

Dutch Citizen Participation in Decision- Making: A Volunteer Perspective

Getting people involved

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Abstract

This article sheds a light on what the individual motivations are to start participating in governmental decision-making. The study compares the motivations of both volunteer work and participating in the governmental decision-making process and also whether these are equal. A cross-sectional survey (N=113) was used to gather data. Results indicate that there are some comparisons between volunteer work and participation. The motivators' values, enhancement and understanding make a unique contribution to both volunteering and participating. Next to that young-adults are more highly motivated by career motives to participate than older inhabitants. However the new proposed model is not fully supported by the data. Results are discussed in this article. Future research is needed to come up with other factors that predict behaviour towards participation and to examine which downsides are to be found when it comes to citizen participation.

Introduction

For local governments it is important to have the support of their inhabitants, since inhabitants will be more satisfied with local politics and the decisions made by local politicians when they support the municipality board. A first step towards this support comes from elections where inhabitants vote for their representatives. However, this first step is not enough to sustain the support of inhabitants for a longer period of time. After the elections, representatives disappear in anonymity.

Since there is little contact between inhabitants and the town council and because inhabitants don't know what is going on during meetings of the town council, there is a gap between local politics and the inhabitants of a municipality. Because of this gap there is a lack understanding about how a municipality board operates, which causes a lack of support when it comes to governmental decisions that will affect civilians or villages in a municipality. Such decisions could involve zoning changes, establishment of a residential area or raising taxes. The widening gap and the lack of support evolve into a bigger problem, and that is the lack of confidence in local government. This lack of confidence could even lead to political cynicism.

Political cynicism refers to the degree of negative affect towards the government and is a statement of the belief that the government is not functioning and producing outputs in accord with individual expectations. (Miller, 1974). Due to this cynicism the trust in representatives reduces which could even lead to aversion towards the town council. Therefore decisions made are being viewed more negatively over time which causes the gap between inhabitants and board to grow since both groups have been trapped into a downward spiral (de Vreese, 2004; Erber & Lau, 1990; Litt, 1963; Miller, 1974).

To avoid this from happening, it is crucial for local politicians to be aware of the inhabitant's expectations. Because of the current lack of awareness and inhabitant needs, citizen participation is becoming more important in Dutch society. This process especially takes place in local governmental settings. People are more involved with decisions taken at that level, because decisions about residential areas and taxes directly affect them. This research will focus on such a local governmental setting, namely the municipality of Tubbergen.

Looking at Tubbergen, where participation is a rather new topic for both inhabitants and municipality board, it is remarkable that the volunteer rate is high. In Tubbergen, one out of three persons is a volunteer, so it might be very useful to focus on this group since they are in the midst of society and therefore know what is going on and what is needed for improvement.

Tubbergen is a small community in the east of Holland divided over 9 villages. Due to the fact that the elections from 2010 resulted in a radical change in the political landscape, the views of town council also changed. The main theme of the new municipality is "*Minder overheid, meer samenleving*" which means as much as "Less government, more community".

The villages and communities of which this municipality is made up, all have a strong bond with citizens among their own village or community. Therefore a lot of citizens are performing volunteer activities in their neighbourhood. Because of the high volunteer rate in this municipality, Tubbergen has the potential to show whether motivations to participate and to volunteer are equal for the majority of the inhabitants.

Next to that, participation can be seen as a form of volunteering. This approach is new in citizen participation literature. In both volunteering and citizen participation, people offer their spare time, do not get money in return and do it to help and benefit others.

By doing this the gap between municipality board and citizens can be closed and both groups will gain trust in the other. This will lead to more democratic decision-making, absence of political cynicism and a more harmonic society where there is confidence in both the town council and the citizens of the municipality.

This study claims that motivations to volunteer and motivations to participate can be assumed equal. To test this hypothesis the Volunteer Factor Index (VFI) of Clary and Snyder (1999) is used and rebuilt for participation in decision-making to see if the statement holds up.

Through literature a framework will be built to outline why participation can be seen as a form of volunteer work. First participation is addressed, followed by the embedding into volunteer literature. Next, the study is outlined and results are presented. Last, conclusions are drawn and directions for future research are discussed.

Citizen participation

In the eighties and nineties democratic renewal found its way through Europe (Hamlett, 1984). Democracy in that period was not seen as democratic decision making but as a site of community leadership, improving management or building social capital (Sullivan, 2001). Therefore many authors opted for some sort of civic engagement in politics (Farrelly, 2009). Birmingham, in the eighties, already opted for a 30-minute period of open citizen participation and questions from the public which could be useful and important for innovation (Farrelly, 2009).

A more developed form of the civic engagement opted by Farrelly (2009) is citizen participation. Citizen participation is defined by Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger and Wandersman (1984) as a process in which individuals take part in decision making in the institutions, programs and environments that affect them. Participation is wider than civic engagement, since engagement only focuses on the people's voice. Participation takes a variety of forms such as advisors on boards or committees, policy makers on neighbourhood councils who influence municipal policy, and residents in local

community organizations who develop block and neighbourhood activities (Florin & Wandersman, 1990).

