With or Without Organisations:
Interpretations and Findings on
Individual Volunteering in Italy

Ksenija Fonović, Riccardo Guidi, Tania Cappadozzi

Abstract

The consolidated imagery overlaps direct voluntary action onto a soft form of solidarity, informal support within short networks, rooted in social obligations and tied by ethical expectations. Does this make it a pre-modern/traditional phenomenon? On the other side of the spectrum of expectations, activism outside or on the sides of formally constituted third sector organisations is viewed as a post-modern expression of individualism and distrust of intermediary corps. So, if it is volunteering at all, is it similar to organised volunteering? Or the characteristics and the dimensions of individual volunteering differ wildly from those of organised volunteering?

The Paper deals with these questions in Italy on the basis of the National Statistical Institute (ISTAT) module on organised and individual volunteering which implemented the new statistical standard of the ILO Manual for the measurement of volunteer work in 2013. For the first time in Italy, the resulting data allow to assess and compare the characteristics and dimensions of voluntary action within and outside the boundaries of formally organised settings.

First, the paper confronts the basic dimensions of organised and individual voluntary action. Second, the authors present the results of a cluster analysis from which four distinct profiles of individual volunteers emerge. Third, personal and social antecedents that contribute to determine the propensity to volunteer individually are assessed, in particular with regard to two models well established in literature for organised volunteering: the social centrality model and the model of collective identities one. Applied to volunteers engaged outside third sector organisations, both models yield important answers to our initial question about the nature of individual volunteering.

In conclusion, the Paper turns full circle to the original question of whether individual and organised volunteering are two legs of the same body or separate phenomena, by challenging the ILO functional definition of voluntary work against the actual results on Italy. Initial hypotheses for further study are presented, positioning individual voluntary action outside organized frameworks of third sector organisations against different forms of modernity and welfare regimes.

1. Presentation and research questions

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1 This paper is the result of the joint work of the authors and long-term teamwork. For the purposes of attribution, parr. 2 and 6 are to be assigned to Ksenija Fonović; parr. 1 and 5 to Riccardo Guidi; parr. 3 and 4 to Tania Cappadozzi. The Conclusions are co-authored.

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4 ISTAT
Starting from the mid-1990s, international literature has significantly focused on the transformations of volunteering in contemporary (Western) societies. To interpret and tackle them, scholars as well as practitioners have been robustly inspired by the late/second modernity theories, particularly Giddens’ and Beck’s hypotheses on individualization and reflexivity (Beck, 1992, 1994, 2000; Giddens, 1991). According to these, contemporary volunteering would have progressively abandoned the XX century styles of involvement conventionally based on solid long-term commitments to value and membership based organizations and would have gone towards softer, more episodic, free and flexible, noncommittal (enter-exit), politically relaxed, self-oriented styles of involvement (see the debate in Hustinx, 2010). This turn would concern volunteering as well as other forms of social and political participation (van Deth, Maloney, 2012; van Ingen, Dekker, 2011) and it would affect each social segment of all the so-called ‘advanced societies’, especially the youngest cohorts (Hustinx et al., 2010, Handy et al., 2010).

As a consequence of this shift, we would assist to two big trends in contemporary volunteering: a path toward the “dis-organization” of voluntary action, and a path toward its “re-organization”. First flows from «interpreting modernization-induced changes in volunteering (…) in terms of a growing independence of volunteers (…) that is, the breakdown of its traditional organizational design» (Hustinx, 2010: 169-174, italics added). It consists in a radical detachment from organizations and in a preference for volunteering individually of direct–that is doing something for free without any obligations and any involvement in organisations. Second path flows from interpreting recent socio-cultural trends «as a changing interdependence between volunteers and their organizational and institutional environment» (Hustinx, 2010: 169-174, italics added). It consists in multiple restructuring processes and the emergence of new organizational forms of voluntary actions which significantly replace the old frameworks.

Elsewhere one of us showed why second path generally appears more realistic and which emerging (re-)organizational configurations of volunteering have been developing in Italy (Guidi, 2018, Bonetti, Guidi, 2016, Guidi, Bonetti, Popolla, 2016). Here, we specifically focus on the first path, namely on individual volunteering in contemporary Italy, with two crucial aims.

The first is descriptive: since evidence-based knowledge on individual volunteering in Italy has been so far very little, we will illustrate the main characteristics of this phenomenon, as resulting by the national implementation of the ILO Manual on the Measurement of Voluntary Work. The Module on «Unpaid activities to benefit others» included in the Statistical National Institute “Aspects of everyday life” survey (Avq) in accordance with the ILO Manual on the Measurement of Voluntary Work (ILO Module) provides a clear picture of protagonists and issues involved in both

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5 “Aspects of everyday life” is a sample survey on households which is part of the integrated system of yearly social surveys (Multipurpose Surveys). The random sampling design is composite (in part at one stage and in part at two-stages), with stratification of the first stage units (municipalities) according to socio-economic and demographic characteristics. The survey is conducted annually on a theory sample of about 24 thousand families and underlines the fundamental information about the daily life of individuals and families. Survey estimates are considered reliable up to the regional level. In particular, the data mentioned in the present volume are related to the 2013 Edition (AVQ2013), carried out in March 2013 on a sample of 19 thousand 151 families. 46 thousand 315 individual interviews were conducted. For further details, see note on methodology of the survey «Aspects of daily life – 2013», Istat, 2013.
organised and individual voluntary action, presenting it for the first time in an exhaustive format, potentially comparable at international level.

