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Trends in Volunteering in Scandinavia

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Chapter 3

Trends in Volunteering in Scandinavia

Hans-Peter Y. Qvist, Bjarte Folkestad, Torben Fridberg and Susanne Wallman Lundåsen

Abstract

In this chapter, we examine participation rate and time use trends in volunteering in Scandinavia during the period from the beginning of the 1990s until the mid-2010s. The aim of the analysis is twofold. First, we aim to provide a descriptive analysis of the trends in volunteering in Scandinavia during the period under investigation. Second, we aim to determine whether and to what extent the socio-demographic and institutional changes in the Scandinavian societies during this period can explain the observed trends in volunteering. The results show that the overall levels of participation in volunteering are high and stable in the Scandinavian countries, with a small upward trend. The participation levels are all high in international comparisons, but they are markedly higher in Norway and Sweden than in Denmark. Volunteers' contributions of time appear relatively stable in Norway, but Denmark has witnessed a slight decline and Sweden has witnessed a slight increase. The explanatory analysis revealed that nearly half of the upward trend in the levels of volunteering can be attributed to the expansion of education in the Scandinavian countries. The explanatory analysis also indicated that the gap in the levels of volunteering between Sweden and Norway on the one hand, and Denmark on the other hand, cannot be attributed to socio-demographic differences between the countries, as the gap is left unchanged when controlling for socio-demographic factors.

Keywords Trends · Volunteering · Scandinavia · Participation · Time Use

Introduction

As in many other countries, the levels of volunteering within the Scandinavian societies have received much attention during recent decades. The attention has come from the voluntary organizations where a chief concern for practitioners is the sustainability of current levels of volunteering, as many organizations are critically dependent on the labour that volunteers provide. It has also come from policy makers within the Scandinavian countries who have often underlined the importance of engagement in civil society for a plethora of policy fields, perhaps most prominently connecting volunteering to the state of democracy writ large. Also regarding the role played by volunteers when dealing with processes that become too complex for the public sector to handle on its own, both in the short term and long term, like for instance the reception and integration of immigrants. However, the debate around trends in volunteering within the Scandinavian countries may run the risk of comparing contemporary societies with a somewhat “mythical past” where everyone is argued to have been more involved in volunteering (Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999). In order to make sense of the trends of volunteering within Scandinavia, and to pose “a correct diagnosis” on the trends of volunteering we need to depart from empirical data that is comparable over time (Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999).

In this chapter, we examine participation rate and time use trends in volunteering in Scandinavia during the period from the beginning of the 1990s until the mid-2010s. The aim of the analysis is twofold. First, we aim to provide a descriptive analysis of the trends in volunteering in Scandinavia during the period under investigation. Second, we aim to determine whether and to what extent the socio-demographic and institutional changes in the Scandinavian societies during this period can explain the observed trends in volunteering. In terms of socio-demographic changes, we focus on the expansion of education, work life changes and changes in family structures. In terms of institutional changes, we focus on the increased institutional, political and public focus on volunteering and the potential weakening of organizational attachment.

Within academia, volunteering as a phenomenon has been studied from several different perspectives. As argued in the introduction to this book, the Scandinavian societies have undergone a number of important socio-demographic and institutional changes in recent years that could have opposing effects on levels of volunteering. On the one hand, the expansion of public education combined with increased institutional, political and public focus on volunteering could drive up levels

of volunteering. On the other hand, other processes, such as increasing time pressure on dual-breadwinner families, could potentially drive down levels of volunteering.

As outlined in the introduction to this book, the Scandinavian countries share many similarities, but there are also important differences between the countries. Therefore, we also examine whether and to what extent these important societal changes have led to similar or divergent trends in volunteering across the three Scandinavian countries.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, we discuss how the socio-demographic and institutional changes can be expected to affect participation levels and time use among volunteers in Scandinavia. Next, we present the results of a descriptive analysis of the trends in volunteering in Scandinavia, which is followed by a regression analysis wherein we examine whether and to what extent the observed trends in volunteering are connected with the socio-demographic and institutional changes. Finally, we conclude by discussing the implications of our results for the future of Scandinavian civil societies.

The resource theory and changes in volunteering over time

A way to understand and explain trends in volunteering is to study the resources that individuals possess and how these may vary across countries and across time. The resource theory of volunteering suggests that people with a surplus of human, social and cultural resources are more likely to volunteer (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Wilson & Musick, 1997). *Human resources* refers to resources that make people better able to perform volunteer work and also that make them more attractive (valuable) to voluntary organizations (Wilson & Musick, 1997). The typical indicators of human resources used in the literature are education, occupational status and income. *Social resources* refers to social ties, which increase the chances of becoming involved with volunteer work. The most important mechanism is that social resources increase the likelihood of being asked or recruited to do volunteer work; however, social resources have also been found to have a direct effect on the likelihood of volunteering net of the indirect effect on the likelihood of being asked (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, &, 1995; Paik & Navarre-Jackson, 2011). *Cultural resources* refers to values and beliefs that may promote volunteering, such as collective values or religious beliefs.

A vast number of empirical studies lend support to the resource theory of volunteering (for a recent review of the literature, see Wilson, 2012). However, most of the studies that confirm the correlations between individual resources and volunteering are cross-sectional in nature. These cross-sectional studies suffer from two main shortcomings. First, the associations between resource factors and volunteering that are estimated using cross-sectional data might only to some extent reflect causal effects, or they could be entirely spurious. Second, cross-sectional studies provide a static picture of the resources that increase the likelihood of volunteering, but the effects of the resource factors might change over time as societies change (Smith & Wang, 2016).

To the extent that the associations between the resource factors and volunteering have causal effect on volunteering, we should expect societal developments that *increase* the amount of individual, social and cultural resources within the populations to increase the levels of volunteering (see Chapter 2 in this book). Conversely, we should expect that *decreases* in the amount of individual, social and cultural resources within the populations will drive down the levels of volunteering.

In this section, we present data that shows the extent to which the socio-demographic changes witnessed by the Scandinavian societies from the 1990s to the mid-2010s can be expected to affect the levels of volunteering in Scandinavia based on whether these developments increase or decrease the stock of individual resources in the Scandinavian populations.

Educational expansion

One of the most important sources of human resources is probably education. Education provides people with ‘civic skills’ that enable them to do volunteer work (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995) and increase the chances of volunteer recruitment. This likely explains why empirical research consistently finds that education and volunteering are positively associated in Scandinavia (Folkestad, Christensen, Strømsnes, & Selle, 2015; Fridberg & Henriksen, 2014; von Essen, Jegermalm, & Svedberg, 2015).

During the period from the early 1990s to the mid-2010s, the Scandinavian societies experienced a massive educational expansion¹. A few figures indicate just how profound the educational expansion has been. In Denmark, the share of the population aged 25 to 64 with a long cycle higher education has increased from 4% in 1992 to 11% in 2014 (Statistics Denmark, 2018a) In Sweden, there was a rapid increase in the share of the population with higher education during the period between 1992 (6%) and 2014 (15%). In 2014, about 13% of men and 18% of women in Sweden had a higher education (Statistics Sweden 2017)². In Norway, 10% of males and 8% of females over 16 years of age had long cycle higher education in 2014, up from 5% and 2%, respectively, in 1992 (Statistics Norway 2018a) Conversely, the share of the population aged 25 to 64 with no professional qualification decreased from 41% in 1992 to 26% in 2014 in Denmark. In Sweden in 2014, only about 15% of the male population and about 12% of the female population had only compulsory education (Statistics Sweden 2017)³. In Norway, 27% of males and 27% of females had only compulsory school in 2014, down from 29% and 30%, respectively, in 2009.