Advantages of citizen participation

Lots of theories are present when it comes to citizen participation and the advantages for the political system (see for example: Barnes, 1999; Farrelly, 2009; Fischer, 1993; Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Geissel, 2009; Geurtz & van de Wijdeven, 2010; Irvin & Stansburry, 2004; Leach & Wingfield, 1999; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2004; Michaels & De Graaf, 2010; and Sullivan, 2001). Research that has been done is mainly conceptual; stating that citizen participation is useful for the government and that it has a lot of advantages.

First, Barnes (1999) describes citizen participation as a necessary condition for a cohesive society and that citizen participation will decrease social exclusion. Furthermore, there is evidence that citizen participation is related to improvements to the neighbourhood and the community, stronger interpersonal relations and feelings of personal and political efficacy (Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Michaels & De Graaf, 2010).

Citizen participation also has advantages for the inhabitants who are participating in decision-making. First, is the educative function, whereas citizens may increase their civic skills and become more competent to participate (Irving & Stansburry, 2004; Michaels & De Graaf, 2010). Second, participation has an integrative function, because of the fact that participating contributes to the feeling of being a public citizen as a consequence they might feel more responsibility for public decisions. Last, participation plays a role in the legitimacy of the decision (Fischer, 1993). Rules will be more acceptable since all groups involved will form the opinion and not only the municipality board (Michaels & De Graaf, 2010).

Next to the advantages stated above, citizen participation also has economic advantages. Because of the financial crisis and huge cutbacks also local governmental institutions have to do something to reduce their costs. Participation will save money in two ways. First procedures will take less time because of the fact that everyone can ventilate their opinion about the subject at once. Second because evaluation will be shorter since citizens can indicate their wishes and desires at an early stage, so a decision is less likely to be reversed (Naar buiten, 2010).

However, none of these researches have been confirmed by empirical evidence. This paper is a first step to empirical evidence in citizen participation literature as it sheds a light on motivations to participate. In other words, why people would make that first step to actually make a difference and think side-by-side with municipal officials.

Participation in relation to volunteering.

When looking at what makes a citizen a participating citizen, one could say that this is closely related to volunteer work or might even be volunteer work. To establish this link, participation is placed into a volunteer perspective.

Bussel and Forbess (2002) give an onset towards a volunteer definition. The authors state that it is difficult to define the word volunteer, because in practice there is not a homogeneous group when it comes to 'the volunteer'. The widest approach to what a volunteer is, is that a volunteer has a free

choice towards his/her activities and contributes his/her own time without a penalty or reward associated to it (Bussel & Forbess, 2002).

The definition as described above contains fixed concepts where practice is more complex, therefore Cnaan, Handy & Wadsworth (1996) give the preference to a continuum of the concepts free choice and reward. The free choice continuum starts with “free will” and ends with “the obligation to do voluntary work”. For reward the continuum starts with “none at all” and ends with “allowance or a small reward”. So reality is that a volunteer will ‘move’ along these concepts.

Last, the fields in which volunteers operate are rather diverse. It is possible for individuals or communities to help improve quality of life for others, help to others in emergency situations, help with sports activities or just update a website every now and then (Bussel & Forbess, 2002).

Participation in this context

When looking at participation, it can be seen as a form of volunteering. There are three arguments to explain why:

First of all, participation fits into this wide approach, since when participating, an individual will also contribute own time without getting rewarded directly for it, nor is a penalty involved when a decision does not lead to the desired outcome in the end. Next to that also participation is a choice which is made by the individual. Therefore it is possible to place participation into the wide context of a volunteer Bussel and Forbess (2002) posed.

Second, looking at a participating citizen the same concepts that Cnaan et al. (1996) outline can be applicable. Participating can be purely out of “free will” but a citizen can also feel obliged to do something for their community. Rewards will not consist of money, but will be small such as personal growth or a safer neighbourhood. Also in this area participation could be seen as a form of volunteering.

Last, the fields in which a governmental participant operates can also be diverse and differ from time to time, since those fields are related to local governmental themes. Therefore participation will also have a changing character because the community is evolving. Looking at the definition of what a volunteer is and how citizen participation fits into this concept, one could say that citizen participation is a form of volunteer work.

The motivations to volunteer

When trying to get citizens on board local governments have to know what drives them and gets citizens enthusiastic to actually participate. As previously posed in this article, citizen participation can be viewed as a form of volunteer work. Volunteer literature, unlike participation literature, does consist of empirical evidence concerning motivations to actually start volunteering.

Intention is the most important predictor when it comes to people really showing up at a volunteer activity (Harrison, 1995). Therefore it is vital to investigate if inhabitants have the intention to actually mean something for the government.