Our second aim is interpretative. In describing the picture, we also address a crucial question: does current Italian individual volunteering actually look like a second modernity phenomenon? In posing this research question we make more complex the reference to individual volunteering and we refer to three wide interpretations. In the first (“individual is pre-modern/traditional” scenario), individual voluntary action is overlapped onto a soft form of solidarity, informal support within short networks, rooted in social obligations and tied by ethical expectations in a way that makes it close to a pre-modern/traditional phenomenon. In the second (“individual is second-modern” scenario), activism outside formally constituted third sector organisations is viewed as a late modern expression of individualism and distrust of intermediary corps. In the third, individual volunteering would not be so different from the organised one (same people would volunteer with and without organisations, the characteristics and the dimensions of individual volunteering would be similar to those of organised volunteering) and this would confirm the ongoing strength of conventional membership model of volunteering (“individual is modern-like” scenario).

Our primary source being the first use of the ILO standard in Italy, and one of the first implementations in the world, of a new statistical standard, we will start (paragraph 2) by focusing on the most innovative elements of the methodology. In the paragraph 3 we will relate the basic data on the dimensions and spread of voluntary activities and an overall reading on how they are organized. We will then present the methods (paragraph 4) and the outcomes (5) of an explorative analysis identifying four groups of informal (direct, non-organised) volunteers.

Our first, descriptive, objective is therefore achieved by better understanding who the informal volunteers are and what they do. Together with the rates and the measurement of the voluntary commitment as expressed in hours, these volunteers’ profiles represent a benchmark for following up on how the phenomenon will change in the future and how this relates to the emerging community needs – and the different forms that the grass-roots answers to these take, while modifying over time. In our conclusions, we first point out the initial policy and practice implications of this novel bulk of data then attempt an answer to our interpretative objective as to the nature and quality of the individual volunteering.

2. Informal volunteering: data and definition

The «Unpaid activities to benefit others» module included in the Aspects of daily life - 2013 survey (AVQ2013) in accordance with the standard of the ILO Manual on the Measurement of Voluntary Work (ILO Module from now on) contains a series of relevant innovations. The first fundamental innovative element consists in considering the volunteer-citizen as a statistical unit of the voluntary activity provided both through an organisation and directly. This point of view marks a

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6 The term 'organization' includes organisations of public, private and third sector, declined by the questionnaire in a taxonomy to specially built 14 alternatives, including: voluntary organization/Non-profit/association of social promotion, cultural association, amateur sports association, religious organization, NGO for international cooperation, other non-profit organization, social enterprise, public administration, Committee, movement, trade union or trade association , Political party, other informal group, other.
change of direction from the widespread and shared practice of considering volunteers as one of the resources of voluntary organisations (as typical for instance of the Istat Survey of Nonprofit Institutions or of the surveys carried out in the nineties by FIVOL7) and allows to analyze volunteering as an activity freely chosen by people, without any obligation or monetary exchange, in any type of organisation or directly. This allows us to analyse volunteering as activity freely chosen by people in a self-realization perspective, in relation with others and with the world, without any obligation or monetary exchange – it is the sphere of action typical of the human condition (Arendt, 1958)8. On a practical level, this provides data on both formal and informal volunteers. As it emerges from the results of the exploratory survey (see infra, par. 4), being active in an organisation and doing it directly have each their own special but not opposed characteristics. In particular, the ILO Module offers information never published before in Italy on the second type, that future research could develop. The second element characterizing the ILO Module is its object, the voluntary work, whereby “work”, we wish to remind, means “the application of physical and intellectual faculties of man addressed directly and consciously to the production of a good, an asset, or otherwise to obtain a product of individual or general utility”9. “Volunteers” shall be considered, therefore, all those who performed at least one hour of activity in the four weeks (reference period specified in the ILO Manual) prior to the interview.

When the ILO Manual was published [ILO, 2011], it was considered informal and delicate to join those two worlds which up until then had been considered separate, if not antagonist – the productive, economic, working world, and the value-based, unpaid, volunteering world. With the spreading of a new welfare measurement culture looking “beyond GDP” (Stiglitz, 2013), considering volunteering in terms of work becomes not only stimulating for statisticians but also interesting for the third sector and volunteers themselves. This falls within the more comprehensive re-visitation of the concept of work promoted by ILO, that nowadays considers as such not only professional work sold and bought on the marketplace (to date the only one “counted” as productive in the official global statistics), but flanks it with voluntary work and family work (ICLS, 2013).Voluntary work and the time devoted to it are the basis from where ILO suggests to measure the economic value of volunteering as contribution to the construction of the satellite account (UNSD, 2018). Although that has not been done in Italy, we examined the possibility of using the classification of occupations to describe voluntary activities with satisfactory results.

The last among the most innovative elements to point out concerns the special Italian implementation of the ILO Module. Unlike the ILO recommendations inviting the inclusion of the Module in the national surveys on work forces, Italy chose the “Aspects of everyday life” (AVQ), ISTAT yearly large scale multipurpose social survey. The Italian implementation was moreover characterised by the overcoming of the basic version of the ILO Module enriched – also in virtue of a scientific consultation process10 (– with further questions (in particular on motivations and perceived impacts of voluntary activity, on the years of commitment, on the multi-membership) – only for organised volunteers. Those are relevant elements since they provide opportunities for social and political analyses which can greatly advance the understanding of the phenomenon.

