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A Cross-cultural Examination of Student Volunteering: Is it all about Resume building?

Abstract

This research takes the utilitarian view of volunteering as a starting point; for a student population we posit that volunteering is motivated for career enhancing and job prospects. In those countries where volunteering signals positive characteristics of students and helps advance their careers, we hypothesize that their volunteer participation will be higher. Furthermore, regardless of the signaling value of volunteering, those students who volunteer for utilitarian reasons will be more likely to volunteer but will exhibit less time-intensive volunteering. Using survey data from 12 countries (n=9,482) we examine our hypotheses related to motivations to volunteer, volunteer participation, and country differences. Findings suggest that students motivated to volunteer for building their resumes do not volunteer more than students with other motives. However, in countries with a positive signaling value of volunteering, volunteering rates are significantly higher. As expected, students motivated by resume building motivations have a lower intensity of volunteering.

(181 words)

Introduction

There has been a long standing interest in why people volunteer. Given that most volunteering activity is unpaid, and the net-cost to volunteer is positive, a strict cost benefit analysis would suggest that such behavior will not be undertaken by all (Handy et al., 2000). However, volunteering is ubiquitous across the world, and this begets research on the underlying motivations to volunteer (MTV) and its impact on volunteer participation. Individuals volunteer for a myriad of motives, and there is an extensive literature that examines MTV in different settings and in different places. Two classes of motivations dominate and are often found to coexist: those that are altruistic or values based in nature and those that are utilitarian (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Altruistic or values-based MTV include religious beliefs, supporting an important cause, helping others, etc. Utilitarian motives often include enhancing human capital, such as work experience and job training, develop new sets of skills, explore different careers paths, enhance their resumes, or make contacts that help them find paid work. A third category of motivations exist, social motives, and include extending one's social networks, volunteering because friends volunteer, facing social pressure to do so, etc. (Cappellar & Turati, 2004)¹.

Among students specific contextual MTV factors may be at play, which in turn may influence their volunteering activities. For example, their MTV may also be influenced by the signaling role volunteering plays in the labor market and in getting into institutes of higher learning. Economic theory has suggested that volunteering plays a unique role in the labour market through its use as a signaling device. Spence (1973) first proposed the value of signals in the context of the labor market as well as the educational market: applicants for jobs and admissions have to signal in a convincing manner why they should be the candidate of choice. Katz & Rosenberg (2005) showed that in an environment characterized by competition, volunteering serves as a signaling device through which the volunteer signals the (potential) employer that he or she has qualities that make him or her more desirable than other candidates.

The recruitment strategies used by volunteer coordinator worldwide are often based on North American studies that are rarely replicated in different cultural contexts. This study may show that student volunteers in different countries are differently motivated. Thus understanding what motivates them to

volunteer and the differences across cultures is of importance to organizations who wish to recruit them. For example, to avoid the pitfall and appeal to altruistic motives as recruitment strategy if volunteers are looking for career enhancement opportunities or vice versa, understanding the MTV is important. Understanding the differences across cultures of the signaling value of volunteering is crucial in framing volunteer opportunities to ensure a win-win opportunity for organizations recruiting student volunteers.

Literature review: The payoff of volunteering for university students

Studies in the US found that students who volunteer were more likely than non-volunteers to have leadership ability, social self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and conflict resolution skills (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999). Hence, an employer faced with many suitable applicants may use volunteer experiences to infer skills, or even increased marginal productivity thus enabling applicants to use their volunteering experiences as positive signals and successfully compete and enhance careers prospects, command higher salaries, and get better jobs (Freeman, 1997; Menchik, & Weisbrod, 1987; Prouteau & Wolff, 2006).

There is substantial theoretical reasoning and empirical evidence that suggests that many people engage in volunteering activities to improve their employment opportunities either as direct investment in human capital (e.g., Menchik & Weisbrod, 1987; Day & Devlin, 1998; Carlin, 2001; Segal & Weisbrod, 2002; Gunderson & Gomez, 2003), increasing their social contacts which may be used as a means to get better jobs (Wuthnow, 1998), or the signaling value of volunteering (Ellingsen and Johannesson, 2003; Katz & Rosenberg, 2005; Ziemek, 2006). In the latter literature, volunteering serves as a signaling device through which the volunteer signals to the (potential) employer or admission officer that he or she is a 'good' type, who is willing to incur net-costs of their volunteering activities that serve the public good. They are generally found by employers to be 'good citizens' who will be more productive employees and likely to forgo their private interests for the good of the organization. However, identifying the 'good citizen' is crucial for the employer. Employers use an individual's volunteering experience as a proxy, a signal for the otherwise hard to observe characteristic 'good citizenship'. It is not a surprise that it is suggested that employers should '...recruit individuals prone to engage in organizational citizen behaviors and avoid

individuals who are egocentric' (Organ, 1988). Consequently, individuals with volunteering experience tend to be hired or command a higher wage (Katz and Rosenberg , 2005)

Empirical data for the most part does not contradict this line of reasoning. Hackl, Halla, and Pruckner (2007) using Austrian data found evidence of a wage premium of 18.7 percent on average for volunteers. A Canadian study found a 6-7 percent return of volunteering in annual earnings for Canadian workers (Day and Devlin, 1998). However, a recent contribution using French data by Prouteau and Wolff (2005) found no statistically significant wage premium for volunteers.

While the above literature does not specifically deal with any one particular population, their findings, we argue may be all the more cogent for university students, as they are more likely to be at a transition from student life to the labor force or education institutes of higher learning. They will, on average, be more engaged in producing resumes in which it is evident that they are 'good citizens.' Given the scarcity of good jobs or limited admission to institutes of higher learning, the competition for such positions will increase the need of signaling in this population as compared to the population at large. Indeed, in those countries where such signaling is an accepted norm (USA and Canada) it is likely that the MTV for this cohort will reflect the utilitarian motives that are career related. Friedland and Morimoto (2005) have argued that many youth do volunteer out of self-interest, explicitly in order to "pad their resume". They write: "Much of this volunteerism...has been shaped by the perception that voluntary and civic activity is necessary to get into any college, and the better the college (or, more precisely, the higher the perception of the college in the status system) the more volunteerism students believed was necessary (p. 10-11).