When intention is there it does not necessarily mean that people will actually participate in voluntary activities. People have to be motivated to do something for the community. Clary and Snyder (1999) distinguish six factors that influence actual participation in voluntary activities; the functions are

explained in Table 1. This table shows why people might conduct volunteer activities. Drawing on the Volunteer Factor Index (VFI), values, understanding and enhancement are the most important functions and that career, social and protective are less important (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Anderson and Moore (1978) contribute almost the same motives for an individual to volunteer, the motives Clary & Snyder (1999) present are based on these insights.

Table 1.
Six functions that influence voluntary participation, ordered in significance (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

So according to Clary & Snyder (1999) individuals find it most important to care for people around

Function	Conceptual definition
Values	The individual volunteers in order to express or act on important values like humanitarianism.
Understanding	The volunteer is seeking to learn more about the world or exercise skills that are often unused.
Enhancement	One can grow and develop psychologically through volunteer activities
Career	The volunteer has the goal of gaining career related experience through volunteering
Social	Volunteering allows an individual to strengthen his or her social relationships
Protective	The individual uses volunteering to reduce negative feelings, such as guilt, or to address personal problems.

them and stand up for them. Next to that, individuals want to understand the world and try to learn new skills by doing volunteer activities. Further they want to grow and develop through volunteer activities. Redirecting this to participation, this would mean that an individual finds it important to help people in his/her community. They can gain new skills about politics and learn about that subject and simultaneously be able to develop psychologically through participating with local government.

Hypotheses

First of all hypotheses about volunteerism are discussed to check whether previous research holds for Tubbergen, then participation is discussed to see whether motivations could be seen equal amongst these two groups.

Volunteering vs. participating

Literature states that participation can be seen as volunteering. When a citizen participates with local government, decisions made will be more democratic. Irvin and Stansbury (2004) define breaking gridlock, whereas Michaels and De Graaf (2010) speak of deliberation. Both indicate a situation where local government and the citizens of the municipality reach a conjunctive decision concerning a certain subject. By doing this, the decision becomes more democratic, more applicable to the

situation and mutual trust is created since it is a coproduction (Farrelly, 2009; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2004; Michaels & De Graaf, 2010). By working side-by-side, it also contributes to the building of social capital and it reduces social exclusion (Lowndes & Sullivan, 2004). Comparing these outcomes to the motives Clary and Snyder (1999) outline, it is clear that the values and social motivations are applicable here. A person can mean something for their society and express important values in meetings with municipality board and because of those meetings they will participate in social relationships.

Citizens might want to participate in decision-making because they are able to ventilate their own opinion or the one from a majority of people close to them. It can become a duty or an obligation to their neighbourhood to keep a foot in the door when negotiating with local government. This could cause an obstruction for local government (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004) but will also cause a feeling of fighting for the good cause among citizens. After all they can influence local government by ventilating the interests of a big group.

One could say that Clary & Snyder (1999) also defined two motivators, similar to education or skills and virtue, namely career and understanding. So when participating people will learn from the local authorities and vice versa (Michaels & De Graaf, 2010). When citizens are aware of the fact that they can learn from participating, it could be a motivator for them to actually get involved.

People feel responsible for clubs and other associations nearby and for other people who are close to them. One could assume that, because of that, values may be an important motivation to volunteer. Because of the fact that a lot of people feel the same way and feel responsible for their community, it would make sense that also the social motivation is an important predictor why people engage in volunteer work. It is a way to strengthen their social relationships, or maybe stronger, a way to fit in with society. This causes protection to be an important motivator because participation can help them escape from their own problems

Finally, enhancement might be a motivator, because of the fact that people feel better when being part of their society. Tubbergen is made of people who volunteer, so when also taking part in volunteer activities a person will feel better about him- or herself since people close to them are doing the same. Therefore H1 is formulated:

Since participation here is seen as a form of volunteer work, motivations for both should be the same. Therefore hypothesis 1 is formulated:

H1: Motivations to volunteer and to participate in decision-making are similar for inhabitants of the municipality of Tubbergen.

The VFI

Clary and Snyder (1999) opt for a model that consists of six factors/motivators that can predict whether or not an individual is willing to volunteer. Findings concerning the importance of all motivations clearly point to the multi motivational nature of volunteering (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Therefore more than one motive will decide whether an individual will become a volunteer. Different volunteers pursue different goals or could be pursuing multiple goals, so it makes sense that one will not be affected by just one motivation. Therefore hypothesis 2 is formulated:

H2: Every value in the VFI will have a unique contribution to the willingness to volunteer.

The PFI

Since the study is trying to establish a link between volunteering and participating, the VFI can be read as a PFI. So that motivations to become a volunteer also will be motivations to participate in governmental decision making. Again it is true that a single motivation will not decide whether an individual will participate in decision making. Individuals can have different or multiple goals. Therefore hypothesis 3 is formulated:

H3: Every value in the PFI will have a unique contribution to the willingness to participate in decision-making.

Since the VFI predicts whether a person is willing to volunteer - and motivations between volunteering and participating are assumed to be equal, it would make sense that a person- who does volunteer work will be more motivated to become involved in participation. This because of the underlying motives, for becoming a volunteer or a participant, are the same. When motivations to volunteer and to participate are similar, it would makes sense that volunteer will be more motivated to both volunteer and participate. Therefore hypothesis 4 is formulated:

H4: Volunteers will be more willing to participate in decision-making than non-volunteers.

