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Social and Cultural Origins of Motivations to Volunteer: A Comparison of University Students in Six Countries

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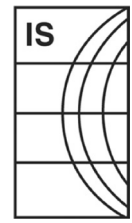

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abstract: Although participation in volunteering and motivations to volunteer (MTV) have received substantial attention on the national level, particularly in the US, few studies have compared and explained these issues across cultural and political contexts. This study compares how two theoretical perspectives, social origins theory and signalling theory, explain variations in MTV across different countries. The study analyses responses from a sample of 5794 students from six countries representing distinct institutional contexts. The findings provide strong support for signalling theory but less so for social origins theory. The article concludes that volunteering is a personal decision and thus is influenced more at the individual level but is also impacted to some degree by macro-level societal forces.

keywords: cross-national analysis ✦ exchange benefits ✦ motivations ✦ non-profit regimes ✦ signalling theory ✦ social origins theory ✦ university students ✦ volunteering

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Introduction

Volunteering is a foundational block in the formation and sustainability of civil society across the world. In order for non-profit and non-governmental organizations to exist and be effective, countless volunteers are needed. The literature on why people choose to volunteer is rich but mostly limited to one country, industry, or organization. Few studies explain how volunteering in various countries is shaped by societal characteristics. Our aim in this article is to examine if and how specific societal characteristics are associated with self-reported motivations to volunteer (MTV) among university students in six countries.

This article begins with a review of the literature on MTV. Our review shows that although these motivations overlap, they can be differentiated conceptually. We discuss two theories that can explain MTV cross-nationally. First, we apply social origins theory, advanced by Salamon and Anheier (1998), and predicated on Esping-Anderson's (1990) 'worlds of welfare capitalism'. According to this theory, four prototypes of non-profit regimes exist. We hypothesize that the MTV of student volunteers will vary according to differences in these regimes: the larger the involvement of government in social service delivery, the less likely MTV to be altruistic in nature. We also introduce signalling theory. Here we posit that in countries where employers and educational institutions evaluate applicants' volunteer activities to infer productivity, students will engage more often in volunteering activities to build their résumés.

Next, we describe the study data and methods used to generate a sample of 5794 students from six countries: Belgium, Canada, China, Finland, Japan and the US. These countries are useful for the purposes of our study for they prove a good representation of the different non-profit regimes as well as of educational regimes with respect to the signalling value of volunteering. We then report our findings with respect to our hypotheses and finally conclude with a discussion of the results and their implications for policy and research.

Motivations to Volunteer from a Cross-National Perspective

MTV is a well-researched topic (Wilson, 2000). Much of the research has been conducted either at the national level using representative samples or at the organizational or sector level using volunteers in specific activities or those involved with particular organizations (Musick and Wilson, 2008). Regardless of this diversity in the study of MTV, scholars have consistently found MTV to be a complex interplay that includes both altruistic and self-interested elements (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen, 1991). For example, whether studying health service volunteers or fire fighters (Gabard, 1995; Handy and

Srinivasan, 2004; Thompson and Bono, 1993), or seniors or youth (Herzog et al., 1989; Marta et al., 2006; Okun et al., 1998; Serow, 1991; Sundeen and Raskoff, 1994), MTV include both sets of key motivations. Similarly, large national surveys conducted in, for example, the US (Clary et al., 1996; Independent Sector, 1996), Canada (Bozzo, 1999; Hall et al., 2001), UK (Davis Smith, 1998) and Australia (Baum et al., 1999) exhibit both motivational dimensions. Despite these similarities, cross-national comparisons based on these studies are difficult, as questions, contexts and samples differ.

Several studies found that the intensity of MTV differs according to certain demographic factors (Cappellari and Turati, 2004; Independent Sector, 1996; Okun and Schultz, 2003; Smith, 1994). For example, that the MTV of youth differ from other age groups is well established in the literature (Carlin, 2001; Hall et al., 2006; Jones, 1999; Reed and Selbee, 2000, 2001). Gillespie and King (1985) found that a greater proportion of older volunteers gave time for altruistic reasons such as to 'help others' and 'contribute to the community'. By contrast, younger volunteers more often expressed MTV pertaining to acquiring training and skills. In a national survey of Canadians, volunteer rates were highest among youth, who also tended to be motivated to volunteer more by self-interested factors than other age cohorts. For example, 65 percent of 15- to 19-year-olds, vs 13 percent of those 25 and older, volunteered to improve their job opportunities (Hall et al., 2006). Among the student population, Winniford et al. (1995) found that American college students volunteer primarily because of altruistic concern for others, although they also seek to satisfy self-fulfilment and development needs (e.g. affiliation, sense of satisfaction and development of career skills). In addition, Dickinson (1999) reported that in the UK students who volunteer are engaged in a conscious attempt to enhance their chances of success in finding post-education employment.

The question thus arises: are there differences across cultures in the various motivations to volunteer? Although several studies compare volunteer participation rates (Anheier and Salamon, 1999; Curtis et al., 1992; Haddad, 2006; Hodgkinson, 2003; Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006), to our knowledge only two studies have offered cross-cultural comparisons of MTV (Hwang et al., 2005; Ziemek, 2006). In this study we extend the cross-country analysis of MTV by incorporating two theoretical models. First, we investigate whether social origins theory, based on the four non-profit regimes used by Salamon and Anheier (1998), can account for cross-national differences in relevant MTV. Social origins theory presents a macro-explanation of the role of government in influencing the structure of the non-profit sector in a country, and by extension the volunteering in the country, as the non-profit sector relies on volunteer contributions of its citizenry. This linkage may in turn influence MTV among volunteers as volunteers will more be likely to exhibit altruistic motivations when the role of government is limited. Second, we investigate whether MTV differ by the signalling value of

volunteering. As this value is culturally constructed, we expect cross-national variations. In countries where volunteering acts as a strong and positive signal in labour markets or educational regimes, we should expect MTV to include career and résumé-enhancing motivations more frequently than in countries where it is less of a positive signal.

Social Origins Theory: Non-Profit Regimes

Cultural and political contexts determine the size and scope of the non-profit sector in different countries (Curtis et al., 1992; Hodgkinson, 2003; Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006: Salamon and Anheier, 1998) and the amount and type of volunteering (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2001, 2003). Thus, it is likely that student volunteering is also influenced by different non-profit regimes.

The social origins theory put forward by Salamon and Anheier (1998) and Salamon et al. (2000) explains the size and development of the non-profit sector as an outcome of broadly defined power relations among social classes and social institutions. In brief, social origins theory identifies four different regimes: liberal, social-democratic, corporatist and statist with corresponding levels of government social welfare spending and non-profit sector size ranging from high to low. In addition, the social origins theory examines the role non-profit organizations serve in a society (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2001). Depending on the regime, non-profits are more likely to provide some services that have an instrumental value to society or expressive services that are the actualization of values or preferences, such as pursuit of artistic expression, preservation of cultural heritage or the natural environment.

At one end, in the liberal model or regime low government spending on social welfare services is associated with a relatively large non-profit sector mainly focused on service provision. At the opposite end is the social-democratic model in which, high government spending on social welfare results in a limited role for non-profit service provision, but a larger role for the expression of political, social, or recreational interests. In addition, corporatist and statist models also exist, both characterized by strong states, with the state and non-profits partnering in the corporatist model, while the state retains the upper hand in many social policies in the statist model. In both models, the service role is dominant.