Similarly, Marks & Jones (2004) found that volunteering increases among those who volunteer for episodic and less demanding purposes, rather than among those who view volunteering as an expression of their core values. Indeed, while mounting competitive pressures to obtain admission in institutions of higher learning and find status jobs rise, students are more prone to seek out the volunteering experiences that help resume-padding. This does not imply that all volunteering is undertaken for instrumental reasons in the pursuit of resume building, as many students are engaged for complex reasons with multiple motives. Motives such as altruism, religious values, and love of society or volunteerism can coexist with that of resume

padding. However, due to increasing pressure and competition to achieve that youth face today, especially in North America, the pay-off to volunteering and its use in resume building may be a powerful drive that can dominate other motives in the decision to volunteer (Crosby, 1999).

There are many popular sites in the US and Canada exhorting students to volunteer. In a typical publication Mitchell and Doyle (2007) told students,

You know the dilemma: if you want to get a good job, you need experience; but to get experience you need a job. One solution, you've been told, is to enhance your resume with descriptions of your volunteer activities – projects you've participated in and the responsibilities you shouldered for each one. There's no doubt that the time you spend as a volunteer or volunteer leader can be invaluable to you, not only for the often unique experiences you gain, but because it can help you secure a better job in summers and after graduation, open doors to networking opportunities with community and business leaders, broaden your knowledge base, and give you a feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment.

Institutions of higher learning may face comparable problems of deciding how to select among equally qualified students. Additional information is often required or provided in personal statements or at interviews that allows decision-makers to select students that fit the institution (Astin, 1998; Sax, 2000). Volunteering experiences are one mechanism used to screen applicants to identify appropriate individuals. For example, a medical school applicant who has volunteered in a hospice will likely be a better candidate for medical school than a candidate with similar scores and no volunteer experience (Smith, 2006). Such volunteering is signaling that he or she really cares about the health and welfare of people and is more likely to be a compassionate human being and, therefore, a better doctor. Thus, volunteering is used as a proxy for desirable personality characteristics. As a result, individuals who volunteer are more likely to be admitted or hired and to command higher salaries than non-volunteering individuals.

National survey data available for young people is limited and not available for all countries. However, where data do exist, higher rates for young people exist as compared to adults. In the United States, volunteering among college-age adults (19-24 year olds) is fairly robust and rising. It was 20% in 2003, up from 18% the previous year, and in 2005, over 30 percent of college students volunteered, exceeding the volunteer rate in the general adult population of 28.8 % (Volunteering in America, 2008). Higher rates of volunteering are evident in data from the Freshman Survey done in 2002 where 82 percent of

college freshmen volunteered for their community during their last year in high school. If indeed volunteering activities were to help them enter college, the high rates of volunteering indicate a utilitarian purpose to gain admission; it is not surprising that national rates for this population show diminished rates. Interestingly, college students are twice as likely to volunteer as individuals of the same age who are not enrolled in an institution of higher education (30.2% and 15.1%, respectively); suggesting further likelihood, that volunteering may have greater benefits for students in institutions of higher learning. Sax (2004) however suggested that these high rates of volunteering in college are related to the service learning opportunities, the National Community Service Act, and to more high-schools demanding community service for graduation – hence not all reported volunteering may be the result of a spontaneous choice.

In Canada, Hall et al., (2006) showed increases in youth volunteering in 2004; over half (55%) of all youth (15 to 24 year olds) volunteered as compared to the national average of 45% of all Canadians aged 15 and older who volunteered. This research also examined the MTV of volunteering and showed that the decision to volunteer among youth differed from others: they were three times more likely to volunteer to improve their job opportunities, than 25 year old and older Canadian (22%). (Hall et al., 2006). Earlier national surveys of Canadians also showed similar trends (Hall, McKeown, & Roberts, 2001; Jones, 2000). Volunteering rate among 15-19 year olds was 37%, this is 42% higher than the average rate of volunteering in the population (26%). Indeed these younger volunteers were much more likely (55%) to indicate that improving job opportunities was a reason for volunteering, as compared to the general population (23%). In addition, a greater proportion of younger volunteers (24%) reported volunteering had at some point helped them to obtain employment as compared to the general population (14%). Thus, it is not surprising, to see that the group of individuals most in need of labor market credentials volunteered in greater numbers than any other group.

However, signals are very context specific, in that not all labor markets or educational regimes interpret volunteering experiences in the same way. Putting volunteering experiences on one's résumé is de rigueur in the US and Canada, yet it may be quite foreign to do so in the Netherlands. One cannot but `` it may not send similar signals in other contexts where volunteering may be seen as a religious duty, or noblesse oblige. In this case, volunteering cannot be understood instrumentally, and altruistic MTV makes better sense

in understanding volunteering. Thus in contexts where employers and university admission officers need signals to assess and sort applicants, MTV will include résumé building; in other contexts where educational achievements such as grades, training certificates, or the like are sufficient to assess and sort applicants, we will expect altruistic MTV to dominate.

Although several studies compare participation rates in different countries (Curtis, Grabb, & Baer, 1992; Hodgkinson, 2003; Ruiters, & De Graaf, 2006; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2000), to our knowledge, only few studies have offered cross-cultural comparisons of MTV. Using the World Values Surveys of 1991-1993, Hwang, Grabb, and Curtis (2005) compared MTV between Canada and the US. They found that volunteers in the US see helping the poor and disadvantaged as part of their role as citizens and were more likely than Canadians to mention altruistic reasons for joining voluntary organizations. By contrast, Canadian volunteers see welfare needs fulfilled by their government and, hence, are less likely to report MTV for altruistic reasons. The differences are thus explained as a function of differing levels of social welfare provision by the government. A second study by Ziemek (2006) examined MTV across countries with different levels of economic development, namely, Bangladesh, Ghana, Poland and South Korea. By clustering MTV into three categories ‘altruism’, ‘egoism’, and ‘investment in human capital’, she also tested the differences in MTV by the volunteer’s perceived level of public spending. High public spending was found to negatively influence altruistic MTV and positively influence investment motivation. Salamon and Sokolowski (2000), using social origins theory, link primary MTV with different political and social regimes, suggesting that, for example, in those countries where government is not involved in providing social services those volunteering will be motivated to volunteer for altruistic reasons. As such, MTV is influenced by environmental and context factors suggesting their impact to be a predictor of volunteering, but no study focused on the impact of signaling as a factor influencing student volunteering from a cross-national perspective.