Following the resource theory of volunteering, we should expect educational expansion to drive up levels of volunteering because of the increase in the share of the population possessing the skills that enable volunteer work. This expectation is based on the assumption that the effect of education on volunteering is stable over time. Some caution is, however, warranted, given results of previous studies that show the effect of education on volunteering might *not* be stable over time. The increase in the supply of educated people might in itself decrease the demand for volunteers with higher education. This interpretation is supported by previous studies from Norway and Denmark that show that the effect of education on the propensity to volunteer has diminished over time (Folkestad et al., 2015; Frederiksen, Henriksen, & Qvist, 2014) while education remains an important explanatory factor in Sweden (von Essen et al., 2015). Additionally, although increasing educational levels might generally drive up participation rates, the development might at the same time keep a residual group from

¹ Educational expansion refers to a process whereby a larger share of the population receives higher education, based on higher education becoming increasingly accessible for disadvantaged social groups, which in turn raises the overall educational level in the country (Gesthuizen, van der Meer, & Scheepers, 2008).

² Own calculations from Statistics Sweden, including those with a higher education of three years and longer up to PhD degree. Due to changes in the official statistical classification records in the year 2000, historical comparisons should be made with caution.

³ Own calculations using official data from Statistics Sweden.

involvement because organizations could demand more so-called clever volunteers in response to increasing demands for professionalization of organizations (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003, p. 183).

Another possible explanation of why educational expansion might not be followed by increases in levels of volunteering as large as might be predicted based on previous research is that the effects of obtaining an education might be heterogeneous. Previous research has found that the effect of higher education on the propensity to volunteer is higher for people who are usually less likely to get higher education, such as less privileged socio-economic groups (Brand, 2010). However, as the educational levels of these less-privileged social groups increase through the educational expansion, we might witness a ceiling effect on the association between education and volunteering.

Finally, we should be aware that increasing educational levels might affect volunteers' contributions of time differently to how it affects participation rates. A previous Danish study found that education had a strong positive effect on the decision to participate in volunteering but was not associated with time use among volunteers (Qvist, 2015). This result might be explained by the fact that while people with higher education typically possess the civic skills that enable volunteer work, they may also have less time available to contribute because they may work in jobs with blurred borders between spare time and work (that is, often expected to work outside of regular office hours).

Work-life changes

The relationship between paid work and volunteer work is complicated from a resource theory perspective (Musick & Wilson, 2008). On the one hand, a job in the paid labour market aids people's social integration, and paid jobs are an important source of civic skills. On the other hand, paid work hours constrain people's free time, which limits the time available to do volunteer work.

The evidence about changes in work hours during the period under investigation is mixed. In Denmark, time use studies show that the average hours worked per week has declined from about 25 hours and 33 minutes in 1987 to 21 hours and 49 minutes in 2009 (Bonke, 2012). However, the average number of hours worked among those employed has increased from 37 hours in 2001 to 39 hours in

2009 (Bonke, 2012). In Sweden, the average number of hours worked among those employed has increased for women from 25 hours in 1987 to 28 hours in 2011 while remaining stable among men at about 34 hours during the same time period (Statistics Sweden, 2012). In Norway, the picture is also mixed. Studies using data from the 2016 labour force survey suggest that during the last 20 years, the average hours worked per week has declined for men but remained stable for women (NOU, 2016, p. 86). In 1996 the average hours worked per week was around 40 for men and 30 for women. In 2014 it was around 38 for men and 31 for women.

Because of the mixed patterns in the changes in hours worked in Scandinavia, it is difficult to determine whether such changes might explain trends in volunteering. However, another development is more certain. Like most other Western countries, the Scandinavian societies have experienced an increase in the share of older people in their populations, which can be attributed to the pleasant development that Scandinavians experience better health conditions and live longer than previous generations. The average life expectancy has risen sharply in all Scandinavian countries. For men in Denmark, it rose from 72 years in 1990 to 79 years in 2016, and for women it rose from 78 years to 83 years (Statistics Denmark, 2018b); the corresponding increase in Sweden was from around 74 years for men and around 80 years for women in 1990 to around 80 years for men and 84 years for women in 2016 (Statistics Sweden, 2017). In Norway, the development is almost identical to that of Sweden: life expectancy for men was 73 years in 1990 and 80 years in 2016. For Norwegian females, it was 80 years in 1990 and 84 years in 2016 (Statistics Norway, 2017).

The increase in life expectancy and the improved health among older people has resulted in a growing group of age pensioners with good health and time on their hands. This development could drive the levels of volunteering up, and previous Danish research suggests that retirement from the labour market is positively associated with the decision to volunteer (Frederiksen & Qvist, 2015).

Changes in family structures

Empirical research across various countries consistently finds that people are most likely to volunteer in the middle of the life-cycle (van Ingen, 2008). The inverse U-shaped relationship between the propensity to volunteer and age is often explained with reference to the social resources to which

family connections give access in the middle of the life-cycle. Thus, the role of family connections is highlighted by research that shows that major life-cycle events such as getting married or having children is associated with volunteering (Nesbit, 2012; van Ingen, 2008). For example, it is well-known that parents are often ‘dragged’ into volunteering through their children’s school and leisure activities (Rotolo & Wilson, 2007; Svedberg, von Essen, & Jegermalm, 2010).

However, also like most Western countries, Scandinavia witnessed a number of important changes in family structures between the 1990s and the mid-2010s. First, an increasing share of the Scandinavian populations reside in single-person households and the average household size has decreased. In Denmark, the share of single-person households increased from 35% in 1992 to 38% in 2015 (Statistics Denmark, 2018c); in Norway, the corresponding figure is 38% in 2015, which is the same as in 2005 (Statistics Norway 2018b). We find the same pattern in Sweden, where the share of households that are single person has remained fairly stable, around 39% and 38% respectively, between 1990 and 2012 (Statistics Sweden, 2015). Another trend is that people tend to have children later in life. In 1999, the average age of first birth for Norwegian females was 29 years whereas in 2015 it had increased to 31 years. In Denmark, the corresponding age was 28 years in 1999 and 29 years in 2015. Swedish mothers also increased their average age at first birth from 28 years in 2000 to 29 years in 2015. Therefore, and also as a consequence of longevity, the share of households without children is decreasing slightly in the Scandinavian countries.

Following the resource theory of volunteering, the developments in family structures can be expected to drive down the levels of volunteering because more people live as singles and without children. The developments are also likely to result in a shift in the life-cycle of volunteering towards older ages because people get married and have children later in life. Finally, it is also possible that the difference in volunteering between people with and without children has grown larger over time because of the general societal trend towards valuing quality time between parents and their children (Folkestad et al., 2015).

However, changes in family structures might affect levels of volunteering in some areas more than others. A Swedish study suggests that having children living at home increases the likelihood of volunteering only for sports’ organizations (von Essen & Wallman Lundåsen, 2016), probably because sports organizations have large-scale activities directed towards youth and children that often also

presuppose the involvement of parents in different kinds of voluntary activities (see also Chapter 2 in this book for a more detailed description of the composition of the voluntary sector in Scandinavia). This indicates a close dialectic between the organizational society as an opportunity structure for volunteering and life conditions. Interestingly, however, having young children seems to decrease the likelihood of volunteering for other types of organizations than sports organizations in Sweden (von Essen & Wallman Lundåsen, 2016).

Institutional changes

In recent decades, the Scandinavian societies have undergone not only important socio-demographic changes but also important institutional changes. Studies have suggested that the institutional context and especially the political context play an important role in determining the type of civil society and how vibrant that civil society is within a given context (Schofer & Longhofer, 2011; Kriesi & Baglioni, 2003; Stadelmann-Steffen & Freitag, 2011, Selle & Strømsnes, 2012; see also Chapters 1 and 2 in this book). In this section, we discuss how an increasing political focus on mobilization of volunteers and weakening organizational attachment might affect the supply and composition of the volunteer work force.

