



LUND UNIVERSITY

**Volunteers' Identification and Commitment
in a Publicly Disgraced Organization**

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Drawing on a study of the Swedish Red Cross, the research intends to examine how individual volunteers identify themselves with the organization that has suffered from a public disgrace and how this has impacted their commitment. In the existing literature, volunteers' organizational identification has been commonly theorized to predict their commitment, which draws our interest and concerns to further investigate the relationship of the two classical concepts specifically in the context of image crisis. Underpinned by an interpretive approach, 10 face-to-face semi-structured interviews have been conducted. The findings suggest that volunteers still stay with Swedish Red Cross and continue committed to their voluntary work despite the image crisis. On this basis, the study problematizes this simplistic link between organizational identification and commitment empirically and theoretically. It contributes to both the organizational studies and the voluntary sector literature by showing that the multiple identification targets, the possible positive effect of disidentification, and the neutral identification in terms of the spirit of volunteering could offer more insight into understanding the complicated rather than simplistic link.

Key words

Identification, commitment, volunteering, image crisis

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Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgement	2
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Theoretical Problem	6
1.2 Our study of the Swedish Red Cross.....	9
1.3 Research Questions and Purpose.....	10
1.4 Contributions.....	11
1.5 Outline of thesis	12
2. Methodology	14
2.1 Research positioning	14
2.2 Used methods	15
2.3 Collection of empirical material.....	16
2.4 Analysis of empirical material.....	18
2.5 Quality evaluation.....	20
2.5.1 Credibility.....	20
2.5.2 Methodological limitations.....	22
3. Literature Review	25
3.1 Organizational Identification and Commitment.....	25
3.2. Identification and commitment in a disgraced organization	27
3.3. Identification and commitment in voluntary context	29
3.4. Problematization	31
3.5. Alternative ways of conceptualizing the relation of identification and commitment.....	31
3.5.1 Identification with specific group or person.....	32
3.5.2 'Positive' Dis-identification	33
3.5.3 Neutral identification	34
4. Empirical Material	37
4.1. Background to the analyses	37
4.1.1 Red Cross International	37
4.1.2 Red Cross Sweden	37
4.1.3 Organizational Structure of Swedish Red Cross.....	38
4.1.4 Financial situation	39
4.1.5 Representing the context of scandals at Swedish Red Cross	39
4.1.6 Red Cross Lund - The International House	41
4.2. Findings	42
4.2.1 How do they identify themselves?	42
4.2.2 How is individuals' identification process affected by the image crisis?.....	46
4.2.3 Why are they still committed to voluntary work after the image crisis?	49

5. Discussion..... 54
5.1. Individual identification in the context of an image crisis..... 54
5.2 What keeps them stay: multiple identification targets 56
5.3 Beyond identification: The spirit of volunteering 59
5.4. Practical implications on commitment..... 61
5.5. Concluding remarks on discussion 61

6. Conclusion 63

7. References..... 67

1. Introduction

Volunteering is widely regarded as a growing phenomenon where freedom of action and choice to do good things are argued to lie behind the very soul of voluntary organizations (Kreutzer and Jäger, 2011). In recent years, volunteers have been increasingly needed and used by voluntary organizations to accomplish their social missions (Vecina, Chacón, Marzana and Marta, 2013). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), about 64.5 million people in the United States volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September 2011 and September 2012. A report of the study on volunteering in the European Union by GHK (2010) indicates that there are around 92 to 94 million adults involved in volunteering in the EU. The large proportion of voluntary workers in society highlights the great economic value of volunteers (Vecina et al., 2013). Yet, the supply of volunteer labor still seems insufficient with recent reports showing a decrease (Vecina et al., 2013): in the United States, the volunteer rate declined by 0.3 percentage point to 26.5 percent for 2012 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

Volunteers' leaving is a great challenge that voluntary organizations face as it has an immediate and significant influence on organizational effectiveness (Dávila and García, 2010). Usually volunteers without pay have no "contractual obligation" (Kreutzer and Jäger, 2011, p.637) to the organization to stay doing voluntary work if it is not what they themselves really like. In such sense, they can abandon the organization anytime since they participate voluntarily (Harris, 1998), which thus brings the question of how to attract, motivate, and retain volunteers into focus.

Furthermore, with increasing number of voluntary organizations, the competition for volunteers among voluntary organizations has also increased in recent years (Wei, Donthu and Bernhardt, 2012). Therefore the abundance of voluntary organizations has led to a challenging but highly worthy task to not only attract but also retain volunteers. Organizational image and reputation has been argued by many to be an important asset for voluntary organizations to accomplish this task. Their studies suggest that organizational positive image or reputation is not only an impacting factor behind the choice of organization volunteers want to enter, but may have a substantial influence on volunteer's identification with the organization which in turn may impact their commitment. According to Kenny

(2010), our identifications are premised on a desire for recognition from others. People thus try to enhance their self-esteem by identifying with an attractive, successful, and prestigious organization (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Tidwell, 2005).

In light of these findings, one question arises: What happens when organizations have suffered from a public disgrace? And especially organizations which are arguably permeated by a different, more humane character like voluntary organization? An image crisis has been seen as an undesirable situation, and even unfortunate specifically for voluntary organization in the sense that it may make it worse to attract and retain volunteers. Thus, we are very concerned and interested in investigating if a voluntary organization has suffered from a public disgrace, whether or not, and/or how the identification process and commitment of members within the organization might be impacted. In summary, the study at hand is concerned with identification and commitment; how it works in a voluntary work context and more specifically in an image crisis context.

1.1 Theoretical Problem

As two “classic and related concepts” (Vecina et al., 2013, p.292), the puzzle of the relationship between identification and commitment has drawn great attention from scholars. The existing body of literature on identity in management and organization studies has usually regarded identification and commitment to be inextricably intertwined in the way that individuals’ identification with the organization will lead to their commitment to the organization (Cooper and Thatcher, 2010; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; R. Van Dick et al., 2004). For example, Ashforth and Mael (1989) argue that when individuals identify with a group, they will not only act in accordance with the group’s norms and values and incorporate them into the individual’s self-concept but also personally experience the successes and failures of the group and psychologically being intertwined with the destiny of the group. In the same vein, Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky (2002) regard organizational commitment as a strong emotional identification with the organization, manifested by believing in its goals and values, being willing to contribute to the organization, and continue as a member. This theory is also supported by many studies suggesting that identification is an important

mechanism in developing engagement and attachment, and a strong antecedent and predictor to organizational commitment (O'Reilly III and Chatman, 1986).

Following this literature stream, many authors in the voluntary sector adopt this positive perspective on the impact of identification on commitment. Watts (2010) assumes that, different from a company employee, who may be more concerned with the company's product or brand value, volunteers are more connected to the organization as a whole and motivated by their belief in the cause of the organization. Thus, he suggests that volunteers' motivation and commitment can be improved by strengthening their identification with the organization. Taking a similar stance, Tidwell (2005) asserts that those volunteers high in organizational identification are more committed to and satisfied with their voluntary work. What's more, they remain committed "until identification no longer exists" (p.460).

Moreover, we have investigated the organizational literature specifically studying the publicly disgraced organization as we are concerned with the identification process in the organization that has suffered from an image crisis. According to Dutton and Dukerich (1991), a tarnished organizational image will have a significant negative influence on individuals' identification with the organization, which in turn impacts their self-esteem and commitment to the organization. More specifically, if an organization has suffered from a reputation crisis and had its image tarnished, the member of the disgraced organization may suffer "shame, disgrace, or embarrassment" (Dutton et al., 1994, p.242) and further more probably turn to be "less identification, less commitment" (Terry, 2003, p.229). It seems that organizational identification has been theorized to predict members' commitment, which means if the organization suffers from an image crisis, it would be assumed to damage the process of identification and reduce members' commitment. This argument has got wide support from many scholars and nearly become a common sense both in academic and practical management world.

However, this is a rather simplistic view and has been challenged on various grounds by other more nuanced literature. Besides, our empirical findings from the study of Swedish Red Cross (see next section for an overview) also suggest that this commonsense needs to be further and critically pondered upon. One problem is that individuals' commitment does not necessarily come from identification with the organization, as some authors have analyzed the different organizational identification types and commitment levels (e.g. Kramer et al., 2013). Through

our findings, we argue that our respondents express strong identification with the local chapter, their project group or the manager of the local chapter instead of the collective Swedish Red Cross. This has been supported by the literature suggesting that people has the tendency to “display subunit-specific identities” (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, p.22) and their identification with a group or person might be more convincing reason to explain their stay in the organization (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). We intend to further explore it and make it more visible in the voluntary sector.

Moreover, as Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) argue, in order to sustain positive social identities, individuals may cognitively distance their identity from an organization's identity inasmuch as “individuals may understand who they are, in part, by defining who they're not” (p.395). Fleming and Spicer (2003) further indicate that employees derive psychic satisfaction and relief from realizing that they can protect ‘who they really are’ from those that they disidentify with and may ironically work more effectively given the feeling of autonomy it engenders. Consistent with this, our findings show that respondents still stay with the organization and continue their voluntary work after the image crisis by distancing and defending themselves and Swedish Red Cross from the person that caused the scandal. Therefore, we assume that the phenomenon of disidentification, which has been neglected in that simplistic link, can be analyzed in a promising way to better understand individuals’ identification and commitment in the voluntary context.

Finally, in contrast with those who support the simplistic link between identification and commitment, some authors suggest not limiting ourselves only to identification but think more critically and broadly “as there are many shades between the poles of identification and disidentification (for example, indifference, ambivalence, anxiety and so on) and seldom do we maintain one subjective stance over time and contexts” (Fleming and Spicer, 2003, p.167). The way in which our respondents relate their motivations and commitment to the organization suggests a strong combination of individualist and altruist orientation to act in conformity with the social needs instead of the organization (Avrahami and Dar, 1993). This makes neither the theory of identification nor disidentification practically powerful enough to explain their stay in the Red Cross after the reputation crisis. Therefore, we propose that the concept of neutral-identification related to the spirit of volunteering might lend more clear support to better understand volunteers’ identification and commitment in the circumstance of image crisis.

In summary, the view of the positive effect of individuals' identification on their commitment to the organization is just one aspect in this very complicated relationship. It fails to take into consideration the different organizational identification types and commitment levels, the possible effect of disidentification on people's identity and commitment, and the important implications of neutral identification for understanding identification and commitment in voluntary work. We intend to problematize this simplistic logic empirically and theoretically in our study to contribute to both the organizational studies and the voluntary sector literature.

1.2 Our study of the Swedish Red Cross

Publicly disgraced organizations might have been regarded to be ideal research sites to efficiently and precisely study this dynamic relationship between organizational identification and commitment. As for our studied organization, the Swedish Red Cross has been recognized with a long-standing good reputation but has recently suffered a serious image crisis. Therefore, we believe that a study of Swedish Red Cross will help us investigate our research question.