Hypotheses

This study examines the impact of utilitarian MTV on rates of university students’ volunteering in a cross-national context. We argue that rates of volunteering will reflect the signaling value of volunteering in

the particular country. Thus, we hypothesize that the greater the positive signaling value of volunteering in labor markets and educational institutions, the more students will volunteer. We focus our cross-national comparisons on a particular population, university undergraduate students for various reasons. First, we can hold constant the variations in MTV that can be ascribed to lifecycle and thereby focus on country variations. Second, this cohort is one whose MTV will most likely include all types: altruistic, utilitarian, and social. They are at an age where it is important for them to maintain social relations; they are idealistic about making changes in society, and are at a stage in their career where they most tangibly could benefit from using volunteering for enhancing their career related opportunities. Finally, their MTV are more likely to be interested in padding their résumés either for graduate school or for better jobs than other populations.

In addition to the impact of MTV on rates of volunteering, we assess the impact of utilitarian MTV and the signaling value of volunteering on the nature of participation. Previous research has shown that MTV varies as a function of the intensity of involvement, with long-term active volunteers significantly more likely to reflect altruistic MTV than shorter-term episodic volunteers, who are likely to be satisfying more self-interested MTV such as resume building (Handy, Brodeur & Cnaan, 2006; Reed & Selbee, 2003). Given that in general, the costs of a long-term and time-consuming involvement are significantly greater than those incurred by an individual who volunteers sporadically or as a one-time activity (Cnaan & Handy, 2005), we expect utilitarian-driven volunteers to reduce their net-costs by involving in more episodic volunteer opportunities that demand a smaller time investment and are sufficient in meeting their utilitarian goals.

If utilitarian motives are particular prevalent among university students, it is highly relevant to examine whether this population also has a distinct style of involvement. Sax (2004) for instance noted that college students are more likely than the general adult volunteer population (27% to 23.4%) to be engaged in volunteering as “episodic” volunteers (volunteering fewer than two weeks per year with their main organization); which is typical for those trying to build a resume than those volunteering for other reasons (Dote et al., 2006).

Based on our discussion above, we frame several hypotheses and test it in different countries to see if contextual differences explain student volunteering. As such we hypothesize:

- **H1a:** There will be higher probability of students volunteering if he or she prefers résumé building MTV over altruism or social motives.
- **H1b:** The differences of student volunteering will vary by country. That is we expect the North American countries to show higher rates of resume building MTV and enhanced volunteer participation.

We further explore the instrumentalist view on volunteering by using as our dependent variable the intensity of volunteer participation. We suggest that students motivated by resume building motives are likely to engage for fewer hours and more episodic assignments just sufficient to enhance their resumes, whereas those with altruistic motives are likely to engage for longer hours and more frequently to satisfy their intrinsic needs. As such we hypothesize:

- **H2a:** There will be lower intensity [hours and frequency] of student volunteering if students are motivated by resume building motives versus altruism or social benefits.
- **H2b:** The differences of the intensity [hours and frequency] in student volunteering participation will vary by country. We expect countries that have a high positive value of volunteering as a signal – such as USA and Canada to show lower intensity of volunteering.

Methods

Since the aim of the research was to study student volunteering as a response to differences in MTV in a cross-cultural context, data was collected in 12 different countries: Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, England, Finland, the Netherlands, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, and the U.S. In each country, a research team member distributed questionnaires to 600 plus university students, mostly in classroom settings. Data were collected in 2006-07. Although surveys were not distributed randomly, the very high number of respondents can support the validity of the data.

As it was an international study, the questionnaire had to be translated and adopted to the local language and culture. The English version of the questionnaire was first piloted, revised. It was used in Canada,

England, India, and the USA; in all other countries the questionnaire was translated, piloted, and reviewed by a panel of experts before going into the field.

Measures

A survey was designed for the purpose of the current study and included items that were related to volunteering habits. More specific, we use the following three measures as our key dependent variables. First, to examine H1a and H1b, we use students' participation in volunteering in formal organizations the past 12 months (yes coded 1, no coded 0)². Second, to measure intensity of participation (H2a and H2b), we use two measures: hours of volunteering per month in the past 12 months, and the frequency of volunteering (none, occasionally, monthly, or weekly).

To measure MTV, students were asked to rate 14 possible reasons for doing volunteer work on a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (very important). The items were chosen to reflect different dimensions of motivation to volunteer as recently used in the literature (Hwang et al., 2005; Liao-Troth, 2005; Ziemek, 2006). To determine the set of dimensions emerging from the combined data for the 12 countries, we conducted a principal component analysis. The results reported here are based on a principal component extraction with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization, which does not allow the extracted factors to be inter-correlated.

The first component incorporates four items that clearly represent the value of volunteering for résumé building and career-related motivations: to put it on C.V. (résumé) for admission to higher education; to put it on C.V. (résumé) when applying for a job; to get foot in the door at place where one wants to get paid employment; and to make new contacts that might help a business career. The second component reflects altruistic and value-driven reasons for volunteering based on the following five items: it is important to help others; to work for a cause that is important; to learn more about the cause for which one is volunteering; it gives one a new perspective; and it makes one feel better.³ The third motivational component is referred to as social and ego-defensive reasons for volunteering. It comprises the remaining five items: because friends volunteer; was advised to do so; influenced to volunteer by people close to them; it relieves guilt over being more fortunate than others; and it is a good escape from one's own troubles.