Finally, there can be differences among groups. According to Clary and Snyder (1999) career motives are more important to young-adults than they are for older ones. As a consequence this could also be true when it comes to participating in decision making. Therefore hypothesis 5 is formulated:

H5: Young-adults will be more likely to participate in decision making than older inhabitants because of career motives.

Method

Sampling and Survey procedures

Data were collected (in May 2011) by conducting a cross-sectional survey among 300 households in the municipality of Tubbergen. The municipality consists of 9 villages with a total of nearly 20000 inhabitants. Using the Municipal Administration, a random stratified sample from 8000 households was drawn. Each village was represented proportionally in the sample.

An introduction letter was sent to all of the participants that directed them to the website www.tubbergen.nl to take part in the questionnaire.

Also text was placed in a local magazine to focus on the research. Next to that the research was promoted through the twitter account of the municipality. To make sure that people outside the municipality would not take part in the survey, the question was asked whether they did or did not live in the municipality of Tubbergen.

Response in the first week was very low, therefore emails were sent to a 100 households and the survey was published on twitter. The letter, twitter, the emails and the text in the local magazine made clear that every person over 18 present in the household was able to participate. A total of 174 questionnaires were returned. After removing 61 respondents (incomplete questionnaires and questionnaires filled out by people that had not reached the age of 18 yet) a total of 113 questionnaires was analysed.

Since e-mail, local newspaper, twitter and the website of the municipality were used to get respondents and participation was completely anonymous; it is not possible to calculate a response rate for the entire sample.

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 79 years old (mean age = 47 years and 11 and a half months). Furthermore most people in the research were male (62%) and living in Tubbergen (23%), the majority voted for the CDA in the last elections (65%). The complete demographic information of the respondents is to be found in Table 2.

When looking at the data it can be concluded that the sample is not representative for the entire population. The number of volunteers in the sample is twice as big as reality. Furthermore it is remarkable that relatively small villages as Manderveen, Vasse and Harbrinkhoek/Mariaparochie are the biggest groups in the sample.

Table 2.
Demographic variables (N=113)

Variable	Frequency	Sample (%)	Population
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	70	61,9	50,4
Female	43	38,1	49,6
<i>Village</i>			
Albergen	15	13,4	16,8
Fleringen	3	2,7	4,3
Geesteren	14	12,5	20,4
Harbrinkhoek/Mariaparochie	21	18,8	7,5
Langeveen	4	3,6	5,9
Manderveen	13	11,6	2,9
Reutum	7	6,2	5,8
Tubbergen	9	8,0	27,0
Vasse	26	23,2	4,5
<i>Voted last election</i>			
CDA	73	65,2	43,4
GB / VVD	18	16,1	41,1
PvdA	12	10,7	15,3
Rather do not tell	9	8,0	-
<i>Volunteer</i>			
Yes	123	73,2	33,4
No	45	26,8	66,6
<i>Age</i>			
18-39	28	24,8	n.a.
> 39	85	75,2	n.a.

Instrument

Questions in the questionnaire were derived from prior research or constructed in such a way that they would fit the literature. All of the questions were adjusted or constructed for the typical Dutch context. The first question of the questionnaire checked if the participant really lived in the municipality of Tubbergen. In the second part of the questionnaire, the motivations to volunteer were checked for the inhabitants of Tubbergen. The third part consisted of questions concerning interest in local politics. Whether people were willing to participate and in which way was the fourth part of the questionnaire and finally questions were asked about demographic variables.

Motivations to volunteer

The motivations to volunteer were investigated among the sample using the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). The VFI consists of 30 statements, measured with a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = not at all important / accurate; to 7 = extremely important / accurate), about motivations to volunteer (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen & Miene, 1998). All of these questions are formulated positively. Statements as *'Volunteering is a way to escape from my own problems'* or *'Volunteer work gives me an entrance at a place I would like to work'*, were used to measure motivations. Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .91.

Participation

To investigate motivations to participate in decision making, an adjusted VFI was used. This adjusted model, the Participation Functions Inventory (PFI) was based on the VFI, 30 statements were posed on the willingness to participate in local governmental decision-making, intended to compare motivations from volunteering. A 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = do not agree at all; to 7 = totally agree) was also used here. Statements from Clary and Snyder (1999) were reformulated in such a way that they could be used to measure participation motives. Statements as *'Participating in decision-making is a way to escape from my own problems'* or *'Participating in decision-making gives me an entrance at a place I would like to work'*, were used to measure participation. Also for the construct participation reliability was measured. Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .90.

Next to the PFI, intention to participate was measured with the question *'Are you willing to take part in any form of governmental participation'*.

Demographic variables

For a description of respondents and to make distinctions between them, questions about age, gender, family situation, in which village they live, number of years living in municipality and political party voted were asked. Results can be found in Table 2.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics: Mean, Std. Dev., reliability and correlations of variables from the VFI, PFI, volunteers and willingness to participate (N = 113).