The Swedish Red Cross was founded in 1865 and goes under the group of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Rednet, n.d.). Accommodating with more than 31 000 volunteers and 1100 local chapters around the country, they have granted the role as the biggest voluntary organization in Sweden (Gladh, 2012). As mentioned above, voluntary organization's reputation is argued to be an important factor in attracting volunteers as well as collecting money. Nevertheless, when Swedish Red Cross was faced with two main scandals that generated much media attention directly after each other, the reputation of the voluntary organization got negatively affected drastically (Swedish Red Cross annual report, 2011). The first scandal occurred in 2009 when the former head of communication, Johan af Donner got exposed and charged for embezzling money from Swedish Red Cross and Cancerfonden (Byttner, K.J., 2010). This was followed by the uncover in the beginning of 2010 when the former board-chairman at Red Cross, Bengt Westerberg was accused for getting a too high salary. These scandals led not only the society but the organizational members to question their trustworthiness which the organization had built up for decades (Sokolow, 2010). However, after the scandals most volunteers still chose to stay, which got us more interested to study "what is keeping them still there" since it didn't seem like the Red Cross image crisis had influenced volunteers' identification and commitment in the way as

commonly suggested. Thus, this supports our belief that in existing literature the relationship of identification and commitment needs nuanced analysis, which we intend to contribute to by our study on Swedish Red Cross.

Drawn from our interpretations on the empirical material, we distinguished three different themes based on how individuals perceive the image crisis that Swedish Red Cross faced and how this in turn affects their organizational identification as well as impact their commitment. Firstly, our findings showed that although respondents generally regarded Swedish Red Cross as a good organization and their personal values were considered to be aligned with the organizations', their identification with the organization can be rather nuanced. On one hand, respondents felt more or less related to other things, e.g. the people, the relationship, the project in the local chapter than the whole Swedish Red Cross. On the other hand, since what they identify themselves with differed, it was hard to categorize them into one single category. This could explain as well as be explained by the different reactions to the scandals faced by Swedish Red Cross as identified as our second theme. While some expressed criticism and lost faith in the organization others defended it by separating the persons causing the scandals from the organization whereas other respondents claimed that they didn't care.

However, common for all respondents despite their varied reactions was that they all had stayed working at Red Cross. As a result, the third theme emerged in our findings, which enabled further justification beyond identification concerns for why volunteers were still at Red Cross after the image crisis. Our findings stressed that, our respondents showed a strong tendency of combining individualism and altruism, which may be called "the spirit of volunteering" according to one respondent. In addition to their identification with the local chapter, the people or projects there rather than with the whole organization, the spirit of volunteering could further shed significant light on why they stayed with Swedish Red Cross and continued committed to their voluntary work after the public disgrace.

1.3 Research Questions and Purpose

Based on the focus of the literature and the empirical context of our study, we have posed a specific research question followed by supported sub- questions.

How does individual volunteers identify themselves with the organization that has suffered from a public disgrace and how does this impact their commitment?

- *How do volunteer workers perceive the recent image crisis and scandals at Red Cross?*
- *How does identification and commitment relate to each other especially in the context of a public disgraced organization?*
- *What keep individuals working as volunteers at Red Cross despite the image crisis?*
- *What are the motivations, especially intrinsic ones, for working as a volunteer?*

The study emphasizes on the concepts of individual identification and commitment in the voluntary organization. The aim of the study is to investigate how individuals' identifications with a voluntary organization impact their commitment to the organization and the voluntary work when the organization they work for has suffered from public disgrace. As such, we want to provide further understandings and insights regarding the motives and characteristics that lie behind voluntary work and how identification can be enacted in several of forms, with varying consequences for commitment.

1.4 Contributions

Theoretical Contributions

Existing literature has commonly suggested that organizational identification leads to commitment to the organization. Specifically in a context of publicly disgraced organization, a tarnished organizational image has arguably significant negative impact on individuals' identification with the organization, which in turn leads them to be less committed. However, as indicated in our case of Swedish Red Cross, individual volunteers still stayed with the organization and continued their voluntary work under the circumstance of an image crisis. Therefore, drawing on some relevant nuanced literature within the fields of interpretative organization studies and Social Identity Theory (SIT) (e.g. Mael and Ashforth, 1989; Kramer et al., 2013; Costas and Fleming, 2009), we intend to challenge the simplistic link and contribute to both the organizational studies and voluntary sector literature.

Specifically, first we highlight individuals' tendency to "display subunit-specific identities" suggested by the social identity literature and further specify the possible identification targets through our case to enrich the existing literature on identification in general as well as

voluntary management thought. Furthermore, we incorporate the concepts of disidentification and neutral identification into understanding individual volunteer's organizational identification and commitment to expand the voluntary sector literature. In addition, we theoretically contribute to the voluntary sector literature a more nuanced understanding of how volunteers' commitment could be influenced by the spirit of volunteering, namely the combination of individualism and altruism in voluntary work.

Practical Contributions

Volunteers' independence and freedom as well as lack of contractual obligations to the organization without receiving payment have been seen as challenges for many voluntary organizations to retain committed volunteers. Organizations, however, can turn the challenge into an opportunity to gain volunteers' commitment by embracing their individualism and independence. Our study proposes that volunteer's individualistic orientation in terms of autonomy identity and independence once lit by altruistic concerns, could play significantly positive role in keeping themselves committed to voluntary work. That is, the spirit of volunteering as the combination of altruism and individualism will set the basic ground for commitment in voluntary work.

Through our study, we therefore intend to contribute voluntary organizations with practical implications both on how to react towards the specific situation of image crisis and how to attain volunteer's commitment on the long-term basis. We suggest that supporting volunteers' combination of individualistic and altruistic motivations can act as the bridge to bond the organization with volunteers. This could be achieved by investing in understanding volunteer's ideas, interests and motivations and further turn them into volunteers' passion for the cause in the organization. As such, volunteer's commitment would be safely expected through understanding and empowering their intrinsic motivations for volunteering.

1.5 Outline of thesis

The structure of the thesis will be presented in five sections as below.

The first chapter regards our used methodology during the research. We intend to understand individual's feelings, thoughts, sense-making and have therefore taken an interpretive stance. Our empirical material has been gained through mainly semi-structured interviews and

analyzed with a hermeneutic approach in terms of authenticity, bias, distance, dependence and reflexivity. In the following chapter we present the literature based on four sub-sections, which emphasizes the general view on the link between identification and commitment, and specifically in the context of an image crisis as well as the voluntary context, plus a more nuanced way of understanding the above issues. The third chapter about our empirical material starts with a background on Red Cross and the context of the study. This continues with an outline of our findings about how individual volunteers identify themselves with the organization, how their identification process is impacted by the image crisis and the reasons for why they still stay at Swedish Red Cross after the image crisis. Drawn from the findings we in the following chapter further discuss the above three aspects to challenge the reasoning that organizational identification leads to individuals' commitment to the organization. In the concluding chapter we summarize our research purposes and theoretical and practical contributions as well as address limitations of the research process and implications for future research.

2. Methodology

This chapter aims to provide readers with our epistemological and ontological positioning in the research process. Stemmed from those we provide information about the collection of data as well as the challenges regarding quality and credibility that matter in our research process.

2.1 Research positioning

Our ontological positioning goes in line with constructionism which means that the world and social entities are constructed “in a constant change of revision” rather than objective seen (Bryman and Bell, 2011.p.22). Being objective means that a phenomenon is independent of social actors whereas construction means that social phenomena are produced through continuous social interaction. This means that in our research, ontology suggest that reality is understood by people’s meaning and behavior and not objectively based on facts.

The epistemological stance taken in the thesis is based on an interpretive perspective and concerns the central issues of how we know and understand knowledge about the social world (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In contrast to positivism, which assumes that the social world should be measured with objective methods, an interpretive stance emphasize that differences between people and objects of natural science are fundamental reasons for subjective thinking and acting (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Whereas positivism, is about explaining the social world, interpretivism is more related to understanding. Also, scholars of the interpretive approach claim that objective knowledge has theoretical limitations for understanding phenomenon as humans (Sandberg, 2005). An interpretive stance grounds on constructionism where one's personal positioning, understanding and experiences might influence the research, which is why it becomes important to put these aspects of influences in relation to the context. As such, it will facilitate the understanding when surprising findings occur in later states in the research process, e.g. one finds out that the respondents don’t perceive difference in their work from the structural changes, which is because the structural changes occurred at a much higher level in the organization. Interpretation means that nothing is self-evident but we need to be aware of the fact that pre- understandings are historically and contextually bound phenomena of both the researcher and the respondent (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000).

2.2 Used methods

Since our objective of the study is to understand the individual's emotions, backgrounds, self-perceptions and how they make sense of situations and phenomena, we have chosen to adopt qualitative research methods, more specifically semi-structured interviews based on open questions (Merriam, 2002). Constructionism assumes that there are multiple meanings and constructions, which also is a reason why it is considered to be the key aspect in qualitative methods. Another aspect Merriam (2002) mentions is the fact that the researcher is a vital and primary tool in analyzing and conducting data. Since we as researchers don't only control the direction of the interview by determining the questions but the analysis is also based upon the researcher's personal subjective stance and interpretations of the phenomena.

These types of semi-structured interviews can be defined as interviews as conversations (Kvale, 1996) and mostly preferred in our study since conversations essentially enable the respondents to share personal stories and knowledge. Through personal stories, respondents will conceptualize their own experiences, which will lead to more subjective narratives. Even though conversations can be more flexible they might also have negative aspects. For example, when we tried to analyze the data with a desire to acquire coherence both in the length and content of the interviews, this method was not always easy since respondents gave different stories and some were more willing to talk and share while others weren't. As such, in those situations conversations were more difficult to apply in some interviews, which as a result entailed in various forms of interviews.

As Kvale (1996) also mentions, it was difficult to obtain a reliable and validated view of the social world through multitude of views. As the research progressed we learned that interviews didn't always go as planned but required us to personally adapt to the specific context along the development of the interview. As a result, the structure of the interview sometimes had to change as well as certain questions needed to be added or deleted in order to enhance understanding of the interviews. Moreover, we acknowledged that new themes might emerge during the interviews. Those situations required us to simultaneously be able to frame follow-up questions accordingly. Therefore standardized interview sheet developed as long as the interviews processed. It would nevertheless always be a matter of question whether the interview was conducted correctly in regards to what the objectives with the interview were.

As relatively inexperienced interviewers, we want to stress that it become more difficult to ask open questions in reality once the circumstances changes. One of the acknowledged pitfalls by using interviews as conversations is that it requires the interviewer to be fast thinker and flexible in the way of asking the “right” follow up question in the right time and to avoid asking leading questions, which wasn’t an easy task. For example, at some point, the circumstance required us to add new questions due to the fast and short answers from the respondent. Therefore, even though interviews as conversations entailed in a deeper understanding of individuals, as relatively inexperienced researchers it was sometimes rather difficult to manage the leeway we had.

In addition to qualitative semi-structured interviews, we have consulted secondary sources as well. They came primarily from the member’s site - Rednet. Also the Swedish and the local Red Cross’ annual reports, newspaper articles, blogs, website were studied in order to contribute to and support the interviews. Even though this type of information didn’t reveal much of personal feelings and sense- making, they however provided us with background information and a good structural overview of the organization in general.