Based on the regimes identified by Salamon and Anheier (1998), a later study by Salamon and Sokolowski (2001) argued that the structure of volunteering in each regime would differ due to government social welfare spending. Using the social origins theory for understanding cross-national variation, the authors suggested that the volunteering rate in a country depends on the size of the non-profit sector: the larger the size, the greater the volunteer participation. Thus, they hypothesized that 'the amount of volunteering in countries with strong liberal or corporatist traditions is generally larger than in those with statist and

social-democratic traditions' (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2001: 14). However, the authors observed that the relationship between a non-profit regime and the structure of volunteering is more complex. For example, they noted that some Scandinavian countries with strong government involvement in social welfare have a smaller non-profit sector but relatively higher rates of volunteering. Hence, there is a need to examine whether non-profit entities play service or expressive roles in different regimes to understand their effect on volunteering. Yet, in general, these authors expect the non-profit regime model to help explain cross-country variation in the amount of volunteering.

In this research, we use Salamon and Sokolowski's (2001) analysis as a starting point. In addition to the varying rates of volunteering, we suggest that MTV will also differ in different regimes, and that a systematic link can be found between the regimes and the primary MTV. Findings by Hwang et al. (2005) and Ziemek (2006) suggest why this line of enquiry may be fruitful. Using the World Values Surveys of 1991–3, Hwang et al. (2005) compared MTV between Canada and the US and found significant differences. Americans were more likely than Canadians to mention altruistic reasons for joining voluntary organizations, while Canadians were more likely to emphasize self-interested reasons for their volunteer work. To explain these differences, the authors argued that although both countries are liberal democracies, Canada has more extensive social welfare programmes (such as universal health care and aid to vulnerable groups) than provided by the government in the US. Thus, volunteers in the US see helping the poor and disadvantaged as part of their role as citizens and are more likely to report altruistic MTV than Canadian volunteers, who see this role fulfilled by their government. A second study by Ziemek (2006) examined MTV across countries with different levels of economic development: namely, Bangladesh, Ghana, Poland and South Korea. Clustering MTV into three categories, 'altruism', 'egoism' and 'investment in human capital', she tested differences in MTV by the volunteer's perceived level of public spending. Perceptions of high public spending were associated negatively with altruistic MTV and positively with investment motivation. Ziemek's findings also suggest that our line of enquiry into non-profit regimes will be useful as public spending is captured in the categorizations of the regime.

We thus aim to extend the initial arguments made by Hwang et al. (2005) and Ziemek (2006) using the social origins framework (Salamon and Anheier, 1998) – an approach yet to be taken. Following Salamon and Sokolowski (2001), we include three basic dimensions to explain differences in volunteering and MTV across the four non-profit regimes: government social spending (high/low), non-profit sector size (large/small) and dominant volunteering type (service/expressive). To operationalize the differentiation among regime types we also include non-profit sector sources of

support (government, fees, philanthropy) and the size of the paid and unpaid non-profit workforce (large/small) (Salamon et al., 1999, 2004).

For the purposes of this study. we have selected six countries that display significant variations across these dimensions and, hence, represent different non-profit regimes. Four countries fit neatly into the typology: the US (liberal), Japan (statist), Finland (social-democratic) and Belgium (corporatist) (for a discussion, see Salamon and Sokolowski, 2003; Salamon et al., 1999). In addition, we include two 'hybrid' regimes, namely Canada (liberal/corporatist) and China (statist/liberal). Canada represents a hybrid liberal/corporatist regime because, on the one hand, the non-profit sector resembles the welfare partnership of corporatist regimes, with a similarly high level of government funding, a predominance of service activities and a moderate share of volunteers in the non-profit workforce. On the other hand, Canada's non-profit sector has higher levels of private philanthropic support and a higher absolute amount of volunteer effort (i.e. of the economically active population), which is more in line with the liberal regime type (see Hall et al., 2005).

Although China is classified as statist, with a small non-profit sector and low volunteering rates, it is in the midst of a major social and economic transition, and has increasing liberal characteristics that are especially noticeable in the market sector. Non-profit organizations were almost non-existent in China prior to the economic reforms of the 1980s. Indeed, during China's transition to a market economy, Chinese non-profits emerged and have become an important, albeit relatively small player in setting the agenda for social development and progress. This *independent* non-profit sector has grown relatively fast, expanding from roughly 6000 registered groups in 1999 to 399,000 in 2008, with a share of GDP ranging between 0.1 and 0.2 percent (Civicus, 2006). In 1998, government financial support constituted half of non-profit revenue, fees accounted for 21 percent, businesses contributed 6 percent and the remainder came from individuals and other sources (Civicus, 2006). Many of the *government-affiliated* non-profit organizations absorb nearly 85 percent of all available private and public resources, leaving little for the burgeoning number of smaller *independent* non-profit organizations, which suffer from a dearth of funding (Yu-Ting et al., 2006). Based on these descriptions, we classified China as a statist/liberal hybrid: one that reflects strong state control in many aspects as well as a liberalization of the market and non-profit sector.

Table 1 provides empirical data on the various regime characteristics for the selected countries. Salamon and associates have successfully assigned these countries to the respective non-profit regimes as part of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Research Project (CNRP; jhu.edu/~ccss/), with the exception of China, which is not included in this

worldwide study. As yet, knowledge of the Chinese non-profit sector is limited to broad, descriptive studies, on the basis of which we legitimate our logic of assignment.

Our predictions of the relationship between non-profit regimes and MTV are based on research by Hwang et al. (2005), which proposes that volunteers are most likely to report altruistic MTV when they provide services that are underserved by government; that is, when non-profits fulfil a primary role in the production of welfare a country. In such a context, as Hwang et al. (2005) have argued, there is a strong normative appeal to see helping the poor and disadvantaged as part of the citizen role. Inferring from social origins theory, this situation will most likely arise if a non-profit regime is characterized by (1) limited social spending; (2) a fee-dominated revenue structure; (3) a large non-profit sector; (4) with a small paid workforce; (5) a large unpaid workforce; and (6) service provision as the dominant volunteering type.

These characteristics correspond to the liberal regime (see Table 1). In clear contrast are the social-democratic and the corporatist regimes, which place a heavy reliance on government social spending. The former is characterized by a universal welfare system, with state-guaranteed and state-provided social welfare protections. Moreover, although the amount of volunteering is high, it is largely expressive in form. Consequently, we predict altruistic MTV to be weak in the social-democratic regime.

In the corporatist regime, government social spending is also high, and the revenue structure of the non-profit sector is government-based with a strong presence of paid non-profit workers. Although a majority of volunteers are involved in service provision, their role is moderate and auxiliary. Thus, we predict volunteers in the corporatist regime to be less likely motivated by altruistic reasons. In Canada, next, because of the particular mix of corporatist and liberal elements (see earlier), we expect citizens' responsibility in the provision of non-profit services to be higher than in the corporatist regime but lower than in the liberal regime, hence, we predict moderate support for the altruistic MTV.