Increasing political focus on mobilization of (welfare) volunteers

During the last decades, the Scandinavian societies have witnessed important shifts in perceptions of volunteering, especially within the broader welfare fields of health and social policies (see Chapters 1 and 8). In the welfare state epoch of the 1960s and 1970s, many policy makers expected that volunteer work would become redundant with the expansion of the welfare state. The 1980s, in contrast, were characterized by a growing critique of the welfare state, which paved the way for a renewed focus on civil society and volunteering. The period studied in this chapter, from the 1990s until today, has been characterized by a large degree of political consensus about the many societal benefits of volunteering.

Policy makers on both the left and the right speak in favour of volunteers and voluntary organizations. In addition, reforms aiming at increasing the efficiency of the public sector have resulted in cuts in some sectors and perhaps a greater need to engage volunteers in the provision of welfare, especially during the initial stages of crises or emergencies, before the resources of the welfare state can be mobilized. An example is the role of volunteers in the spotlight in the wake of the arrival of large groups of refugees during the autumn of 2015. Against this background, much political effort has turned towards stimulating the voluntary sector, and especially into mobilizing larger shares of the populations to do volunteer work, especially within the areas of welfare (see also Chapter 8 for a discussion of the moral dilemmas of volunteering for welfare in the context of the Scandinavian welfare states). Examples of such mobilizing efforts are the development of national volunteering strategies and the invention and institutionalization of volunteer centres in all the Scandinavian countries, with one of the main aims being to expand the volunteer work force by attracting new volunteers (Lorentzen & Henriksen, 2014; Svedberg & Olsson, 2010).

The increased political focus in later years has been first and foremost on the performance role of the voluntary sector – as a provider of public services (Henriksen, 2013; Lundström & Svedberg, 2003). This focus is less pronounced in the political discourse in Norway, where a more inclusive and broad view of volunteering has been maintained compared to Denmark and Sweden (Strømsnes, 2013). The shift towards a more utilitarian view of volunteers in Denmark and Sweden was to some extent brought about by increasing fiscal pressure on generous Scandinavian welfare states, which is more pronounced in Sweden and Denmark than in Norway. The Norwegian case could partly be explained by better economic conditions (oil economy), resulting in less pressure for cutbacks of the welfare state (see also Chapter 1 for an extended discussion).

If the recent political efforts to promote welfare volunteering have been successful, then we should expect to see that relatively larger shares of the Scandinavian populations have become engaged in these types of volunteering over time. If the levels of volunteering have increased within these areas, it is interesting to see whether the levels of volunteering have decreased in other areas, for example, in the areas of sports and leisure, which traditionally have been very large in Scandinavia compared to the area of welfare.

Weakening organizational attachment?

As shown in Chapter 2 of this book, the Scandinavian voluntary sector has traditionally been deeply rooted in member-based volunteering. This has, however, changed in recent years and although the vast majority of volunteers are also members, this is not as prevalent as it used to be. Scholars argue that processes of modernity such as increasing individualization results in weakening organizational attachment and loosening connections between volunteers and their organizations (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Wuthnow, 1998; see also Chapter 6 in this book for a discussion of new organizational logics).

In Denmark and Norway, the share of volunteer that are members of the organization for which they volunteer has declined markedly, from 81% in 1993 to 70% in 2012 in Denmark (Henriksen, 2014) and from 88% in 1997 to 76% in 2014 in Norway (Folkestad et al., 2015). However, the share remains quite stable over time, at 85%, in Sweden (von Essen et al., 2015). To a large extent, the legal context and public support structures share many similarities in Scandinavia, with strong incentives for the civil society organizations to attract and retain as many members as possible, as both direct and indirect financial support to organizations from public institutions may depend upon membership rates.

An important question is whether the alleged changes in the relationship between volunteers and their organizations changes only the mode or style of volunteering rather than *how much* volunteers contribute. On the one hand, one may argue that a decline in membership rates of traditional voluntary organizations does not necessarily translate into a decline in volunteering, because this development might be offset by increasing involvement in non-member-based types of volunteering, ad hoc projects and short-term activities (Grubb, 2016; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Lorentzen & Hustinx, 2007; Wollebæk & Selle, 2003), as well as new types of volunteering such as virtual volunteering (see Chapter 6). On the other hand, we might expect some volunteers who are not members of the organization for which they volunteer to be so-called marginal volunteers, that is, volunteers who join in times of increasing levels of volunteering but remain weakly attached to the organization for which they volunteer and spend little time and effort on their volunteer work.

In sum, the developments outlined above point in somewhat different directions and may also vary between the three countries. The changes over time in factors related to the resource theory of

volunteering indicate that we might expect some increase, or at least stability, in levels of volunteering according to some factors (e.g. increase in life-expectancy, expansion of the share of population with higher levels of education), while other resource factors (e.g. increase in single-person households) may lead to a decrease in volunteering for some types of organizations. Other changes such as increased political attention towards volunteering may predict an increase in volunteering within certain types of activities such as welfare-oriented activities. Trends in organizational attachment of volunteers seem to differ between the three countries, with stable levels of membership among volunteers in Sweden while the trend shows a marked decrease in membership rates in Denmark and Norway. Given that the trends that have been outlined above most often deal with only a section of the population or a section of the civil society organizations, we may expect to find gradual rather than dramatic changes across time. We proceed by analysing empirical data to tap the general trends in volunteering in Scandinavia.

Trends in the levels of volunteering

Our initial analysis of the overall volunteer rate expresses the share of the population that has engaged in some kind of volunteer work within the previous year. These are figures for those who say they did volunteer work for at least one organization within the last 12 months. It is important to note that the concept of volunteering used in this chapter encompasses several types of activities, from simple day-to-day tasks to more complex tasks, such as serving as a member of a board of a voluntary organization or being involved in raising money for an organization (von Essen et al., 2015; Fridberg & Henriksen, 2014; Folkestad et al., 2015). In this initial analysis, we thus intend to measure the overall levels of volunteering within the countries. Because we after all pool different types of activities, the overall levels of volunteering should not be sensitive to the fact that the Swedish questionnaire asks the respondents about voluntary activities within a longer list of different areas compared to the Danish and the Norwegian questionnaires (see Methods Appendix of this book).

Our data demonstrate that the volunteer rates in Scandinavia are high, and remarkably stable over time. Figure 3.1 shows the development in volunteer rates from 1992 to 2014 in the three Scandinavian countries.

