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Mapping the philanthropic contributions of service clubs: the Dutch case

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Introduction

Service clubs, like Rotary, Soroptimist International, Lions find their roots in the United States. In fact, most service clubs have seen the light at the edge of the 19th and 20th century in the US. The Round Table, however, was founded in the UK; out of this club the Ladies' Circle was also born in the UK. The club Fifty One International started at the European Continent, in 1966, Waterloo, Belgium.

Nevertheless, service clubs were "Born in the USA", a title of one of the albums of Bruce Springsteen. Why there and what kind of incentives, questions, conditions have created the impetus for their "naissance"? Of course, their presence has strong links to the type of society, the USA was – and is. Therefore, the diffusion of the social phenomenon "service club" over the world, and, especially in the welfare states in Western Europe, is an amazing and, for scholars, an interesting fact. Service club members are active citizens of society: they organize meetings, charity-dinners, they raise funds, they support their local community as well as the international community and they form social networks of friendship. Service clubs fulfill the social contact function for their members, and, doing so, they serve societal goals, the public good. In that way, service clubs are part of the philanthropic community: the volunteer time and money for the common good. Surprisingly they have not been mentioned in (inter)national research on philanthropy as a distinct source of contributions. To put it more strongly: data on what service clubs perform are, as far as we know, not available, and the scholarly attention paid to them is scarce. Enough reasons to draw up an inventory research on this subject.

A pilot: service clubs in the Netherlands

In The Netherlands service clubs like Rotary, Lions, Soroptimistclubs, Ladies' Circle, Zonta are historically committed to citizenship, to civic duty, especially at the community level. Surprisingly they have hardly been investigated as a philanthropic "source". In neither the "Giving USA" studies, nor the "Giving The Netherlands" studies the philanthropic contributions of these clubs have been considered separately. In The Netherlands about 47.000 people join a service club. Twelve different organizations cover 1595 local clubs.

Table 1: Number of service clubs and members in The Netherlands

Club	Number of members	Number of clubs
Rotary	19.600	468
Lions	11.500	400
Soroptimisten	3.215	93
Inner Wheel	2.939	85
Round Table	2.877	196
Kiwanis	2.645	125
Junior Kamer	2.250	96
Rotaract	450	45
Ladies' Circle	750	48
Zonta	610	21
Fifty-one	175	8
Leo's	100	10
TOTAL	47.111	1.595

For that reason, since September 2005 a research on the 12 service clubs has been started. This study intends to offer a historic-sociological analysis of the roots of service clubs, it tries to collect data of the philanthropic contributions (money and time) over the last 50 years and it will compare these civic efforts with the service ideals from the past and with the political context of the (Dutch) welfare state of today. The study focuses at two questions: 1. What are the basic ideas of service clubs and are they still valid in the changing (Dutch) welfare state?, 2. What is the content of the philanthropic contributions of service clubs?

Relevance of the study

Welfare states in Western Europe are in transition. Demographic changes, growing wealth, cultural and political developments at national as well as European level trigger fundamental shifts in economic, social and political institutions. Western Europe is moving into the ongoing process of restructuring: in the meanwhile integrating new East European countries at the one hand, coping nationwide with the ethnic diversity challenges at the other. As a result, the transition urges the continuous innovations of governments, businesses and civic efforts to keep Western Europe a prosperous and democratic community to live in. It is the ultimate task to philosophers, authors, scholars and politicians to grasp this transition into a cohesive cultural framework. A sustainable economic growth, political democracy and a basic level of social services will form the pillars of prosperity in the future.

Along with the economic and political changes most Western European countries are transforming into so-called “civil societies”. Social services will financially rely on three sources of contributions:

- a. Government funding
- b. Fees and charges
- c. Philanthropy (Salamon and Anheier 1999; 2004).

Especially the last category is getting weight: wealthy individuals, entrepreneurial wealth, bequests, foundations and corporate philanthropy stand for a huge amount of money. Service clubs historically express the philanthropic commitment of individuals to society. Will the rise of the civil society in Western European Welfare states influence the performance, the kind of activities of service clubs? Moreover, scientific literature on the subject is, as mentioned before, scarce.