We control for gender (women coded 1; men treated as reference category), age in years, and household income (with high income class coded as 1 and middle or lower income class coded as 0). We excluded education as a variable as our cohort represents university students who have graduated from high school but not university, hence belong to the same category. In addition, we accounted for individuals' personal value systems by means of two additive scales: material values and nonmaterial values. We conducted principal component analysis to extract two components with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. Individuals who score high on material values attach high importance to: making a lot of money; being successful in one's studies or work; living a happy, comfortable life; and being able to do what you want. Those who support nonmaterial values, on the other hand, consider it more important to: help people in need; make the world a better place; and have a religious faith.

We also control for the study program (dummy variables for business and all other programs; the latter treated as reference category), as we believe that students in business programs are likely to be more competitive and career-oriented than in other programs including social sciences (Astin & Sax, 1998; O'Brein, 1993). High schools and universities in some countries have 'volunteering' as a formal or recommended requirement for graduation. This provision not only raises the awareness of volunteering among members of their cohort but also gives them opportunities to volunteer thereby raising their rates of participation (Sundeen & Raskoff, 1994). We, thus, controlled for volunteer requirements in high school and university (yes coded 1, no coded 0).

Methods

To examine our hypotheses, we use a Heckman selection model⁴. To analyze H1a and H1b, we use probit analysis in the first stage of Heckman selection model; in the analysis, we use as our dependent variable participation in volunteering. Our key independent variables are the three dimensions of MTV and country differences. We control for individual characteristics of students: age (A), gender (G), family income (I), personal values (V), program of study (P), and volunteer requirements in high school and university (R). Thus, we model volunteer participation V, a binary variable, 1=yes and 0=no as:

$$1. \quad V(0, 1) = F [\text{MTV, country effects, A, G, I, V, P, R-high school, R-university}]$$

To analyze H2a and H2b, we use OLS regression analysis in the second stage of Heckman selection model and ordered logistic regression model; in these analyses, we use as our dependent variable the intensity of participation, as measured by the number of hours of volunteering and the frequency of volunteering. In the second stage analysis (OLS regression) of Heckman selection model correcting sample selection bias with Mills' ratio estimate, we analyze the number of hours volunteered as the dependent variable. Finally, employing the ordered logistic regression model, we analyze the frequency of volunteering, an ordinal variable (degree of regularity), as the dependent variable. In each case, controlling for the same variables (except for age) as we do in the probit model, we examine MTV and country effects on the dependent variables. The rationale of dropping the age variable in the OLS regression analysis and ordered logistic regression analysis is based on the requirement for model identification in the Heckman selection model and age variable's limited variation in predicting the intensity in our study population (college and graduate students).

2. $V(\text{hours}) = F[\text{MTV, country effects, I, G, V, P, R-high school, R-university}]$

3. $V(\text{degree of regularity}) = F[\text{MTV, country effects, I, G, V, P, R-high school, R-university}]$

Sample characteristics

All together 9,482 students in 12 countries completed surveys with a minimum number of 600 in each country; all together 69.2% reported volunteering in the past 12 months. Our sample consisted of slightly more females (55.2%) than males (44.8%). However, gender was significantly unequal between the 12 studied countries: in India, 62.5 percent were males while the majority was female in the UK (71.4%), Finland (71.3%), and Canada (68.3%). Most reported themselves as coming from the middle-income group (68.2%), with 17.1% reporting coming from high income groups and 14.7% from low income groups. The highest rates of students reporting their family as high-income class was found in the Netherlands (41.3%) and Israel (35.6%). The highest rates of low-income families were reported in China (25.9%), Japan (22.1%) and Finland and Israel (20.1% and 20.0% respectively).

The mean age of the students was 22.2 years (median=22.4 years), with 65% of students coming from the age group 18-22 years. Significant differences in mean age were found between the 12 countries. In

Israel, the mean age was higher (26.1) due to obligatory two to three years of military service, followed by Finland (24.6) and the US (24.0). The youngest mean age (20 years) was found in Belgium and Japan.

Students came from diverse disciplines and the distribution was as follows: 24.9% from Social sciences, 13.4% from Natural sciences, 22.7% from Business, 14.7% from Humanities, 13.4% from Engineering, and 10.9% from other disciplines. The distribution of students across disciplines differed by country, with substantial overrepresentation of some sciences in Japan (79.9% from Social sciences), UK (45.5% from Natural sciences), and Finland (43.4% from Humanities).

Just over half of the students (53.7%) were exposed to some form of institutional service learning at their high school or university as volunteering either being compulsory or optional, while the others did not have such exposure. Students in Korea (81.0%), Israel (80.0%), and India (75.5%) were most likely to have such exposure, and students in China (9.9%), Croatia (15.5%), and Japan (18.0%) were least likely to experience some form of service requirement.

Findings

Volunteering and motivation to volunteer across countries

In **Table 1**, we present a descriptive analysis of the dependent variables by countries. As we expect our utilitarian paradigm to apply most strongly in the North American context, we use the US and Canada as our key countries of reference, as these countries provide the strongest evidence of the value of volunteering as a signal among students (Katz & Rosenberg, 2005). Table 1 shows that with regard to participation in volunteering, India (86.2%) and China (84.5%) belong to the top tier; Canada (79.7%) and the U.S. (78.8%) belong to the second tier; and Croatia (51.2%) and Japan (39.1%) belong to the lowest tier. Across countries, Belgium, Canada, and USA had the highest average number of hours of volunteering per month (respectively 15.74, 15.58, and 11.26 hours per month on average). In the U.S., Finland, and Netherlands, the highest percentage of students volunteered on a monthly basis (14.7%, 13.3%, and 12.5% respectively). Belgian, Canadian, and Israeli students, on the other hand, most often reported weekly volunteering (22.2%, 22.1%, and 19.2% respectively).

