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The Art of Making Sense of Volunteering

Johan von Essen

Introduction

The chapters in this anthology explore different aspects of how values work within organisations to structure individual behaviour in everyday life. The present chapter will contribute to this endeavour by studying how values related to the volunteer experience are used to construct identities of engaged citizens in contemporary Swedish society.

In research on volunteering, there is a vital interest in values since persons engaged in volunteer work are expected to embrace pro-social values. Thus, values are often studied as antecedents to volunteering since they are supposed to cause action. This is of interest for scholars and policy-makers since volunteering is expected to deliver desirable outcomes such as welfare services, trust, deliberative democracy and empowerment.

J. von Essen (✉)

Centre for Civil Society Research at Ersta Sköndal Bräcke University College,
Stockholm, Sweden

e-mail: johan.von-essen@esh.se

To a lesser extent have scholars been interested in the volunteer experience, how volunteering is constructed, how it transforms people's perceptions of themselves and society, and what their engagement means to them (Wilson, 2012). How the social construct of volunteering is maintained by scholars and policy-makers to make it into a legitimate and significant object of scholarly enquiry is previously studied (Sachar, von Essen, & Hustinx, 2019). This chapter studies how values related to the volunteer experience are used by individuals to construct and disclose their identities. Here, values are not discussed as causes of actions; instead, how values are used to constitute the identity of the actor is studied. By taking the relation between values and actions in this reverse order, the aim is to contribute to the research on values by studying how values may be used in constituting and disclosing the identity of an individual.

Agents, Values and Identity

Values are often treated as normative opinions on desirable behaviours, objectives and ideals that individuals or organisations have to guide practices (see introduction by Askeland, Espedal, Jelstad Løvaas and Sirris). This perspective on values and actions and how values relate to institutions is studied in several chapters in this volume. A reversed perspective on values work will be explored in the present chapter by using some ideas on human agency suggested by Charles Taylor. At the heart of Taylor's philosophical anthropology is the notion that the values of an agent are not only used in discrete evaluations of possible alternatives to guide action, they also constitute the quality of the actor. By evaluating a normative significant situation leading to the preference of one alternative over another, a human agent discloses the kind of person she wants to be, so that identity is defined by the agent's evaluations (see also Jelstad Løvaas and Bruland Vråle for the significance of values for identity work).

In this respect, Taylor refers to 'strong evaluation', which is an evaluation of a normative significant situation where possible alternatives are logically related so that they get their meaning in relation to each other.

Strong evaluations are made within a language of evaluative distinctions where alternatives are characterised contrastively so that competing alternatives can only be understood in relation to one other. For instance, the decision to help someone is due to an evaluation of a situation where the agent values altruism instead of egoism, and the meanings of altruism and egoism are dependent on each other. To reflexively evaluate different alternatives demands a vocabulary of worth that comprises contrasting alternatives where the superiority of one alternative over another can be expressed (Taylor, 1985, p. 24).

According to Taylor, this implies that when individuals talk about their actions and prefer one alternative over another the alternatives are parts of an evaluative horizon (Taylor, 1991) which situates them in a social context so that acting in one way discloses the kind of person the human agent wants to be. The notion of identity refers to essential evaluations because they are the indispensable horizon based on which individuals reflect and evaluate as persons (Taylor, 1985, p. 35).

Since values get their meaning in contrast to other values, individuals may disclose their identities in contrast to other lifestyles, in particular when deviating from dominant or taken-for-granted norms, which makes it necessary to defend the identity. This implies that values are contextual as they may be reactions against a prevailing social order (see also chapter by Askeland). By deviating from social norms or traditions, one can appear as a person in society (cf. Hustinx, 2003; Wuthnow, 1991).

By the term “identity”, Taylor does not refer to decontextualised physical or psychological traits. Instead, identity is used in the same sense as when “we talk about ‘finding one’s identity’, or going through an ‘identity crisis’” (Taylor, 1985, p. 34). Thus, identity is self-reflexive and socially dependent; it is the sense one has of oneself (Grönlund, 2011). Taylors’ argument is theoretical, but recent empirical research has also shown that volunteering can provide volunteers with a sense of identity (von Essen, 2016; Wuthnow, 1991) especially due to the change towards reflexive volunteering (Hustinx, 2003), and that individuals may have multiple social identities, depending on social interaction (Grönlund, 2011).