7 FIVOL – Fondazione Italiana per il Volontariato, leading reference point for policy and studies on voluntary organisations in eighties and nineties in Italy.
8 The universal comparative potential of the module Unpaid activities is anchored to this and to the possibility of enhancing the contribution of volunteering to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Fonović, 2015). In this perspective, the ILO Module has a value that transcends the illustration of the Italian situation of the moment, since the results can be used as an example of the role of citizens not only in the immediate community, but as actors of global governance (UNGA A/69/700, 2015; Laudato si, 2015).
9 Treccani Enciclopedia.
10 For the understanding of the multistakeholder of the implementation process of the ILO Manual in Italy we refer the readers to the “Introduction” in Guidi, Fonović, Cappadozzi (eds.), 2016.
The terminology we have chosen to adapt for volunteering outside the framework of organisations is individual volunteering, in our view most neutral and most clearly juxtaposed to volunteering in organisations. Two other terms most commonly used and perfectly overlapping with the phenomenon under exam – in the academic, practice and policy circles – are “direct” and “informal” volunteering. Both bear a hue of over-interpretation as regards volunteering in organisations and as regards the differentiation of subjective meanings attached by volunteers to two modalities of activation of which one, volunteering outside the organisations, is far too little researched. The term direct volunteering confers emphasis to the organisational framework as a sort of barrier or prism that diverts, transforms and ultimately liquefies the relationship between the volunteer and the beneficiary, as if voluntary action performed in organisations were “indirect”. The use of term “informal” leads to predetermine volunteering in organisations as “formal”, shifting the attention to third sector organisations in terms of societal institutions, which diverts the focus of attention away from the core aspect of our interest, which is volunteering as individual action.

3. Volunteering in Italy in the year 2013. The main traits

In this paragraph we present the main results of the Istat-ILO module AVQ2013 “Unpaid activities to benefit others” (Istat, 2014), data issued in July 2014. 6.63 millions of Italians volunteered in 2013. The total volunteering rate, including organisation-based and individual voluntary activity, is 12.6%. The organised volunteering rate is 7.9%; 4.14 million citizens performed activities in (at least one) organisation. 16.2% of those are active in more than one organisation. The individual volunteering rate is 5.8%; there are about 3 millions of citizens who perform unpaid activities benefitting others outside any organisational framework. 8.1% of volunteers performed both organised and individual voluntary activity.

The total volunteering rate varies from 21.8% in Trentino-South Tyrol to 7.9% in Campania region (Fig.1). Although the usual division among central and northern areas and central and southern areas is also valid for the heterogeneous geographical distribution of volunteering rates, some relevant exceptions can be observed: Sardinia (South and Islands) has the same characteristics as the Central Italy, Liguria (North West) has typical “Southern” rates, in Lazio (Centre) the individual volunteering rate is comparable to the one in Veneto (North East).

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12 People aged 14 and over that in the year 2013 volunteered for at least one hour (in an organisation or directly) in the four weeks prior to the survey.
13 For more insight on the socio-economic antecedents and the territorial cultures of organised volunteering we refer the readers to the Chapter IV and for a novel reading of the geographical segmentation of organised volunteering to the Chapter X of the compendium of studies based on the Istat-ILO AVQ2013 data in Guidi, Fonović and Cappadozzi (eds.), Il Mulino, 2016.
As for gender, the basic figures (Table 1.1) draw a rather equal situation between women and men (volunteering rate: 11.9% vs 13.3%), the latter slightly more represented in organised activities\(^\text{14}\). Almost confirming the saying “if you want something done, ask those who are doing more”, the percentage of volunteers is higher in the middle age group of the population (the rate describes an upside down U curve that reaches its highest, 15.9% in the 55-64 years old age group), among those in employment (14.8%) and students (12.9%). It is important to notice that among students the organised volunteering rate reaches its highest (9.5%), while the individual volunteering rate the lowest (4.3%). Similarly, the better the financial situation of the family the higher the volunteering rate. The link between volunteering rate and educational level appears manifest: 6.1% of those who have completed primary education or who do not have any formal education are involved in unpaid activities to benefit others, 22.1% of those with a degree. On the whole, these evidences are not surprising and confirm what found in other European and not European countries\(^\text{15}\).

\(^{14}\) For the gender-based detailed analysis of data on organised volunteering we refer the interested readers to Fonović and Cappadozzi, 2018.

\(^{15}\) Referring to Chapter III in Guidi, Fonović and Cappadozzi (eds.), Il Mulino, 2016 for a detailed understanding of social antecedents of volunteering, we highlight here the international recurrence of connections between greater volunteering ratio and higher educational qualifications. It’s the case of Canada for example (a country having among the most advanced time series on volunteering in the world) [Vézina, Crompton, 2012] and of Ireland that in the year 2013 implemented the ILO Module [CSO Ireland, 2015]. Also the report commissioned by the European Commission in preparation for the European Year of Volunteering 2011, albeit without solid and comparable data, surveys a strong correlation between high level of education and voluntary commitment, in all EU countries [CE, 2010].
Organised volunteers are loyal to their organisations: 76.9% have been performing the same activity for more than three years and 37.7% for more than ten years. This marks the strongest difference between organised and individual volunteering, where half of the volunteers have been involved for less than two years.

A grand total of 126 million voluntary work hours was carried out in Italy in the year 2013 to benefit the community and for the general interest, on average 19 hours per month by each volunteer (Table 2). They amount, as an example, to about 808 thousands full time (39 hours) “working units”\(^\text{16}\). A greater number than the one recorded in the year 2013 in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (704 thousands full time employees) (Istat, Workforce Survey, 2013).