Finally, the statist regimes overall are characterized by limited growth in both government social spending and non-profit activity. Moreover, non-profit organizations lack the type of autonomy and resources typical of western democracies, and membership in associations and related 'voluntary' activities are strongly government-led and supported, as in China where volunteering is deliberately organized by government efforts to promote community service (Tuan, 2005), and in Japan where families as a rule join local neighbourhood associations (Taniguchi, 2008). Consequently, we predict weak support for altruistic MTV among volunteers in statist and statist/liberal regimes.

In sum, based on this argumentation, we expect that:

Table 1 *Typology Non-Profit Sector Regimes with Fact Findings for Selected Countries*

Country	Regime type	Government social spending (public social expenditure 2003, % of GDP)	Dominant source of revenue (% of total revenue)	Size of non-profit sector (% of economically active population working in non-profits)	Volunteer input (% of non-profit workforce)	Dominant volunteering type (% of total volunteer time)
Finland	Social-democratic	High (22.5) [a]	Fees (58.0) [b]	Low (5.3) [d]	High (54.3) [b]	Expressive (21.0) [d]
Belgium	Corporatist	High (26.5) [a]	Government (77.0) [b]	High (10.9) [d]	Moderate (21.7) [b]	Service (60.0) [d]
US	Liberal	Low (16.2) [a]	Fees (57.0) [b]	High (9.8) [d]	High (36.9) [b]	Service (64.0) [d]
Japan	Statist	Low (17.7) [a]	Fees(45.0) [b]	Low(4.2) [d]	Low (24.5) [b]	Service (39.0) [d]
Canada	Hybrid (liberal/ corporatist)	Low (17.2) [a]	Government (51.0) [c]	High (11.1) [c]	Moderate (25.0) [c]	Service (73.8) [c]
China	Hybrid (statist/ liberal)	Low	Government (50.0) [e]	Small	Low	Service

Sources: [a] OECD (2008); [b] Salamon et al. (2004); [c] Hall et al. (2005); [d] Salamon and Sokolowski (2003); [e] Civicus (2006).

Hypothesis 1: Altruistic MTV will receive strong support in the liberal regime, moderate support in the liberal/corporatist regime and weak support in the social-democratic, corporatist and statist and statist/liberal regimes.

Signalling Theory: Labour Market and Educational Regimes

Spence (1973) first proposed the value of signals in the context of the labour 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. What does volunteering signal? The fact that an individual engages in volunteer activity may signal something about an unobservable, yet desirable characteristic that this person possesses. In a competitive environment characterized by competition, volunteering serves as a signalling 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, such as being altruistic in nature, or broad minded, or willing to cooperate for the collective good, or inherently hard-working. Indeed, 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 and Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 1999).

Many scholars have argued that individuals volunteer as an 'investment' motive to build up their skills and experiences and are able to list this activity on their résumés to signal their attractiveness. Applicants with these positive signals are able to compete successfully and enhance careers prospects, command higher salaries and get better jobs (Day and Devlin, 1998; Freeman, 1997; Katz and Rosenberg, 2005; Menchik and Weisbrod, 1987; Prouteau and Wolff, 2006). Labour market data from Canada indicate a substantial monetary return of 4–7 percent for volunteering (Day and Devlin, 1998; Devlin, 2001).

Institutions of higher learning face a comparable challenge of deciding how to select among equally qualified student applicants. 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, 2004). 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 or at the Red Cross will likely be a better candidate for medical school as he or she has already demonstrated through volunteering that he or she cares for the health of people and has some familiarity with the life of medical professionals (Smith, 2006). 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.

A recent study found that 'résumé padding' is a significant MTV among young people in the US (Friedland and Morimoto, 2005). The authors 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. (Friedland and Morimoto, 2005: 10–11)

Such MTV are common in North America as volunteering experiences are often used in college applications (Crosby, 1999). This suggests that MTV may be related to the prevalent expectations of universities in each country. However, this analysis is very context specific – not all labour markets or educational institutions interpret volunteering experiences in the same way. Putting volunteering experiences on one's résumé is *de rigueur* in the US and Canada. Many top schools in these countries use extracurricular activities such as volunteering to evaluate the leadership skills of potential applicants. Thus, not surprisingly in these countries, national surveys show that youth are more likely to indicate career enhancement and résumé-building as MTV. In addition to signalling to institutions of higher education, volunteering can result in productive networking that can facilitate a job search, the school-to-work transition and effective job placement (Dickinson, 1999; Jones, 2000; Montgomery, 1992), and as such, play an important role in career enhancement.

As discussed above, research on the investment value of volunteering has generally been limited to the micro level and has focused on comparing the signalling value of volunteering in terms of income differences. At the macro level, volunteering has not been used to predict country-wide differences in outcomes in the laboor market, hence, country differences regarding the signalling value of volunteering have not hitherto been examined. To the extent that educational qualifications are suitable and reliable signals, at the macro level scholars have relied on these qualifications to compare labour markets (Breen, 2005).

For the purposes of this study, to capture the signalling value of volunteering, we rely on the admission policies of the universities where the students were sampled. It is reasonable to assume that the signalling value of volunteering is high where admission depends on grades and personal statements (that include extracurricular and leadership activities). In countries where the competition for entrance is fierce and universities rely on personal statements, volunteering experiences are virtually indispensable on student résumés. In this case, we hypothesize that university students will report differences in MTV based on the importance of volunteering signalling in a given society.

Among the countries selected for this study, university admission policies that require grades and a personal statement are most prevalent

in the US and Canada. We thus consider these countries to have a strong volunteering signalling value. By contrast, in Belgium, Finland and Japan, competition is based solely on grades. Admission depends on a previously earned degree or diploma, and possibly an entrance exam, but students do not have to undergo a selection procedure in which their extracurricular activities are screened through a personal statement. We therefore expect that the signalling value in these countries is weak.

In China, most undergraduate admission is based on the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (NHEEE). However, the top universities are permitted to select top talent students nationwide *prior to* the NHEEE.[1] Only in this instance are students interviewed and allowed to supply résumés that include and promote their volunteering and leadership experiences. It should be noted that students in our Chinese sample attend these top universities. Regardless, while attending university, Chinese students may use volunteering to build up their résumés to help them gain admission to coveted graduate programmes in the top universities in China, Hong Kong and other countries. Similarly, coveted foreign employers demand résumés that demonstrate personal leadership and social concern. Hence, for China we expect that résumé-based MTV will be moderate as it will be used only by those students with aspirations for highly desirable graduate schools at one of the few top universities, or those wishing to leave the country for further education.

Based on these arguments, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: The greater the positive signalling value of volunteering in the respective countries, the more students will emphasize résumé-building MTV.

Data and Methods

Procedure

Our data emanate from a large survey of university students in 15 countries, conducted in the 2006–7 academic year[2] and encompassing more than 12,000 responses (600+ in each country). The present analysis focuses on our findings from Belgium, Canada, China, Finland, Japan and the US, as each country represents a different contextual framework with respect to non-profit regimes as well as the signalling value of volunteering. Because the study is international, the questionnaire had to be prepared in nine different languages and adapted to the local language and culture. To do so, the questionnaire was piloted and reviewed by a panel of national experts on volunteering before fielding them. Students were recruited by means of a convenience sample, which was stratified along academic disciplines (social sciences, humanities, business and economics, natural sciences, engineering and other).