****Insert Table 1 about here****

Looking at the combined results for these volunteering features, some interesting patterns emerge. First, the countries that have the highest rates of volunteer participation (India and China) are also the countries where students participate most frequently on an occasional basis and invest the lowest average number of hours volunteering per month. In these countries, episodic volunteering is highly prevalent. Similarly, in India and China, most volunteers, on average, reported less than 2 hours per month.

The most regular and time-consuming volunteering, on the other hand, can be found in Canada, the US, and Belgium. In Canada, 8 out of 10 students reported volunteering, invested an average of 15.6 hours per month, and participated most frequently on a weekly basis. Although in Belgium, slightly fewer students were involved in volunteering; their intensity of participation was similar to that of Canadian students. American students participated at similar rates as Canadian students, but invested slightly less hours and were more likely to participate on a monthly basis. In spite of these nuances, these three countries distinguish themselves from other countries by displaying high rates of volunteering, and a high intensity of involvement (i.e. a large number of hours and more frequent involvement).

In **Table 2**, we compare the importance of the three motivational dimensions, altruism, résumé, and social MTV, across countries. Students express the strongest support for altruistic and value-driven reasons for volunteering across all countries. Résumé building motivations come second, social and ego-defensive reasons for volunteering are considered least important. Notwithstanding the similarity in these general rankings, important country differences exist in the strength of these motives. As we expected, the résumé building MTV scores highest in Canada and the US, as well as in England. 'Résumé padding' is least important in Korea and Finland. Altruistic and value-driven MTV are most important in Finland and Croatia, followed by the US, Canada, and Israel. This motive receives the lowest support in Korea. Social and ego-defensive reasons are most prevalent in the US, India, and Canada; and are least important in Croatia and Japan.

****Insert Table 2 about here****

MTV and participation in volunteering

In this study, we hypothesized that students participate in volunteering to achieve outcomes that help them build their resumes and advance their careers. However, this will only be true in environments that value such volunteering experiences and see them as proxies for success in future employment and learning. On the basis of these assumptions we have formulated two hypotheses. First, participation in volunteering will be higher if students are motivated by resume building motive (H1a). Second, this effect will vary by country, with the US and Canada being the countries where the volunteering-as-investment paradigm most strongly and explicitly prevails (H1b).

The results of the Probit analysis in **Table 3** do not support the assumption that students who are more strongly motivated by resume building motives have a higher probability of participation in volunteering. Thus, although the variable of resume building is statistically significant, it has a negative impact and not a positive one, as hypothesized. Instead, altruistic MTV has a positive effect on the probability of participation in volunteering with high statistical significance. On the other hand, social MTV is also statistically significant; but in a negative direction. In sum, the results of the Probit analysis do not support the first hypothesis in this study.

****Insert Table 3 about here****

To test the second hypothesis (H1b), we examine country effects on participation in volunteering with the US as a reference category, controlling for MTV and background variables. All countries show statistically significant differences except for Canada and India. These two countries thus provide a similar context effect for participation in volunteering as the US. The direction of effects indicates that in comparison to the US, students in China are significantly more likely to participate in volunteering; these positive country influences indeed reflect the higher rates of participation we observed in these countries. All other countries show a statistically significant negative effect. Thus, the probabilities of participation in volunteering in these countries are significantly lower than in the U.S. In sum, the results of the probit analysis support the assumption that important cross-national differences in rates of student volunteering exist. The findings also suggest that the US and Canada produce similar country effects on rates of volunteering. However, although a majority of other countries has a negative impact when compared to the

US, which supports H1b, India is also similar to the North-American countries, and China has a significant positive impact, which suggests further study regarding this hypothesis.

The results of the probit analysis further show that family income and requirement for volunteering in high school and university are statistically significant in a positive direction. Thus, when students come from a higher-income family and when they were exposed to some form of service requirement, the probabilities for participation in volunteering are higher.

Comparing study programs, students in business programs have a significantly lower probability of participation in volunteering in comparison with other academic programs that are the reference category. Finally, there is an effect of students' personal value systems: the stronger their support for non-materialistic values, the higher their likelihood of volunteering. The effect of material values is negative: the stronger their support for materialistic values, the lower their likelihood of volunteering.

MTV and intensity of volunteering

Based on our utilitarian investment model, we expected not only differences in the probability of participation, but also in the intensity of volunteering. We suggested that students motivated by resume building motives are likely to engage for fewer hours and particular assignments [episodic] just sufficient to enhance their resumes (H2a), and again, that significant country differences would exist (H2b). **Table 4** shows findings from the OLS regression analysis (the second stage of Heckman selection model) with hours of volunteering as the dependent variable. **Table 5** reports results on the ordered logistic regression with frequency of volunteering as the dependent variable.

****Insert Table 4 and 5 about here****

The results in **Table 4** and **Table 5** support the hypothesis that students who are more strongly motivated by resume building MTV have a lower intensity and regularity of volunteering. Students that more strongly support resume building MTV participate less in volunteering, but if they do so, they are significantly more likely to invest fewer hours and volunteer in an episodic way. Students who embrace altruistic MTV, on the other hand, invest more hours and participate more frequently, and these effects have

high statistical significance. Support for social MTV is also statistically significant; but it has a negative impact on both measures of intensity of volunteering. In sum, the results of OLS regression analysis and ordered logistic regression analysis support the third hypothesis (H2a).

We also found that high school and university exposure to required volunteer participation is statistically significantly related with regularly volunteering (weekly, monthly, occasionally, or none) but not to the number of hours one volunteers per week.

Comparing country effects on the intensity of volunteering (H2b), most countries show statistically significant differences. With regard to the estimated number of hours of volunteering per month, most countries are significantly different from the U.S., except for Canada, Israel, and the Netherlands. These three countries thus produce similar context affects on students' number of hours of volunteering as the U.S. When the U.S. is used as a reference category and controlling for other variables, Belgium is the only country that has a significantly more positive impact on the number of hours of volunteering. All other country deviations from the US are in a negative direction. Thus, the time devoted to volunteering in these countries is lower than in the U.S.