	M	SD	Coeff. α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Career Volunteers	3.25	1.55	0.84	X													
Enhancement Volunteers	4.04	1.57	0.85	.57**	X												
Social Volunteers	3.84	1.43	0.81	.61**	.63**	X											
Values Volunteers	4.17	1.49	0.82	.52**	.69**	.67**	X										
Protection Volunteers	2.83	1.48	0.86	.63**	.60**	.57**	.57**	X									
Understanding Volunteers	4.19	1.61	0.87	.71**	.76**	.66**	.74**	.52**	X								
Career Participation	3.01	1.39	0.86	.64**	.33**	.36**	.23*	.43**	.38**	X							
Enhancement Participation	3.19	1.45	0.88	.48**	.49**	.27**	.23*	.51**	.31**	.72**	X						
Social Participation	3.47	1.39	0.87	.40**	.40**	.52**	.32**	.38**	.41**	.48**	.50**	X					
Values Participation	3.89	1.44	0.89	.51**	.46**	.45**	.53**	.36**	.51**	.58**	.59**	.59**	X				
Protection Participation	2.17	1.33	0.92	.36**	.25**	.19*	.22*	.64**	.11	.57**	.43**	.43**	.41**	X			
Understanding Participation	3.93	1.59	0.90	.56**	.47**	.39**	.39**	.33**	.54**	.73**	.55**	.55**	.82**	.41**	X		
Volunteer Yes/No	1.27	.44		-.20*	-.38**	-.20*	-.33**	-.08	-.39**	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.17	.06	-.09	X	
Willing to participate Yes/No	1.30	.46		-.07	-.06	.01	-.06	-.02	-.02	-.12	-.20*	-.07	-.35**	-.00	-.32**	.22*	X

Results

Descriptive statistics

Statistics show that motivations to volunteer differ in order of importance (Table 3).

Most important motivation to volunteer is understanding, followed by values, enhancement, social, career and protective. Similar to Clary and Snyder (1999) indeed values, enhancement and social are most important and the other three motivators are less important when it comes to the motivations to volunteer.

When it comes to willingness to participate, most important motivation is understanding, followed by values, social, enhancement, career and protective.

The order of importance is almost the same; however there are some differences between the importance of a motivator. Motivations to volunteer are seen as more important in general than motivations to participate (Table 3).

Second 73,2% of all respondents were volunteers which confirm the assumption in the introduction that Tubbergen is a municipality with a lot of volunteers. However, volunteer rate in the sample is a lot higher than reality. Inhabitants of Tubbergen were positive about participating in decision-making, because 78,8% of participants answered 'yes' to the questions *Do you want to participate in any kind of governmental decision-making?*

Test of hypotheses

The first hypothesis states that motivations to volunteer will be equal to the motivations to participate in decision making. To test this hypothesis first a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare means between the volunteer motives and the participation motives. Results, presented in Table 4, show that there are significant differences between the motives to volunteer and the motives to participate. Therefore hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Table 4.

Paired sample t-test scores for all participants N = 113 (Volunteering – Participation).

Construct	T	df	p
Career	3.02	112	.00
Enhancement	6.89	112	.00
Social	3.83	114	.00
Values	3.12	114	.00
Protection	6.52	112	.00
Understanding	2.94	112	.00

The second hypothesis states that all the factors of the VFI have a unique positive contribution to the willingness to volunteer. To test this hypothesis a logistic regression was performed. Results are there to be found in Table 5. Five of the six factors as presented in the VFI have a significant effect on becoming a volunteer; protective is the only factor that does not fit into the model as proposed by Clary & Snyder (1999). Next to that social has a negative value and therefore is not consistent with what was expected. Therefore the first part of this hypothesis is partly confirmed.

Table 5.

Logistic Regression Analysis for motivations to volunteer predicting willingness to volunteer (N=113).

Predictor	Volunteer			Participation		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>e^B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>e^B</i>
Volunteer						
Career	.06*	.32	.94	-.41	.31	1.51
Enhancement	.71***	.32	.49	.25*	.31	.78
Social	-.30**	.31	1.35	-.32	.24	1.38
Values	.53***	.32	.59	.60***	.32	.55
Protections	-.72	.29	2.06	-.25	.25	1.28
Understanding	.16***	.85	2.16	.37***	.35	.69
Constant	.77			.76		
<i>Naglekerke R²</i>	.33			.24		
<i>Df</i>	8			6		

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

Since protection does not fit into the model it has been excluded from further analysis here. Furthermore it is remarkable that social motivations have a negative influence on becoming a volunteer. These results will be discussed in the discussion section.

Hypothesis 3 states that all the factors as presented in the PFI, have a unique positive contribution when it comes to willingness to participate. Again a logistic regression was performed to analyse the data. Results are presented in table 5. Looking at the table only three factors fit into the model (values, understanding and enhancement) and therefore this hypothesis is partly confirmed.

