

Abstract for review

European Research Network On Philanthropy
8th International Conference Copenhagen, July 13-14, 2017

Click [here](#) for the abstract evaluation form.

Spontaneous Volunteering

a new form of civic engagement?

Reference:	48402212
Number of authors:	1
Author/submitted by:	Georg Mildenberger (Dr.)
Organisation:	University of Heidelberg, Economics and Social Sciences, Germany
Authors:	Georg Mildenberger - - -
Keywords:	volunteering, civic engagement, organisation, governance, refugee aid
Topic:	Volunteering, giving time
Theme of abstract:	
Research method:	Mixed methods
Geographical focus:	Single country (European)
Type of article:	Research article

Abstract:

Spontaneous Volunteering a new form of civic engagement?

Modern societies are complex structures where systems and organizations are specialized to fulfill a wide array of functions. Big infrastructures with attached organizations offer services of all kinds to citizens, including safety and protection against natural forces and other harmful influences. They develop support structures for all types of situations occurring from disturbances and failures of all kinds. Professional help is provided by catastrophe relieve forces with expertise and material. The professional core teams are supported by militia like organizations of trained volunteers.

But they are not alone. In the last year more and more often spontaneous volunteers in big numbers enter the disaster areas. Partly they are integrated as additional resources into the intervention forces. But quite often they do not accept their assigned duties and start to act on their own, with sometimes problematic results.

With the refugee crisis this phenomenon reached a new stage. Now not only small areas were confronted with spontaneous volunteering, but all over the country new informal groups emerged and started to act, sometimes even earlier than the officially designed responders. And those new

semi formalized groups ceased to give over when the officially designed responders arrived but demanded to stay. This can be observed up to now, and not only in Germany but all over Europe new organizations emerge. It seems we see a new wave of civil society organizations being founded.

The phenomenon of spontaneous volunteering in the refugee crisis allows us to study self-regulation in real time and on a rather big scale. We have the opportunity to analyze how self-organization works under different conditions, what limits of self-regulation occur and how formal organizations can be seen as a way to overcome such limits.

The paper will introduce the phenomenon of spontaneous volunteering especially in the context of the European refugee crises. It builds especially on first results of our own research under other recent studies in Germany. It will especially examine how actors from different sectors of society interact and ask whether new forms of organizations, networks and governance structures on the local level emerge.

It builds partly on recent survey of civic engagement in refugee aid and partly on qualitative studies/case studies in the area Heidelberg, Wiesloch, Sinsheim.

Most important references:

- Barraket, Jo, Robyn Keast, Cameron Newton, Kristy Walters, und Emily James. 2013. Spontaneous Volunteering During Natural Disasters.
- Whittakera, Joshua, Blythe McLennana, und John Handmera. (2015): A review of informal volunteerism in emergencies and disasters: Definition, opportunities and challenges. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction. Volume 13, September 2015, Pages 358 368.
- Mutz, Gerd; Costa-Schott, Rosário; Hammer, Ines; Layritz, Georgina; Lexhaller, Claudia; Mayer, Michaela et al. (2015): Engagement für Flüchtlinge in München. Ergebnisse eines Forschungsprojekts an der Hochschule München in Kooperation mit dem Münchner Forschungsinstitut miss. München.
- Speth, Rudolf; Becker, Elke (2016): Zivilgesellschaftliche Akteure und die Betreuung geflüchteter Menschen in deutschen Kommunen. Maecenata Institut für Philanthropie und Zivilgesellschaft; Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik. Berlin.