One may understand the relation between values and factual statements in the sense that facts precede values since values are based on factual prerequisites. By this understanding, facts are self-evident whereas values are subjective and may be disputed. However, factual statements are not independent of values since there are no “brute facts”. Instead reality, not least human action (Ricoeur, 1971), is interpreted, and ascribed meaning which implies that descriptions of reality may be articulated in more than one way. Hence, normative statements and reality descriptions are not totally independent of each other. An articulation of the significance of an object tends to make it different from what it was before (Taylor, 1985, p. 38).

The volunteers were asked, “What is volunteering?” On the surface, this request is about defining volunteering. But as will be evident, the volunteers interpreted volunteering and ascribed their descriptions with meaning and explanations which made volunteering normatively significant. It is impossible to judge if the values and motives referred to by the volunteers have caused their actions, and this is not what is studied. Instead, it is demonstrated how values work when constructing volunteering so that human agents may disclose their identities as engaged citizens in society.

The Volunteers

The focus will be on the narratives of the interviewed volunteers. Previous research has demonstrated that volunteers are influenced by the organisational context (Hooghe, 2003). However, here the organisations they work in will merely function as a contextual backdrop to make sense of the interviewee’s narratives. Only to a limited extent will context-dependent differences among the volunteers be discussed. The material is based on interviews conducted in 2013 and 2014 with 41 volunteers active in four different hybridised organisational contexts.

The first context involved interviews with ten police volunteers at the *Stockholm Police Department*. The volunteer organisation is built into the regular police organisation, where the “volunteer coordinators” play a key role.

The second context involved interviews with ten volunteers at *Stockholms Stadsmision* (The Stockholm City Mission). This is a civil society welfare organisation, founded in 1853, involved in social work among youths and homeless persons, education and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. This extensive activity demands a professional management, paid staff and a solid organisation.

The third and fourth contexts involved interviews with two groups of corporate volunteers (eleven and ten persons, respectively) in two different *corporations* (Skandia and Accenture) offering corporate volunteer programmes. As part of their employment, the employees work as volunteers one or two days per semester, often in or for a civil society organisation.

The age distribution among the interviewees ranged from 21 to 89. Seventeen of them were men and 24 were women. Age and gender were unequally divided between the organisations. There were more women than men active as volunteers in the corporations. In Accenture, the volunteers were on average younger than in Skandia, but in both corporations they were typically middle class, well-educated and often held prestigious posts. The majority of the corporate volunteers had no previous experience of civic engagement. The volunteers in *Stockholms Stadsmision* were on average older compared to the other groups, and the distribution between men and women was fairly equal, and as among the corporate volunteers, the volunteers were often middle class and well-educated with, or retired from, a prestigious job. Among the police volunteers, the age distribution was fairly even. The police volunteers also were often persons with few resources, a problematic background, a peripheral position in society or a dramatic personal history.

Not Paid

The most elaborated upon, and frequent theme found when the interviewees were defining volunteering, was the notion that the term refers to actions that are not paid for in monetary terms. That this theme was so emphasised and elaborated on indicates that not getting paid is the most urgent theme to explain and defend. A typical statement expressing this

need comes from a middle-aged woman, active as a corporate volunteer in *Skandia*.

I'd say that volunteering is unpaid work, at least not paid in cash. It's something you do for the sake of others. Not for your own gain but to help another, and that other person or persons is usually needy.

It is crucial that this work is not paid for and she, like almost all the interviewees, specified this aspect by adding that money cannot be involved. Actions categorised as volunteering are not performed to yield profit or gain, defined as payment in cash; instead, they are supposed to be for the benefit of somebody else, preferably someone in need. The volunteers are aware of and thankful for the wide range of valuable experiences and benefits their engagement gives them. Thus, the fact that money is rejected does not make volunteering necessarily altruistic in any simple interpretation of the concept; it is rather an exchange between actors according to specific rules. The reason for the sharp restriction against involving money does not come from a concern for the beneficiaries of those actions; and the purpose of keeping unpaid work outside the monetary system is to preserve the value and authentic character of those actions.

Engagement

Volunteering as the outcome of an engagement is another important theme. This is reflected in the answer of a middle-aged man engaged in Stockholm's City Mission who alleged that volunteering is:

... combination of two things. One is that you have an idea. That's clear from the words themselves. You want to promote something, lift forward something, achieve something; and there's also an element of commitment. Some kind of burning idea that's not found in any other kind of work. That's what it is; an idea plus commitment.