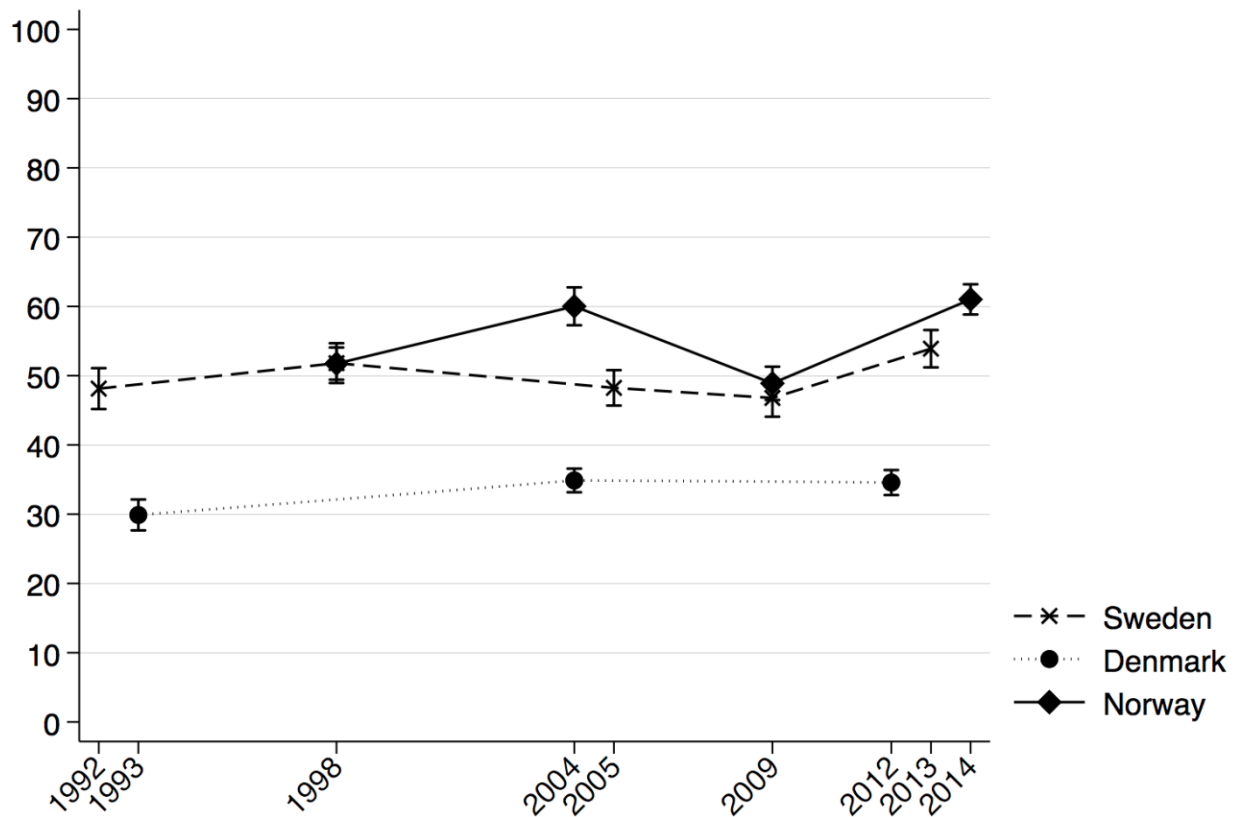


Figure 3.1: Volunteer rates in Scandinavia, 1992–2014.

Note: The volunteer rate measures the share of the population that reports having participated in volunteering in at least one area within the previous year. The numbers deviate slightly from the national reports due to some differences in calculating the rates. In addition, we do not weight the numbers in this chapter.

The Norwegian and Swedish volunteer rates depicted in Figure 3.1 are among the highest in Europe and other Western countries (see also Chapter 1 in this book). The Danish volunteer rate is also high in an international comparison, but it is significantly lower than the Norwegian and Swedish volunteer rates. The Scandinavian volunteer rate shows no signs of decline, but rather a slight upward trend. Based on the figure, volunteering thrives in the Scandinavian societies, which runs counter to what might be expected based on crowding-out theories or theories of individualism (discussed in Chapters 1 and 6, respectively). The high rates are more in line with institutional explanations that stress the importance of e.g. the openness of the state (in a broad sense) and the degree of decentralization of the

state (Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001; Stadelmann-Steffen & Freitag, 2011; see also Chapters 1 and 9).

The most recent numbers suggest that the highest volunteer rate is found in Norway, where 61% of the population volunteers, followed by Sweden, where 53% of the population volunteers, and then Denmark, where 35% of the population volunteers.

In Norway, the figure suggests an upward trend, as the volunteer rate has risen from 51% in 1998 to 61% in 2014, the latter of which is the highest level of volunteering measured in Norway for the period under investigation. However, the Norwegian volunteer rate appears to have fluctuated quite a bit across the period⁴. In Sweden, the volunteer rate appears stable, with about half the population volunteering and only minor fluctuations over the studied period. Finally, the Danish volunteer rate increased from 28% in 1993 to 35% in 2004 but remained stable at around 35% from 2004 to 2012.

We conclude by remarking that the high and stable volunteer rates we observe in the Scandinavian countries do not imply that replacements in the volunteer work force have not taken place during the period of investigation. From previous research, we know that there is a large turnover in the volunteer work force, even in periods with stable rates (Frederiksen & Møberg, 2014; Svedberg et al., 2010). Accordingly, the stability in the size of the volunteer work forces in Scandinavia does not reflect rigid voluntary organizations with little turnover but rather that the Scandinavian countries enjoy a large pool of potential volunteers from which organizations can continually replenish their stocks. This is also reflected in evidence that suggests most citizens in Scandinavian volunteer at some point in their lives (von Essen & Wallman Lundåsen, 2015; Frederiksen & Møberg, 2014).

Trends in and across different areas of volunteering

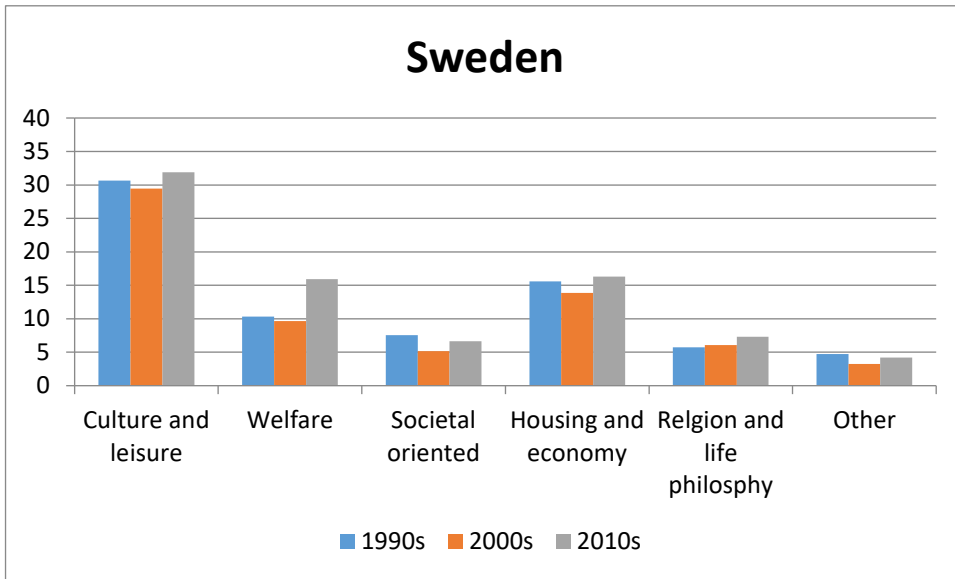
⁴ The reasons for the fluctuation in the Norwegian data, in particular the 2009 data, are discussed in Folkestad et al. (2015). As the author discusses in this report, one major reason seems to be some differences in ways of asking about volunteer work. Whereas the surveys in 1998, 2004 and 2014 used a recognition design in asking about volunteering (asking about different types of organizations), the 2009 survey used a recall design, asking specifically about whether the respondents did volunteer work or not (without listing organization types). Cnaan, Jones, Dickin, & Salomon (2011, p. 504) suggests ‘...that in many studies recognition is superior to recall, and as such it is also an appropriate and preferred technique to use for studying giving and volunteering’.

Figure 3.2 presents the volunteer rates in different areas of volunteering in each of the three Scandinavian countries. We classify the organizations into six main categories (see Methods Appendix for more details). In Table 3.1, we list the organization types as well as giving examples with ICPNO-numbers indicating what kind of organizations are included in the classifications.