The analysis of country effects for students' frequency of volunteering shows that Canada, Belgium, and China do not statistically differ from the US. All other countries have a statistically significant negative effect, thus students in these countries more likely to volunteer episodically.

In sum, the results of OLS regression and ordered logistic regression analysis indicate that, as expected, the country context significantly impacts students' intensity of volunteering. However, students in North America have a higher likelihood of participating on a regular and more time-intensive basis, which is contrary to our fourth hypothesis (H2b). A number of countries show similarities in varying ways. While students in Israel and the Netherlands are likely to volunteer less frequent, they invest a similar amount of time. In Belgium and China, students volunteer as frequently as those in the US and Canada, but Belgian students tend to spend more hours, and Chinese students are likely to invest less hours.

The findings further indicate that family income has a statistically significant positive effect. Thus, students from higher-income families are more likely to spend more hours of volunteering and participate more frequently. Volunteer requirements in high school or university do not affect the number of hours devoted to volunteering, but have a positive impact on the frequency of volunteering. Students in business programs, in comparison to students in other programs, have a lower intensity of volunteering.

Finally, both material and non-material values are statistically significant in predicting the intensity of volunteering; students supporting material value participate on a less intensive basis, students who embrace non-material values, on the other hand, invest more hours, and participate more frequently.

Discussion and conclusion

Not only is our first hypothesis on resume building MTV as being a positive predictor of student volunteer participation not supported by our data, we find that resume building MTV has a statistically significant negative impact, as indicated in Table 3. Instead, altruistic MTV has a positive effect on the probability of participation in volunteering with high statistical significance. This finding clearly does not support our hypotheses about the expected impact of the resume building of MTV or the overall influence of the ‘investment model.’ However, when we add to this finding the fact that results from Table 4 and Table 5 support the thesis that students who are more strongly motivated by resume building MTV reported to volunteer less frequently and invest fewer hours of volunteering, a few possible explanations emerge.

There can be various explanations to our findings. First, volunteering is not the result of one aspect of MTV alone. People who volunteer often do so because of a comprehensive set of motives all interwoven (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Those who are mostly motivated by resume building MTV may in turn be less interested in volunteering as compared to students motivated by all three MTV. If one is primarily motivated to enhance his or her future career, it is likely that this individual lacks other motives and is hence less likely to volunteer. Indeed résumé building MTV may help increase one’s chances of volunteering but it is neither necessary nor sufficient MTV to volunteer, as significant personal cost must be weighed against the probability that such activity would influence an employer or university admission officer. However, if one is

also motivated to make friends (a social MTV) and enjoyed helping others (an altruistic MTV), the benefits would increase and you may more likely accept the costs of volunteering and volunteer.

Second, students were asked to report why they volunteer, in other words, whether they agreed or disagreed with all the possible reasons that might motivate them to volunteer. In all countries students agreed more strongly with altruistic reasons as their motivations to volunteer than any other motivations. Although they did not reject other motivations, resume and social MTV, they were second to altruistic MTV. This finding is significant, in that it explains what students believe about any volunteer activity: it is to help others at a personal cost to themselves, and hence respond strongly to altruistic MTV. Indeed, this conforms to the net-cost theory of volunteering wherein individuals perceive volunteers as those who undertake an activity at net costs to themselves, despite certain private benefits they may get along the way (Handy et al., 2000). Students in our sample do not reject the resume or social MTV, but are these MTV are overshadowed by the altruistic MTV. Thus, notwithstanding that they receive private benefits (resume, social), students see that they give their labor at some cost to themselves, and hence regard their volunteering as an altruistically motivated activity.

Third, another possible explanation for the lack of support for the individual 'investment benefit model' may be social desirability. Most students find it difficult and embarrassing to admit that they are volunteering only to enhance their private benefits. It is safer and socially expected that volunteering is an altruistic behavior and benefits to the volunteer are inappropriate. It is possible that many students, who may have strong self-serving motives (resume building or social), inflate the altruistic MTV along with admitting, albeit downgrading their resume building and social MTV. This possibility calls future studies in this area to include measures of social desirability or to resort to open ended interviews where self-serving motives are probed.

Fourth, as our data is cross sectional, we cannot tell what first motivated students to volunteer, and if MTV change over the course of volunteering. It may be likely that résumé building MTV has a strong impact on the initial decision to volunteer, but once students get involved, they learn about other meanings and values of volunteering through their experience. In other words, while the initial MTV may have been more

exclusively focused on private benefits (e.g., building their résumé or making friends), once they are involved they gradually develop different insights and explanations for continuing to volunteer. To explore this hypothesis calls for further research using different research methods

Another methodological issue may be related to the fact that we found lower rates of volunteering among students highly motivated by instrumental MTV. We only inquired about participation in volunteering in the 12 months preceding the interview. As a result, we cannot exclude the possibility of a higher incidence of volunteering activities among instrumentally motivated students, be it over a larger period of reference. Given that we found résumé building MTV to be positively associated with more episodic involvement, the likelihood of reporting any type of volunteering in the past 12 months is indeed lower than that of regular volunteers. In addition, at the time of the survey, many respondents were not facing a job search or admission into graduate school (especially those in the early years at university), hence there was no immediate instrumental benefit to participating in volunteering, which further explains why instrumentally oriented students reported lower rates of volunteering in the 12 months preceding the interview.

Finally, it may be that our population of university students was too homogeneous to find pronounced differences in the effect of the resume building MTV. As other studies have found the effect of instrumental MTV on volunteering to be stronger for youth, and more specific college students, in comparison to older age groups (Hall et al., 2006; Sax, 2004), a comparison of our sample with young people outside university and/or with in other stages of the life course may provide stronger support for our hypothesis.