A historical sociological context

Why, just why did the phenomenon “service club” spring up in the USA? Fortunately, the little literature on the history of service clubs helped us in our search for explanations. “Going west”, the hard life of farmers and their families brought people together in their struggle to survive. They could not lean on an existing social framework of neighbourhoods, communities, and, in the case of disasters on guilds, like in Western Europe. People in difficult circumstances seek grouping as a way to make their life bearable.

For the generations of the farmers the family economy concentrates around the role of the mother, who chaired the household. So, women took the initiative to join in a form of service club, in so-called maternities. Women first, not men. These maternities delivered support, mutual exchange and leverage for the wives. In fact, women create this new form of social arrangement in the world, the service club: mutual social support was matched with friendship (Charles 1958). The tough life, the ecology of the pre- industrialized society of the United States shapes the conditions for this new type of social network.

Industrialization changed the household economy fundamentally and the dominant position of women as well. Men went out to work and the domain of women to operate shrunk to the house. This situation gives way – oh dialectics! - to a new development and the end of the 19th century, namely “community-service”. The maternities added this external orientation to the original internal group-service ideal. Internationally the rise of female community service was boosted by the first feminist wave. The appearance of industrial capitalist economy forced women to make their own life-air. All around the world they themselves made new jobs to enter the labour market. In these times professional jobs as nurse, teacher, social worker saw the light. (in Amsterdam, for instance, the first professional school of social work opened in 1899 and hospitals were even founded by nurses since 1850 in The Netherlands (Posthumus-Van der Goot 1948).

Industrialization, especially the capitalist mode, led to a Wild West, but now in economic terms. Business has winners and losers. Make your profit, irrespective of possible consequences. This rough capitalist mode of production evoked – in the same dialectical way as in the case of female community service – a need for “truth”, for norms and values in business. So, in the beginning of the 20th century, first Paul Harris sets up Rotary Club and, some years later, Melvin Jones his Lions Club.

Representatives from different professional groups gathered to offer internal service (can we trust each other in doing business; can we help each other in finding people with whom we can do business?), friendship, social support and to offer external community service.

The first statements of the Code of Ethics of the Lions, for instance, express the values the social conditions of this period evoked:

1. "To show my faith in the worthiness of my vocation by industrious application to the end that I may merit a reputation for quality of service
2. To seek success and to demand all fair remuneration or profit as my just due, but to accept no profit or success at the price of my own self-respect lost because of unfair advantage taken or because of questionable acts on my part".

The economic, social and political situation has to be seen as the ground on which initiatives of civic duty and citizenship, including maternities and service clubs grow. It is a coming together of actors and social structures. Now we tune in at the latter. Does the societal organisation of the United States lead us to explanations why, and why just there, service clubs have been created?

Society models and citizenship

Logically, crucial tasks in society, like income security, education, socialisation, healthcare and the preservation of culture and values must be fulfilled. In the United States citizenship, the responsibility of the individual is the pillar of all social organisations and political institutions. In Western Europe however, in The Netherlands as well, a great deal of these societal tasks have become the responsibility of politicians and officials, in a word, of government. We call those societies welfare states.

A welfare state can be defined as form of social structure whereby a free market economy and a pluralistic democratic political structure guarantee certain welfare for the population (Mishra 1986, De Swaan 1988). The term 'certain welfare' implies a given minimum in (financial) security. Education is usually also guaranteed by law in welfare states, and health care frequently is as well. In some countries, housing (for certain target groups) may also be covered by government regulation.