Questionnaires were distributed at a class session and took 10–15 minutes to complete. Student participation was entirely voluntary, and in five of the six countries selected for this study there were no reports of students declining to take part, thus reducing the risk of respondent self-selection. In Japan, however, out of 1524 students to whom the questionnaire was distributed, 472 (31 percent) refused to answer. This rate may well reflect the low level of volunteerism reported for this country in previous studies (Hodgkinson, 2003; Taniguchi, 2008) and in the present enquiry (see later). Given that the surveys were not distributed randomly, we should use caution in generalizing our findings and emphasize that our study is exploratory. Nevertheless, the population from which we selected represents a relatively homogeneous group in terms of age and educational attainment, and the sample was equally distributed across academic disciplines.

Sample

In total, 5794 university students in the six selected countries completed the questionnaire. Of this group, 70.5 percent indicated they had participated in volunteer activities in the 12 months preceding the survey.[3] Rates of volunteering varied significantly by country ($\chi^2 = 669{,}681$, d.f. = 5, $p < .001$) with China, Canada and the US having highest participation rates of 84.5 percent ($N = 919$), 79.7 percent ($N = 973$) and 78.8 percent ($N = 1294$), respectively, followed by Belgium at 71.4 percent ($N = 891$), Finland at 70.1 percent ($N = 665$) and Japan the lowest participation rate of 39.1 percent ($N = 1052$). These general participation figures seem rather high in comparison to national rates of volunteering. However, several studies have indicated that students are more inclined to volunteer than the general population (Hustinx et al., 2005; Sax, 2004; Volunteering in America, 2008). Moreover, when accounting for *regular* volunteering only (i.e. monthly or weekly), the rate of volunteering in our sample corresponds more closely to the national findings.[4]

The analyses and results reported in this article are based on the subsample of students who volunteer ($N = 4085$). Of this subsample, 42.5 percent are male and 57.5 percent are female. Gender differences are significant across countries, with the highest proportion of female volunteers in Finland (71.7 percent), followed by Canada (67.8 percent). Participation is more gender-balanced in the US, Japan, Belgium and China, with 55.2, 52.6, 51.3 and 49.8 percent female volunteers, respectively. The mean age in the subsample is 22 years, with a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 80. Age also varies significantly by country, with the lowest mean age of 20 years in Belgium and Japan, and the highest mean age in the US (24 years) and Finland (25 years). A majority of students who volunteer indicate they come from a middle-income family (68.5 percent); 15.4 percent rate the family income as high. Important country differences can be

found, with the proportion of students coming from low-income families highest in China (25.9 percent) and lowest in Belgium (3.5 percent) and the proportion from high-income families highest in Belgium (24.9 percent) and lowest in China (4 percent).

Among students who volunteer, 34.6 percent indicate that their high school had some form of volunteer requirement, and 17.2 percent report that this is the case for their university. The highest proportion of students exposed to volunteer requirements in high school was in Canada and the US (70.8 percent and 45.2 percent, respectively), and the lowest percentage was in China (8.1 percent). At the university level, Canadian (24.7 percent) and Finnish (24.3 percent) students were most frequently exposed to volunteer requirements, and Chinese (7.0 percent) students were exposed least frequently.

Measures and Statistics

To measure MTV, the subset of 4085 students who had volunteered in the last 12 months was asked to rate 15 possible reasons for performing volunteer work on a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (very important). The items were based on the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) as developed by Clary et al. (1996, 1998); items were modified to include a number of résumé-building motivations that were added to test the signalling model. To determine the set of dimensions emerging from the combined data for the six countries, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis and used a split-random design, in which we developed the measures on one half of the sample, and subsequently applied the obtained factor solution to the second half. Both samples produced highly similar results, as shown in Appendix Table A1. The factor analysis is based on a maximum-likelihood extraction with oblique rotation and Kaiser normalization which allows the extracted factors to be intercorrelated. The final solution retained 14 items with factor loadings above .40 and reflected three MTV scales with a simple structure. Across samples and countries, 15 out of 18 reliability tests produced sufficiently high alphas, thus the scales are generally reliable.[5] These findings, both within and across countries, support the feasibility of comparing MTV in the six countries.

The first factor incorporates four items that clearly represent the value of volunteering for résumé-building and career-enhancing motivations (RÉSUMÉ). The second factor reflects altruistic and value-driven reasons for volunteering (ALT-VAL).[6] The third factor incorporates social and ego-defensive reasons for volunteering (SOCIAL-EGO). Following Clary et al. (1996, 1998), this third factor offers a useful counterpoint to the RÉSUMÉ factor because it appears to capture other self-interested motivations and is distinct from the altruism factor. We examine it to see if the SOCIAL-EGO dimension, which is not substantively related to either of the two theories (i.e. social origins and signalling), will manifest itself differently across the country samples.

We treat all measures as additive scales. The three factors are positively and significantly intercorrelated, with correlations ranging from r = . 27 between the ALT-VAL and SOCIAL-EGO scales to r = .43 between RÉSUMÉ and SOCIAL-EGO scales. The positive correlations show that respondents who find altruistic reasons for volunteering important tend to also rate résumé and other self-interested motivations as important. This finding is consistent with previous studies that show that individual volunteers are motivated simultaneously by a blend of both altruistic and self-interested reasons (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Knoke, 1986; Smith, 1994).

To examine and explain cross-national differences in MTV, we follow Hwang et al. (2005) in their comparison of Americans and Canadians. First, we compared how students in the six selected countries rate each of the 15 reasons considered individually and their mean scores on the three composite motivational scales. In addition to comparing differences in rankings, we conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine significant differences in mean scores on the separate items and additive scales. Next, we used multivariate regression analysis with the ALT-VAL, RÉSUMÉ and SOCIAL-EGO scales as dependent measures. The central purpose of the multivariate analysis was to assess whether differences in students' responses on the three MTV scales can be explained by cross-national variations in non-profit regimes and by labour market and educational regimes, when controlling for the effects of social-background variables.

The predictor variable used to assess cross-national variations in volunteering is country (five dummy variables with the US as the reference category). To test the signalling theory we also conducted a separate analysis for the RÉSUMÉ scale in which we regroup the countries according to the admission policies of their universities, as discussed earlier. We created a reference category for countries with a weak signalling value (Belgium, Finland and Japan), and dummy variables for the countries with moderate (China) and strong (Canada and US) signalling values of volunteering.

We simultaneously controlled 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 educational category. In addition, we accounted for individuals' personal values by means of an additive five-point Likert-type scale (Cronbach's alpha .75) that assesses the importance of material values (Wuthnow, 1991). Individuals who score high on material values attach high importance to (factor loadings between brackets): making a lot of money (.65); being successful in one's studies or work (.73); living a happy, comfortable life (.76); and being able to do what you want (.78). We also control for the study programme (business coded 1; all other programmes

treated as reference category), as we believe that students in business programmes are likely to be more career-oriented than students in other programmes (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008; 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 and Raskoff, 1994). However, experimental research by Stukas et al. (1999) suggested that service requirements could also negatively impact intentions to volunteer. In particular, when students initially feel they need a strong external pressure and control in order to participate in volunteering, the actual obligation to volunteer undermines future intentions to volunteer. Consequently, service requirements could also affect MTV. We thus controlled for volunteer requirement in high school or university (yes coded 1, no coded 0). Finally, we accounted for the frequency of volunteering (episodic coded 1, vs weekly or monthly as reference category). 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 have self-interested MTV (Handy et al., 2006; Reed and Selbee, 2003). Appendix Table A2 provides correlations of all measures included in the analysis.