In addition to the impact of individual MTV on the rate and nature of volunteering, we also expected the value of volunteering to be culturally rooted and environmentally specific. We predicted the influence of utilitarian MTV to be particularly strong in North America, where it is an accepted norm. We indeed find that the US and Canada provide a highly similar context for volunteering in this respect, and hence there are no differences in country effects between USA and Canada on any of the dependent variables (rate, hours, and frequency of volunteering).

Assuming that the signaling value of volunteering is very strong in the North-American context, our findings show an opposite effect of the utilitarian value of volunteering at the macro and the micro level. This may indicate that the association between resume building MTV and actual volunteering is not at the individual level but at the societal level. Students responding high on resume building MTV participate less in volunteering; however, in countries, such as North America where resume building is a normative expectation, large number of students - even if they are unaware of it or loathe to admit it - respond with high rates of volunteering. Given that North American students also participate on a more intensive basis, with more frequent involvement and longer hours of volunteering, our findings would suggest – contrary to our theoretical assumptions – that regular volunteering is a more credible signal of volunteering than is episodic volunteering, which is a less costly engagement. It is possible that those reading the resumes are also savvier and are looking for more intensive volunteering.

India and China, the two emerging economies, showed comparable or higher rates of volunteering as North America. These countries, more than the others, are culturally more influenced by the US and students aspire to come to study or work in US; hence it is not surprising that they learn the norms and value of volunteering.

However, three other countries, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Israel, in which the signaling value of volunteering is supposed to be weak, showed similar effects on the intensity of volunteering as the North American countries. It thus seems that at the country level, a more complex set of dynamics is at play, which affects various aspects of volunteering differently in different contexts. Presumably, the country effects observed are not only attributable to the utilitarian value of volunteering for university students, but maybe even more importantly to the broader social and cultural origins of the nonprofit sector in these countries (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). In this respect, the relationship between MTV and differences in welfare regimes that was demonstrated in earlier research (Hwang et al., 2005; Ziemek, 2006) seems to offer a more adequate explanation.

Besides the effects of MTV and country differences, the finding that the existence of required volunteering in either high school or university has positive effect on participation in volunteering and in

volunteer regularity but not on hours begs for special discussion. It is likely that either service requirements could have a positive effect on students' propensity to volunteering; or that students report more volunteering because they consider service requirements also as volunteering.

Our hypotheses were derived from the micro-economic model emphasizing the importance of the investment motive; and look for whether there are any actual returns to this investment. While studies show that such benefits exist, they do not ask whether volunteers also get a return on the social and altruistic MTV, and whether these latter benefits are more important to the volunteer as compared to the returns to their resume MTV. Our findings suggest that students are more influenced by the benefits of the altruistic and social MTV than the benefits of resume building MTV, which we have argued may lead to a better job, a higher wage or admission into a particular university or program. Furthermore, as Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) noted, the combination of MTV is the stronger predictor of volunteering rather than its various parts.

Cross-national studies up to this date on volunteering have not used MTV to predict differences in volunteer participation nor its intensity. Hence it is likely that to study the impact of investment model; it probably is not fruitful to use the conventional method of measuring MTV. Rather, future research needs to develop methods that allow us to grasp the "decision to volunteer", that is, what actually triggers individuals to take the initial step to volunteer. In addition, the complexity of our findings calls for more systematic research efforts to disentangle the multiple individual and contextual effects on the nature of volunteering. While existing research has merely looked at differences in rates of volunteering, it has not yet taken up the challenge of explaining cross-culturally the multidimensional nature of volunteering, that is, the highly diverging interactions between rates and intensity of volunteering- this research is just the beginning in an attempt to unravel the impact of MTV at the macro and micro levels.

End Notes

- (1) These motives it may be argued are utilitarian as well since they serve a purpose to further the volunteer's social position and or meet his or her social needs.
- (2) In our instrument we only ask about volunteering in formal organizations. Sorting capability based on individuals' volunteer experiences requires it should be verifiable that what an individual claims is indeed done. This makes formal volunteering through organizations a better signal than informal volunteering. In the questionnaire, we defined volunteer experiences as “giving *freely* of your time to help others through organizations” and presented a list of eight types of organizations (religious organizations, human service organizations, sport or cultural organizations, community organizations, student clubs or other university organizations, on-line volunteering, neighborhood organizations, local activist groups, youth organizations).
- (3) Although this motive can be interpreted as an ego motive, we believe that it is a more value-driven motive as interpreted in our survey, given its factor loading with other items on altruism and values. It is reasonable to infer that volunteering will only make you feel better *if* you value helping others.
- (4) The Heckman selection model or Heckman correction (Heckman, 1979) is a two-stage method to correct for selection bias in samples where the dependent variable is only observed for a restricted, non-random sample. In this case, we are examining participation in volunteering – our dependent variable, and a considerable part of the student population does not take part. Given that the decision to volunteer was made by the individual students, those who choose to volunteer constitute a self-selected sample, and not a random sample. And thus, estimating the determinants of participation from the subpopulation who choose to volunteer may introduce bias and lead to erroneous conclusions. Indeed, by running an OLS regression we would automatically exclude students who have zero hours of volunteering, that is, we remove students who did not volunteer with the same condition (age, gender, etc.). The Heckman selection model is a two-step statistical approach that corrects for non-randomly selected samples by estimating the self-selection decision by using the independent conditions with inclusion of all students. Thus, Heckman's solution adds a ‘decision equation’ to the ‘outcome equation’. First, we formulate a

model for the probability of volunteering (a probit regression). In the second stage, we correct for self-selection by including a transformation of the predicted individual probabilities as an additional explanatory variable (OLS regression). In the Tables, we report the unstandardized coefficients of the probit (step 1) and OLS (step 2) models.