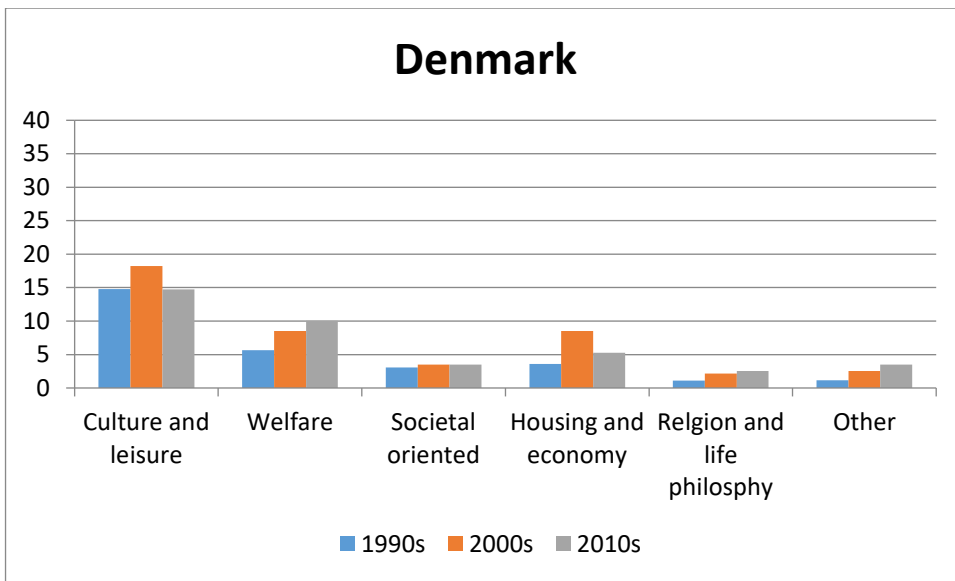
Table 3.1: Overview of organization types

Main category	ICNPO-number (Both sub-categories and main categories)
<i>Culture and leisure</i>	1 100 Culture and arts 1 200 Sports 1 300 Other recreation and social clubs
<i>Welfare</i>	2 Education & research 3 Health 4 Social services
<i>Societal oriented</i>	5 Environment 7 100 Civic and advocacy organizations 7 200 Law and legal services 7 300 Political organizations
<i>Housing and economy</i>	6 100 Economic, social and community development 6 200 Housing
<i>Religion and life philosophy</i>	10 Religious
<i>Other</i>	12 Other

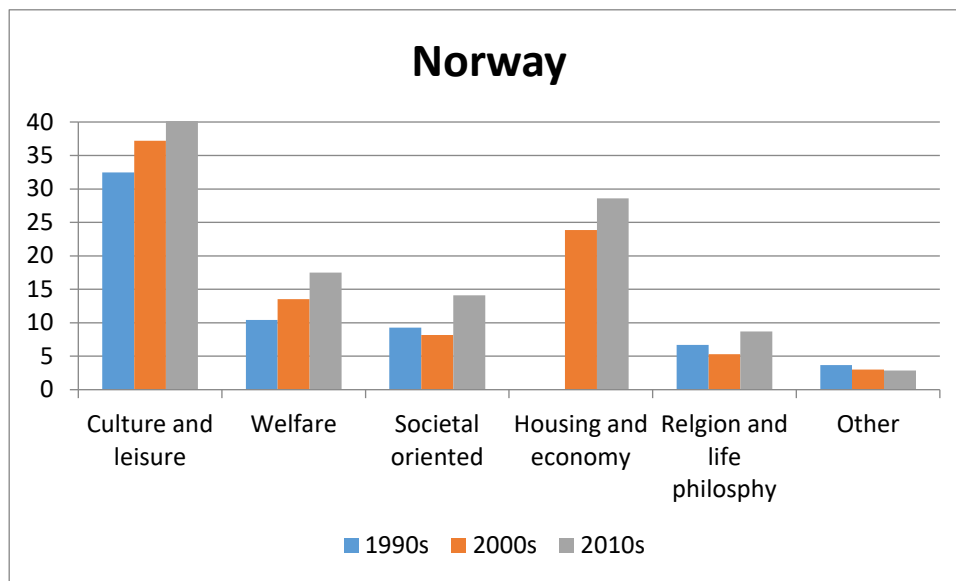
Figure 3.2 shows that the three Scandinavian countries all have in common that a large share of the voluntary work is done within culture- and leisure-oriented organizations that organize numerous different types of activities but just to name a few these include for example organizing sports and recreational activities, girl/boy scouts, theatre, and museums. The sector of housing and economy is also quite large in all three countries, albeit smaller in Denmark. An interesting trend is that voluntary work in the welfare sector that pools voluntary activities within education and research, health, and social services seems to be on the rise in all three countries. In our classification, volunteer work within the welfare category thus includes activities such as medical patient support groups, homework assistance, organized help of immigrants, and drop-in centres for the homeless.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 3.2: Volunteer rates in different areas of volunteering.⁵

Trends in volunteers' contributions of time

In order to preserve their multi-faceted functions, voluntary associations are critically dependent not only on adequate numbers of volunteers but also that volunteers contribute adequate amounts of their time. Accordingly, the most relevant measure for the productive capacity of the voluntary sectors is the total amount of volunteer person-hours. To illustrate the productive capacity of the voluntary sectors in Scandinavia, the economic value of volunteering in Denmark is estimated to be equivalent to 110,000 full-time workers (Boje & Ibsen, 2006, p. 135); the corresponding figure in Norway is 142,290 full-time workers (Arnesen, Sivesind, & Gulbrandsen, 2016, p. 57). In Sweden, which has about twice as many inhabitants as Denmark and Norway, the numbers are estimated to 350,000 full-time workers (von Essen et al., 2015).

⁵ The Housing and economy category was incomplete in the survey conducted in 1990s in Norway, and is therefore not included in this figure.

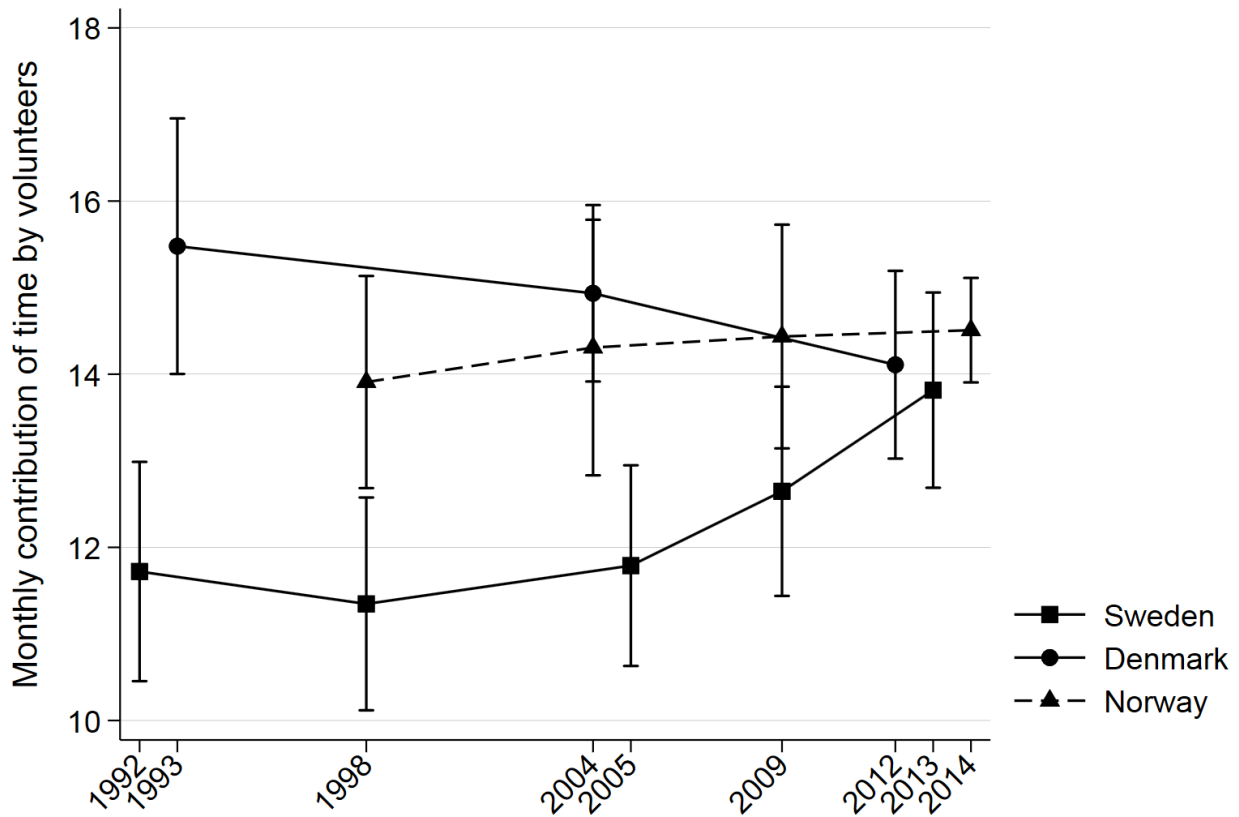


Figure 3.3: Volunteers’ monthly contribution of time in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, 1992–2014.