\(^{16}\) Worktime provided for in the national labour contract, farm labourers.
**TAB. 2 - Volunteering hours (total, organisation-based and individual) by some individual and family characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total volunteer work</th>
<th>Organised volunteer work</th>
<th>Individual volunteer work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N. hours in total</td>
<td>N. hours in total</td>
<td>N. hours in total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average n. hours</td>
<td>Average n. hours</td>
<td>Average n. hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>per volunteer</td>
<td>per volunteer</td>
<td>per volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>125,995</td>
<td>77,189</td>
<td>48,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENDER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>63,549</td>
<td>42,407</td>
<td>21,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>62,446</td>
<td>34,782</td>
<td>27,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE CLASS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-24 years</td>
<td>9,945</td>
<td>6,645</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 years</td>
<td>14,281</td>
<td>7,318</td>
<td>4,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 years</td>
<td>20,024</td>
<td>11,661</td>
<td>8,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54 years</td>
<td>23,691</td>
<td>14,120</td>
<td>9,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64 years</td>
<td>26,964</td>
<td>18,132</td>
<td>8,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74 years</td>
<td>22,254</td>
<td>14,809</td>
<td>7,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 years and over</td>
<td>8,937</td>
<td>4,554</td>
<td>4,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary (university, doctoral and specialization courses)</td>
<td>28,479</td>
<td>17,584</td>
<td>10,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper and post secondary</td>
<td>51,581</td>
<td>33,339</td>
<td>18,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary school certificate</td>
<td>32,002</td>
<td>18,612</td>
<td>13,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school certificate, no educational degree</td>
<td>13,932</td>
<td>7,654</td>
<td>6,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAIN STATUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed person</td>
<td>51,276</td>
<td>30,178</td>
<td>21,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In search of occupation</td>
<td>12,184</td>
<td>6,522</td>
<td>5,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>15,379</td>
<td>8,167</td>
<td>7,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>9,513</td>
<td>6,097</td>
<td>3,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>33,023</td>
<td>18,612</td>
<td>13,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other condition</td>
<td>4,620</td>
<td>2,869</td>
<td>1,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC RESOURCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>2,222</td>
<td>1,377</td>
<td>845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>69,600</td>
<td>46,217</td>
<td>23,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarce</td>
<td>43,301</td>
<td>24,976</td>
<td>19,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolutely insufficient</td>
<td>9,932</td>
<td>4,850</td>
<td>5,083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Data from Istat _Aspects of everyday life_ year 2013

Analysing jointly the volunteering rates and the quantification of the hours devoted to it, four major volunteer groups were identified\(^\text{17}\).

**Group I: The great contributors.** It is the largest group and the one devoting to volunteering many hours of activity. Graduates, financially well-off, past middle age. It can be compared to the generation of “founding fathers”, of the cultural élite participating in the eighties and nineties to the construction of the volunteer movement in Italy and still leading it nowadays.

**Group II: The Best of Youth.** On the opposite front, we found the least represented group, both in number and in intensity. It is composed of adults holding only a lower secondary certificate and with few financial resources, of young people and of very young people. Those who, from this starting point, choose to engage in volunteering, represent the spearhead of civic engagement in their own reference contexts and are of great value to society. Moreover, they have on their side an exponential function: the long future ahead\(^\text{18}\).

**Group III: The precious ones.** They are few, but do a lot: the characterising features of this group are low volunteering rates and a noticeable quantity of hours devoted to it. They are, in particular, those retired from work, people looking for employment, over 75, people with insufficient financial resources, women, home-makers, people with only primary education or none at all. This group reflects the image of the traditional selfless volunteer, devoted to the cause, the hard and


\(^{18}\) Convincing evidences start to emerge in support of the intuitions of those working in the sector that having experienced civic commitment at a young age leads the propensity to volunteering in adulthood (Jones, 2000; Oesterle, 2004; Hart, 2007; Marzana, 2015).
pervasive core of solidarity in Italy, widely described also as the volunteering that compensates for deficiencies of the welfare state.

*Group IV: The changing tide.* The last subgroup, characterised by the highest rates of participation but by the relatively small number of hours, groups people most active in other spheres of society: those in employment, students, those with higher education diploma, people aged 35 to 45, mostly men. They are many, they are educated, they are the long term effects of the new generation of Italian volunteers.

To organisations and institutions these data – albeit descriptive – can represent a first ground to understand the diversities and the opportunities of (possible) volunteers and to elaborate organisational strategies on how to convoy at best availabilities and interests of citizens to benefit the common good.

As first evidences for our research interests, these general traits account for a significant spread of individual volunteering in Italy (about 3mln of individual volunteers), a scarce net overlapping between organised and individual volunteers (only 8,1% of 6,63mln perform both organized and individual volunteering) and separate organised and individual volunteering worlds in terms of length of involvement. The typical duration of activity emerges as the most evident cleavage between organisational and individual volunteers – permanent in time, a stable life habit for the organised volunteers, temporary engagement for the individual volunteers.