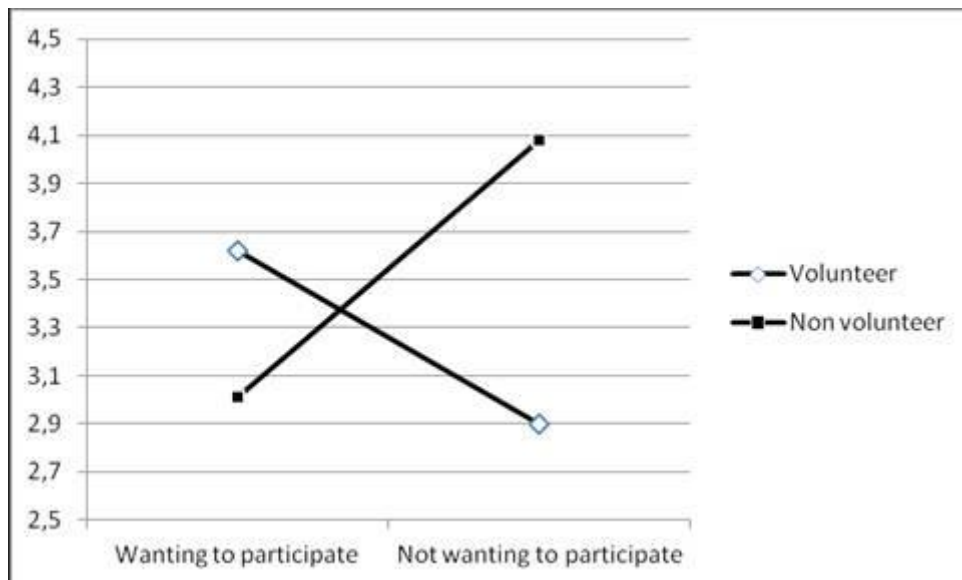
The fourth hypothesis states that volunteers will be more willing to participate in decision making than non-volunteers. A two-way between subjects ANOVA was performed to see whether there were any differences between the groups. Results are displayed in table 6.

Looking at the results the only significant difference between non-volunteers and volunteers is found on the factor social $F(1, 110) = 7.683, p < .01$. And the inhabitants who do not want to participate and neither are a volunteer, score higher on this constructs than the other three groups (Figure 1). Career $F(1, 108) = .00, p < .96, n^2 = .02$, enhancement $F(1, 108) = .40, p < .53, n^2 = .05$, values $F(1, 110) = 1.34, p < .25, n^2 = .14$, protection $F(1, 108) = .50, p < .48, n^2 = .01$ and understanding $F(1, 108) = .77, p < .38, n^2 = .11$, are not significant. Therefore hypothesis 4 is rejected.

Table 6.
Two-way between subjects ANOVA (N=113).

		Volunteer	Non volunteer
Career			
Wanting to participate	Mean	3.12 (1.35)	3.35 (1.52)
Not wanting to participate	Mean	2.73 (1.48)	3.00 (1.19)
Enhancement			
Wanting to participate	Mean	3.40 (1.35)	3.50 (1.74)
Not wanting to participate	Mean	2.63 (1.53)	3.20 (1.14)
Social			
Wanting to participate	Mean	3.62 (1.32)	2.90 (1.10)
Not wanting to participate	Mean	3.01 (1.44)	4.08 (1.16)
Values			
Wanting to participate	Mean	4.28 (1.22)	3.75 (1.69)
Not wanting to participate	Mean	3.13 (1.49)	3.44 (1.16)
Protection			
Wanting to participate	Mean	2.18 (1.25)	2.28 (1.88)
Not wanting to participate	Mean	2.01 (1.40)	2.60 (1.26)
Understanding			
Wanting to participate	Mean	4.32 (1.37)	4.10 (1.82)
Not wanting to participate	Mean	3.09 (1.74)	3.56 (1.27)

Figure 1.
Two way between subjects ANOVA on the construct social (N=113)



Finally, the last hypothesis states that young-adults would be more motivated to participate by career motives than older inhabitants would be. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare young-adults career motivations to participate and elder inhabitants. There was a significant difference in the scores for young- adults ($M=3.44$, $SD=1.35$) and elder inhabitants ($M=2.87$, $SD=1.44$) conditions; $t(111)=1.91$, $p=.04$. These results suggest that age really has influence on career motivations. Specially, the results indicate that young-adults will be more motivated by career motives than elder inhabitants. Therefore hypothesis 5 is confirmed.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine if there were any parallels between motivations to volunteer and motivations to take part in the governmental decision-making process, in order to get people to participate and try to close the gap between local government and the municipal inhabitants.

Theoretical implications

New in this study is that it looked from a volunteer perspective at citizen participation. Arguing that participation can be seen as volunteering sheds a new light on this subject. Insights from volunteer literature can be used to examine other relations with this subject. Furthermore it is one of the first studies that does not look at participation as a conceptual concept only, but tries, with help from empirical evidence, to answer the question why people would participate in the first place.