Findings

Bivariate Findings

Table 2 compares the six national samples with respect to their ratings of the importance of each of the 15 motivations for volunteering. The table also scores on the additive scales ALT-VAL, RÉSUMÉ and SOCIAL-EGO.

Most prominent in the table is that the six samples generally demonstrate similar rankings of the 15 individual reasons for volunteering. Despite some slight differences in the country rankings of the top reasons, as a group the leading four motivations are the same in all samples, and all belong to the ALT-VAL scale, for example, 'it is important to help others' or 'work for a cause that is important'. Similarly, the two least important motivations across all countries are SOCIAL-EGO in nature and refer to the idea of volunteering as a way of relieving the guilt of being more fortunate than others or as a good escape from one's own troubles. All students ranked ALT-VAL reasons for volunteering first, followed by motivations in the RÉSUMÉ scale, with SOCIAL-EGO reasons last. This item ranking is also reflected in the ranking of the additive scales (see Table 2). In all countries mean scores on the ALT-VAL scale rank first, followed by the RÉSUMÉ scale, and with the SOCIAL-EGO scale third.

Nevertheless, there are some notable differences across the country rankings. First, in the Japanese sample the most important reason for volunteering was that 'it gives one a new perspective' – while all other countries unanimously rank 'to help others' first.[7] Chinese students ranked 'to make new friends' second, which also differs from the other countries. Finally, consistent with signalling theory, the US and Canada ranked résumé-building reasons higher than the other countries.

Although these comparisons of country rankings on the individual items are informative, a more valid way of testing our hypotheses is to apply analysis of variance across the countries of the additive scales, which are a more reliable measure of the motivational dimensions than the separate items. The results indicate that the US, Canada, and Finland score distinctively higher on the ALT-VAL scale than Belgium, Japan and China.In line with H1 (social origins theory), in the liberal regime (US), students report higher rates of altruism than in Belgium (corporatist), Japan (statist) and China (statist/liberal). Thus, while in the liberal regime students may feel that they are caring for their society that has relinquished parts of its citizenship responsibility, in the latter three regimes the state is more powerful and engaged in providing services, hence student volunteers may not see their role as altruistic. The results for Canada and Finland, however, do not lend support to H1. While we predicted the hybrid liberal/corporatist regime to have a moderate influence on altruistic motivations, Canada appears to be similar to the US. And in Finland, which represents the social-democratic regime type where government social spending is also high, students on average report the highest levels of ALT-VAL – a finding counterintuitive to the non-profit regime theory. Thus, these findings provide mixed support for H1.

Regarding H2 (signalling theory), Canada scored significantly higher on the RÉSUMÉ scale, followed by the US and China. We identified these countries as strong to moderate in their signalling of the benefits of volunteering, hence they were the countries we expected to score higher on the RÉSUMÉ scale. Belgium takes a distinct fourth position, and Finland and Japan attach the lowest importance to this motivation. These country variations provide preliminary support for H2 in regard to the explanatory value of signalling theory.

With regard to the SOCIAL-EGO scale, American students were ranked first followed by Canada. Students in Belgium scored similar to the Canadian students but lower than the Americans. They are followed by Finland and China, with Japanese students having the lowest mean score. This measure of MTV, which was not expected to follow either social origins theory or signalling theory, indeed yielded a rank order that could not be explained by these theories. The bivariate findings suggest important cross-national variations in student volunteer motivations. In general, country differences in RÉSUMÉ seem to support signalling theory, and the differences on the ALT-VAL scale provide mixed support for the social origins theory.

Table 2 *Reasons for Volunteering, Means Scores and Rankings for Selected Countries*

	Total		US		Canada		Finland		Belgium		Japan		China	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Separate items														
Important to help others	**4.29**	**1**	**4.36**^{a,b}	**1**	**4.35**^{b}	**1**	**4.54**^{a}	**1**	**4.22**^{b,c}	**1**	4.12^{c}	2	**4.11**^{c}	**1**
Work for cause that is important	4.18	2	4.32^{b}	2	4.29^{b}	2	4.52^{a}	2	4.19^{b}	2	3.79^{c}	3	3.87^{c}	5
Volunteering gives new perspective	3.95	3	4.01^{b}	4	4.05^{b}	3	3.99^{b}	4	3.46^{c}	4	**4.40**^{a}	**1**	3.90^{b}	4
Volunteering makes one feel better	3.93	4	4.02^{a}	3	4.01^{a}	4	4.08^{a}	3	3.64^{b}	3	3.63^{b}	5	4.03^{a}	3
Make new friends	3.60	5	3.37^{c}	11	3.50^{b,c}	9	3.50^{b,c}	6	3.53^{b,c}	5	3.67^{b}	4	4.04^{a}	2
New contacts that help business career	3.54	6	3.58^{a}	8	3.75^{a}	7	3.24^{b}	8	3.19^{b}	10	3.61^{a}	6	3.70^{a}	6
Learn more about the cause	3.52	7	3.63^{a}	7	3.72^{a}	8	3.76^{a}	5	3.42^{b}	7	3.38^{b,c}	7	3.21^{c}	8
Put on CV for job application	3.50	8	3.65^{b}	6	3.89^{a}	5	3.10^{d}	10	3.33^{c}	8	2.90^{d}	8	3.59^{b}	7
Put on CV for admission education	3.41	9	3.69^{a}	5	3.81^{a}	6	2.50^{d}	13	3.19^{b}	10	2.78^{c}	10	3.70^{a}	6
Foot in door at paid employment place	3.29	10	3.54^{b}	9	3.81^{a}	6	2.99^{c}	11	3.15^{c}	11	2.46^{d}	12	3.19^{c}	9
Influence close environment	3.21	11	3.39^{a,b}	10	3.22^{b,c}	10	3.13^{c}	9	3.52^{a}	6	2.30^{d}	13	3.21^{b,c}	8
Friends volunteer	3.20	12	3.36^{a}	12	3.18^{a,b}	11	3.26^{a,b}	7	3.30^{a}	9	2.88^{c}	9	3.07^{b,c}	10

(Continued)

Table 2 *(Continued)*

	Total		US		Canada		Finland		Belgium		Japan		China	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Advised to do so	2.80	13	3.09^{a}	13	$3.00^{a,b}$	12	2.12^{e}	14	2.72^{c}	13	2.49^{d}	11	$2.88^{b,c}$	11
Relieves guilt	2.66	14	**2.83^{a}**	**15**	**2.80^{a}**	**14**	2.55^{b}	12	2.88^{a}	12	**1.99^{c}**	**15**	2.51^{b}	12
Good escape from own troubles	**2.46**	**15**	3.00^{a}	14	2.81^{a}	13	**2.07^{c}**	**15**	**2.35^{b}**	**14**	2.02^{c}	14	**1.97^{c}**	**13**
Additive scales [f]														
ALT-VAL	3.97	1	4.08^{a}	1	4.09^{a}	1	4.18^{a}	1	3.79^{b}	1	3.86^{b}	1	3.82^{b}	1
RÉSUMÉ	3.43	2	3.62^{b}	2	3.82^{a}	2	2.95^{d}	2	3.22^{c}	2	2.93^{d}	2	3.55^{b}	2
SOCIAL-EGO	2.86	3	3.13^{a}	3	$3.01^{a,b}$	3	2.63^{c}	3	2.95^{b}	3	2.34^{d}	3	2.73^{c}	3

Notes: All country differences are significant at $p < .001$. One-way ANOVA, with Scheffe test of between-group differences; different superscripts (*a, b, c, d, e*) point to significant differences between the countries.