4. Profiles of informal volunteers. An explorative analysis

The existence of many reference cultures, of diverse modalities of activation and nature of the engagement, the plurality of sectors and the scale of the intervention, the compresence of organised and individual activities makes the volunteering phenomenon especially complex, to the point that it has often been considered more apt talking of “volunteerings” (Ardigò, 2001; Arcidiacono, 2004). Facing the issue of “volunteerings” means acknowledging that it is a very complex world, operating in, beside the traditional social assistance field, also in the sectors of culture, environmental protection, folk traditions valorisation, heritage, advocacy etc. and that at last it involves volunteering moving among families, neighbourhoods, cities or within problematic issues unexplored up until now by traditional entities.

To take into account this plurality we considered jointly some of the most distinctive features of volunteers, detected through the ILO Module in order to define the most significant volunteer profiles. To do so, multivariate statistical analysis techniques were used. In particular, the multiple correspondence analysis was used (from now on MCA), a typically explorative analysis, that doesn’t start from a pre-constituted model, but tries to identify the existing links among the detected characteristics. These links were then used in an instrumental way to create homogeneous groups of individuals, through the use of cluster analysis techniques (from now on CA). Given the presence of diverse initial information gathered among organised and individual volunteers, we chose to work distinctly on the two sub-populations, inserting the individuals who performed their activities both in and outside organisation in the analysis devoted to organised volunteering. Data presented here refer therefore to individuals who performed exclusively individual voluntary activities.

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19 The (problematic) role of volunteering in supplying to the deficiencies of the Italian welfare system is manifest since the first empirical studies on the phenomenon in Italy (cfr. Ranci, De Ambrogio, Pasquinelli, 1991).

20 Multivariate analyses were performed by using statistical software Spad. The cluster analysis was made with the hierarchical aggregation method of Ward (RECIP).

21 For reading accessibility, not all statistical procedures and details of the processing are detailed here. Interested readers can contact the authors for further information.
The research concerned 2 million 493 thousand volunteers performing their voluntary activities outside organisations. The “active variables” used in the MCA are those related to the characteristics of informal voluntary activity surveyed in the module on unpaid activities, namely: the type of unpaid activity performed (according to the large groups of professional classification - CP2011), the number of volunteering hours performed in the 4 weeks and the main beneficiary of the individual activity. The “illustrative variables” used are the same as those used for volunteers in organisations: gender; age; educational level; employment status; geographic distribution; type of municipality; family economic status; presence of children in the family; age of the youngest child in the family; number of components and role in the family; frequency of seeing friends; frequency of watching TV; health; cultural, social and religious participation; indicators of satisfaction and of trust. The MCA and the following CA identify four profiles of informal volunteers, on the basis of the characteristics that distinguish them from other groups, because those are owned by individuals in that group at a significantly greater extent than the overall average of the volunteers.

The fundamental discriminant to start to understand the universe of those performing volunteering outside the organisational framework is the final goal of the commitment, which we distinguish in two large spheres. The first was codified in the questionnaire as “community and environment” and corresponds to the commitment in favour of the common goods and to the advocacy actions. The second was codified in the questionnaire as “for others” and corresponds to the activities providing services and assistance to people. The “others” as beneficiaries were further segmented in the questionnaire between “neighbours, friends and acquaintances” and “persons unknown to the volunteer before the start of the voluntary activity”.

4.1 Informal volunteers - Profile 1: those who... lend a helping hand

This group is made of about 852 thousand people (34.2 % individual volunteers). Over a third among those volunteering outside an organisation is active in helping people in their own network of friends, neighbours, acquaintances. It is, therefore, a “short distribution chain” in the activation of geographically and/or emotionally close support networks. These volunteers “lend a helping hand” on direct demand, answering a delimited and temporary need. Their activity, indeed, does not extend much over time: 61.8% of them have been performing it for less than a year. Also the amount of commitment is rather low: 53.9% spent on it between 2 and 4 hours in the four reference weeks, 37.4% devoted between 4 and 9 hours. The activities that are most represented in this group are those of help with bureaucracy (11.5%), help in redecoration, maintenance and agriculture (7%) and driving (6.9%). These volunteers provide the resources and the skills activated to perform an activity that an individual cannot complete independently. Even without information on beneficiaries’ characteristics, the prominent activities and the type of skills required suggest that these include mainly old people. It does not come as a surprise, in this context, that the area most represented is the South (30.8%). Volunteers “lending a helping hand” come from families with scarce financial resources (44.3%), have a low cultural participation and scarce interest in politics. Among all the volunteers, this is the group recording the lowest educational levels (only 19% of members of this group has a university degree, versus an average of 22.5% of all direct volunteers). The condition that emerges most significantly in the group is the one of those looking for employment (13.3%).

4.2 Informal volunteers - Profile 2: those whom... one cannot do without

The second group in numbers, almost a third of informal volunteers, is characterised by commitment for others. The group is made of about 707 thousand individuals (28.4% of direct
volunteers). Activities performed are those ascribable to skilled assistance to people in need (senior citizens, children), mainly from one’s own circle of friends, neighbours or acquaintances (77.1%), but also to people unknown before the start of the helping relationship (18.9%). Unlike the first profile, this type of help is more stable in time: 34.3% declare of having performed it for 1 to 2 years. The long-term character of this helping relationship is a distinctive trait of the group: one out of five (20.4%) of informal volunteers have been looking after someone for 5 to 9 years. This shows that it is a down and out service, complementary to the self-management of the family. The amount of commitment is also considerable: 69.9% of volunteers in this group are committed for at least 10 hours in the 4 weeks. 20.5% (more than one out of five) of volunteers belonging to this group devote to this service up to 40 and more hours a month. It is a weekly “driving force” for Italian families. Doing without it is probably unthinkable of. The greatest majority of individual volunteers of this profile are women. The female gender weighs in this group 67.5% versus a general average of 53.7% of individual volunteers. It doesn’t come as a surprise that this type of voluntary activity is often alternative to paid employment: the unemployed in this group are 59.9%. In particular, there is a significant presence of home-makers (18.3%) and students (9.7%).