He mentions two aspects of engagement that recur as defining properties of volunteering: firstly, engagement as having an idea, which follows from the Swedish term (*ideellt arbete*) that is etymologically related to the word “idea”. However, it is not just any idea, it is specifically about goodness. No one mentioned any ideology, political conviction or belief, when they elaborated on engagement as a cause of volunteering; instead, they emphasised the second aspect of engagement, its particular function as an expression of themselves as persons.

By talking about volunteering as something they were engaged in, were passionate about, believed in, etc., they were subjectivising these actions (cf. Hultén & Wijkström, 2006). That is, they attached their efforts to themselves as actors, which may be needed when there are several possible competing motives that can make sense of a certain action (Wuthnow, 1991). The crucial function of referring to engagement is to make volunteering into actions that are intimately connected to themselves and to disclose who they are as persons.

When a middle-aged woman engaged as a police volunteer was asked what volunteering is, she answered that it is non-paid work, but her simultaneous ironical expression indicated the possible cynical interpretation that the police organisation is taking advantage of her efforts as free labour. She demonstrated that she was aware that volunteering is open to both cynical and idealistic interpretations, and continued by saying that according to her, volunteering is “... *when you feel that you want to engage in something you believe in, something you burn for ...*”. The answer illustrates that engagement as an inner conviction ensures that efforts cannot be contradicted or suspected to be due to cynical or improper motives (cf. von Essen, 2016; Wuthnow, 1991); neither can she be accused of naïvely being used by the organisation since her engagement serves as a valid explanation of why she is deliberately making these efforts without getting paid.

Voluntary

A third recurrent theme is that volunteering is voluntary, which has significance for the character of these actions as not monetarily compensated. To work without being paid, of one's own free will, is one precondition for not being cynically perceived as being used. This was demonstrated in the earlier quote by the female police volunteer. If perceived as actions of free will, unpaid work is categorised as something different to gainful employment.

A middle-aged woman, engaged as a corporate volunteer at *Accenture*, explained the difference between volunteering and gainful employment: *"For me, voluntary work is such efforts as go beyond the work that is expected of you in some way or another and which you are paid for."* According to her and others, gainful employment is not a matter of free choice. But beyond the demands of everyday life there is another and different social realm where individuals can act out of free will. This does not necessarily mean that volunteering really is entirely voluntary; it is of course embedded in and dependent on social relations and organisational structures where normative pressure and social contracts can have a distinct effect (Hustinx & Meijs, 2011).

That volunteering is conceived of as voluntary is also significant for its ability to be an expression of engagement. The interviewees claimed to be genuine and sincere when engaged in volunteering, but coerced or instrumental when acting as employees. These two dynamics are shown when another middle-aged woman engaged as a corporate volunteer in *Accenture* talked about unpaid work, *"... there is no coercion. Instead it is born out of one's own motivation..."*. As she was talking, she became somewhat disturbed at being vague and not quite able to capture the difference between being sincere and being coerced; instead, she found herself lost in "philosophical discussions". What she and other interviewees were trying to capture is that in contrast to gainful employment, their efforts are voluntary and to be voluntary engaged express themselves as autonomous subjects.

For the Benefit of the Other

The fourth theme providing the meaning of volunteering is its other-directed dimension (Story, 1992), that is, intended for the benefit of a person or cause. To be for the benefit of someone was a taken-for-granted defining property, and unlike being non-paid, this aspect did not need to be explained or defended, and there were no openings for possible cynical interpretations. An elderly woman engaged as a police volunteer answered as follows when asked about the nature of unpaid work:

Well it's a good question. Most important, I think, is that it must be beneficial to the society or the world, even...

Some of them explicitly said that volunteering means acting with the intention to do something good, or for a good cause. But little was mentioned about the content of a good purpose and how it would be realised. However, it was not about changing or influencing society or politics, but rather to help with or amend particular shortcomings or needs. A younger man, engaged as a corporate volunteer in Skandia, expressed this apolitical understanding of volunteering by saying:

... doing something, whatever it's possible to do, so it's these two things and you try to do as well as you can—donate money or offer your time once a month or week to safety patrol the town or work with children and young people or whatever the cause...

He mentioned these particular examples in order to contrast the voluntary character of volunteering with gainful employment, but also to contrast volunteers from persons who try to change the world because they find it “imperfect”. The underlying premise seems to be that a political conviction or belief is imperative, which threatens the idea of volunteering as actions of free choice.