The crux of the welfare state structure lies in political, governmental intervention in the market (de-commodification: Esping-Andersen 1990). The market and government are alternative mechanisms through which primary human needs (food, education, health, housing) can be provided. Welfare states are the result of collective response to setbacks and calamities (De Swaan 1988). Under government leadership and by way of payment of taxes, citizens save up to protect themselves against potential disaster. The real significance of the welfare state lies primarily in its potential for social integration (Mishra 1981, Offe 1984), in the sense that a secure existence is offered to all citizens. The strength of the welfare state does not depend on the reduction of social stratification and inequality, because lower income groups benefit, middle-income groups benefit more and high-income groups benefit most (Mishra 1981). Absolute poverty is reduced, but relative poverty remains or is increased. The strength of the welfare state is precisely because it does not redistribute, but instead ensures a high degree of social rest (Offe 1984, Mishra 1981).

In terms of Mishra's definition the United States is a welfare state, but one of the residual type. Government has guaranteed only a little minimum of societal tasks. Most Western European states have, what Mishra calls an institutional model of welfare state: social security, healthcare and education are governmentally regulated. They are institutionalised on a legally base.

Theoretical framework

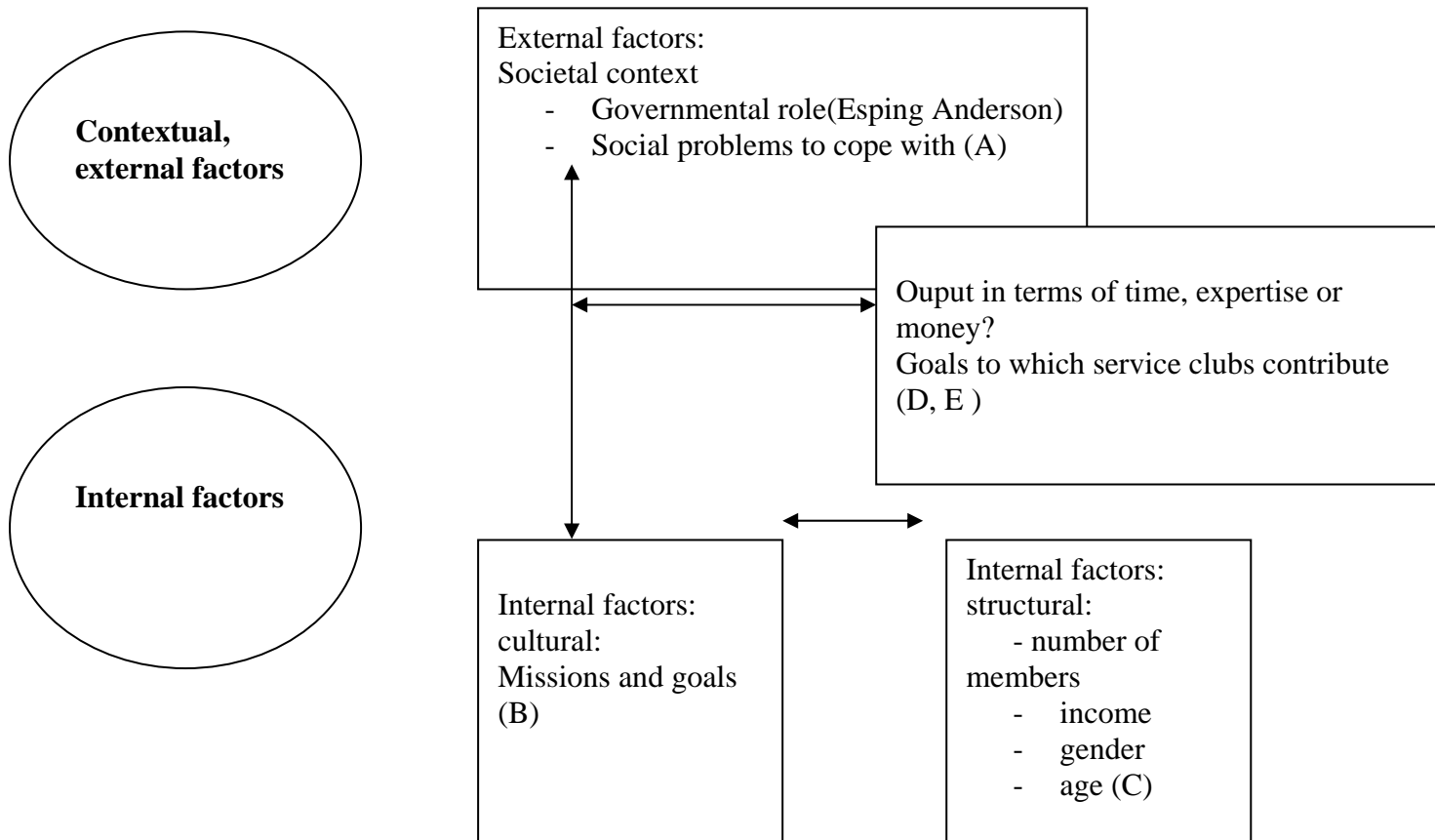
These societal circumstances form, together with the ecological challenges, social problems and the mode of economic production the conditional prerequisites for people to act. So did women act in founding their maternities, and developing community services, so did businessmen like Harris and Jones act in starting their service clubs. For describing, analysing and explaining the creation, existence and future of service clubs we then first have to pay attention to a set of macro-economic factors. Among them, the degree and kind of governmental influence and state regulation is an important one. One of the most well known typologies in this regard has been introduced by Esping-Andersen.