Looking at the PFI it becomes clear VFI and PFI cannot be assumed as equal. Data among the groups volunteer and participants differ in such a way that motivations for both groups are not the same. Also three of the six factors (social, protections and career) do not fit into the PFI model. However, values, enhancement and understanding do fit in the model and according to Clary & Snyder (1999) those are the three motivators that are most important to become a volunteer. Therefore one could say that volunteering and participating in decision-making do have a lot in common.

When it comes to participation, it is clear that a single motivation does not lead to behaviour. There are more motivations underlying the decision to choose between participation or no participation. According to the PFI only understanding, value and enhancement are clear motivations for an individual to be willing to become a participant. The model as presented is not sufficient enough to capture all participation motives, so here future research is needed.

The VFI shows that social has a negative influence on becoming a volunteer. This implies that a person who has a need for more social relations will be less likely to become a volunteer. This could be explained by the fact that a person cannot initiate new social interactions or cannot interact in his or her old social relationships when he or she is volunteering. Therefore the need for social contacts can have a negative influence on the willingness to participate.

Furthermore young-adults are more driven by career motives than other inhabitants. Social theories could be used to explain why this phenomenon occurs. For example that young-adults differ in the way they act in social relationships from other workers (Fischer, Sollie, Sorell & Green, 1989). Municipalities have to adapt their messages to younger adults in the context of career motives to get these people aboard.

Context

In the context of the growing importance in Dutch society, but also in world society, to involve citizens in governmental decision making, this is an essential finding. First of all the results state that willingness to participate in decision-making is high among inhabitants from the municipality of Tubbergen (78,4%) and next to that, for young-adults and non-volunteers there are some interesting similarities in motivations. Results indicate that for both volunteering and participating, understanding and values are the most important motivators. So an individual feels it is vital to help others and also wants to feel better about himself. A relation between these variables can be drawn, but future research has to determine what this relation will be. It is possible that one will feel better about himself when helping others, but one wants to feel better and therefore is helping others (Kiesler & Kiesler, 1969). Probably the second option will be most favourable for people, because helping others feels good and people help others when benefits are higher than cost to help (Brehm, Kassin, Fein, 2005). The lack of social motivations can stem from a prisoners dilemma game (Pattie, Sheyd & Whiteley, 2004) where costs are higher than benefits. When one chooses to cooperate and another person lacks to cooperate, payoffs for not-cooperating will be higher for that person. Both parties doing the same will result in equal pay-offs (Pattie, Sheyd & Whiteley, 2004).

Young-adults vs. older inhabitants

Hypothesis that young-adults would be more motivated by career motives than older inhabitants is supported. However only found when it comes to participation motives. This could mean that there is a difference in perception between volunteering and participation, where young-adults prefer participation above volunteering to gain career experiences. Further research is needed to confirm this presumption. This also is true for non-volunteers, career motives are more important when it comes to participation than they are for volunteering.

Whereas older inhabitants show difference across all motives in this research, this is not true for young adults living in the municipality of Tubbergen. Looking at career motives, values and understanding, we see a clear pattern that the differences between these motivators are not attributable to chance and therefore cannot be seen as differences. This finding and the difference between these groups is interesting, because it implies that older inhabitants want to do something voluntarily for their community, while young-adults find it more important to also contribute to policy of the municipality. Older participants scored higher on each motivator when these motives were related to volunteering. Hence, future research might shed a light on why young-adults differ from older inhabitants and why they are more motivated to participate in decision-making than older people are.

Volunteers vs. non-volunteers

Taking a look at this group it becomes clear that there are major differences. As with older inhabitants, volunteers differ on all the six motivators when it comes to volunteering and participating. This is not remarkable; because they are already volunteers and will do those jobs that suit them and make them feel good (Brehm et al., 2005). More interesting to look at is the group non-volunteers. Motivators understanding and enhancement are not significant so these will not be discussed. Differences between the motivators are not attributable to chance, but since the sample is fairly small (19 participants) it might be interesting to dig deeper when it comes to non-volunteers. This is not only interesting for the municipality board, but also for clubs and other associations in the community.

Practical implications

First of all the municipality board is now aware of the fact that the majority of its inhabitants wants to participate in decision-making.

For the municipality of Tubbergen it is now vital to get people on board to take part in decision-making. Results show that understanding, values and social are most important motivators to participate in decision-making. For officials and the mayor and aldermen it is essential to know these motivations and to respond to these needs (Liao-Troth & Dunn, 1999; Clary & Snyder, 1999). Next it is important to formulate a message based on the motives from the groups. This is key since there are differences between young-adults and older inhabitants and between volunteers and non-volunteers.

To keep people involved and try to make a continuum when it comes to participation, it is also crucial to know how to bind people to the organization. By doing that, participation among inhabitants will be guaranteed for the future. Here, the municipality board can rely on the work of McCurley and Lynch (2007) who researched methods to keep people involved and bind them with the organization. First it is essential to create involvement, so make people believe they really matter and have something to say. Next it is key not to waste time, because people will participate mostly in their spare time and last the municipality should thank these people for their efforts. It is also important to tune the task to the motivations of a person to participate. So here tasks have to be related to the social aspect, the values and understanding of people.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The research that was conducted has some restrictions that result in recommendations for future research in this field.