2.3 Collection of empirical material

The aim of the study is to examine the individual’s identification process with an organization that has suffered from an image crisis and to understand why volunteers still stay after the image crisis. However, before this new direction emerged, our intention with the research was to investigate the process of identity negotiation volunteers are going through when they face organizational change. Based on the latter direction we searched for voluntary organizations that would possible match those characteristic and found the Swedish Red Cross among many others to be the most convenient and suitable organization. This is not only because this organization has experienced many changes but also based on their willingness to participate in the study as well as their presumed open and generous information sharing.

After acquiring the support from the information center at the head office of the Swedish Red Cross, we were forwarded to one of the local chapters in Lund: the International House of Red Cross in Lund and got in touch with the chairman. We applied the snowball effect (Alvesson, 2011) and were through this contact person further provided with contact details to

volunteers and to volunteers at the management level. These were later contacted first by email with information about our study in order to offer them leeway to think. For those who didn't reply within a particular time frame, we followed up by making phone calls.

In total we interviewed 10 individuals, 2 with a managerial and leading role at the chapter and 8 working on a regular volunteering basis, whom all were current volunteers at the International House of Red Cross Sweden in Lund. The main purpose of interviewing 2 managers was to get a profound understanding of the organizational structure and the image crisis from a managerial perspective. Meanwhile, their perspectives might help to reduce the risk of only listening to volunteers' opinion that may be colored by their biases. In addition, since our research is based upon an investigation of individual's identification process, we wished to gain more personal experiences, perspectives and feelings through the 8 interviews with volunteers. Each interview lasted for 45 minutes to one hour. In regards to the research topic, we had some criteria for samples, which was to have a diverse group of participants since we presumed that difference in age and gender might lead to diverse narratives and will thus be interesting for later interpretations of the research. However since the majority of volunteers at Red Cross in general are homogeneous in age and gender, we accepted this premise as the representatives of the volunteers at Red cross international and took the opportunity to interview available members. Another criterion for the sample was that the individuals should have worked during the transition when the change occurred and therefore experienced the change period.

Even though there were no intentions to use other methods to collect the empirical material, we were however put in situations where observations under a short time frame were possible. Apart from the interviews, we did not only socialize with the interviewees but also with other volunteers, participants and members at the international house of Red Cross. After spending quite some time there, we were offered to participate in celebrations with coffee and cake. Too little time was spent to become a "native", but we could yet through this unintended participating observational method, deduce some sense of belonging which enhanced our understanding of the chapter and its members that was vital for our interpretations when analysing the data (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.438).

Seven out of eight interviews were conducted in person with both of us researchers present at the interview while one was held in Swedish and thereof only required one of us who

possessed the Swedish language. Six interviews were situated at the International House of Red Cross in Lund due to convenience but also because we assumed it was an advantage to have a natural and coherent place for all the interviews. The view of their voluntary work environment enabled us as researcher to better relate to the participant's descriptions of their voluntary experiences at the International House and in turn gain better understandings of the individuals (Creswell, 2003). The opportunity to take a glance of their surroundings, gave insight of their comfort there and their interactions when meeting other volunteers, which later impacted our interpretation and sense making of the individuals' contexts. Unlike other corporation offices, the International House signaled a rather homely feeling mainly because the house can be described as a typical Swedish house but also because of the interiors. However, a possible disadvantage by interviewing in an open room was the interrupting moments such as when people came to visit. Other distributions were phone-calls and children of the respondents. 2 other interviews were conducted at the respondent's home and at the respondent's workplace in terms of the convenience for them. Every interview was recorded in order to avoid misunderstandings and to facilitate the transcription.

2.4 Analysis of empirical material

In majority of cases, the interviews were transcribed verbatim to preserve the respondent's own perceptions and to reduce our interpretations and assumptions. In order to present the context of each interview and to facilitate the data analysis, our personal impressions of the interview environment, the voice tone and the respondents' way of dressing were noted. These visual impression were likely vital to the analysis in terms of getting a better reasoning of the person as a complete individual.

The process of analyzing data is about understanding the conducted material. This was done first by only reading the transcribed material without marking anything in order to get a sense of the context followed by carefully scrutinizing the transcribed material with an attempt to identify common or recurring themes with relevance to our research questions. As Ryan and Bernard (2003) state, analysing texts requires several tasks: discover themes and subthemes, acknowledge which of the themes are most relevant for the research, rank the themes and lastly to connect them to the theories. Therefore we chose to apply data analysing methods defined as scrutiny- based technique, suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2003). In more detail, we searched for repetitions, metaphors, pauses or changes in voice that indicated transitions,

similarities/ difficulties and missing material. The techniques set the ground for the analysis and facilitated the process of outlining useful themes such as the different reactions to the scandals and the individualistic motivations of being a volunteer. With the techniques in mind, we were able to find underlying meanings and draw connections between the different narratives of the respondents.

The material was analyzed based on a hermeneutic approach with the purpose to understand the underlying meanings of the respondent's personal experiences, feelings and sense making of phenomena or contexts. In order to understand those, we were required to consider pre-understanding and understanding of both the researcher and the respondent. This is because respondent's pre-understandings might influence their narratives as well as our pre-understandings impact our interpretations. Through asking questions about personal experiences, opinions of how and why a certain topic evokes a particular meaning or feeling, some understanding of the respondent's pre -understanding was revealed. Regarding the pre-understandings of the researcher, both of us were honestly acknowledging our own possible biases by being open with each other and encourage discussions. If the awareness of the pre-understandings isn't considered, potential drawbacks such as skewed information can in turn not be noticed, which might affect the interpretations and eventually our inference (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). As the key in hermeneutic, we moved between the whole and the part by looking at specific themes and reread the whole transcription which facilitated richer understanding (ibid.).

Although qualitative research often is inductively reasoned, qualitative research is also known as very emergent rather than preset (Creswell, 2003), which means the research often is an ongoing process. An inductive approach means that theories are the outcome of the research whereas deductive is reversed, as to say, the theories determine the data collection (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The process of conducting data, problem formulation and theoretical underpinnings cycle back and forward since many variables are contextual and will be hard to predefine (Creswell, 2003). As a result, these activities are likely simultaneously occurring during the research process. Therefore, even though our research is mainly considered to be inductive, the line between whether it is inductive or deductive is rather difficult to draw since the research started as deductive but switched as the process progressed when theories, ideas and findings changed. The difficulty to choose between alternative explanations and to choose between themes, codes, and category descriptions and so forth have instead led us to grasp a

more appropriate qualitative reasoning for our case, the role of abduction (Lipscomb, 2012). Abductive reasoning assumes that if qualitative researcher identifies themes and codes etc, these findings outlined will however be insecure or fragile (Lipscomb, 2012). Just like our research changed direction as the unexpected themes were already sensed after the second interview. In turn, the intended theoretical underpinnings were less relevant and required us to keep open minded in terms of exploring new directions of research focus simultaneously as we tried to avoid neglecting our “intended themes” in the upcoming interviews. Throughout the empirical material we were later able to specify a new theoretical direction.

2.5 Quality evaluation

In most traditional literature, the value of a research grounds on the criteria of validity and reliability. Even though these criteria are suggested in variety of qualitative research as well, there’s a growing agreement on the inappropriateness of these concepts in terms of the constructionist perspective opposed in qualitative research. Considering those premises, our research is thus valued based on criteria of credibility.

2.5.1 Credibility

Social scientist may expect that research should be free from values (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, within an interpretive approach, personal values as a form of pre-conception can hardly be suppressed but credibility of the research can yet be gained by being critical to the sources. Credibility will be continuously examined through authenticity, bias and distance and dependence (Alvesson and Sköldman, 2000) given that a specific interpretation can be very subjective.

Criticism of authenticity concerns if a source is a source (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000) and how genuine the source is. We believe that our respondents haven’t had an intention to share falsified information or in any sense tried to manipulate our research. With that in mind we assume our interview sources to be genuine. On the other hand, since the research is based on an interpretive approach, authenticity can be rather problematic due to the fact that the social world is considered subjective. Whether our respondents’ narratives are consistent with what they actually do or not can be difficult for us to determine with certainty knowing that their perceptions of themselves might be a “fantasy” identity (Johnsen et al., 2009).

Criticism of biases can be applied to both the respondent and the researcher regarding whether the information is being skewed or not. As researcher we shouldn't take all information for granted but always ask who it is speaking and with what purpose (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). In addition, backgrounds, ideologies, values etc. may entail in assumptions and biases, which affects the informant's stories. Furthermore, the biases we as researcher possible possess might impact our interpretations, which we tried to avoid by acknowledging them at first hand. For example we assumed that volunteers are "low key" persons who help others for a good cause and neither seek a place in the spotlight nor want fancy campaigns but believe that voluntary work is purely intrinsic. In order to manage the possible biases we tried to stay neutral, constantly reflect upon ourselves and keep an open mindset to new concepts and perspectives as well as factors that underlie the informants' stories. In addition, the research objects' stories were reflected upon by comparisons and deeply thoughts about what factors may have impacted their stories. To broaden our perspectives we therefore used information and narratives representing the opposite bias or neutral sources such as news articles, which was helpful to compare and notice possible biases or embellishments (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000).

Criticism of distance refers to "the more remote the source is from the event in time and space, the less value it has" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p.74). Whereas *criticism of dependence* refers to "the number of hands the information has passed through from the source in question" (ibid. p.74). For this research, the distance is medium low and since the scandals occurred less than 3 years ago it can on one hand be considered to be a relatively short time because the respondents had the scandals fresh in mind but on the other hand a relatively long time in terms of "how fast people can forget and forgive" the scandals. Dependence is also low since our data is mostly based on interviews where the respondents give their personal opinions.

Another factor impacting the research credibility is the fact that our study and research questions weren't directed by the organization, which gave us more leeway to investigate and ask questions of our own interest without their involvement. However, since the management at Swedish Red Cross forwarded all respondents, it can be questioned if there is any underlying reason for why "these" people or if it may just be random samples. Any objectives behind the choice of respondents can affect the credibility negatively. Even though we as researcher feel confident that there were no such intentions behind, yet it's necessary to keep it in mind.

Despite the fact that a hermeneutic approach (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000) was used, where pre -conditions of what individuals might bring into the interview while interpreting meanings were taken into account, it doesn't necessarily imply that the interpretation was correct since every researcher might interpret differently. Therefore reflexivity plays an important role in interpretation based on the fact that we as researcher aren't perceived as objective observers because of our historical, social, cultural and political positioning in the world (Creswell, 2003). In other words, reflexive interpretations were applied, indicating that one shouldn't accept everything that is given but need to scrutinize them on several levels since the other's perception is interpreted already. Taking a reflexive stance means that we as researchers are in a co-construction with the respondent and that we should be continually alert to what and who is constructed and the social context where the construction occurs, both the subject and the researcher (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000). Reflexivity was valuable when for example the narratives by the manager and the other volunteers at some point were inconsistent, which depended on their backgrounds and experiences, working role and personal characteristics. By reflecting what was underlying these narratives, we could outline a profound understanding of the inconsistent sayings.

