



How socialization influences informal volunteering

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Concerns have been raised over the potential decline of community life. This study discusses the impact of parents and current partners on behaviours during adulthood that foster social bonds.

The study questions whether parents and partners modelling and encouraging prosocial behaviour affects adults' informal volunteering.

Informal volunteering amongst adults is impacted by previous experiences of parental social involvement, as well as by the social engagement of partners and their encouragement in this regard. Practices which benefit societal cohesion are thus not fixed in childhood and youth but continue to develop into and throughout adulthood.

[#Informal](#) [#Volunteering](#) [#Socialization](#) [#Modelling](#) [#Encouragement](#)

Background

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Context



- Previous research has shown that socialisation through external agents develops prosocial behaviour. This study set out to expand these conclusions by **investigating the impact of socialisation through parents and partners on the informal help participants gave to others.**
- Socialisation is a two-stage process whereby the influence of various agents leads to socially acceptable behaviours becoming learnt and internalised. Modelling and encouragement are here of particular relevance: **People learn expected behaviours through watching, copying, and responding to instructions and expectations.**
- Based on previous research, the researchers **expected the role of parents and partners in both modelling and encouraging prosocial behaviour to be influential.** These hypotheses were tested using empirical data from questionnaires completed by a cross-section of the Dutch population during 2017-2018 and controlled extensively for influencing variables.
- Using numerous models, the researchers tested the independent impacts of parental modelling, parental encouragement, partner modelling and partner encouragement on various types of informal volunteering. **Results proved with some certainty a link between adult informal volunteering and all such forms of socialisation other than parental encouragement.**

ERNOP Research Note

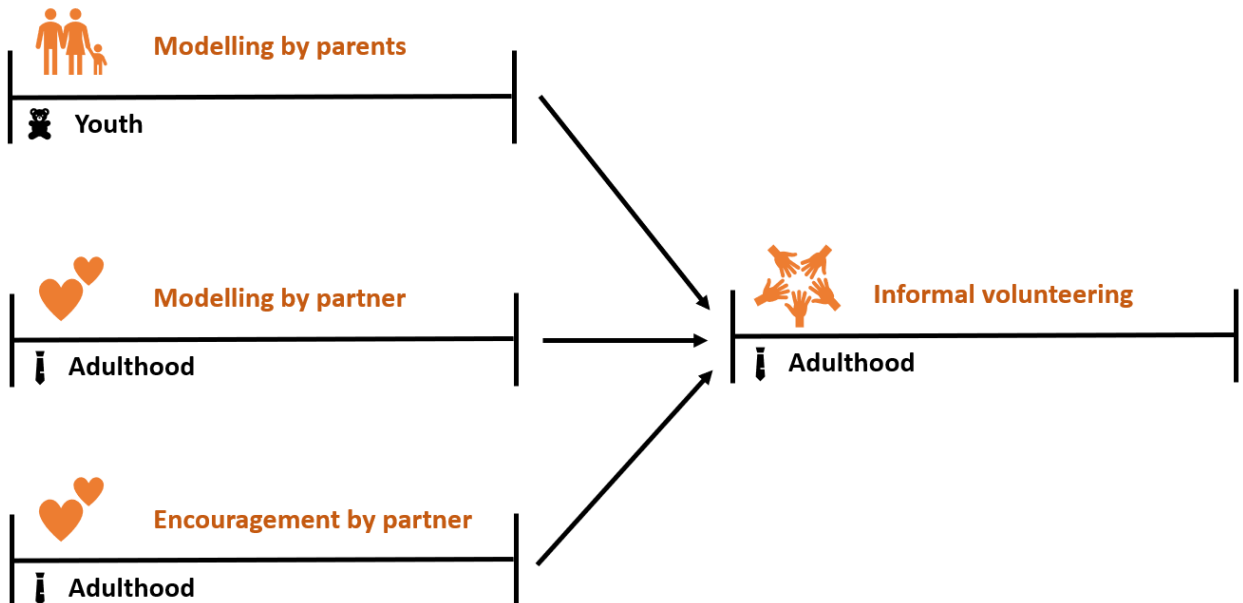
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Take aways & Learnings



- **Socialization of prosocial behaviour is not only limited to experiences during childhood and the teenage years but can also occur during adulthood** when the role of romantic partners becomes relevant and replaces that of parents during the early years of life.
- **Relationships in youth and adulthood impact prosocial behaviour: Societal bonds based upon informal assistance and support can thus be seen as strong and slow to change.**
- **Socialization in both youth and adulthood is encouraged more through modelling than through encouragement.** Both influences are, however, of more relevance than psychological variables such as agreeableness and religious involvement.
- Parental modelling was assumed when parents formally volunteered. This research thus expands previous research conclusions to include **informal volunteering as a form of philanthropy encouraged through observing formal volunteering.**

Figure 1: The influence of modelling and encouragement from parents and partners on prosocial. Prosocial behaviour is positively encouraged through modelling from parents during youth and through modelling and encouragement from partners during adulthood.



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