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Table 1: Participation in Volunteering, Hours of Volunteering and Frequency of Volunteering by Countries

Country	Participation in volunteering		Hours of volunteering	Frequency of volunteering				
				Not at all	Occasionally	Monthly	Weekly	
	N	(%)	Mean	(SD)	N	(%)	N	(%)
U.S.A.	1020	(78.8)	11.26	(45.42)	288	(22.4)	608	(47.3)
Canada	775	(79.7)	15.58	(59.01)	225	(23.4)	433	(45.0)
Belgium	636	(71.4)	15.74	(57.07)	271	(30.5)	357	(40.2)
China	777	(84.5)	2.44	(15.11)	113	(12.4)	644	(70.8)
Croatia	307	(51.2)	3.45	(18.34)	346	(57.7)	197	(32.8)
England	380	(63.3)	4.98	(24.80)	224	(37.5)	290	(48.6)
Finland	466	(70.1)	4.07	(11.63)	219	(33.2)	269	(40.8)
India	517	(86.2)	2.08	(5.34)	98	(16.3)	409	(68.2)
Israel	398	(67.5)	7.24	(22.30)	202	(34.3)	216	(36.7)
Japan	411	(39.1)	0.72	(4.10)	732	(69.9)	262	(25.0)
Korea	508	(73.0)	4.34	(16.42)	246	(35.5)	286	(41.3)
Netherlands	368	(61.1)	6.76	(19.47)	243	(40.6)	184	(30.8)

Table 2: Motivations to volunteer by country (means scores on 5-point scale).

	Motivation		
	Altruism	Resume	Social
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
U.S.A.	4.03 (0.86)	3.67 (0.93)	3.16 (0.78)
Canada	4.04 (0.81)	3.83 (0.96)	3.05 (0.85)
Belgium	3.78 (0.51)	3.22 (0.84)	2.97 (0.55)
China	3.81 (0.58)	3.55 (0.67)	2.74 (0.72)
Croatia	4.10 (0.62)	3.29 (1.02)	2.38 (0.80)
England	3.94 (0.72)	3.67 (0.85)	2.79 (0.74)
Finland	4.17 (0.57)	3.03 (0.93)	2.73 (0.76)
Israel	4.03 (0.61)	3.22 (1.07)	2.99 (0.85)
India	3.82 (0.93)	3.29 (0.89)	3.07 (0.90)
Japan	3.82 (0.68)	3.03 (0.92)	2.47 (0.81)
Korea	3.65 (0.62)	2.70 (0.84)	2.91 (0.60)
Netherlands	3.81 (0.52)	3.39 (0.85)	2.94 (0.58)

Table 3: Probit analysis of participation in volunteering—the first step in Heckman Selection Model

	Coefficient	Std. Err	P_value
Motivation to volunteer			
Resume	-.0813948	.0165335	***
Altruism	.0988395	.0166072	***
Social	-.1172552	.0165526	***
Countries (ref=USA)			
Belgium	-.161519	.0677237	*
Canada	.0049831	.0692249	NS
China	.4037255	.0715459	***
Croatia	-.9078035	.0743274	***
Finland	-.4675916	.0765609	***
India	.053085	.1054163	NS
Israel	-.5303797	.0798712	***
Japan	-1.027619	.0672781	***
Korea	-.2549429	.0747513	***
Netherlands	-.4380052	.072438	***
United Kingdom	-.4818365	.0784688	***
Background characteristics			
Age	-.0061779	.0037414	NS
Gender	.0157902	.0320489	NS
Family income	.1213484	.0281142	***
Program (ref=Business)	-.1746076	.0375411	***
Individual values			
Material	-.07354	.0164193	***
Nonmaterial	.1574626	.0175303	***
Service requirements			
In high school	.1191455	.0390777	**
In university	.2752176	.0427672	***
_cons	.631903	.1212628	.000
Mills lambda	12.73469	6.617925	.054
Rho	.70168		
sigma	18.148741		
lambda	12.734695	6.617925	

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 4: OLS regression results on hours of volunteering per month—the second step in Heckman Selection Model

	Coefficient	Std. Err	P_value
Motivation to volunteer			
Resume	-.828138	.3577239	*
Altruism	1.478026	.4029654	***
Social	-1.686851	.434903	***
Countries (Ref=USA)			
Belgium	2.164631	1.059672	*
Canada	1.06366	.9611411	NS
China	-4.499022	1.578796	**
Croatia	-12.17645	3.279251	***
Finland	-8.518054	1.867819	***
India	-7.159495	1.318765	***
Israel	-3.238326	2.079404	NS
Japan	-15.35996	3.855059	***
Korea	-4.960189	1.330824	***
Netherlands	-2.607123	1.768898	NS
United Kingdom	-6.146754	1.907352	***
Background characteristics			
Gender	.9152708	.4962525	NS
Family income	1.030109	.5843579	NS
Program (Ref=Business)	-3.230599	.8084478	***
Individual values			
Material	-1.298161	.346961	***
Nonmaterial	1.693678	.5617984	**
Service requirements			
In high school	-.2847695	.7204122	NS
In university	1.452676	1.037956	NS
_cons	2.339703	3.743431	.532

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 5: Ordered logistic regression of frequency of volunteering (none, occasionally, monthly, weekly).

	Coefficient	Std. Err	P_value
Motivation to volunteer			
Resume	-.1206533	.0231294	***
Altruism	.1734136	.0231669	***
Social	-.2017991	.0225901	***
Country (ref=USA)			
Belgium	.0243352	.0910638	NS
Canada	.0726325	.0882171	NS
China	.165158	.0862093	NS
Croatia	-1.747988	.1082809	***
Finland	-.7236631	.1041274	***
India	-.5662574	.1146263	***
Israel	-.5086273	.1070413	***
Japan	-1.998731	.0981957	***
Korea	-.445404	.1006196	***
Netherlands	-.3789245	.1034897	***
United Kingdom	-.7088527	.1057338	***
Background characteristics			
Gender	.0981409	.04403	*
Family income	.1900554	.0393529	***
Program business	-.3137958	.0520327	***
Material	-.2123703	.0229129	***
Nonmaterial	.3082511	.0246404	***
Service requirements			
In high school	.1324964	.0524919	*
In university	.2639354	.0562586	***
/cut1	-.7846437	.1037221	
/cut2	1.410885	.1045318	
/cut3	2.062481	.1062412	