4.3 Informal volunteers - Profile 3: those who... choose to do it themselves

The third group is made of 688 thousand people (27.6% of informal volunteers). Members of the group have basic characteristics that strongly distinguish them from other individual volunteers: they are professionals, well educated, with features ascribable to the so-called “social core”, as theorised in literature (Milbrath, 1965; Lemon, Palisi and Jacobson, 1972) and described for the Italians organised volunteers (Guidi and Maraviglia, 2016).

Their demographic profile shows significant similarities and overlaps with some of the profiles of organised volunteers (Cappadozzi and Fonović, 2016; Fonović and Cappadozzi, 2018). But, for reasons for the moment unexplored and invisible from the data analysed, these volunteers choose individual commitment outside an organised framework. Those belonging to the group give their help to the community and the environment (37.6%) or to strangers (25.1%). They are mainly in employment. The voluntary activities most characterising the group are ascribable to technical professions (32.9%): nursing, educating, social working. Next to those, technical professions equivalent activities are well represented (performed by 19.5% of group members): doctors, legal professionals, teachers. Hence, the group is characterised by the presence of many graduates (35.7%), by those employed as managers, businesspeople or freelance professionals (17.3%). A significant share of volunteers in this group are employed in the Public Administration, Education or Health fields (34.1%). They are, therefore, professionals, serving others or employing their highly-skilled capacities for the common good. Such activities are well-established over time. Almost half, indeed, (42.2%) has performed the activity for over 10 years and 17.5% from 5 to 9 years. The long-term duration – comparable only to sports volunteers and to the ones with a religious inspiration in the organised volunteers group – means that the voluntary practice is deeply rooted in their life. Having said that, the time devoted is limited: 43.4% between 2 to 4 hours in the four weeks of reference. This represents a clear demarcation line with the type of commitment that tends to be more intense for those volunteering in an organisation. Again quite in line with evidence emerging on some of the profiles of organised volunteers, the group is characterised by high cultural participation (26.7%) and by the economic condition of the family subjectively considered as adequate (58.6%). These volunteers, professionals and individual activists, are interested in politics (27.7% inform themselves on an everyday basis) and show a high degree of interpersonal trust (32.5%).
4.4 Informal volunteers - Profile 4: those who… to donate end up straight in hospital

This group is made of about 246 thousand people (9.9% of informal volunteers) characterised by the fact of devoting to this activity a very short time: one hour in the 4 reference weeks (83.1%), plus 10.1% who devoted between 2 to 4 hours. The activity most characterising the group does not have an equivalent in the codification of professions (33.9%) while the beneficiary is the community or the environment (28.6%). This is the profile of the individual blood donors, which mirrors exactly the group of blood donors profiled among the organised volunteers. But unlike those who entrust themselves to associations, they donate directly at the hospital. Those belonging to this group are mainly in employment (69.9%), employees in particular (48.1%), males (61.8%). The manual workers group is over represented in this group (23.8% compared to 12.1% average of all individual volunteers). The structural characteristics are very similar to those of the organised blood donors. They are very happy about their health and their attendance of places of worship is scarce (58.7% attend religious service only sometimes or never). They are parents with a partner, with underage children and have a very low cultural participation (they do not participate to cultural events nor read books or newspapers).

The comparison between the individual and the organised blood donors profiles suggests two main reasons for the individual’s choice between the organised and the individual modality of blood donation. One immediately apparent driver is the activation under the demand of a specific need arising from their own social circles or territorially close community. The other explanation points in the direction of the availability of organisational infrastructure for the blood donation. In addition to the local civic culture and the individual resources for engagement, in the case of blood donation it is important to point out the difference made by large employers, who promote and facilitate access to organised blood donation.

A general trait shared across the four profiles of individual volunteers that came to light is the predominance of commitment dedicated to helping others. The greatest majority of those who engage themselves outside an organisation, does so answering the needs of their fellow citizens – their peers, belonging to the same reference community, outside of their own household. Volunteers committed to the community and the environment are a minority among individual volunteers (about 13%). Most of these presumably converge into the Profile 3 - those who... choose to do it themselves.

5. Personal and social antecedents of informal volunteering

Our final research step is about the so-called “determinants” (or “antecedents”) of individual volunteering (Smith 1994, Wilson 2012). We refer to those individual factors which can be considered – on the basis of specific theoretical models – facilitating the probability people have to volunteer. We particularly finalise our analysis to compare the influence of the same determinants on individual and organised volunteers in order to assess if the background drivers of volunteering appear to play in the same way for the two worlds.

We address the topic under two main theoretical hypotheses and a progressive application of logistic regression models. The first theoretical paradigm ("social centratily" with Milbrath 1965 or “social dominant statuses” with Lemon, Palisi and Jacobson, 1972) is based on social stratification theory (Goldthorpe, 1960) and consider social position of the individuals as the main source of the drivers for being involved. People would engage for free after having achieved an economic condition
assuring a personal ease. Moreover, who are in central social positions would have major opportunities to get in touch with organisations which provide concrete requests to engage and conversely the latter would have more interests in recruiting people having a consolidated position (Wilson and Musick, 1998; van Ingen and Bekkers, 2011). These theoretical assumptions have been formulated having in mind organisations as crucial intermediation of personal engagement and in a historical conjuncture where materialist values were centrally staged. To little update this successful theoretical model, we also include the socio-cultural dimensions into the analysis in a way to refer to both socio-economic and socio-cultural central social statuses.