Some of the interviewees added that volunteering has to be to the benefit of someone or something outside their own private sphere; otherwise, it is not entirely of free choice. A female corporate volunteer in Accenture said that actions derived from predispositions or inherited behaviour

are not volunteering. She concluded by saying, “*I mean family, well you have to care of your children, sort of*”. Thus, nursing or taking care of children is not categorised as volunteering since these involve actions that are either too natural or imperative to be deliberate or entirely of free choice.

So, Why Not Money?

It seems as if money has a meaning that is significant for how volunteering is perceived and how actions are categorised. Thus, to deepen the understanding of the importance of keeping volunteering disassociated from monetary exchange the interviewees’ answers to the question “Why not money?”, will be discussed here.

A frequent answer was that money can lead to opportunism and threatens the fragile dynamic of volunteering. Basically, the recurring idea was that if volunteering is rewarded, the inclination to act in a calculating and egoistical manner would prevail over the genuine motive to help or be benevolent. A typical statement revealing this view was given by a middle-aged woman engaged as a corporate volunteer in Skandia:

For the simple reason that no one should be able to make an undue profit from it, because that would attract persons and groups who do it for themselves, for their own gain, ...

According to her and others, the genuine dynamic of volunteering is easily overridden if money becomes involved, and the opportunistic motive to earn money will get the upper hand. It is as if the dynamic of volunteering is fragile and has to be protected against monetary incursions (cf. Zelizer, 1996, p. 485). Egoism is taken to be the “default cause” of human actions. To avoid people who are only interested in making money and let the genuine motive to help prevail it is necessary to keep money and volunteering apart.

The outlook on mankind that best fits the idea that monetary gain will make individuals act in their own interest is the idea of the economic man. The crucial presumption is that man by nature is *calculus rational* and will act in his own interest. However, according to the interviewees,

if there is no money involved, this dynamic will not be triggered; instead, altruistic motives can prevail. Hence, the volunteers will trust others and themselves to be altruistic when there is no money at stake, but will assume that people will act as rational egoists when money is involved. If money is not involved, individuals can deliberately and of free choice act altruistically. Volunteering is then framed so that being engaged in and carrying out these efforts is to stand out as an individual in relation to the norm of gainful employment and the natural inclination of man to act in self-interest.

There were also other reasons to reject money. Some of the interviewees said that if they got paid, it would make their engagement similar to an occupation and thus become a way to earn their living. So, they wanted to avoid money since the necessity of earning one's living in reality makes gainful employment somewhat coerced. An elderly woman and corporate volunteer in Accenture described what would happen if they were remunerated for their efforts.

You work not only because you want to, that is just a maybe; one is dependent on work for getting by, for one's own survival. When you volunteer you're not dependent on it; you're not dependent on getting something back in order to survive, that's putting it bluntly

What she wanted to capture was that acting out of free will demands independence, in this case from the necessity of earning one's living in order to survive.

Several interviewees also remarked that relations become contractual when money was involved, which restricted their freedom. To be employed is a contractual, binding relationship and not a personal engagement. Hence, money challenges the voluntary character of unpaid work both because of the need to earn one's daily bread and because of the binding character of contractual relations.

There were persons in all four groups who declared that volunteering entails a risk of becoming opportunistic and egoistic if money is involved. However, this inclination to defend the altruistic character of volunteering was more frequently found and emphasised among the corporate volunteers than among the interviewees in the other two groups. Some of

the police volunteers on the other hand said that they felt the need to explain and even defend their engagement since some people could not understand why they made these efforts without getting paid. Thus, it seems as if the corporate volunteers, who were often rather well-off, had to defend the idea of volunteering against the inclination to act as the rational egoist, whereas the police volunteers, who were more often living in and confronted with a poorer environment, had to defend their engagement against the suspicion of being used.

The interviewees also declared that money would be an immoral motive for volunteering. One younger woman, who was engaged as a corporate volunteer in Accenture, said that it would be a nightmare if their efforts were paid since it would lead to people becoming engaged *only* for the money. A younger man, who was engaged in corporate volunteering in Skandia, declared that if money were accepted, the very definition of goodness would be challenged since it would mean that money and goodness were being confused. The underlying premise is that you cannot be paid for being good because goodness demands that you are sincere, and money makes relations instrumental (von Essen, 2015). It is by the rejection of money that volunteering can be conceived to be a morally significant action.

