Voluntas (2010) 21:1–2
DOI 10.1007/s11266-009-9121-0

EDITORIAL

Editorial

Bernard Enjolras

Published online: 6 January 2010
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As I start acting as the journal's editor, *Voluntas* embarks on its twenty-first year with a well-established record as an international journal in the field of voluntary and nonprofit sector scholarship. As the official Journal of the International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR), *Voluntas* is committed to promote interdisciplinary research with a worldwide reach.

My main ambition as editor will be to make *Voluntas* a dynamic and active actor in the work to widen the worldwide scholar community engaged in research on the voluntary and nonprofit sector. The past 20 years have seen the field expand rapidly—also in terms of institutionalization. From being an emerging field, third-sector research is increasingly recognized as a legitimate research specialization within various disciplines across the different regions of the world. However, the growth, expansion, development, and institutionalization of this field of research expose the scholar community to the risks of fragmentation, specialization, and regionalism. Fragmentation occurs because third-sector research entails an increasing number of not always mutually compatible paradigms and perspectives. Specialization can also result from the combined effect of disciplinary and paradigmatic specialization as well a lack of an encompassing perspective capable of bridging the gaps between specialties. Regionalism, in a worldwide perspective, happens when researchers, embedded in their national, cultural, social, political, historical, and institutional contexts, are not able to generalize and communicate their research questions, paradigms, and results across national and regional boundaries, and therefore fail to engage with an international readership. In such a context *Voluntas* offers a unique medium through which to exchange and cross-fertilize ideas and knowledge, while building of a common identity for the worldwide third-sector scholar community.

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https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-009-9121-0 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In order to achieve these objectives, the following guidelines will govern my editorial choices. First, contributions ensuring the worldwide, multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary character of the journal are welcome. Today, most of the articles are authored by sociologists or political scientists. Contributions from other disciplines, in particular, economics, history, anthropology, and psychology, will be encouraged. Second, the journal is interested in theoretical and encompassing papers on the third-sector and civil society. Sector-specific and country-specific papers should, to a larger extent, clearly state their relevance to an international audience. Indeed, such papers require a particular form to enable the international readership of the journal to understand the context (both national and sector specific) and draw conclusions of wider interest than the national and institutional background. Third, *Voluntas* will do more to publish papers with a comparative perspective or which take a broad and encompassing perspective on an issue (e.g., social capital, democracy, governance, etc.). Fourth, the number of thematic issues and symposia on particular topics, contributing to scholarly exchanges and debates, will increase in the future. Book reviews are clearly important to the journal and to scholarship. The journal will privilege book reviews and review essays which speak to the community and touch on issues of current interest. Finally, the journal will seek to tap into possible synergies between ISTR activities and *Voluntas.* ISTR regional network conferences, ISTR international conferences, and ISTR-supported thematic symposia present opportunities for authors of papers delivered at these events to have them published by the journal. I will encourage participants and organizers of such events to think of *Voluntas* as a natural medium for publishing and disseminating their work.

I believe that *Voluntas* has the potential to grow both in terms of content and readership. An international journal like *Voluntas* is not the result the individual endeavors of the editor, but the sum of the efforts of authors, reviewers, the book review editor, members of the editorial board, and publisher. I would like to thank all who have contributed to this issue and, in advance, to the coming issues and invite the nonprofit and voluntary sector scholar community to join me in making of *Voluntas* a leading international journal in the field.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-009-9121-0 Published online by Cambridge University Press