“Esping-Andersen distinguished three types of welfare-state regimes: a social democratic, a liberal and a corporatist or conservative regime. These regimes differed with respect to the major institutions guaranteeing social security (the state, the market or the family); the kind of stratification systems upheld by the institutional mix of these institutions (the extent of status and class differentiation, segmentation and inequality typically implied in social security systems); and the degree of de-commodification, that is to say ‘the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation’ (Esping-Andersen 1990: 37). The social democratic regime was characterized by a political commitment to equality; it reduced status and class differentials and modified greatly the market dependence of wage-labour. Particularism and an unwillingness to alter the status and class structure are major features of the conservative regime, which also favoured a social policy that privileged and preserved the family. In the liberal welfare-state regime the market predominated and social rights were generally modest and attached to performance on the labour market. The variations in welfare-state regimes were by and large explained by the distinct modes in which classes (particularly the working class) became politically mobilized, the diverging structuration of class alliances and class coalitions, and the different national policy legacies.” (Van Kersbergen, Becker forthcoming).

Next to the role of government, the kind of social problems people and communities face may be an important factor in scrutinizing service clubs. Are they confronted by or threatened by poverty and criminality, or are they committed to educational questions of the problem of safety, or international solidarity? These two factors (governmental role and social questions) form the contextual variables in the theoretical model.

Now we change focus and look at the actor-side, the service clubs, their founders. What missions did they stand for; what goals did they want to achieve? These cultural factors go side by side with structural ones. As organizations the internal structural factors of service clubs (gender, income, age and number of members) play a role too.

The external and internal factors both are related to the output of the work of service clubs: the total of given time, expertise and money to the public good.



Out of this preliminary theoretical framework some general hypotheses may be extracted:

Hypothesis 1: Service clubs in The Netherlands do not favor public goals that already have been covered by governmental social policies

Hypothesis 2: Because of the widespread governmental efforts in the field of community and non-profit goals service clubs in The Netherlands social services tend to be more internal oriented than external. Community service will get less attention in comparison with networking, mutual support, friendship and leisure / recreational activities.

Methods

In The Netherlands 12 service clubs do exist. At national level they cooperate in information exchange and advocacy. They work together in a foundation, so-called SIN: Service clubs In the Netherlands. Three students of the Vrije Universiteit started

this inventory research in September 2005 as part of their master thesis. During 8 months they performed depth –in interviews, documentary analysis, literature-study. Also a questionnaire has been made, and sends to well-informed representatives of the clubs. The response was very low. It proved out to be not because of unwillingness. Amazingly the clubs didn't have aggregated data of the performances of their local clubs. In this respect the research conducted strongly pushed the SIN's awareness that the slogan "Do Good and Tell It" doesn't match the Dutch service clubs and this fact hampers the attractiveness for young people to join.