These are the reasons for excluding money from the precarious dynamic of volunteering. When the interviewees tried to explain why money was rejected, they talked about preserving volunteering as actions of free will. In their answers, they oscillated between the practical need for an income and an abstract idea of the nature of man as two threats to the voluntary character of volunteering. But irrespective of their practical or abstract reasons, material needs and benefits had the character of an “ultimate concern”, as an imperative necessity. To be able to act from free will so that their actions were expressions of themselves as actors they had to be autonomous and independent of their practical needs and of human nature.¹

¹ See Haers and von Essen (2015) for a discussion on free will and the Christian calling of neighbourly love.

The Rewards of Unpaid Work

The fact that money was rejected does not mean that volunteering cannot be rewarded at all. On the contrary, when the interviewees elaborated on why money was rejected, they were anxious to mention all the other good things they received from their volunteering.

When elaborating on their rewards they talked primarily about what they experienced through helping. This was exemplified by many different narratives, but on an abstract level they talked about the profound meaning of helping someone without expecting anything in return.

The corporate volunteers talked more often than the others about the satisfaction of using their professional skills to help others. Hence, they often reflected a certain consultancy perspective on how to help and empower the persons they met.

When asked about what they gained from their efforts the interviewees also talked about the social aspects of their engagement and referred to the people they came to meet while carrying out their efforts. Several talked about how meeting a person in need or being able to help someone could create a certain intimacy. These encounters had changed some of the interviewees' lives and had made them more confident in asserting the importance of love and solidarity among people.

Other interviewees also described the social context they were part of. Some mentioned the fellowship and friendship with other volunteers as a reward. One middle-aged man, engaged in the Stockholm City Mission, mentioned the care the organisation showed its volunteers, saying:

... they often offer you cakes or buns, and coffee is free and things like that, so it's not money I get, but a cup of coffee and a nice bit of cake or an ice cream

When they talked about the social aspects as rewards for their efforts the absence of money was significant. They did not receive social relations, gratitude, care and trivial gifts as compensation for not being paid. Instead, they could appreciate the social dimension of their engagement because money was not involved. The gifts and the social relations were not categorised as a second-best form of payment. Thus (the absence

of) money was significant for the social relations enjoyed through their engagement.

Their engagement led to relations with people that were quite different from those in their ordinary everyday life, and implied encounters with new lifestyles and different social conditions. Some interviewees valued these encounters and said that because of their engagement they had come to understand what it is like to live in poverty and need. These experiences often perplexed them and sometimes changed them as persons by widening their perspectives,² even causing some of them to reconsider their political standpoints.

A recurring notion among the interviewees was that they wanted to find their efforts meaningful. To see themselves as good persons and to be able to receive and enjoy the social dimension of their engagement, their rewards had to be categorised as gifts. A younger man and corporate volunteer in Accenture elaborated on what would happen if he were paid for his efforts:

...then it's a matter of someone buying your services rather than you doing what you do simply because you want to do it and that would be a hindrance in terms of motivation.

He said that he believed that for most people not being paid is positive because one can then get something else in return for one's engagement and he found this more valuable than ordinary payment. If people were paid, their efforts would be transformed from being gifts into exchanges and what they received would lose its meaning. A middle-aged man, engaged in Stockholm's City Mission, explained how money would affect the categorisation of his actions:

... otherwise it's more of an exchange. I exchange one unit for another unit. But for me volunteering is about me giving something, in this materialistic physical world we live in.

²For the use of the term "perplex" see Eliasoph (2013).

If his efforts were categorised as exchanges, then what he received would be an expected and calculated payment. He was fairly comfortably situated and used to business relations, but exchanges could not make him into a good person since, as he said, goodness cannot be bought. What was at stake for this man was his urge to give, in spite of and in contrast to the material world they all live in. So, acting as good persons by helping someone and the good feeling and satisfaction they experienced demanded that their rewards were categorised as gifts. The middle-aged man engaged in Stockholm's City Mission quoted above expressed this idea as, "... *volunteering means that you're not expecting any payback, but at the same time, that is what you do get*".³

Intention is obviously important. If they carried out their efforts with the intention of getting paid, their actions would have been categorised as exchanges. Hence, to be able to receive rewards from their engagement, the reward had to be unexpected. Calculative motives for unpaid work would preclude the unexpected rewards of their engagement. However, also the presence of money as such, and not only the intention to get them, would determine how their actions were understood. Several interviewees felt a need to defend the precarious dynamic of unpaid work from a societal order where money is a central value and defines most human relations.