Demographic

First of all, this is due to the fact that the municipality of Tubbergen consists of a little over 20.000 inhabitants. A total of 75,8 % is older than 18 and therefore part of the target group (CBS stat, 2011). Since 113 people filled out the survey, this is only a fraction; results might differ when the whole population had been taken part in the survey.

Second, the survey was displayed in an online environment. Since the municipality consist for the majority of older inhabitants (50+) it might be possible that the majority of these people were not able to participate in the survey because they lack the skills and knowledge or they might not even have an internet connection.

Third, Tubbergen is only a small municipality, consists of villages only and therefore inherits other norms and values than other villages or even cities do in Holland. Also it is a municipality in the east of Holland where norms and values differ slightly from the west of the country. For all the above reasons, results cannot be generalized for all municipalities, let alone for Holland.

Last, the sample used for this research shows large differences with the reality. Therefore results might be coloured and could change when a representative sample was taken from the total population. For example small villages were very present in this sample; this might indicate that they

want to be heard whereas larger villages will be more satisfied with how things are managed. Also the number of volunteers in the sample was three times higher than in the population.

Further Research

Since citizen participation is a booming subject for governmental institutions, especially in this time of economic crisis, and because research about this topic is scarce, it is interesting to look at topics that could use some attention.

Instead of comparing volunteer and participation motives with each other, a different option could have been looking at Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (Organ, 1988). OCB is behaviour apart from tasks given by an organization. Because it is a behaviour that is not directed from the organization, it can be assumed as volunteer activities and therefore be of interest in this field of research. Therefore, this will be the other way around. Since OCB also can be divided into constructs (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). Constructs consist of helping behaviour which can be defined as helping colleagues with their tasks, in the light of volunteering this can be seen as the value motive. Next there is sportsmanship, which refers to bonding with colleagues in order to deal with everyday work, in volunteer literature this can be seen as the social motive. Third, Podsakoff et al. (2000) define organizational loyalty, which yields identification with the organization and contributing to its reputation, in volunteer literature this can be seen as a career motive. The fourth construct is organisational compliance, which refers to a rational structure; protection of oneself could be a volunteer motive here. Fifth, individual initiative is the way in which a person can take own responsibility, when looking at volunteer literature this can be seen as the understanding motive. And last civic virtue or self-development is a construct defined by Podsakoff et al. (2000) which can be seen as an enhancement motive. Therefore, studying OCB could be a comparing study between workers and non-workers or between people with and without extra tasks in relation to participation.

One also might argue that people are only willing to participate when they have the feeling they have an honest chance and that they are treated correctly by the municipality board. For taking a look through this lens, organizational justice might come in handy, because of the fact that organizational justice deals with the fact that an organization treats their employees, or in the case of a governmental institution, their inhabitants fairly (Cropanzano & Byrne, 2000). Eskew (1993) found that people are willing to do more tasks if they are treated fairly, if not treated fairly they will switch to economic interests. Here it will be wise to distinguish between organizational and procedural justice (Bobocell & Holmvall, 1999). In relation to justice, trust might also be a predictor for citizen participation in decision-making (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Porter, Lawler & Hackman, 1975).

To stay on the same page with motivators such as values, social and enhancement, adding the factor identification might be an interesting one. Since identification is also closely related to commitment (Ashforth, Harrison & Corley, 2008) When a person identifies with him/herself and values, this will result in identifying with believes and goals and eventually this will result in behaviours of identity (Ashforth et al., 2008; Weick, 1995). Question arises if an individual with an identity close to the identity of a governmental organization is willing to participate more quickly than someone with completely different opinions.

Finally, since participation is becoming more important among Dutch society when it comes to governmental organizations which are pulling back and want to stand 'between the inhabitants', it is advisable to also look at the other side of the coin. What if citizen participation does not pay off and what are the hazards and dangers when it comes to citizen participation.

First of all it is possible that group polarization will occur (Choo, 2001). Opinions can be more present in a certain group than they will be in everyday life and therefore decision-making could fail. More research is needed when it comes to citizen participation in relation to group polarization.

Second, false consensus might be an issue (Pol, Swankhuisen & Van Vendeloo, 2007). Here a few individuals dominate the gatherings and therefore people with less self-confidence or trust will not speak up, these opinions will therefore be lost.

Conclusion

The study's aim was to get an insight into motivations to participate in local governmental decision-making. The paper shows what the actual motivations are and how it is possible to get people to actually come on board and donate their own time to their municipality. Results show that the most important motivations to volunteer are also the most important motivations when it comes to willingness to participate in local government settings. Also young-adults are more motivated by career motives than other inhabitants.

This study however is one of the first to look beyond the concept of citizen participation and gives new insights on this subject. Future research is needed to confirm conclusions drawn from hypotheses and to gain more insights in how to get citizens involved in participation.

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