First Results

Table 2: Total amount of funds raised of 12 service clubs in the year mid 2004 – 2005

Organisation	Total amount in euro's 2004-2005
Rotary (460)	Not available yet
Lions (400)	3.200.000
Soroptimisten (93)	795.800
Inner Wheel (85)	208.000
Round Table (196)	600.000
Kiwanis (125)	118.000
Junior Kamer (96)	768.000
Rotaract (45)	Not available yet
Ladies' Circle (48)	290.000
Zonta (21)	33.000
Fifty-one (8)	Not available yet
Leo's (10)	30.000
Total	6.046.800

Table 3: Goals which has been benefited in the period 1960 - 2006

	1960-1970	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2006
Religion	0%	0%	2%	3%	0%
Sports	0%	0%	2%	4%	0%
Health	9%	14%	18%	18%	20%
International affairs		14%	19%	25%	30%
Public society benefit	91%	68%	33%	33%	45%
Environment and animals	0%	4%	10%	7%	1%
Culture	0%	0%	4%	4%	1%
Education	0%	0%	4%	0%	2%
Unknown goals	0%	0%	8%	6%	1%

Table 4: Histogram of benefited goals in the period 1960 - 2006

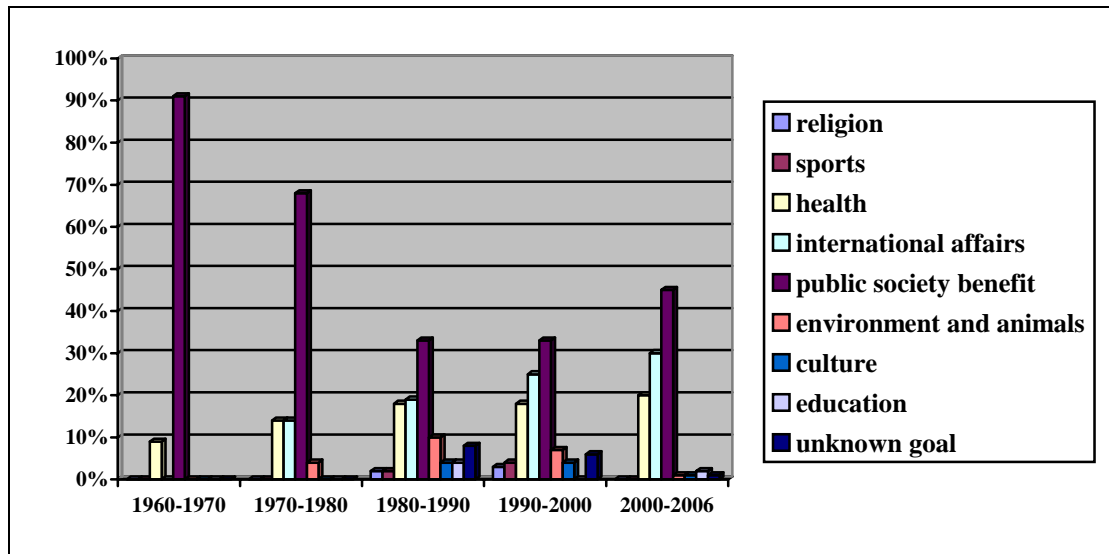


Table 5: Specification of the public society benefit.