Discussion

According to the interviewees, volunteering entails voluntary, unpaid efforts and expressions of a personal engagement to act for the benefit of someone else. This description resembles the common and prevalent definitions of unpaid work that can be found in research on volunteering, with the exception that the organisational context is not included and the personal engagement is emphasised (e.g. Handy et al., 2000;

³See von Essen (2015) for this paradoxical pattern and its structural similarity with the Lutheran doctrine of the calling.

Musick & Wilson, 2008). There are of course many possible explanations for the exclusion of the organisational aspect. However, considering the hybridised character of the interviewees' contexts this exclusion is possibly due to a shift from a collective to an individualistic mode of involvement (cf. Hustinx, 2003).

Charles Taylor's ideas about strong evaluations and evaluative horizons providing a vocabulary of worth will now be used to unfold how the interviewees' volunteer experience is used to construct and disclose their identities.

It was important for the volunteers to reject money; by doing so, they preserved volunteering as actions carried out of their own free will. To ensure that their actions were expressing their identities they had to be autonomous and independent of the need of earning their income. By interpreting volunteering as actions performed by sincere agents their identities could be disclosed by these actions, leaving no room for interpreting the actions as coerced or calculative, which would jeopardise the authenticity of the agent.

However, this relation to money was context-sensitive. In another context, when acting as employees for instance, they acted according to other rules without violating their authenticity. How money is transferred in exchanges between people defines social relations and meaning systems, and to use the incorrect transfer violates or challenges social relations (Zelizer, 1994). The empirical results indicate that values are used according to Taylor's argument, but with the proviso that values have different meanings in different social contexts (see Grönlund, 2011 and the chapter of Sirris). According to the interviewees, the involvement of money would definitely determine whether their actions were categorised as volunteering or not. This is not only because of how the concept of volunteering is defined. If money were involved in volunteering, it would have to be interpreted as a compensation and their efforts would have to be understood as exchanges between parties. Hence, money is an artefact that has social meaning in itself, regulated by social conventions and defining social relations.

When referring to their engagement, the interviewees gave assurances that their efforts were genuine and therefore categorised as other than

gainful employment. These two categories of action, structured by different dynamics—gainful employment based on the need for an income and volunteering based on a personal engagement—were contrasted with each other throughout in the interviews, often in juxtaposition in order to acquire their meaning through the mirroring of each other. That volunteering was evaluated in contrast to gainful employment was articulated when they said that their engagement was voluntary, in contrast to coerced employment which makes volunteering into a voluntary and personal engagement.

When the volunteers elaborated on these themes, they recurrently referred to values that stood in contrast to dominant norms in society which made them appear as persons in society. The idea that volunteering constitutes a genuine and free realm deviant from and alternative to the materialistic society the interviewees were living in, was an overarching theme. How volunteering was perceived and expressed was dependent on this idea. Thus, the notion of volunteering as comprising meaningful altruistic actions of free choice did not emerge *in spite of* the individualistic and materialistic character of contemporary society. On the contrary, volunteering was conceived to be altruistic *because of* the materialistic society (see Wuthnow, 1991). This relation between materialistic society and altruistic volunteering is crucial; in order to understand the functions volunteering serves for individuals, but also how it is conceptually defined. This demonstrates that cognitive meaning, how volunteering is conceptualised, and normative meaning, how it matters to individuals, are dependent on each other.

Hence, according to the interviewees a society characterised by a competitive, individualistic and self-interested culture does not make volunteering more instrumental. On the contrary, such a society provides motives for engagement. Furthermore, it constitutes the evaluative horizon wherein an individual can deploy a language of evaluative distinctions to make strong evaluations, and by preferring contrasting values can disclose his or her identity as a reaction against the prevailing social order.

The motives for volunteering are not only about finding solutions to practical problems; there is more at stake. To be engaged makes it possible to refer to values by which one can disclose an identity as an authentic

person free from the striving for material gain and acting for the sake of goodness. This construction of volunteering involves an evaluative horizon enabling a social realm of freedom and compassion in contrast to the materialistic society where individuals can appear as engaged citizens by referring to values that motivate their engagement.

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