From Figure 3.3, we learn that there has been a trend towards convergence in volunteers’ contributions of time in Scandinavia. In the beginning of the 1990s, Danish volunteers spent significantly more time volunteering than did Swedish volunteers, but this difference has vanished by mid-2010s, with time use in Denmark decreasing and time use in Sweden increasing. In Norway, the contributions of time appear quite stable around the most recent Danish and Swedish levels. In the most recent surveys we see that in all three Scandinavian countries, volunteers spend approximately 14 hours a month on their volunteer work.

Explaining the trends

The descriptive analysis of trends in volunteering in Scandinavia suggests that the volunteer rates in Scandinavian countries are high compared to other Western countries and remarkably stable over time (Baer, 2007; Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001). We find a significantly lower volunteer rate in Denmark than in Sweden and Norway throughout the period of investigation. However, in international comparison Denmark does not have a low level of volunteering, rather it is the levels in Norway and Sweden that are exceptionally high.. The countries, however, seem to diverge when it comes to time spent on volunteering. There has been a trend towards convergence in volunteers' contributions of time such that in the mid-2010s there is no significant difference between volunteers' contributions of time between the countries.

Our analysis is complicated by the fact that some of the socio-demographic changes noted above, such as educational expansion, can be expected to drive the supply of volunteers up while others, such as the changing composition of households, can be expected to work in the opposite direction. However, in an attempt to isolate the effects of the different societal and institutional changes, we use multivariate regression techniques. This allows us to summarize whether and to what extent each of the societal and institutional changes can be linked to changes in the supply and composition of the volunteer work force.

We use a two-part model based on linear probability models in the first part and log-ordinary least squares (OLS) in the second part (Duan, Manning, Morris, & Newhouse, 1983; see also Wooldridge, 2010). The two-part model allows us to estimate separate effects of the explanatory factors on participation and time contribution. The separability of the model is important, because some factors are found to affect participation but not intensity of involvement and vice versa (Forbes & Zampelli, 2011; Qvist, 2015; van Ingen & Dekker, 2011).

Explaining trends in levels of volunteering

To investigate and explain trends in levels of volunteering we estimate a series of linear probability models that predict participation in volunteering. We begin our analysis by estimating a model that only includes variables for decade, country, gender and age. This model allows us to summarize cross-national differences in levels of volunteering and trends in volunteering over time net of gender and age. Model 1 suggests an upward trend in the levels participation over time. The model suggests that the propensity to volunteer increased about two percentage points from the 1990s to the 2000s and approximately another four percentage points from the 2000s to the 2010s, net of cross-national differences, gender and age. The model also suggests that net of the changes over time, Swedes are about four percentage points less likely to volunteer than Norwegians, and Danes are as much as twenty-one percentage points less likely to volunteer than Norwegians. In addition, we see that men are more likely to volunteer compared to women in Scandinavia (see Chapter 7), which is driven by men volunteering more for sports (when controlling for sports, the gender gap disappears).

In Model 2, we additionally control for educational level. To the extent that educational expansion explains some of the positive trend in the levels of participation over time, we should expect educational level to have a positive effect on the propensity to volunteer, and we should expect the magnitude of the coefficient for the period indicators to decrease. First, we see that education has a significant positive effect on the likelihood of participation. Scandinavians with higher education are approximately thirteen percentage points more likely to volunteer than people without a higher education. Next, comparing the period indicator coefficients between Model 1 and Model 2, we see that the magnitude of both coefficients decline. The 2010s period indicator is nearly halved, from 0.040 to 0.023, and additional tests show that the difference is statistically significantly ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that nearly half of the positive trend in the levels of volunteering between the 2000s and 2010s in Scandinavia is explained by educational expansion.

Next, in Model 3, we include an indicator for employment status. From this model, we learn that Scandinavians who are employed are four percentage points more likely to volunteer than those who are not employed, but the coefficient from the period indicators is left virtually unchanged after controlling for employment status. The latter indicates that the trends in volunteering are not explained by changes in the proportion of the population who are employed in the paid work force.

In Model 4, we additionally control for marital status and children in the household to examine the effects of changing family structures. The model suggests that being married or having a cohabiting partner does not significantly affect the likelihood of participation. Children in the household, on the other hand, has a significant positive effect. From the coefficient, we learn that Scandinavians with children in the household are approximately eight percentage points more likely to participate in volunteering than those without. Moreover, we see that the magnitude of the 1990s period indicator increases upon controlling for marital status and children in the household. This indicates that if the share of Scandinavians with children in the household had not been larger in the 1990s compared to the 2000s, then there would be a stronger upward trend in participation during the period from the 1990s to the 2000s.

In Model 5 we examine how personal income may influence the likelihood of participation. We have standardized the personal income variable and grouped respondents by percentile into deciles. We thereby avoid differences across countries and time in terms of currency and inflation/deflation. The results indicate that the relationship between personal income and volunteering is positive and significant. Increasing personal income by one decile increased the probability of volunteering by roughly 1 percentage point, which in turn means that the highest earning tenth of the population is more likely to volunteer by ten percentage points than those with lowest personal income.

In Model 6, we add interactions between the period and country indicators. This model allows us to examine whether there are cross-national differences in the trends in volunteering, net of the factors for which we control. There are two significant interaction terms. The first significant interaction term indicates that the upward trend in the levels of volunteering in the period from the 1990s to the 2000s does not apply to Sweden, which is in line with the descriptive results presented in Figure 3.1. The second significant interaction term indicates that the upward trend in the levels of volunteering in the period from the 2000s to the 2010s does not apply to Denmark, which is also in line with the descriptive results in Figure 3.1.

Table 3.2: Linear probability models predicting participation in volunteering.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
1990s	-0.017* (0.008)	-0.011 (0.008)	-0.014 (0.008)	-0.021* (0.008)	-0.023** (0.008)	-0.024 (0.015)
2010s	0.040*** (0.007)	0.023** (0.007)	0.021** (0.007)	0.020** (0.007)	0.018* (0.007)	0.034** (0.011)
Sweden	-0.040*** (0.008)	-0.032*** (0.008)	-0.031*** (0.008)	-0.036*** (0.008)	-0.036*** (0.008)	-0.043** (0.013)
Denmark	-0.213*** (0.007)	-0.204*** (0.007)	-0.200*** (0.007)	-0.205*** (0.008)	-0.210*** (0.008)	-0.180*** (0.013)
Female	-0.019** (0.006)	-0.019** (0.006)	-0.018** (0.006)	-0.020** (0.006)	-0.042*** (0.007)	-0.043*** (0.007)
Age	0.016*** (0.001)	0.011*** (0.001)	0.009*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)
Age × Age	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Secondary education		0.073** (0.008)	0.067** (0.008)	0.064** (0.008)	0.057*** (0.009)	0.058*** (0.009)
Higher education		0.132*** (0.009)	0.124*** (0.009)	0.118*** (0.009)	0.105*** (0.009)	0.105*** (0.009)
Employed			0.037*** (0.008)	0.024** (0.008)	-0.004 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.009)
Married/partner				0.014 (0.009)	0.010 (0.009)	0.009 (0.009)
Children				0.082*** (0.008)	0.081*** (0.008)	0.082*** (0.008)
Personal income					0.011*** (0.002)	0.011*** (0.002)
Period-country interactions:						
1990s × Sweden						0.032 (0.020)
1990s × Denmark						-0.027 (0.021)
2010s × Sweden						0.005 (0.020)
2010s × Denmark						-0.053** (0.017)
Constant	0.247*** (0.023)	0.262*** (0.023)	0.279*** (0.023)	0.311*** (0.023)	0.347*** (0.024)	0.338*** (0.024)
Observations	24255	24255	24255	24255	24255	24255
Adj. R ²	0.053	0.061	0.062	0.068	0.068	0.068

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Multiple imputation has been used to complete the dataset.