The second theoretical paradigm (“collective identities” with Pizzorno, 1993) consider collective values and belonging as main drivers of social and political participation. Worldviews and cultural imperatives would put people in contact with different agencies which would ask them some form of engagement. Under this hypothesis people would volunteer to express their own identity and to be recognised by their own social circle. Also these theoretical assumptions have been formulated having in mind organisations as crucial intermediation of personal engagement. Nevertheless, many studies have confirmed the importance of religious and political values as drivers of voluntary action in advanced capitalist societies too (Van Ingen and Dekker, 2011; Van Tienen et al., 2011; Ruiter and de Graaf, 2006; Taniguchi and Thomas 2011; Bekkers, 2005; Wilson and Musick, 1997; Reed and Selbee, 2000).

If organised volunteering were first modernity like and individual volunteering would be second modernity like, we would expect the organized volunteering to be facilitated by socio-economic resources, working and middle-class statuses and the adherence to religious and political values, while individual volunteering by socio-cultural resources and middle-class status.

Under these assumptions, we first apply a basic regression logistic model including socio-demographic variables only, then we apply a regression model shaped by social centrality paradigm and controlled for socio-demographic factors, finally we apply a more complex regression model shaped by collective identities and social statuses hypotheses and controlled for socio-demographic factors. In each step organised volunteering and individual volunteering (output variables) are considered separately and the quality of the model is assessed through the Akaike information criterion (AIC). For synthesis purposes, we only present the last and most significative step (Table 3).
According to our analysis, the patterns of the determinants of organized and individual volunteering in Italy appear the same, although some differences exist. Socio-cultural resources and political and religious values seem to increase the probability to be active for both but more strongly for organised volunteering than for individual volunteering. Moreover, while volunteering through an organisation appears associated to a middle-class status, coming from working class families and being seriously unsatisfied for own economic condition would facilitate individual volunteering.

These evidences seem to support the idea that there is a significant distance from second modernity like individual volunteering and the Italian individual volunteering at present time. The study of determinants accounts for a similar pattern of driving forces for individual and organised

**TAB. 3 – Social antecedents: Individual and organised volunteers in comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total volunteer work</th>
<th>Organised volunteer work</th>
<th>Individual volunteer work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL CLASS OF THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD (ref. = Working class)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourgeoisie</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>0.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SATISFACTION FOR THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE HOUSEHOLD (ref. = Not at all)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not much</td>
<td>-0.168</td>
<td>0.047 **</td>
<td>-0.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (ref. = Primary school certificate, no educational degree)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>0.655</td>
<td>0.075 **</td>
<td>0.709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper and post secondary</td>
<td>0.587</td>
<td>0.065 ***</td>
<td>0.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary school certificate</td>
<td>0.427</td>
<td>0.063 ***</td>
<td>0.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CULTURAL PARTICIPATION (ref. = None)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.946</td>
<td>0.059 ***</td>
<td>0.972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>0.766</td>
<td>0.052 ***</td>
<td>0.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.386</td>
<td>0.044 ***</td>
<td>0.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICT COMPETENCE (ref. = None)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.664</td>
<td>0.061 ***</td>
<td>0.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>0.390</td>
<td>0.054 ***</td>
<td>0.550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.286</td>
<td>0.049 ***</td>
<td>0.358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELIGIOUS IDENTITY (ref. = Absent)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>1.018</td>
<td>0.048 ***</td>
<td>1.247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>0.280</td>
<td>0.045 ***</td>
<td>0.369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POLITICAL IDENTITY (ref. = Absent)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>0.997</td>
<td>0.082 ***</td>
<td>1.189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>0.460</td>
<td>0.046 ***</td>
<td>0.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-4.143</td>
<td>0.144 ***</td>
<td>-5.424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R² (Nagelkerke)</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC (Akaike's information criterion)</td>
<td>27267</td>
<td>19616</td>
<td>14453</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Controlled by: gender; age class; main status; number of family members and territory

*Source: Data from Istat Aspects of everyday life year 2013*
volunteering and – if something different exists – it moves individual volunteering more towards a pre-modern/traditional than a second modernity scenario.

6. Conclusions

We have investigated a new set of statistical information on persons volunteering only outside organisations in Italy (Istat-ILO module “Unpaid activities to benefit others” AVQ2013) with the aim to test the practice of individual volunteering in present day Italy against the three contrasting scenarios posited in the literature: individual volunteering is a

1. pre-modern/traditional phenomenon, overlapping with informal help within the immediate community;
2. modern phenomenon, similar to organised volunteering;
3. second-modern phenomenon, marking the obsolesce of intermediary corps.

To this end, we have profiled four large groups of individual volunteers showing clearly differentiated structural characteristics and have compared the personal and the social antecedents of individual volunteers with those volunteering in organisations.