[f] Additive scales recalculated to original 1–5 scale (ALT-VAL: range 5–25; RÉSUMÉ: range 4–20; SOCIAL-EGO: range 5–25).

Multivariate Analysis

Our next step was to provide a more elaborate and reliable test of these theories by applying multivariate analysis. We assess the impact of the countries on MTV factors, while simultaneously controlling for the effects of individual and socioeconomic characteristics. Table 3 presents an ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression analysis in which the respondents in different countries are compared on the three motivational scales. Each of the three key MTV scales is analysed with two regression models. The first model assesses the impact of the six countries only, the core predictor variable. In the second model, the possible effects of the control variables (volunteer requirements, individual background factors and frequency of volunteering) are added to the regression analysis. To test the signalling theory, a third model is evaluated for the RÉSUMÉ scale. In this model, the country dummies are replaced by the signalling variable that distinguishes between countries with strong (Canada, US), moderate (China) and weak (Belgium, Finland, Japan) signalling with respect to the résumé value of volunteering.

The findings in Table 3 indicate that the strengths of the different motivation scales differ by country, and that these differences are fairly robust when the control variables are included. With regard to the ALT-VAL scale, it appears that Finnish students are most likely to rate altruistic reasons as important to volunteering. Compared to the US, the regression coefficient for Finland is significantly more positive (+.05). The US and Canada have a similar reading on the ALT-VAL motivations of students, whereas Japanese, Belgian and Chinese students are significantly less likely to be altruistic and value-oriented, as the negative regression coefficients indicate (–.05, –.12 and –.15, respectively). Thus, as in the bivariate analysis, H1 regarding social origins theory is reflected in the difference between the liberal regime, on the one hand, and the corporatist and statist(/liberal) regimes, on the other; however, the results for the liberal/corporatist and social-democratic regimes deviate from the predictions of H1. Social origins theory is only partially supported using this test.

With respect to H2, the results of the regression of the RÉSUMÉ scale produced the expected variations by country. Canadian students placed significantly greater importance on résumé-building than American students (+.05), while all other countries show a negative impact in comparison to the US as the reference category. From the standardized regression coefficients it appears that China deviates only marginally from the US (–.06), whereas students in Belgium, Finland and Japan are considerably less likely to support career-related reasons for volunteering (–.18 to –.25). These differences by country are consistent with the hypothesized effects of signalling theory.

In model 3, we regrouped the six countries into three categories based on the strength of signalling in these countries: strong signalling (US and Canada), moderate signalling (China) and weak signalling (Belgium, Finland

Table 3 *OLS Regression Analysis Showing National Differences on Motivations to Volunteer with Controls for Background Variables*

	ALT-VAL		RÉSUMÉ			SOCIAL-EGO	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2
Country (ref. = US)							
Canada	.01	−.02	.08***	.05**	–	−.07***	−.08***
Finland	.05**	.05**	−.23***	−.21***	–	−.13***	−.13***
Belgium	−.13***	−.12***	−.16***	−.18***	–	−.09***	−.08***
Japan	−.07***	−.05**	−.22***	−.25***	–	−.26***	−.27***
China	−.17***	−.15***	−.03	−.06**	–	−.22***	−.23***
Signalling (ref. = weak)		–					–
Strong					.33***		
Moderate					.20***		
Control variables							
Gender (ref. = male)		.13***		.08***	.08***		−.02
Age		.02		−.07***	−.08***		.00
Household income High (ref. = middle or low)		−.02		−.02	−.02		.03
Material values		.04*		.11***	.11***		.01
Programme (business = 1)		−.04**		.01	.02		−.03
Volunteer requirements high school (ref.= no)		.02		−.01	−.01		.03
Volunteer requirements university (ref. = no)		.01		.04*	.04*		.01
Frequency (ref. = episodic)							
Weekly		.07***		−.04*	−.02		−.06***
Monthly		.04**		−.03	−.02		−.01
R^2	**.04**	**.07**	**.11**	**.14**	**.13**	**.07**	**.08**
N	3970	3438	4002	3488	3488	3952	3451

Note: Beta weights, *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

and China). The regression model indicates that strong signalling has a major impact on the résumé-building motivation (+.33) in comparison to the group of countries with weak signalling. A positive but slightly lower impact is observed for moderate vs weak signalling (+.20). This model shows that as we hypothesized (H2), signalling theory provides a more specific and accurate explanation of the résumé motivation than the general social origins theory.

The SOCIAL-EGO scale captured self-interested motivations not reflected in the RÉSUMÉ scale; these motivations emanate from the perceived influence of others and the defensive measures students may take to either assuage their guilt or find an escape for their own problems. To assign societal characteristics to these motivations is difficult per se, and they not bear any direct links to contextual variables of the two theories examined (social origins and signalling). Thus, we simply explore if and how cross-national variations manifest themselves. In the regression analysis we find that American students are significantly more likely than all other countries to express strong support for this scale, while Canadian and Belgian students ranked second, followed by students from Finland, China and Japan.

The Impact of Control Variables

We accounted for the impact of the control variables on the MTV scales. First, we found that female volunteers, in comparison to their male counterparts, expressed stronger support for ALT-VAL and for RÉSUMÉ motivations. Age did not affect scores on the ALT-VAL or SOCIAL-EGO motivations scales, but it had a negative effect on RÉSUMÉ motivations, implying that those students just entering university think more instrumentally about volunteering. This result may indicate that, among this population who have recently been through the university admission process, admission policies have the strongest bearing on students' résumé-related motivations to volunteer. Family income had no effect on MTV scales.

Students reporting material values as important had a stronger orientation towards career-related reasons for volunteering. Surprisingly, students with stronger orientation to material values were also slightly more likely to rate ALT-VAL reasons as important. Although this effect seems counterintuitive, it could be supported by theories of individualization that observe a stronger intermingling of explicit self-orientation with other-directed motivations among the more modernized and younger groups of citizens (Dekker and van den Broek, 1998; Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2003), a disposition that could be labelled as 'altruistic individualism' (Beck, 1997; Rehberg, 2005). As expected, the effect of study programme indicates that business students expressed weaker support for the ALT-VAL motivation than students in the other study programmes.

The presence of service requirements in high school has no influence on MTV; a finding which intimates that there may be no longer-term

socialization effects. Service requirements in university, by contrast, have a significant, although small positive impact (+.04) on the RÉSUMÉ motivation. This finding tentatively suggests that rather than transforming students into socially minded citizens, such initiatives may breed a more instrumental view of volunteer participation. This finding is in line with previous research that found extrinsic reasons for volunteering to undermine ongoing commitment to volunteering by students (Stukas et al., 1999).

