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Who volunteers and why? Understanding the role of resources and motivations in participation in voluntary work

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Who volunteers and why?

Understanding the role of resources and motivations in
participation in voluntary work

Jacobien Niebuur

Who volunteers and why? Understanding the role of resources and motivations in participation in voluntary work.

Thesis, University of Groningen, the Netherlands

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface		9
Chapter 1	General Introduction	12
Part I: Who volunteers?		31
Chapter 2	Determinants of participation in voluntary work: a systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal cohort studies	34
Chapter 3	Transitions into and out of voluntary work over the life course: what is the effect of major life events?	98
Part II: Why volunteer?		127
Chapter 4	Translation and Validation of the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) among the General Dutch Older Population	130
Chapter 5	The Dutch Comparative Scale for Assessing Volunteer Motivations among Volunteers and Non-Volunteers: An Adaptation of the Volunteer Functions Inventory	158
Chapter 6	Why volunteer? Towards a deeper understanding of motivations for participation in voluntary work	194
Chapter 7	General Discussion	232
Appendices	Summary	252
	Nederlandse samenvatting	257
	About the author	263
	Research Institute SHARE	265
	Acknowledgements/Dankwoord	268

PREFACE

In 2014, the University of Groningen celebrated its 400th anniversary. In anticipation of the lustrum year, several festivities and activities have been organized to celebrate the university's anniversary. Among these was the project '400 days for 400 questions', inviting the public to submit questions for future scientific research. Out of all the submitted research questions, three research proposals were established. The Ubbo Emmius Fund organized a crowd funding campaign, providing everyone who wanted to give the university an anniversary present, the opportunity to contribute to the 'Gift for Infinity' - a gift to the future. In September 2013, the public could vote on the three research proposals. With almost 50% of the approximately 8,000 votes, the research proposal '*Actief Oud is Goud*' (loosely translated as '*Being active in later life for a good old day*') was the winning research proposal. Societal participation in later life was the central topic of this research proposal. This research proposal was based on two questions, submitted by Monique van der Linden and Karin van der Schee. Their questions related to determinants of various types of societal participation in later life, prevention of loneliness and ill health, and stimulation of a sense of purpose by the inclusion of older adults in societal activities, and consequences of policy measures aiming to promote participation from an organizational perspective. The donations from the public were complemented by a generous donation by the Emmaplein Foundation, and thereby sufficient resources were collected to finance the PhD research project at hand, aiming to provide answers to questions related to the issues described in the public-based research proposal. Within this PhD project, participation in voluntary work is the central topic of interest, as volunteering is among the most prevalent societal activities in later life. In this dissertation, the antecedents of participation in voluntary work, including individual resources and volunteer motivations, are studied.