Moreover, an implication in the research we noticed was that the interpretations weren't equally salient for both of us researchers, which then could have led to potentially themes getting neglected (Creswell 2003). Since interpretation to some extent is typified with subjectivity, reflection opens up for an open- mind towards the empirical material as well as trying to avoid getting constrained to existing themes and categories. Essentially, as valid researchers we tried to keep a certain distance to see the context but get close enough to see the details and the underlying meanings. We tried to put ourselves in their positions but maintain independence. Also, to be able to interpret the empirical material fairly and neutrally we had to understand the natives with awareness of the outer world.

2.5.2 Methodological limitations

One of the acknowledged limitations with the study is time. Due to the limited time and unintended circumstances such as the rejections by several voluntary organizations, we chose to essentially base our research on interviews and scarce secondary material. Time was also the main reason behind the rather constrained amount of interviews that was conducted. More interviews might possibly offer more perspectives which will reduce biases and evoke more themes to increase the credibility of the research. However, we found that 10 interviews were

reasonable in order to understand the organization at the local organizational level since the local organization, as mentioned above, only had approximately 20 volunteers who regularly worked there. When it comes to whether the 10 interviews is general for the whole population and how representative the samples are, different from quantitative research, representation and generalization in qualitative research are rarely achieved through random selection of subjects, but by selection that can illuminate the subject and are relevant for the specific study (Stenbacka, 2001). As the 10 interviewees belong to the voluntary group we studied, they could be considered to represent that group (Sandelowski, 1986). Even though generalizability might not be achieved to the same extent as in quantitative research, yet improved understanding of the subjects are more important than generalized research in our case (Marshall, 1996).

It takes time to understand an actual persona, which leads to another limitation of the research. Since identity processes are complex phenomena, which is also one of the primary topic in our research, single interview that lasted for no more than 45 minutes to one hour may seem not enough (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). It can be complicated to draw a profound understanding of the individuals based on only 8 interviews. Also, people rarely talk about their identity process spot on so to understand an identity or his/her pre- understanding requires interpretations of several variables such as their surroundings and interaction with other people. Questions regarding their interests, background, personal opinions and behavior were asked and by acknowledging “how” they talked about it, we were able to grasp more of their identities. A picture of the respondents’ identities was valuable for the thesis in order to better relate to why they reacted and felt as they did. However, we also realized that it was difficult for some of the respondent’s to recall things directly and therefore couldn’t share as much as they could have had. Even though we were careful to not send forcing or pressuring signals, they might yet have felt a certain pressure to contribute with information, which made them more stressed. The narratives got even less evident when respondents found some of the questions difficult to answer since they never had thought of those situations before.

As one of the interviews were held in Swedish whereas the thesis is written in English, translation was necessary in terms of maintaining coherence. This is because the interview represents 13 percent out of all the 8 interviews, implicating that this interview with most certainty is valuable for the research to be credible. It is argued that there is no single correct translation but as researchers we are yet responsible for presenting the respondents (Temple

and Young, 2004) as correctly as possible. Translation can however be rather difficult in terms of idiomatic expressions such as: “man” or “ju” which can have different meanings in another context. Expressions in Swedish might have emotional or doubting tones, which therefore play an important role when analyzing the interviews. Since respondent’s explicit expressions matters deeply in the research, we have tried to be extra alert when translating these words as well as metaphors. It needs to be acknowledged that translation also is a way of interpretation (Temple and Young, 2004). Even though most of the respondents (Swedes) were comfortable with speaking English, it was noticed that to some extent they had difficulty in expressing their actual thoughts and meanings with the specific or right word. Not only was searching for the right word time consuming but the lack of English skills can have impacted their actual meaning and thus made it more complex for us to interpret what they initially were trying to suppress. Also, if the language was a constraint for them, it might imply that they could have unconsciously chosen to leave it out because of convenience.

3. Literature Review

This section is divided into four sub-sections. The first subsection briefly traces how management and organizational studies generally relate organizational members' identification to commitment, followed by the second sub-section focusing on the relationship of identification and commitment in the context of image crisis, and specifically those key studies within that sector. Then the third sub-section begins with a brief account of the characteristics of voluntary work, which is relevant for better understanding our research question, and then the voluntary sector literature' core argument about the link between volunteers' identification and commitment to voluntary organization, and closes with our tentatively challenging the above theorized connection between individuals' organizational identification and commitment in order to lay a foundation for the next sub-section. The final sub-section contains a theoretical elaboration on subunit-specific identities and the notion of disidentification, and how the latter phenomenon can be understood in relation to the image crisis context discussed in second sub-section, as well as how it would be important and problematic in voluntary context, leading to our final proposal of neutral-identification in the voluntary sector.

3.1 Organizational Identification and Commitment

Identity is a popular and significant theme for understanding a wide set of issues in contemporary social and working life. It can be used to refer to different levels from the society (social/group identity), to organizational level (organizational identity), to individuals (self-identity) and subunit of individuals (Subunit-specific identity) and the interaction between them (Alvesson and Empson, 2008; Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004). Among the multiple identity issues 'emotional ways' are gaining more attention, in which the individual responds to reflections of itself to understand how identification relates us to surrounding people as the organizational and work context is often social (Butler, 2004; Kenny, 2010; Alvesson, 2004). Identification is generally defined as the extent to which individuals perceive their oneness with or belongingness to another individual, relationship, or group (Cardador and Pratt, 2006; Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

We are not the creators of our own identifications but always outside of ourselves, and are offered what to identify with by the sociality (Kenny, 2010). People have the tendency to categorize themselves and others into various group categories to systematically locate themselves and others (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Pratt, 2000), which offers the grounds for social identification to gain ground. Social identity theorists argue that, when an individual feels identification with a group, the individual will not only feel proud to be part of the group, respect its norms and values and incorporate them into the individual's self-concept but also personally experience the successes and failures of the group and psychologically being intertwined with the destiny of the group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; R. Van Dick et al., 2004).

According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), organizational identification is a specific form of social identification. R. Van Dick et al. (2004) suggest that social identification in organizational contexts is a powerful concept to explain individual's satisfaction, commitment and turnover intentions as a highly identified employee with the feeling of shared fate between self and organization would be less inclined to leave the organization. In the same vein, many researchers agree that individuals' organizational identification-- that is how they think of themselves in the organization, is associated with key positive outcomes in organizations, including effort, cooperation, organizational support, commitment and reduced turnover intentions (Cooper and Thatcher, 2010; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; R. Van Dick et al., 2004). For instance, Dutton et al. (1994) believe that the study of identification may help to explain why some organizational members regularly engage in working to benefit the organization since decisions to become engaged and committed are likely due to attitudes and cognitions about the organization, which are also the basis for members' identification with the organization. They suggest that when individuals identify strongly with the organization, they incline to define themselves in the way they define the organization, and organizations thus could affect their members through this identification process (Dutton et al., 1994) whereby organizational members invest their sense of self and commitment (Fleming and Spicer, 2003). In line with this, Alvesson (2004) claims that if individuals could find positive confirmation of identity within the organization, they will increase the investment of self in work and increase motivation and commitment and vice versa. According to Nelson, Pratt, Carpenter, and Walter (1995), organizational commitment could be linked to the worker's psychological identification with the job. In short, it has been theorized that there is clear connection between individuals' organizational commitment and the degree to which the individual identifies with the organization.

3.2. Identification and commitment in a disgraced organization

It can be said that a positive and distinctive organizational identity could usually attract organizational members' support and commitment, which explains why organizations pay so much attention to images, names and logos, and so forth (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). If the organization suffers from image crisis, how would individuals' identification and commitment be affected? Frandsen (2012) suggests that a discrepancy between the organizational identity and organizational image, resulting in a negative organizational image perceived by outsiders, will cause significant damage to the organizational members' self-esteem and identification. This argument has gotten support from the social identity theory and organizational literature studying disgraced organization as well as dirty work literature.

Dutton et al. (1994) propose that organizations have two images: the perceived organizational identity and the construed external image. The former is described to be a sharing understanding and beliefs, deeply embedded in members' basic assumptions related to organization's central, distinctive, and enduring character or essence (Reger *et al.* 1994; Ashforth and Mael, 1989) while the latter is defined as what a member believes outsiders think about the organization (Dutton et al., 1994). Hatch and Schultz (2002) further argue that members' organizational identification is influenced by the organizational image. Specifically, if the internal identity and external image are fully aligned, as Ashforth et al (2008) argue, organizational member identification will ensue and consequently come long increased satisfaction and commitment. Mael and Ashforth (1992) argue that an important factor that increases identification is the prestige of the group from which individuals achieve personal ends because with perceived organizational identity, individuals assess the degree to which the construed external image corresponds with their self-concept, and reinforces self-esteem (Dutton et al., 1994). On the contrary, a tarnished organizational image, as Dutton and Dukerich (1991) claim, will have a significant negative influence on individuals' identification with the organization, which in turn impacts their self-esteem, commitment to the organization. More specifically, according to them, if an organization has suffered a reputation crisis and had its image tarnished (e.g. in our case, the Swedish Red Cross has been uncovered of Johan af Donner's scandal in the media), the member of the disgraced organization may suffer "shame, disgrace, or embarrassment" (Dutton et al., 1994, p.242) and further more likely to show "less identification, less commitment" (Terry, 2003, p.229).

Nevertheless, in circumstances of image crisis, outside negative comments from the media or public may strongly invoke organizational pride and confidence (Alvesson and Empson, 2008). This happens because organization members are inclined to gauge how outsiders judge them mainly based on how they believe others see the organization (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) as “the way we see ourselves is always controlled by how we think the other wants to see us” (Muhr and Kirkegaard, 2012, p.4). As a result, individuals may serve the organization to help improve the organization’s image to maintain its status in order to enhance their “positive social identity” (Tajfel, 1982, p. 24) derived from identifying with an attractive, successful, and prestigious organization (Dutton et al., 1994; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Tidwell, 2005).

According to social identity theory, individual's sense of self is tied in part to organization, which may motivate them to try to employ different repair tactics when confronted with organizational identity threats (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996). These vary from making excuses and justifications to defend, deny, or explain a particular external claim, to emphasizing alternative identity traits to show the organization is intrinsically good (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996). Following the same stream, the dirty work literature addresses how tainted workers try to deal with the stigmatized image of their occupation by using taint-management technique. Through the repair work, dirty workers may challenge outsiders’ negative assessments and transform their stigmatized identity into an positive collective identity to maintain or even enhance their self-esteem (Frandsen, 2012; Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Terry, 2003). Thereby, a negative image actually brings limited negative impact on dirty workers’ identification or might even ironically lead to high identification (Frandsen, 2012). However, meanwhile, Alvesson and Empson (2008) emphasize that the motivation under taking actions to deal with the deterioration of organization's image is likely to be more about enhancing self-esteem rather than developing any profound insight into their identification with the organization.

As we can see from the above, the fields of identification and commitment theory are huge, which refrains us from providing an overview of the entire field, so we are going to concentrate on our own theoretical position in the voluntary sector literature and suggest that the issue of volunteers’ identification and commitment especially need more nuanced consideration due to the unique characteristics of voluntary work.