Changes in the determinants of volunteering over time

Table 3.3 presents the results of separate linear probability models for each country that predicts participation in volunteering with interactions between the determinants of volunteering and the period indicators.

In the model for Sweden, we see that none of the interaction terms are statistically significant. This indicates that the determinants of participation in volunteering used in the models above have been relatively stable over time in Sweden. In the model for Denmark, we see that the interaction term between the 2010s period indicator and employment status is the only one that is statistically significant. The interaction term is negative, which indicates that being employed has become a less strong predictor of volunteering over time in Denmark. In the model for Norway, we see that four of the interaction terms are statistically significant. The first two interaction terms between the 2010s period indicator and the two educational level indicators show that education has become a less strong predictor of participation in volunteering over time in Norway. This implies that the educational gaps in participation are narrowing in Norway (Folkestad et al., 2015), but the same tendency is not found in Sweden and Denmark. Additional analysis (not shown here) suggests that the decline in the effect of education in Norway is mainly explained by the fact that people with primary education have become more likely to volunteer while the propensity to volunteer among higher educational groups has remained stable over time. Being married or having a cohabiting partner has also become a less strong predictor of participation over time in Norway. However, the model also shows that Norway is the only country where the main effect of being married is significantly positive. Finally, we see from the table that having children in the household has become a stronger predictor of participation over time in Norway (Folkestad et al., 2015).

Table 3.3: Separate linear probability models for each country predicting participation in volunteering with period interactions.

	Sweden	Denmark	Norway
1990s	0.097* (0.042)	-0.041 (0.032)	0.031 (0.042)
2010s	0.123* (0.050)	-0.027 (0.031)	0.117*** (0.032)
Secondary education	0.057* (0.025)	0.036 (0.022)	0.119*** (0.025)
Higher education	0.121*** (0.032)	0.082*** (0.023)	0.130*** (0.029)
Employed	0.012 (0.027)	0.004 (0.025)	0.024 (0.022)
Married/partner	-0.004 (0.021)	-0.037 (0.024)	0.070*** (0.020)
Children in the household	0.092*** (0.022)	0.054** (0.020)	0.073*** (0.021)
Female	-0.063*** (0.013)	-0.035** (0.011)	-0.034** (0.010)
Age	0.003 (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)
Age × Age	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Personal income	0.016** (0.005)	0.012** (0.004)	0.015*** (0.004)
Period interactions:			
1990s × Secondary education	0.031 (0.036)	0.025 (0.035)	-0.041 (0.040)
1990s × Higher education	0.033 (0.043)	0.005 (0.041)	0.047 (0.045)
2010s × Secondary education	-0.036 (0.049)	-0.001 (0.034)	-0.085* (0.033)
2010s × Higher education	0.032 (0.055)	0.013 (0.035)	-0.078* (0.036)
1990s × Employed	-0.026 (0.045)	0.028 (0.038)	0.006 (0.038)
2010s × Employed	-0.060 (0.045)	-0.084* (0.035)	0.010 (0.027)
1990s × Married/partner	0.014 (0.040)	0.008 (0.036)	-0.052 (0.034)
2010s × Married/partner	0.043 (0.037)	0.035 (0.031)	-0.064* (0.027)
1990s × Children in the household	-0.041 (0.032)	0.045 (0.032)	0.001 (0.034)
2010s × Children in the household	-0.058 (0.041)	-0.008 (0.028)	0.060* (0.025)
1990s × Personal income	-0.017* (0.006)	-0.012 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.006)
2010s × Personal income	-0.012	0.006	-0.001

Constant	(0.008) 0.303***	(0.006) 0.146***	(0.005) 0.249***
Observations	(0.050) 6044	(0.042) 7783	(0.043) 10428
R^2			

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Multiple imputation has been used to complete the dataset.

Explaining trends in different areas of volunteering

In this section, we use separate linear probability models to predict participation in six different areas of volunteering. Table 3.4 presents the results of linear probability models that control for educational level, employment, marital status, children in the household, gender and age.

The models show some important shifts between the different areas. In line with our theoretical expectations, the Scandinavian countries have witnessed an increase in the levels of welfare volunteering over time. However, the increase is not as large as we might expect. In the period from the 1990s to the 2000s the propensity to participate in welfare volunteering increased by approximately two percentage points, and by a further single percentage point from the 2000s to the 2010s. The propensity to volunteer in the areas of culture and leisure as well as housing and economy also increased over time. The only area to witness a decline is the societal oriented area, which declined by about one percentage point in the period from the 1990s to the 2000s, but this decline did not carry forward to the 2010s.

Table 3.4: Linear probability models predicting participation in six areas of volunteering.

	Culture and leisure	Welfare	Societal oriented	Housing and economy	Religion and life philosophy	Other
1990s	-0.035*** (0.008)	-0.018*** (0.005)	0.012** (0.004)	-0.045*** (0.006)	0.002 (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)
2010s	0.008 (0.007)	0.014** (0.005)	0.006 (0.004)	-0.010 (0.005)	0.005 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
Sweden	-0.056*** (0.007)	-0.008 (0.005)	-0.024*** (0.004)	-0.048*** (0.006)	0.001 (0.004)	0.013*** (0.003)
Denmark	-0.194*** (0.007)	-0.039*** (0.005)	-0.056*** (0.004)	-0.140*** (0.005)	-0.042*** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)
Secondary education	0.043*** (0.008)	0.003 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.004)	0.022*** (0.006)	0.000 (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)
Higher education	0.056*** (0.009)	0.034*** (0.006)	0.020*** (0.005)	0.032*** (0.007)	0.021*** (0.004)	0.005 (0.003)
Children	0.113*** (0.007)	0.042*** (0.005)	-0.011** (0.004)	0.008 (0.005)	0.007* (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)
Female	-0.075*** (0.006)	0.025*** (0.004)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.016*** (0.005)	0.006 (0.003)	-0.007** (0.002)
Age	0.001 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.002*** (0.000)
Age × Age	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Personal income	0.009*** (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.011*** (0.001)	-0.002** (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)
Constant	0.292*** (0.021)	0.081*** (0.015)	0.080*** (0.012)	0.010 (0.017)	0.034*** (0.010)	-0.007 (0.008)
Observations	24255	24255	24255	24255	24255	24255
Adj. R^2	0.068	0.012	0.011	0.049	0.012	0.008

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Multiple imputation has been used to complete the dataset.

Explaining trends in the volunteers' contributions of time

Table 3.5 presents the results of linear regression models that predict the logarithm of the volunteers' contributions of time (i.e. we exclude non-volunteers from the analysis in this section). Model 1, which includes period and country indicators as well as controlling for gender and age, suggests no general time trend in volunteers' contributions of time in Scandinavian countries. However, the model suggests that volunteers on average contribute 31% fewer hours in Sweden compared to Norway conditional on period effects. Furthermore, the models shows that females are contributing on average 19% fewer hours compared to males.

In Model 2, we additionally include indicators for educational level. Interestingly, we see that educational level has no statistically significant effect on volunteers' contributions of time beyond its positive effect on participation.

In Model 3, we additionally include the employment indicator. This model shows that Scandinavian volunteers who are also employed in the paid work force spend about 10% less time on their volunteer work.

In Model 4, we include indicators for marital status and children in the household. The model indicates that marital status does not predict volunteers' contributions of time. However, the model indicates that Scandinavians who volunteer and have children in the household spend 5% fewer hours volunteering compared to volunteers who do not have children in the household.

In Model 6 we examine how personal income relates to variations in time use. The result is negative and significant, suggesting that increasing personal income from one decile to the next decreases contributions of time by around 2%.

In Model 7, we interact the period indicators with country indicators. This model allows us to assess whether the trends in volunteers' contributions of time differ between countries. However, none of the interaction terms are significant.