Finally, we controlled for the frequency of volunteering, as earlier research showed that individuals who volunteer on a regular basis expressed more altruistic motivations than those who volunteered episodically (Handy et al., 2006). Comparing students who volunteer weekly with those who volunteer episodically, the findings indeed show that the first group is significantly more likely to rate ALT-VAL as important and is significantly less oriented towards RÉSUMÉ motivations. Yet, when the countries are regrouped according to the importance placed on signalling, the negative effect on the RÉSUMÉ motivation disappears. Thus, the findings do not suggest that intensive volunteering experiences are used as a marked signal to university or job market. With regard to the SOCIAL-EGO scale, weekly volunteering as compared to episodic volunteering has a negative impact. Thus, students who volunteer for social expectations and ego-defensive reasons are less intensively involved.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this enquiry we have endeavoured to explain differences that arise in university students' motivations to volunteer (MTV) in six countries. Underlying the study are the theoretical foundations provided by social origins and signalling theories. The former explains the size and development of the non-profit sector as the result of broadly defined power relations among social classes and institutions, and we expected MTV to be associated with non-profit regimes cross-nationally. Signalling theory offers a complementary explanation given our sample of university students. This theory focuses on how employers and educational institutions interpret the implicit cues that applicants provide on their résumés when they list their volunteer activities. We examined the explanations yielded by these theories empirically, and the results of our bivariate and multivariate statistical analyses give strong support to signalling theory but only partial support to social origins theory, at least insofar as volunteering by university students is concerned. These findings hold special importance for researchers to understand the complexity of volunteering cross-nationally. Our study is the first to show how social origins and signalling theories may explain the phenomenon of student volunteering from a cross-country perspective.

With but a few individual item variations, students in all countries rated altruistic and value-driven motivations (ALT-VAL) as the most relevant to

their volunteering, followed by RÉSUMÉ and finally SOCIAL-EGO motivations. Nevertheless, we also found that the three scales are significantly intercorrelated, thus indicating that volunteering is a complex phenomenon emanating from all three types of motivations. To give time and skills to benefit others requires, first and foremost, the willingness to be altruistic, but also carries concurrently the expectation of benefits to the volunteer.

Based on the social origins theory, we predicted that altruistic MTV would receive strong support in the liberal regime (US), moderate support in the liberal/corporatist regime (Canada) and weak support in the social-democratic (Finland), corporatist (Belgium), statist (Japan) and statist/liberal (China) regimes. The empirical differences between the US, on the one hand, and Belgium, Japan and China, on the other, are as predicted by our hypothesis; however, we found Finnish students to express significantly greater support for altruistic MTV than students in the US, and Canadian students to rate altruistic motivations as important as American students.

That Finnish students ranked the highest on the ALT-VAL scale may indicate that Finland is developing into a 'hybrid' social-democratic regime. After the economic depression of the 1990s, there have been increasing complaints about insufficiencies in public welfare services because of cutbacks in public spending, and lack of sensitivity to the diversity of needs and life situations: 'As a result, the state has placed new expectations on the associations to provide services' (Helander et al., 1999: 79). Thus, Finland is shifting towards welfare pluralism, where the role of third sector, non-profit organizations and voluntary work in service provision is increasing (Grönlund and Hiilamo, 2006). Finnish students may see themselves as maintaining the socialist nature of society and view their contributions as volunteers as more altruistic. An alternative explanation may be that the expressive volunteering role, in the Scandinavian context, is more strongly related to activism, that is to political mobilization and advocacy, rather than to the actualization of cultural values and leisure preferences (see Salamon and Sokolowski, 2001). An implication would be that the broad distinction between service and expressive roles may not be sufficient to understand the nature and strength of MTV, and that a further distinction between more activist and recreational types of volunteering is warranted.

We also included a motivation scale that was not related to our hypotheses, namely SOCIAL-EGO, that captures other self-interested motivations than RÉSUMÉ and is distinct from the ALT-VAL scale. Overall, we found that American students are significantly more likely than all other countries to express strong support for this motivation, and Canadian and Belgian students ranked second, followed by students from Finland, China and Japan. This ranking seems to indicate that in a liberal non-profit regime a stronger social norm of volunteering exists, perhaps as a way of relieving guilt over being more fortunate than others. This finding

calls for further investigation into a more diverse set of MTV (Clary et al., 1998) and their relation to non-profit regimes.

In sum, with regard to our first hypothesis, the mixed pattern of empirical findings are insufficient to reject social origins theory as results pertain to one aspect of a country's non-profit sector (volunteering) and to one subpopulation (university students). Moreover, this theory is based on societal norms and arrangements that explain the scope and nature of the non-profit sector, while volunteering is a personal act wherein each student has to weigh the costs and benefits of participating. As such, many other factors come into play other than the macro features described in the social origins theory

With regard to signalling theory, our second hypothesis, the findings show that the signalling value of volunteering in a given society is an important addition to the social origins theory in understanding motivations to volunteer. Of all age groups, students are most vulnerable to employers and to admission requirements in educational institutions and can be expected to do their best to get jobs or placements into professional or graduate schools. In some countries, employers and admission officers often rely on applicants' volunteering experience to discern desirable, yet not easily observable characteristics. Students are therefore motivated to engage in such activities to enhance their résumés and thereby increase their chances of being selected. As a result, they expressed stronger support for the RÉSUMÉ motivation in countries where such signalling is prevalent. In accordance with the signalling theory, we found that students' emphasis on the RÉSUMÉ motivation is higher in Canada, the US and China, whereas students in Belgium, Finland and Japan attach the lowest importance to 'résumé padding'.

Numerous studies have found that the number one reason for volunteering is the desire to help: an altruistic motivation. However, this finding masks country variations and different levels of relevance for other motives. In this study we demonstrated that although altruistic motivations are indeed rated as the most important, they are rated differently in different countries and that other motivations, more self-interested in nature, are also important and also vary across countries. These findings suggest that, in addition to micro-level approaches, more emphasis on cross-national studies is warranted.

This study is limited in that it focused on one age group – students who were on average 22 years old. We developed special sets of questions to meet the situation and culture of this group. Although these questions proved very successful in detecting variations among students in all six countries, they may not be applicable for other age cohorts. We propose that studying volunteering through the life cycle with appropriate questions aimed at different cohorts from a cross-national perspective could be a promising research approach.

The fact that signalling theory strongly explained student volunteering carries with it disturbing implications: if student volunteering, to a significant

degree, is a response to external opportunities and not intrinsically motivated, then volunteering becomes a commodity. While creating volunteer opportunities to address these extrinsic motivations gives us a means to enhance volunteer rates among students, it also suggests that student volunteers are less committed to the agencies or causes they serve and may be prone to drop out as soon as they can do so legitimately. Nevertheless, participation may expose them to other rewarding aspects of volunteering, which may generate new MTV over the life course. Cross-national, longitudinal studies may provide insight into the understanding of how initial extrinsic motivations may change over time and if there is a cultural component in this transition. This finding may shed a new light on the common notion that early volunteer experiences can predict volunteering in later years.