3.3. Identification and commitment in voluntary context

There is a growing argument that volunteering has an “individualist” orientation expressing the search for intrinsic or extrinsic satisfaction of personal needs - not only an “altruist” reflecting pure concern for doing something for others (Avrahami and Dar, 1993). As Brewer and Chen (2007) assume that, individuals have 3 self-concepts—individuals, relational, and collective—respectively based on whether the self is viewed as independent, linked to others through relationships, or included in large groups. Specifically, Cooper and Thatcher (2010) suggest that the individualism and the independent self indicate that “some people value independence and view themselves as unique and autonomous” (p.519). Following this stream, many studies in the voluntary sector have clearly disclosed a mixture of collectivistic and individualistic motives for volunteering. For example, Avrahami and Dar (1993) find a considerable part of volunteers with individualist orientation in their studies of Kibbutz youth, who combine “task-oriented altruism with nonconformist individualism” (p.712) and show more search for an autonomous identity and independence within a group, not necessarily in conformity with the voluntary organization but with regard to social needs (Avrahami and Dar, 1993).

As many scholars claim that, uncoerced activity, freedom of choice, and work without pay are key distinguishing features of voluntary organizations (Kreutzer and Jäger, 2011; Harris, 1998) and given “essentially voluntary nature” (Harris, 1998, p.154) is manifest in every aspect of voluntary organizations, Avrahami and Dar (1993) argue that the flexible framework of volunteering makes it possible for collectivist and individualist orientations to coexist. The duality of collective and individualistic experience seems to respond to the individual's search for autonomous identity, individuation, and personal freedom (Avrahami and Dar, 1993). However, such kind of individualism and independence along with other characteristics of volunteer work (e.g. the absence of contractual obligation to the organization with the absence of pay), have been said to often create certain pressure for voluntary organizations that heavily depend on volunteers’ voluntary contribution but realize that volunteers could abandon them anytime (Kreutzer and Jäger, 2011; Pearce, 1982). As a result, organizational commitment is particularly relevant to volunteers in that it can be shaped independently of monetary rewards (Boezeman and Ellemers, 2007).

As Bang, Ross and Reio (2013) argue that committed volunteers are a valuable asset to voluntary organizations in the sense that they “heavily rely on a volunteer workforce” (p.96) to achieve their missions specifically when facing instability and lacking financial resources in contemporary economy. Thus, given volunteers’ commitment is essential to nonprofit outcomes and the environmental constraints of most voluntary organizations, predicting volunteers’ commitment levels are essential (Tidwell, 2005). Volunteers’ commitment can be inferred from an individual’s degree of association with an organization, as the individual is willing to be dedicated to volunteer work, which is effortful, unpaid and time consuming (Bang et al., 2013). In their research of commitment among fundraising volunteers, Boezeman and Ellemers (2007) extend the social-identity based model of cooperation with the organization and find it valid in, and relevant to, volunteer organizations. In the same vein, Tidwell (2005), by applying the social identity theory to the voluntary sector, argues that volunteers’ attitudes and judgments towards the organization can be enhanced and influenced by organizational identification. In line with this, Watts (2010) claims that solid identification with the organization can influence how much volunteers believe that they are contributing to the organization and the community, which is usually the main intrinsic motivation for their choosing to be a volunteer. Therefore, Watts (2010) suggests that individuals’ motivation and commitment can be improved by strengthening their identification with the organization.

Moreover, Tidwell (2005) discovers that since organizational identification provides “a similar network of support from one’s in-group” (p.454), volunteers high in organizational identification are more likely to maintain a concomitant level of commitment and loyalty to the organization (Tidwell, 2005). Otherwise, volunteers would feel unsatisfied with or uncommitted to the organization, and may minimize their exposure or choose to leave the organization (Tidwell, 2005; Lavelle, 2010; Harris, 1998; Bang et al., 2013). Consistent with many previous studies that highlight the central role of identification in feelings of organizational commitment among volunteers, Tidwell (2005), based on the result from his study, suggests that those volunteers high in organizational identification were more committed to and satisfied with their voluntary work. To take it further, Tidwell argue that a volunteer who identifies with the organization “remains committed until identification no longer exists” (p.460). In sum, the theorizing that organizational identification is a strong antecedent to organizational commitment has also gained much recognition from scholars within the voluntary sector literature.

3.4. Problematization

We acknowledge the above authors' work on the relation between individuals' organizational identification and commitment. However, although organizational identification is usually theorized to predict members' commitment, it is not a "panacea" (Tidwell, 2005, p.454). The relationship between identification and commitment is very complex as there are different identification types and commitment levels existing within organization in reality (Kramer Meisenbach, and Hansen, 2013). Moreover, as identification is highly personally experienced process (Dutton, et al., 1994), organizational members may vary dramatically in terms of how or what/who they are willing to identify with. Thus, individuals' commitment from identification with the organization is only one aspect in the complicated relationship, which gets the most attention from many authors, but their identification with a group, relationship or person might be more worthy investigating.

Furthermore, the existing literature also neglects the effect of disidentification on organizational members' commitment. Usually, disidentification is linked to negative feeling of cynicism, skepticism or irony (Costas and Fleming, 2009) but actually it may also offer individuals appropriate distance to understand and redefine them and the organization better. Finally, those in the voluntary sector who support the positive relationship of identification and commitment limit themselves to identification and fail to realize there is much bigger space between the poles of identification and dis-identification, namely non-identification (Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001), which deserves more exploration based on the unique characteristics of freedom and independence in voluntary work. Therefore, drawing on the following more nuanced theories including subunit-specific identities, disidentification and neutral-identification, we intend to problematize the simplistic identification-commitment link and investigate what else makes individual volunteers stay after organizational image crisis.

3.5. Alternative ways of conceptualizing the relation of identification and commitment

In this section, we first want to further specify them in the voluntary context. Then, given very scant attention has been paid to the concept of disidentification in voluntary sector literature which is important to understand volunteers' identification and commitment especially in the context of image crisis, we intend to contribute to existing literature by further explaining and employing it in the voluntary sector. Furthermore, by analyzing the

more specific concept of neutral identification, we hope we can expand the investigation space in studying how individual volunteers identified with the organization and how the identification impacts their commitment in the voluntary sector literature.

3.5.1 Identification with specific group or person

According to Social Identity Theory, individuals' self-concepts are developed based on their personal identities from individual attributes and interests, as well as their social identities dependent upon the attributes of the groups with which they associate (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Kramer et al., 2013). These social identities, as Kramer et al. (2013) argue, are linked to "individuals' various targets or sources of identifications" (p.23). They also suggest separating volunteers' identification into 3 types: for an organization, an occupation or specific activity, and the general activity. In our study context, they may be respectively referred to the Red Cross, the voluntary activity in the local chapter International House, and the volunteering in general sense (or the spirit of volunteering). Different members may vary significantly in the extent to which they identify with the organization (Dutton et al., 1994). For example, while some volunteers may identify themselves with the Red Cross as a whole, others may find little connection to the Swedish Red Cross and, instead, define themselves with the local chapter or their project group.

As organizations are often characterized by a complicated differentiation of work tasks, department, union and so on, making it barely possible for a single or blended organizational identity to exist (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Alvesson and Svingsson, 2008). Consequently, in complex organizations whose organization identity is abstract, ambiguous and nonobvious, some people tend to "display subunit-specific identities" (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, p.22). In our study, the subunit means the local chapter "International House" of Swedish Red Cross. Volunteers' self-definitions are inclined to be largely subunit-specific as the subunit offers members more space for interaction and more opportunities to see their influence on the group (ibid.). As a result, the group identity of small unit may be richer and easier to be identified with than organizational identity (ibid.).

Identification is group-specific, but even more specifically with a person (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Alvesson and Empson (2008) distinguish between organization-driven individuals who construct their identity through organizational identification, and individual-driven organizations whose organizational identity is contingent upon the individuals that work there.

In the latter circumstance, the organization will not be a strong resource offering a collective basis for identity (Alvesson and Empson, 2008). Instead, the organization may seek to “generalize identification with an individual to identification with the organization through the routinization of charisma” (Mael and Ashforth, 1989, p.22). Individual volunteers may feel identified with a specific person instead of the collective organization and attempt to be like or become the person acting as a “social referent” (ibid. p.22).

According to Cooper and Thatcher (2010), individuals are likely to “identify with relationships that help them to fulfill task and psychosocial needs” (p.519). As a result, although some volunteers may form the start join organizations to assist in accomplishing organizational goals, maintaining relationships with others may instead become the reasons to remain over the long time instead of commitment to the organization (Kramer et al., 2013; Pearce, 1993). Furthermore, Kramer et al. (2013) have found those volunteers they studied viewed identification as a more global synthesis of the whole of 3 types as shown previously, which justify why the relationship of identification and commitment needs more nuances in voluntary context. Therefore, we would rather safely suggest that different volunteers view identification different rather than standing by many authors’ one-aspect argument that identification with organization leads to commitment.

3.5.2 ‘Positive’ Dis-identification

Social identification could provide instruction and direction for individuals to minimize uncertainty and fragmentation (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2001). The majorities of studies focus on the positive aspect of identification and suggest that identification provides benefits to the organization by increasing members' long-term commitment. However, identification is also very ambivalent, involving “both valuable recognition and painful abjection” (Kenny, 2010, p. 859). These may come from inconsistent and conflicting demands from the whole organization and different groups that they belong to or conflicts between demanded identities and their real personal identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

Confronting the tensions between “who they feel ‘they really are’ and who they have to be at work in order to maintain a sense of authenticity” (Costas and Fleming, 2009, p. 354), individuals may employ what Elsbach and Bhattacharya call disidentification to help themselves overcome tensions and keep true to themselves. Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) also suggest that disidentification may be a response by individuals feel threatened by

organization's low status due to a recent negative event, i.e. image crisis. To deal with this, they claim that people may "move toward relationships in which they identify with organizations with which they agree, and disidentify with organizations with which they disagree" (p.394) and individuals may "disidentify more readily than they identify with organizations" (p.394) in such context. Therefore, as Costas and Fleming (2009) argue that, dis-identification as a contemporary mode of workplace experience may not only reveals the negative side of identification but this "unpopular" idea may also lead individuals to distinguish who they really are and thus more easily define their identities.

Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) take a similar stance, arguing that, to sustain positive social identities, individuals may cognitively distancing one's identity from an organization's identity inasmuch as "individuals may understand who they are, in part, by defining who they're not" (p.395). Thus, not all identities are based on positive and affirmative views but may derive from disidentification instead (Styhre, 2012). Fleming and Spicer (2003) also indicate that people derive psychic satisfaction and relief from realizing that they can protect 'who they really are' from those that they don't identify with and this may ironically allow them work more effectively. All of these studies highlight "the importance of understanding how ideological consent can be harnessed through disidentification rather than through identification" (Fleming and Spicer, 2003, p.11). According to Costas and Fleming (2009), perhaps some employees have always disidentified with work "given the economic and cultural contradictions of capitalism" (p. 355), however, this will be very rare case in voluntary sector as typically volunteers choose to join a voluntary organization and do things that they think good on a total voluntary basis. Moreover, as Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) say that identification or disidentification is a highly personal *perception* related to the organization's identity instead of a fixed perception about the organization, thus, due to individuals' subjectivism, we agree with Kreiner et al. (2006) that there might be a range of responses between these two poles, and specifically, in voluntary sector, more nuanced responses to a tainted organizational image are expected to exist though empirical evidence of these is currently lacking (Frandsen, 2012).