In Model 8, we include the membership variable, which controls for the effect of being a member of the organization for which one does volunteer work. The result is positive and very significant, suggesting that members contribute more hours of volunteer work than non-members. Members spend around 33% more hours in volunteering than non-members.

Table 3.5: Linear regression models predicting log(hours) among volunteers.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
1990s	0.021 (0.031)	0.018 (0.032)	0.028 (0.032)	0.035 (0.032)	0.035 (0.032)	0.040 (0.058)	0.061 (0.066)
2010s	-0.007 (0.028)	-0.003 (0.028)	0.001 (0.028)	0.004 (0.029)	0.009 (0.029)	-0.018 (0.043)	0.019 (0.055)
Sweden	-0.305*** (0.028)	-0.307*** (0.029)	-0.309*** (0.029)	-0.306*** (0.029)	-0.312*** (0.029)	-0.345*** (0.048)	-0.286*** (0.065)
Denmark	0.020 (0.031)	0.017 (0.031)	0.004 (0.031)	0.008 (0.031)	0.015 (0.032)	0.008 (0.053)	0.050 (0.061)
Female	-0.194*** (0.023)	-0.193*** (0.023)	-0.198*** (0.023)	-0.196*** (0.023)	-0.224*** (0.025)	-0.225*** (0.025)	-0.240*** (0.030)
Age	0.000 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.008 (0.005)	0.011* (0.005)	0.016** (0.005)	0.016** (0.005)	0.014* (0.006)
Age × Age	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Secondary education		-0.042 (0.034)	-0.030 (0.035)	-0.028 (0.035)	-0.017 (0.035)	-0.021 (0.035)	-0.017 (0.042)
Higher education		-0.052 (0.036)	-0.037 (0.036)	-0.033 (0.036)	-0.003 (0.038)	-0.006 (0.038)	-0.020 (0.045)
Employed			-0.096** (0.034)	-0.084* (0.035)	-0.045 (0.039)	-0.038 (0.039)	-0.044 (0.043)
Married/partner				-0.031 (0.031)	-0.034 (0.031)	-0.040 (0.031)	-0.054 (0.040)
Children in the household				-0.054 (0.028)	-0.046 (0.029)	-0.046 (0.029)	-0.061 (0.033)
Personal income					-0.019** (0.007)	-0.019** (0.007)	-0.019* (0.008)
Member of organization							0.334*** (0.039)
Period-country interactions							
1990s × Sweden						-0.028 (0.074)	-0.125 (0.092)
1990s × Denmark						0.070 (0.089)	0.045 (0.094)
2010s × Sweden						0.140* (0.068)	0.083 (0.082)
2010s × Denmark						-0.033 (0.070)	-0.030 (0.077)
Constant	2.135*** (0.093)	2.138*** (0.094)	2.079*** (0.096)	2.042*** (0.098)	2.006*** (0.098)	2.023*** (0.101)	1.785*** (0.125)
Observations	8458	8458	8458	8458	8458	8458	6173
R ²	0.024	0.024	0.025	0.026	0.037	0.037	0.052

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Multiple imputation has been used to complete the dataset.

In sum, time spent volunteering in Scandinavia seems to have some common features. A significant impact of gender is found in the data, wherein the female population spends significantly less time volunteering than the male population in Scandinavia. Even though education increases the propensity to volunteer, it does not seem to predict the time spent volunteering in the models above. Income, on the other hand, seems to have a negative impact on the time spent volunteering; an increase in income corresponds with a decrease in time spent volunteering. Organizational attachment seems to have a significant impact on time spent volunteering, with more time is spent volunteering by those who are members than by those who are not.

Conclusion and discussion

In this chapter, we set out to examine trends in volunteering in Scandinavia. We find that the overall levels of participation in volunteering are high and stable in the Scandinavian countries from the 1990s to the 2010s, with a small upward trend. The volunteering levels are all high in international comparisons, but they are markedly higher in Norway and Sweden than in Denmark. Volunteers' contributions of time appear relatively stable in Norway, but Denmark has witnessed a slight decline and Sweden has witnessed a slight increase. There has been a trend towards convergence in volunteers' contributions of time in Scandinavian countries. Given that the changes in individual level factors that have been investigated in this chapter often comprise certain shares of the population, we did not expect to find any dramatic changes, but rather more gradual changes. In sum, these findings seem to go against the more pessimistic academic discourse of a general disengagement within civil society (Putnam, 2000). Scandinavians do still according to our data, to a large extent, contribute as volunteers.

Education is the most important factor in explaining trends of volunteering in our analyses and nearly half of the upward trend in the levels of volunteering can be attributed to the expansion of education in the Scandinavian countries. The analysis also indicated that the higher levels of volunteering between Sweden and Norway on the one hand, and Denmark on the other hand, cannot

be attributed to socio-demographic differences between the countries, as the gap is left unchanged when controlling for socio-demographic factors.

In what areas people in Scandinavia volunteer seems to change over the investigated time period. Most notably, the Scandinavian countries have increased their levels of volunteering within welfare organizations and in the areas of culture and leisure. However, the increase welfare areas is not as large as we might expect, given the political and public interests in Scandinavia towards welfare volunteering.

In this study, we have used individual level factors to explain trends across time. To further understand the remaining differences between the countries, we would probably also have to investigate the importance of other structural factors. One important factor may be differences across the countries in the organizations' ability to retain volunteers as members of the organizations. Membership as such may contribute towards a long-term commitment between volunteers and the organization. Given the historically strong role of organizational membership in the Scandinavian context, it is important to further investigate the role of membership in understanding the overall stability of the rates of volunteering. A weakening membership rate among volunteers may first result in a change in how much time volunteers contribute. Our analyses showed that membership was a significant predictor of time spent volunteering even when controlling for other socioeconomic or demographic factors. This is in line with previous findings that indicate that the decline in time spent volunteering in Denmark might be partly explained by dropping shares of volunteers who are members of the organizations for which they volunteer. It seems likely that the time spent volunteering, rather than the likelihood to volunteer, is more sensitive to changes in membership rates. We must, however, emphasize that even though there is a tendency towards decreasing levels of organizational membership among the volunteers in Denmark and Norway, membership rates in Scandinavia remain at an exceptionally high level compared to most other European countries.

Other structural factors that are important to investigate further include the differences between the Scandinavian countries in the structure of the civil society organizations (small vs. large organizations, where small organizations are likely more dependent upon volunteers). As shown in previous studies (Wollebæk, Ibsen, & Sisiainen, 2010), organizational density also varies across the Scandinavian countries; Norway and Sweden have a more dispersed population and a higher density of organizations in rural areas of the countries than Denmark. These organizations

tend to be small and explicitly depend upon volunteering, and this may in part explain the differences in the propensity to volunteer between Norway and Sweden on the one hand and Denmark on the other hand.

The overall pattern that emerges when examining the trends in volunteering in Scandinavia is stability. Stability in terms of who participates, and relative stability in terms of how many people volunteer and how much time they spend volunteering.

Another important characteristic of the voluntary sector is that the pattern of participation is heavily directed towards sports, leisure and spare-time activities. To exaggerate the findings a bit: the typical Scandinavian volunteer is a middle-aged (35–50 year) father who is a soccer trainer. In other words: the dominating field in the voluntary sector is one that is more inwardly oriented and related to activities that benefit the members/participants. However, as this chapter also shows, there is substantial variation within the Scandinavian volunteer sector, for example, there is an increase in volunteer activities related to the field of welfare. This is a field that is often more time-consuming in terms of voluntary activities, with a more outwardly oriented perspective, and where, for example, women participate at a higher rate than men. These shifts in areas where people in Scandinavia volunteer change over time and it is difficult to predict how these changes will affect the landscape of volunteering and society as a whole. Finally, we can conclude that even though the trends in the three countries point at slightly different directions, the general trend indicates that volunteering is an aspect of many Scandinavians' lives.

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