On a first level of analysis, the bulk of evidence would suggest to reject the second-modern scenario following the ‘de-organisation path’ in favor of the confirmation of the modern scenario, where individual volunteering is parallel and complementary, and not substituting for or mining the force of the, considered conventional, organised volunteering. This interpretation draws force from the macro evidence arising from the parallel analyses and comparisons between the structural characteristics of individual and organised volunteers. Clustering exercise has confirmed the neat governing demarcation line between individual and organised volunteers, then segmented clearly both sub-populations into profiles that mirror each other across the demarcation line of the modality of organised / non-organised framework. In the practice of volunteering, this different modality of activation is expressed in two dimensions of time. Overall, Individual volunteers dedicate to the activity less time and their length of involvement over years tends to be shorter. The structural characteristics and antecedents of volunteering are quite similar between individual and organised volunteers, individual volunteers showing more marginal characteristics in comparison to socio-economic and socio-cultural determinants.
The picture though is much more composite as regards the positioning of individual volunteering onto the different scenarios of modernity. Our interpretation is that individual volunteering is a composite phenomenon that reflects the Italian mosaic of compresence of different forms of modernity. Individual volunteering presents therefore a full continuum of elements that span from traditional expressions of individual voluntary activation, cover two forms of modernity linked to different welfare regimes and anticipate advancement towards second modernity.

The first macroscopic distinction that permits us to delineate the composite positioning of the individual volunteering to the forms of modernity in Italy is the fact that the juxtaposition of individual volunteering to organised volunteering as an expression of modernity holds true only for the “helping others” dimension of the organised volunteering and leaves at the margins the activist and self-expressive dimensions of the engagement “for the benefit of the community and the environment”. This quite heavily shifts the relative weight of individual volunteering to the pre-modern/traditional scenario and the realm of the “imperfect modernity” characterised by the family as a dominant element of the welfare regime. Profile 1 of the individual volunteers *those who... lend a helping hand* shows the characteristics of the pre-modern/traditional situation. The activation is immediate, close to the still alive community, neighbourhood, peer-to-peer self and mutual help relations which happen occasionally but diffusely in the Southern regions (the most traditional and poor - in economic resources and culture - areas of Italy) for the most. Profile 2 of the individual volunteers *those who... one cannot do without* concentrates the pre-modern/traditional and modern elements of the Italian familistic welfare model (Ferrera, 1996) which urges unemployed/inactive and unpaid women to develop long-term and weekly time-consuming care relations. In the organised volunteering, it corresponds almost perfectly to the most numerous group of *Committed caregivers*.

In a very similar way, the perfectly mirroring profiles of individual and organised blood donors suggest to interpret individual blood donation as a pre-modern/traditional and organised blood donation as a full modern practice.
On the other side of the modernity continuum, the meagre third of individual volunteers grouped in the Profile 3 *those who... choose to do it themselves* mix the full modernity and the second modernity traits. These individual volunteers strongly differ from those of the previous profiles – for the structural characteristics and for the objective of their action, being the only profile that significantly engages for the benefit of wider community, environment or the promotion of ideas. They share with the average organised volunteers the same middle-high demographic, cultural and economic background. It means they possess plenty of individual resources to find a suitable organisation and live the associational life as protagonists. But, in what could be hypothesised as a very second modernity way – they choose not to adhere to an organised framework of engagement. Still – in a very full modernity manner – their involvement is not occasional but repeated and prolonged in time for the most. This profile of informal volunteers presents a significant osmosis area with the *Pioneers* profile of organised volunteers. In opposition to all other profiles of organised volunteers, *Pioneers* are characterised by loose to inexistent identification with the organisation they volunteer in and its institutional logic, engagement in informal groups, pulviscolarity as to the sector of activity, short duration but consistent amount of time donation, and very high cultural profile. Significantly, these loosely-organised *Pioneers* show a high percentage of those who perform also individual volunteering, mainly for the benefit of the community and the environment. We therefore identify the Profile 3 of individual volunteers *those who... choose to do it themselves* as the segment spearheading the advancements to the second modernity scenario. With the important *caveat* that this evolution is not particular to individual volunteering, but part and parcel of one of the evolutionary trends of full-modernity organised volunteering that we hypothesise follows the path of re-organisation, and not de-organisation.

The positioning of individual volunteering against the composite modernity scenarios would not be complete without pointing out the missing components. Individual volunteering does not express profiles paragonable to those which in organised volunteering represent the structured engagement in usual third sector expressive fields of activity (religion, culture and sports) nor the function of voice in the public sphere. The correspondent profiles of organised volunteering (*Religious educators, investors in culture, Lay sports volunteers* and *Stakhanovs of representation*) cumulate exactly one half of the total of organised volunteers.

The picture thus completed presents individual volunteering spread across all forms of modernities existent in the present day Italy: marginal with respect to the organised volunteering in the full modernity form, substitutive in the traditional environments, complementary and possibly competing in the forms of imperfect modernity of familistic welfare and compenetrating organised volunteering in the advancements to the second-modern scenario.

This initial reading of the composite nature of individual volunteering against the forms of modernity commands to be further investigated and documented. On the one hand, it needs be checked in detail against the mosaic of Italian territorial cultures. On the other hand, it ought be confronted with data from other countries globally. The authors are currently at work to refine the research hypotheses in this direction, by intersecting the reflection around the different forms of modernity with the framing power of the welfare regime and of the family, a tacit but powerful political institution that greatly influences both organised and individual volunteering. The initial analyses proposed in this Working Paper point in the direction of considering individual volunteering outside organisations as a form of “*diffused solidarity*”, a transversal organic societal element rather than a phenomenon specific to a particular socio-economic arrangement, complementary and non alternative to volunteering in organisations.
FIG. 2 – Individual volunteering in Italy: positioning against the forms of modernity

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