Appendix

Table A1 *Factor Pattern Matrix for Motivation to Volunteer*

	Split-random 1			Split-random 2		
	F1	F2	F3	F1	F2	F3
Put on CV for admission education	.93			.91		
Put on CV for job application	.97			.96		
Foot in door at paid employment place	.63			.65		
New contacts that help business career	.56			.56		
Important to help others		.84			.77	
Work for cause that is important		.80			.73	
Learn more about the cause		.51			.56	
Volunteering gives new perspective		.62			.66	
Volunteering makes one feel better		.51			.55	
Make new friends						
Friends volunteer			.58			.56
Advised to do so			.60			.60
Influence close environment			.69			.70
Relieves guilt			.61			.66
Good escape from own troubles			.58			.58
Cronbach's alpha	.79	.86	.75	.80	.87	.75

Notes: Volunteer sample (N = 4085). Split-random design (N = 2016 sample 1; N = 2069 sample 2), maximum likelihood estimation, promax rotation. Only factor loadings greater than .30 are shown, only factor loadings greater than .40 are retained.

Table A2 *Correlation Table of Variables*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1)	(4085)									
(2)	−.279	(4085)								
(3)	−.207	−.174	(4085)							
(4)	−.248	−.208	−.154	(4085)						
(5)	−.193	−.162	−.120	−.144	(4085)					
(6)	−.280	−.235	−.174	−.208	−.162	(4085)				
(7)	.080	.078	.105	−.093	−.027	−.142	(3971)			
(8)	.114	.197	−.185	−.100	−.179	.060	.273	(4003)		
(9)	.179	.065	−.035	.035	−.183	−.122	.178	.266	(3953)	
(10)	.652	.547	−.318	−.380	−.296	−.429	.131	.253	.206	(4085)
(11)	−.442	−.371	.468	.560	.436	−.372	−.018	−.308	−.110	−.679
(12)	−.280	−.235	−.174	−.208	−.162	1.00	−.142	.060	−.122	−.429
(13)	−.027	.100	.103	−.055	−.033	−.076	.163	.082	−.010	.055
(14)	.174	.027	.169	−.160	−.112	−.121	.076	−.051	.042	.173
(15)	.064	−.033	.024	.114	−.007	−.157	−.020	−.044	.051	.030
(16)	−.084	.030	−.025	−.017	−.078	.158	−.065	.030	−.023	−.050
(17)	.098	.338	−.129	−.142	−.123	−.115	.059	.125	.096	.352
(18)	−.030	.038	.024	−.108	−.070	.130	.005	.060	.006	.004
(19)	−.033	−.056	−.037	−.050	−.020	.184	−.069	.016	−.015	−.074
(20)	.089	−.024	.054	−.046	−.074	−.019	.052	−.004	.032	.059
(21)	.007	.103	−.009	.129	−.105	−.143	.071	−.019	−.012	.087

Notes: (1) US; (2) Canada; (3) Finland; (4) Belgium; (5) Japan; (6) China; (7) ALT-VAL; (8) RÉSUMÉ; (9) SOCIAL-EGO; (10) Signalling high; (11) Signalling low; (12) Signalling moderate; (13) Gender; (14) Age; (15) Family income (high); (16) Business programme; (17) Volunteer requirements high school; (18) Volunteer requirements university; (19) Frequency volunteering (episodic); (20) Frequency volunteering (monthly); (21) Frequency volunteering (weekly).

(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)
(4085)										
−.372	(4085)									
.006	−.076	(4013)								
−.079	−.121	.020	(4002)							
.098	−.157	−.050	−.023	(3925)						
−.078	.158	−.027	−.035	−.007	(3999)					
−.268	−.115	.025	−.166	.068	−.010	(4052)				
−.109	.130	.007	−.002	−.064	.004	.232	(4030)			
−.074	.184	−.035	−.046	−.066	.083	−.006	−.006	(4067)		
−.045	−.019	.008	.053	.028	−.050	.012	.012	−.451	(4067)	
.026	−.143	.071	.038	.059	−.053	.028	.028	−.557	−.191	(4067)

Notes

Data collection in China was done by Iris Hui Xiao, Wang Ying and Yongsheng Zhuang, students at the 2007 summer programme at the Global Collaborative at Kyung Hee University, Seoul (Korea).

1. In 2006 a record high of 9.5 million people applied for university education in China. Of these only 0.28 percent were exempted from taking the state-wide tests due to their exceptional talent (Wikipedia, 2008).
2. More specifically, the periods of data collection for the six countries were: April–May 2006 for Belgium, September 2006–June 2007 for Canada, autumn 2007 for China, September 2006–September 2007 for Finland, October 2006–January 2007 for Japan and September 2006–February 2007 for the US. The dates of data collection did not interfere with any major events that could have influenced the volunteering experiences of the students, except for China, where there was a strong awareness of and thrust for students to (apply to) volunteer for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.
3. In the questionnaire volunteering was defined as 'giving *freely* of your time to help others through organizations'. We underscored the element of 'free' participation to distinguish it from 'volunteering or community service as *a requirement for graduation*'.

4. Using data from the European Values Study/World Values Survey 1999–2001 wave, Hodgkinson (2003) reported the following national rates of volunteering (defined as 'currently doing unpaid voluntary work for' one of the voluntary organizations and activities listed): 66 percent in the US; 47 percent in Canada; 37 percent in Finland; 32 percent in Belgium; 16 percent in Japan; and 77 percent in China. Among the respondents in this study, regular volunteering in the 12 months preceding the interview was reported by 38.2 percent in the US; 39.1 percent in Canada; 36.6 percent in Finland; 40.6 percent in Belgium; 12.7 percent in Japan; and 19.5 percent in China. With the exception of China, these rates approximate the national rates of volunteering more closely. The remarkable discrepancy between the high general rates of participation among the Chinese population and the students in this sample, and the low rate of regular volunteering, shows that depending on the specification of volunteer participation in survey questions, highly diverging rates of volunteering could be observed. This is a methodological issue also raised by other scholars, whose comparisons of different surveys also led to the conclusion that the levels of volunteering measured, as well as the differences between countries, both vary markedly from one survey to the other (Dekker and van den Broek, 2006). The findings for China suggest that government-imposed participation results in high levels of occasional or one-off volunteering.
5. The results of the reliability tests (F1, F2, F3) were as follows: Cronbach's alpha equal to .79, .86 and .76 (split-random sample 1); Cronbach's alpha equal to .80, .87 and .75 (split-random sample 2); Cronbach's alpha equal to .58, .88 and .53 (Belgium); Cronbach's alpha equal to .87, .91 and .77 (Canada); Cronbach's alpha equal to .71, .73 and .78 (China); Cronbach's alpha equal to .74, .85 and .73 (Finland); Cronbach's alpha equal to .67, .82 and .80 (Japan); Cronbach's alpha equal to .87, .88 and .73 (US). Thus, the alphas are too low, for the first scale, in the case of Belgium and Japan, and, for the third scale, in the case of Belgium.
6. Although the statement 'volunteering makes one feel better' 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 make you feel better if you value helping others.
7. Japan's national experience with volunteering is relatively new. The phenomenon of volunteering was almost non-existent before the Kobe earthquake (Yamauchi and Okuyama, 2007). This result can explain why we found the top MTV in Japan to be 'volunteering gives a new perspective'. In 2002, a policy was announced in Japan to promote youth volunteering, and volunteer centres were established in universities. In subsequent years, one may anticipate greater volunteer participation.

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