3.5.3 Neutral identification

Given organizational identification is a highly individualized experienced process, to what degree organizational members identify with the organization thus varies (Dutton et al., 1994; Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001; Tidwell, 2005). Extreme situations may not generally exist,

so realistically speaking, individuals might probably not be absolutely against the organization even when it has experienced image crisis “as there are many shades between the poles of identification and disidentification (for example, indifference, ambivalence, anxiety and so on) and seldom do we maintain one subjective stance over time and contexts” (Fleming and Spicer, 2003, p.167). Similarly, Alvesson and Empson (2008) believe that not many people define themselves primarily through identification with their organization but meanwhile, few people are totally de-coupled from with the organization and there is usually some positive affiliation with it. On one hand, as Ashforth and Mael (1989) say that, individual can score high on commitment not in the sense that he or she perceives a shared fate with the organization but because sees the organization as a good platform to achieve their personal goals. On the other hand, Fleming and Spicer (2003) suggest that individuals, who don’t identify with the organization especially when its image crisis has damaged their core values, may be uncommitted and even cynical toward the organization but still stay as a member as a regime of ideology still seems to be at work. Although these studies cover a variety of organizational contexts, they offer interesting insights into understanding the relationship between organizational identification and commitment, and lend clear support to the research linking individualism to “neutral identification”—a state of neither identifying nor disidentifying with an organization (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004).

This research highlights that one’s individualist orientation focus may increase the likelihood of identification with individual traits, but is not likely to promote identification in terms of relation or memberships (Cooper and Thatcher, 2010; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004). This is especially true when it comes to the volunteers with the individualist orientation, making it hard to claim that there is an identity in terms of a shared sense of belonging to a social category or “an agreement of a ‘positive’ set of characteristics functioning as a source of identification” (Alvesson and Empson, 2008, p.14). Many volunteers begin volunteering resulting from their prosocial concerns and sense of responsibility to provide services for those in needs or to make the world a better place for their own children and grandchildren (Kramer et al., 2013; Wei et al., 2012). They highly value their independence as an individual with freedom to do good things but without identifying themselves with specific relationships or memberships (Cooper and Thatcher, 2010). For them, on one hand, either organization itself or the relationship established within the organization is never going to be an adequate replacement for the true spirit of volunteering to make them continue volunteering. On the other hand, they may still choose to stay in the voluntary organization that has suffered from

image crisis as long as they believe the spirit of volunteering does not disappear with the organizational reputation.

In conclusion, this literature review section has sought to accomplish three goals in order to make contributions to both the organizational studies and voluntary sector literature. First, we trace the intellectual contributions to generally understanding the relationship between organizational identification and commitment of both organizational studies and voluntary sector literature. Second, we expand the reach of the studies of publicly disgraced organization to the nonprofit sector, and challenge the argument of individuals' organizational commitment predicated based on their identification with the organization as commonly suggested. Last but not the least, we contribute to the literature by drawing more nuanced theories including subunit-specific identities, disidentification and neutral-identification to investigate without the expected positive influence of identification on commitment, what else makes individual volunteers stay after organizational image crisis.

4. Empirical Material

This section aims to provide a presentation of our conducted material in two parts. The first part introduces the background of the organization and the context of the case study followed by the second part, which introduces the findings from the interviews.

4.1. Background to the analyses

In order to facilitate the understanding of the upcoming analysis, we in the following part will give an overview of Red Cross and its structure and financial situation, aiming to clarify the picture of an organization in such size and respondents' position and responsibility in the organization, as well as better understand the context of image crisis of the case study.

4.1.1 Red Cross International

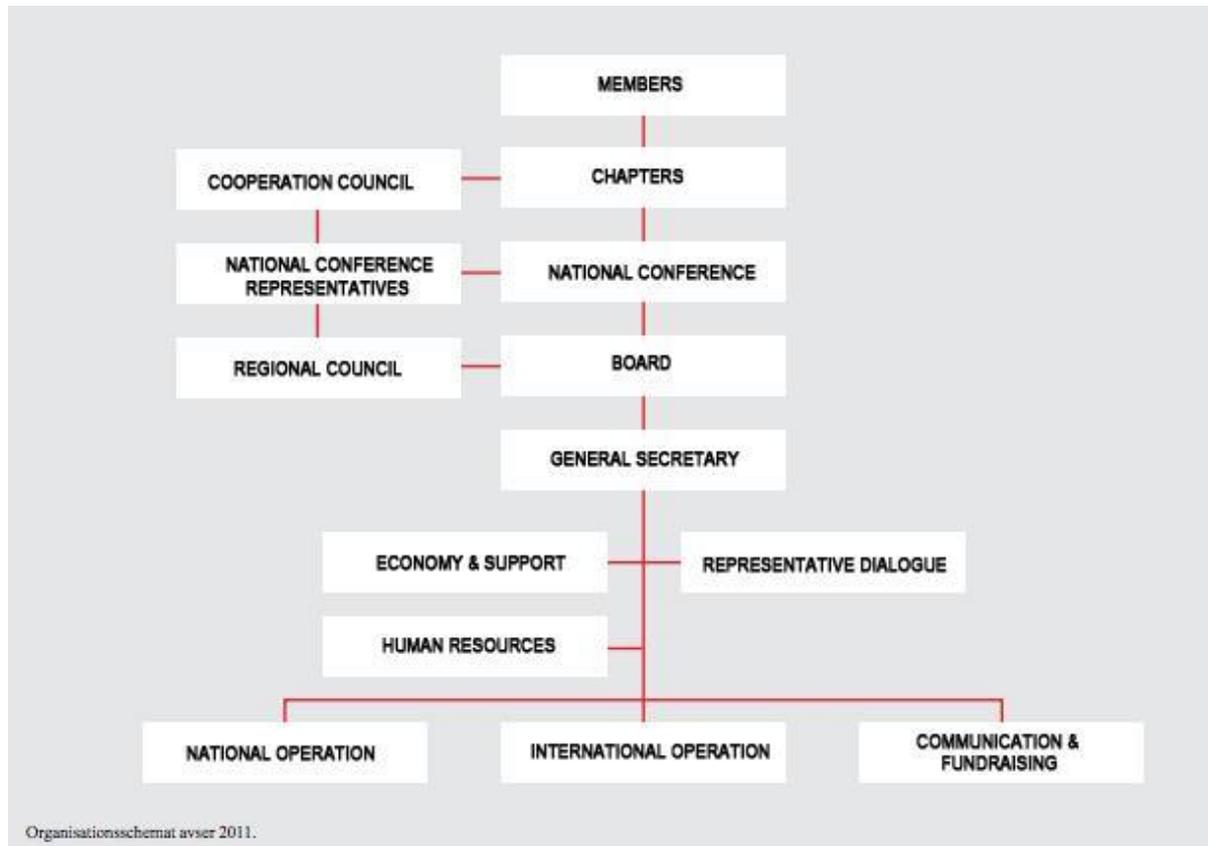
The name of Red Cross refers to a world-wide humanitarian movement and stands for protecting health and human life. Red Cross is divided into three different areas that all are legally independent from each other, but operating based on the same values, principles, symbols and purposes. One of the areas, called the International Red Cross and Red Cross Crescent Movement, has more than 97 million volunteers, members and staff and 188 associations spread over the world today and thus is considered as the largest humanitarian organization in the world (Swedish Red Cross annual report, 2011).

4.1.2 Red Cross Sweden

Swedish Red Cross, included in the International Red Cross and Red Cross Crescent Movement (IFRC) was founded in 1865, which also has granted them the role as the largest voluntary organization in Sweden (Swedish Red Cross annual report, 2011). As a humanitarian organization it works to enhance world peace, prevent human suffering, respect and create human life and to improve the conditions for the vulnerable people through engagement and local human power. In 2011 Swedish Red Cross had approximately 160 000 members, 31 000 volunteers and 1100 local chapters in the country (ibid.). As the demand of need differ from place to place, all chapters will as a result adapt to the local needs. The head office is situated in Stockholm where all administration and information such as guidelines are provided (Gladh, Rednet, 2012).

4.1.3 Organizational Structure of Swedish Red Cross

Swedish Red Cross is a democratic organization in the sense that decisions are directed from the local level (interview respondent 1). The chart of the organizational structure below aims to give an overview of the different organs and levels in Swedish Red Cross followed by a brief description on what functions every organ possesses.



Organizational chart over the Swedish Red Cross 2011, (translated from Swedish to English), originally from: (Swedish Red Cross, annual report, 2011. p. 41)

The national conference, held every fourth year, is the highest decision making organ in Swedish Red Cross where members and chapters can impact decisions by proposing motions through their representatives. Trustees or representatives from the municipalities and chapters in the national conference are not paid workers but all volunteers. *The board* on the other hand operates as the highest decision making organ between each national conference. The *general secretary* has the responsibility to realize and implement the decisions, also in charge of the 350 paid employees. *The regional councils* are responsible to act as mediators between the chapters and the board, to arrange dialogue meetings every second year and to support the cooperation council as well as making sure guidelines from the head conference are followed. Swedish Red Cross is locally organized into different *chapters* focusing on different

directions depending on the need and demand. Every chapter is legally independent but formally a part of Red Cross, meaning that each chapter consists of their own conference, board, chairman, board members, accountants, suppliers and cashiers (Mattson, 2013; Swedish Red Cross Annual report, 2011).

4.1.4 Financial situation

Swedish Red Cross is financed through fundraisings from private persons, companies, local chapters, members' fee, and return on capital and from sales. Other funding comes from international authorities, the Swedish state and by selling first aid education. The chapters' largest income- source are gained from selling donated items with a selling point called Kupan, a flea-market and meeting point situated at 275 places in Sweden. In total Swedish Red Cross income was earned from national activities (673 million Swedish kronor) and local activities (222 million Swedish kronors). In 2011, 87% of the yearly income was distributed to specific causes and the rest went to administrative, fundraising and members ("Swedish fundraising control agency" has a limit of 25% maximum). Fundraising will always go to the specific cause (Swedish Red Cross, annual report 2011; interview respondent 1).

4.1.5 Representing the context of scandals at Swedish Red Cross

Stemmed from its long historical background and contributions at all levels and situations in the society, the Red Cross has gained an important role and a well- established name (Blombäck et al., 2012). As the largest existing voluntary organization, its survival is highly dependent on its reputation and the public's trustworthiness of it. As such, during the past couple of years, Swedish Red Cross has evoked huge media stir because of mainly two internal scandals, which in turn impacted their reputation in the society negatively.

In the beginning of June in 2009, the interest of Johan af Donner and his embezzlement at Swedish Red Cross created huge media stir (Hermele, 2009). After years of being in charge of the increased funds, the former head of communication, Johan af Donner was exposed and charged for embezzling 7,7 million kronors from Swedish Red Cross and "The cancerfoundation" (Sokolow, 2010). His fancy and luxurious lifestyle evoked attention among people around him who questioned how such lifestyle was possible (Aftonbladet, 2009). Continuously that led to a plaint, based on the fact that Mr Donner together with another person in the advertising industry transferred money through Mr Donner's own company by manipulated invoices (Byttner, K.J., 2010). The scandal directly affected

Swedish Red Cross as an organization where the society, volunteers, members and employees started to question their credibility and internal control (Färnbo et al., n.d). Even though no money was lost since it later on was returned, the image of Swedish Red Cross was already suffered and shaken (Interview, all respondents). In turn, this led to decreased funds from national and international authorities, companies and private persons as well as lost members and volunteers (Swedish Red Cross, annual report 2011).