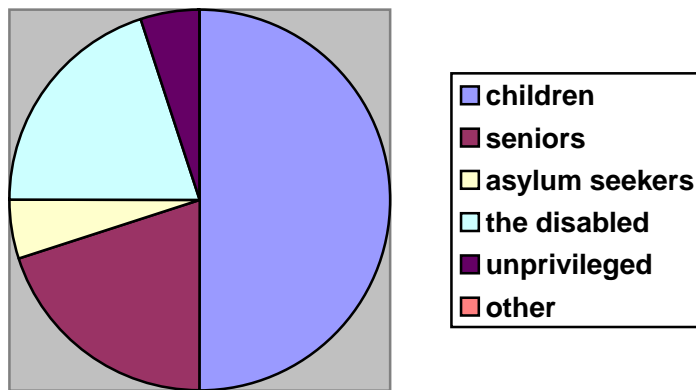


Table 6 : Type of activities: volunteering time and volunteering money

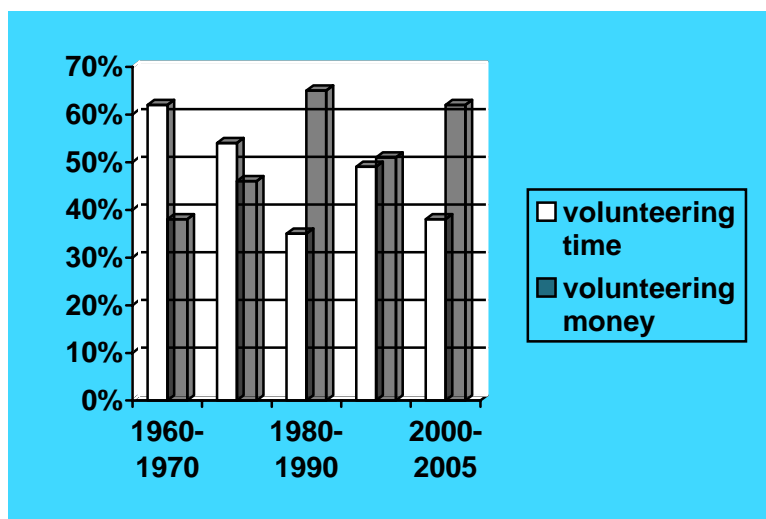


Table 7: Estimation of the costs for internal service, fees for the national and international organization

Club	Total amount of contribution 2004- 2005 in €
Rotary	3.920.000
Lions	2.070.000
Soroptimisten *	297.387
Inner Wheel	229.242
Round Table*	158.666
Kiwanis*	233.685
Junior Kamer	Not available yet
Rotaract	22.500
Ladies'Circle	42.413
Zonta	122.000
Fifty-one	35.000
Leo's	5.000
TOTAL	7.135.893

Conclusion and discussion

First of all we are glad that, for the first time in The Netherlands as far as we know, we are able to present some data. With the help of the Dutch national foundation, the SIN, and their strong support we have made a first, but important step. What happened in the time we gathered information seems to be comparable with the famous research done in the Hawthorne – project: service clubs became aware of the lack of information about the performance of their local clubs. They themselves started to change their behaviour. This is an important conclusion to draw. Nevertheless, a lot of work has to be done to improve data-collection.

A second conclusion respond to hypothesis 1. Indeed, in a context of the dominant role of government, service clubs in the Netherlands seem to seek goals which does not have priority in governmental programs.

The third conclusion is difficult to draw, because the empirical evidence is as thin as a silk thread. And it is difficult because of its content. Answering to hypothesis 2 we may conclude that Dutch service clubs spend a lot of money and time in achieving internal goals in comparison with community service.

This may seem a strange conclusion, because welfare states in Western Europe are tending to get more and more characteristics of a civil society. In terms of Esping-Andersen's typology: The Dutch institutional model will gain some traits of the residual

model the United States have and had in the past. As a result, Dutch service clubs become more in line with their ancestors from the United States. Nevertheless, we apologize for this third conclusion, which probably is too hard. Saying this we turn now to the last paragraph: discussion.

Discussion

This pilot has more shortcomings than positive aspects. The theoretical part of the research has been conducted adequately, but the data-gathering can't reach the minimum academic standards. So, this lead to a – this time not obligatory - recommendation: service-clubs, please draw up an inventory of the performances of your clubs, make aggregate estimations of the amount of money given to the communities and the world as well as the total of time volunteered. Ask scholars of the philanthropic studies discipline to help you. Let them introduce you in the academic forum of philanthropy, volunteering and civil society research.

It will strengthen the “company pride” of the service club members. It will attract for sure more young volunteers who respond to the challenge of the growing Dutch civil society.

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