Soon after the embezzlement scandal, Swedish Red Cross was faced with another scandal in the beginning of 2010 (Aschberg, 2010). The media interest was again at very high point, this time regarding the salary of the former board-chairman at Red Cross, Bengt Westerberg. His annual salary was 822 000 Swedish kronors, approximately 70 000 Swedish kronors a month. In comparison to the board chairman at other well established voluntary organization for example “SOS barnbyar” his salary was the double (Sokolow, 2010). While claims by stakeholder in media pointed that the salary was too high as working for voluntary organizations should be on a voluntary basis (Schjerva, 2010; Sokolow, 2010), some respondents from the interviews argued that the salary was reasonable and deserved in terms of the good work he actually did and how much funds he achieved to bring in. The reactions to Bengt Westerberg were mixed and in his self- defense article he explained the falsified accusations based on facts (Westerberg, 2010). Throughout this, the majority of stakeholders were however negatively bothered with his salary. Furthermore, the critics towards him and his salary affected his decision to resign and leave Swedish Red Cross a couple of months after the exposure in media (DN, 2010).

Consequently the internal scandals entailed in decreased amount of members; from 188 295 (2010) to 160 698 (2011) in one year (Swedish Red Cross annual report, 2011). Respondents noticed during their fundraising on the streets that citizens questioned and hesitated to give money to an organization they had lost faith in (Interview, all respondents). The opinions about the scandals were however diverse and as things move on, the organization has during the past years tried to make their image recover from the scandals (Rednet n.d). As a result of the bad financial situation caused by two scandals, which led to decreased members and lost faith from the society, Swedish Red cross sharpened their internal control and went through structural changes by centralizing and cutting down on costs (Interview respondent 1). 17 local offices around the country were closed down leading to one third of the employees being laid off. These offices were situated at a regional level where they acted as a supporting

role for the chapters. Furthermore, 1132 chapters in 2010 merged into 1074 chapters in 2011 (Swedish Red Cross annual report, 2011).

4.1.6 Red Cross Lund - The International House

The thesis is mainly based on a case study of one of Swedish Red Cross' local chapters called *Internationella Huset* (will be continuously mentioned in English as the International House). Red Cross in Lund is divided into 3 chapters including Internationella huset, Lundakretsen and Romelebygdens kretsen, which all operate independently by financing themselves and by having their own boards, budgets and fundraisings as well as dealing with different work tasks. As for the International house, which has existed for 25 years, their work is mostly focused on integration of refugees and immigrants. Once a month, the board that consists of 10 volunteers meets to discuss future strategies for the chapter (The International House Lund annual report, 2012). The International House is also one of the 275 chapters called Kupan, described as a flea- market and a meeting point, opened every day. As such, there is a half - time paid worker, funded by the municipality in Lund, who is in charge of the second-hand operation. In 2012 they had 200 paying members and approximately 20 volunteers. Moreover, they perceived that the decreasing trend of members after the scandals has started to stagnate (The International House Lund annual report, 2012).

Volunteers, projects and activities

There are in total around 20 volunteers working at the International House. The municipality employs one worker whereas the rest are working unpaid including the manager. Except for the manager and the employed worker who work every day at the chapter, most of the volunteers are devoting approximately 1-2 hours a week to voluntary work. Their engagement varies due to the need. During special occasions such as fundraising to catastrophes or seasonal project more time will be spent there. Some of the respondents have been members and volunteers at the International House for 20 years whereas the majority of the respondents have been engaged for 2-3 years.

Significant for the International House are the different projects they provide. One is the flea-market (previously mentioned), which is their primary income source. During 2012, they had in total nine projects ongoing; Swedish education for those in need composes a big part of the operation consisting of 45 students and 8-9 voluntary teachers. Other projects include swimming sessions, Thursday's dinner gathering, sewing groups every Tuesday, excursions

and sightseeing to different places, parties during the Swedish traditional occasions, golf project, chaplet project and of course the fundraising on the streets for specific projects (The International House Lund annual report, 2012). Some initiatives aim to integrate immigrants and refugees in the society whereas other projects intend to collect money in order to operate the chapter financially. Many activities offered by the International House are based on a need from the society such as other business organizations and Lund municipality (Red Cross, n.d.).

4.2. Findings

In this section we will present the findings elicited from the interview materials. The structure is based upon three different parts: first by introducing a general understanding of how volunteers identify themselves in relation to the organization, second by understanding how individual's identification process is affected by the two scandals and third by presenting further possible motives that lie behind their identification processes with the organization.

4.2.1 How do they identify themselves?

Given that getting a general understanding of the interviewed volunteers' own perceptions of their identifications will shed light on how individuals' identifications might be impacted by the image crisis, we in this section focus on extracting our respondents' feelings, thoughts and experiences to help us gain more insight into their identification status.

When we asked the respondents about their role in Red Cross, all of them were consistent with the small part they took in the organization "Just small, small point. That's my fault; I'm not engaging myself as I could have. I have work here and I have other interests so on" (R2). This respondent who had many interests and were very active in sports, explained that the reason was due to lack of time. In line with previous comment, several respondents used "spider in the web" as a way to explain how small their role in the organization was. "I only see myself as a spider in the net, there are so many so that...a spider that helps a little" (R7). The identification as a spider indicated how small they felt and what limited things they did compared to the whole organization. While outlining these metaphors they didn't however show any regret or concern by being too small but instead they felt satisfied. This indicated that they didn't seek for recognition for their role but were instead satisfied by maintaining as a small part of the organization to do good things, especially when they personally didn't have enough time. As one respondent who was occupied with taking care of grandchildren

expressed, “I am a passive member, but if I feel I have the time, maybe change from passive to active” (R1), which implied that he still wanted to do more voluntary work but cannot because of the lack of time. In this way, it would be too hasty to say he didn’t feel associated with the organization because he wasn’t devoting much time to the Red Cross.

Moreover, most of the respondents were satisfied with how much they engaged, how much responsibility they possessed and wouldn’t like to do more. “I’m not interested in that and don’t have any ambitions” (R3). Here the respondent was asked if he would like to have a career within Red Cross to which he rapidly and straightforward answered with a no. Even though other respondents weren’t as explicit as R3, the feeling to not engage more was reciprocal. Unlike R1 who was considered to be a committed member despite his inactivity, most of the respondents felt that since they didn’t engage a lot they were accordingly not identifying themselves with Red Cross. Time was often brought up as a main concern for not being more engaged, but in essence they didn’t see any need for change in their voluntary work at the moment. Moreover, another respondent even associated herself as an “outsider” in the organization. “I’m not in the organization, but I can help when they need me.”(R5). However, it’s hard to distinguish their low-key characteristic from low identification with Red Cross based on these “modest” descriptions. On the contrary, the following two statements from two respondents gave very clear opinion about his identification to Red Cross:

In no way, I am not identifying myself with Red Cross...because I have other identifications. My identification is on another level. I don’t think I will go into that more in detail. I only tell that I don’t identify myself with Red Cross. I think Red Cross is a good idea. I don’t think that everything with Red Cross is what suits me. But this golf is nice because I like to move, do activities and it’s a nice thing and I found it very interesting so that part is interesting. (R3)

I finally find an organization that really runs good with what I’m thinking too ... So I will be involved in the organization. I think for all my life, maybe not a lot all the time, but I’ll be part of it all the time. (R8)

The former respondent painted up the Red Cross as a good and colorful organization that did many good things in the world, he was yet not identifying themselves with it, while the latter

respondent emphasized her personal values which were aligned with the organization's and felt a stronger identification with the organization.

Although we could not draw a general conclusion about respondents' identification with the organization, we found two common traits among them: independence and freedom, and attachment to the local chapter, which gave more insight of their identification with the Red Cross.

Independence and freedom

While questions regarding why they don't feel identified with the organization, one of the recurring reasons is the independence and freedom to be able to decide whatever they want to. One quote from R3 covered what most respondents mentioned about the issue of independence and freedom in the interviews:

I am as a person, I want to have sort of freedom to do what I like to do, and sometimes I feel that I want to do something else. Sometimes when I have a lot of things, you have this now and this now, then I don't like it. I have other things than Red Cross. I don't want to have too much sort of musts in life... (R3)

According to R3, he as a person was a free man with many interests and therefore can't have too many musts. "I think I want to be free to choose in life that I like. Whether it is Red Cross or anything or other activities" (R3). This respondent highly valued the freedom of being a volunteer and wouldn't want to be attached to anything particularly. Similarly another respondent said "I want to be free to decide, I don't want to mainly feel that I am a part of something else" (R9). It was important for them to not feel too attached to the organization. Voluntary work in their sense shouldn't be something forcing, but on their own conditions. Being independent, as in being able to choose what they want to do is a vital criteria for the respondents. "Responsibility...becomes a demand to really do it when you agree to help. But I don't want that but to want to be freer" (R7). However, since time was an obvious constraint for many, they clarified how much time they were able to devote already from the beginning. By doing so they could prevent the feeling of having too much responsibility and musts, which then would have inhibited the freedom. Through looking at the freedom and independence, volunteers prefer the voluntary work to be easy with few strings attached. To

keep their independence and freedom to decide their own things in life they have accordingly a certain distance to Red Cross as an organization.

Attachment to the local chapter

Another common characteristic noticed was that all the respondents seemed to feel closer to the local chapter rather than to the whole Swedish Red Cross. “I’m not looking that much on the big Red Cross, I more look at the local organization here. I’m on the board for international house, so this little house, what we are doing here is key to me. I’m not involved in that big picture. I think I’m rather important here” (R9). This respondent, whose role at the chapter included taking part of the board and teaching Swedish, seemed to identify herself more to the local chapter rather than the organization. Other respondents had similar answers, which all indicated that since they didn’t have any interaction or knew nothing about what was happening at the head office except for getting information through reading the Rednet (members’ website), they had a hard time relating themselves to it. As such, Red Cross as an organization wasn’t a vivid topic in the interviews. We also asked what they thought Red Cross could contribute with and what values they had which some of the respondents replied; “I don’t know. I know too little about Red Cross, what they do.” (R5). This respondent was in addition considering herself as an outsider in the organization, but significant for the outline was yet that many respondents gave relatively shallow answers when asking questions regarding the Swedish Red Cross.

The International House was however talked in a more detailed and descriptive way compared to Swedish Red Cross. The survival of the local chapter in Lund such as the economic situation, recruitment, attraction of new members and other challenges was a recurring topic among many respondents. One of the respondents was highly prioritizing the International house “The most important thing is, to see that this part of Red Cross in Lund survives, good organization, good ideas, good programs are No.1” (R1). Overall, the International House was repeatedly mentioned in a very positive way.

In addition to the above common topics, direct questions about the previous two scandals at Red Cross (Johan af Donner and Bengt Westerberg) were not asked but instead the respondents brought them up by themselves. The respondents often used the scandals as examples on how “changes” in the past few years have impacted their work as volunteers. This got us interested to further understand how they perceive the Red Cross’ image crisis and how this will affect their identification with the Red Cross.

4.2.2 How is individuals' identification process affected by the image crisis?

The image crisis of Swedish Red Cross resulting from the Johan af Donner billing scandal and the uncover of Bengt Westerberg's high salary was evidently a huge problem for the organization. Many respondents in general expressed disappointment towards the 2 scandals and felt the organization got hurt a lot. However, even though it was clear to all of our respondents that the image crisis has affected and changed the organization, their explicit or implicit expressions of the influence of image crisis on their identification and commitment differed. One respondent showed his attitude in this way:

I've been very angry with the organization of course. I think it's built in a wrong way. I think if we the volunteers, if we work without money, do a lot of things without recognition, without money, salary so on, all the people in the organization should think like that. We have had some managers, directors you know. I don't like the way they work, of course I like the way what they are doing, that's good. But I don't think they should be well paid, shouldn't be seen as a career. It's volunteer, you should do things without recognition. When I saw Bengt Westerberg's salary and so on, I was very angry. Actually I was thinking of leaving the organization. (R2)

The respondent's personal opinion clashed with what the Swedish Red Cross signaled - professionalization and high salary. Volunteering in the respondent's opinion should be based on doing things on free will without the attempt to gain recognition. High salary doesn't go hand in hand with voluntary work, which is a reason for why the salary scandal evoked disappointment and anger. Thus we could obviously detect the negative effect of the image crisis on his identification with the Red Cross since he had thought of leaving. In contrast to this, however, some respondents had opposite views:

Everyone said how it was possible; he should work as a volunteer. We are a voluntary organization, why he should not work as a volunteer so on. Many of the members had the same feeling that is a high salary and that is not good. That was not my feeling at all because I met him, and knew what he was doing...we should have leadership in Red Cross... talk to our government, to our authorities, to voluntary organizations and so on; and he did a brilliant work as I understood. I think ...absolutely reasonable salary. To

have an effective organization, our organization, I think the Swedish Red Cross has the budget...should be professional people doing leading and managing organization. (R1)

This perspective stood in stark contrast with the former one as it shared the same opinion towards the value of professionalism with the organization. The consistency in organizational values seemed to help them protect their identification with the organization under the circumstance of the Red Cross' image crisis. This doesn't absolutely represent a large part of the volunteers and members of Swedish Red Cross, but it does shed light on how individuals' perception of organizational values could be extremely different and that identification could be highly individualized and vary even in the same context. This is more strongly demonstrated in the case of Johan af Donner scandal.

Johan af Donner scandal evoked a huge discussion in media and entailed in mixed feelings. As some started to question how the organization could have allowed such things to happen, another group of respondents justified the scandal by separating Mr. Donner from the organization whereas the rest group of respondents wasn't bothered by the crisis. Accordingly, we divide them into 3 different categories: "Disidentification by being critical: Red Cross has failed in internal control", "Disidentification by defending: He is not Red Cross", "Non-identification: I don't care".

"Disidentification by being critical: Red Cross has failed in internal control" One group of the respondents was critical towards the crisis and expressed huge disappointment. If comparing their opinions of Swedish Red Cross at the moment with Red Cross before the scandals, the faith in the organization declined drastically. One respondent said "I think it meant more to me before those bad things happened...I saw it a very good thing, very useful organization...But I'm bit of critical about the organization today" (R2). Revealing a new reality and truth of Red Cross got the respondent sad and frustrated, which created a distance between him as a volunteer and the organization as the whole. R2 continued describing his feelings now and before "In the past I might have Red Cross here (pointing at his heart). Now I'm not proud for it anymore." (R2) Since this had a somewhat emotional impression, it can be implied that in the past he was identifying himself with the organization but because of the impact of scandal, he reduced the identification with the organization by blaming the organization and being critical towards it. The respondent spoke in terms that were consisted with lack of trust to the head office in Stockholm and questioned- how could this happen? "I

can't understand why they (the Red Cross) couldn't control better. They should have controlled it much better." (R2) Respondents presenting this view doubted the internal control in the organization, which might be a sign of dis-identification with the Swedish Red Cross.

"Disidentification by defending: He is not Red Cross" The general attitudes towards the Johan af Donner case of this group of volunteers sounded like:

I noticed that he has destroyed a lot for the Red Cross. When I tell people I work as a volunteer for Red Cross. They said 'Oh, they stole, I don't want to give anything to Red Cross'... So it's really a shame... I mean you have to look at the person what he did. He isn't Red Cross, he is one person made a mistake, big one, but I mean the whole organization isn't like that; we are not working for this... (R8)

The respondents meant that Johan af Donner who embezzled was a person, a criminal in which can exist in every organization. It seemed that on the surface, the scandal didn't affect the respondents at a level deep enough to alter their identification. However, actually, the way they talked about the scandal still showed disappointment of what the image crisis has led, and they tried to defend the Red Cross by emphasizing that we need to look at this man separated from the organization. Additionally, this group's feeling of shame of the scandal could therefore have affected their status as a volunteer since the image of Red Cross has been damaged. Thus, it could also be a way to protect her own status as a volunteer when the respondents defended the organization by separating the organization and the man apart. The reaction of this group, implies that the volunteers might have felt some sort of identification with the organization before since they cared about it, but by defending the organization they also tried to justify their own image as an volunteer at Red Cross, saying that they may be more care about their role as an volunteer instead of the organization.

"Non-identification: I don't care" This group of respondents didn't experience the scandals as something bothering. Even though to some point they were disappointed by the scandals, they had a rather easy-going attitude about them. This is because, on one hand, they didn't work in the area collecting money, which was most negatively affected by organizational image crisis, so neither affection nor change was experienced in their work. As one interviewee said, "I haven't noticed anything in this, in my sort of concern, my work or interest here. The changes (referred to the scandals) have not influenced that part." (R9).

Since no attention was paid to the scandals or any emotion was evoked from it, respondents didn't care. On the other hand, since they didn't connect themselves with the Red Cross, or at least the reputation of the Red Cross, the scandal did not bring any real change to their intrinsic. As one respondent expressed, "I can see that this person is the image of Red Cross it is not the whole Red Cross. Red Cross is thousands and thousands of people working...together." (R4). The respondent meant that even though Mr. Donner could represent the image of Red Cross, he "is" not Red Cross, since it is based on ten thousands of volunteers' souls.

I don't care. Really, I don't care. It is that person with and it is his conscious, he is going to live with that. That is his problem. Maybe the Red Cross has less money now? We have the money we have and spend on what we can do. (R4)

The respondent separated the person/image with the people/souls within the Red Cross and regarded Red Cross as just a label. So Red Cross's image didn't mean anything to him, and therefore whatever Mr. Donner did was not in his concern. Instead, it is what's beneath the image that matters. Drawn from this, the identification with the Red Cross was acknowledged to be hardly self-evident as it's hard to claim whether this group of people identified or disidentified with the organization. They related themselves more to the soul or spirit of volunteering.

4.2.3 Why are they still committed to voluntary work after the image crisis?

The reputation of the Red Cross as a well-established organization wasn't explicitly mentioned as a reason behind why they chose volunteering at Red Cross, yet from the manager's point of view, the reputation of Red Cross might be a factor affecting their staying. When we asked the reasons why people engaged in voluntary work, the manager stated as follows:

It's very difficult because we are motivated by many things in our life. It would be too simple to say only one answer to say you want (the world to be a good place)..., but I think persons' personal situation...Life situation is essential. You have time to spend; you want to do something that is good...But I think it's very much combination, also the Red Cross's reputation. Our reputation is very important in the sense that you get

something out...in your social circus that you want to be in. It's a good thing in Sweden so far anyway with our good reputation, to say - Oh, I work for the Red Cross on Saturdays. Every Saturday we do this, this...Oh, people say this is good...So trademark is important even in voluntary...(Manager)

The manager offered us alternative perspective to look at the impact of the image crisis on volunteers' identification processes. On one hand, some volunteers might have entered the organization because they in the beginning already knew and were related to it in some way. For example, for some of the respondents, their parents and grandparents were involved in Red Cross, which made being a volunteer for the Red Cross becoming a family tradition. However, this tradition not only makes volunteering a natural move in their lives but may also make them more likely to keep doing this to maintain this tradition. On the other hand, the negative image of the Red Cross resulting from the scandals would impact the group of volunteers who value the reputation of Red Cross as they related them to the Red Cross as a whole. Whenever they lost the confidence of the organization, they might have more likely left the organization. However, most of our respondents stated that the control has been tighten up and the organization is going towards a good direction and believed that, with time people would forget the scandals and the organization would eventually regain good reputation. Therefore, in such sense, reputation is yet a factor that impacts respondents' commitment, but not to the extent that made them leave the organization. Moreover, our findings suggest more reasons for their staying beyond the Red Cross' reputation.

The local chapter, people, projects

Respondents were asked what in their volunteering role and what kept them working there even though some work described by one respondent to be "uniform" and "repetitive", which also was a reason for why many stopped volunteering. As previously mentioned, volunteering is not always fun, so we asked what made it appealing to stay despite the scandals. Everyone mentioned that the scandals did not change this chapter. Respondents were typically using words such as cozy" and "homely" to describe the atmosphere at The International house. For instance, "It's a cozy house, I feel very comfortable every time I come here" (R4). Sharing the same feeling, another respondent said: "I feel stable here and will help as long as I can" (R7). Worth noting is that this respondent has been at the international house for 25 years. Thus, we can see that the local chapter had made a deep impact on volunteers' belongingness.

Furthermore, everyone mentioned the manager as the person they could rely on and thought she was a huge part of why they chose to first of all join Red Cross but also why they keep staying here. “I think it thanks to X (the manager) again. She is not like ‘I’m the boss, you do this, this’. It’s more like whatever you do is good. We are happy with that and that makes you want to do more.” (R8). The manager provided freedom because volunteers never felt any musts in work and she was therefore very appreciated among the respondents. Another respondent also used the manager as the reason for working for Red Cross “So it is X, if another person asked me I might say no.” (R4).

Except for feeling attached to a person, we also noticed that many respondents described the project activities very detailed and with a sense of attachment to it. Especially, several respondents talked very nicely and compellingly about their own groups in which they have built strong relations with during their years as volunteering:

I’m still there but it’s maybe because I like the group. Same person come each year, I got to know those people. I like them ...so that’s my main reason I still work in Red Cross. It’s not Red Cross itself, it’s more my relations to the people in the course. (R2)

As a Swedish teacher this respondent refers to his group of students at the chapter. His relation to his group is the main reason and motivation for why he stayed with Red Cross after the image crisis. Therefore it can be inferred that he felt more identified to the group rather than the Red Cross as a whole.

The spirit of volunteering

We did not explicitly ask about individualism or egoism in voluntary work, but yet it was a recurring category, showing its importance in keeping engagement and commitment in voluntary work. Many respondents said that when they helped others, their happiness would contaminate and make themselves happy, as reflected by the response that “You get a satisfaction and feel that you help to do something, to participate. That is enough.” (R7). As the manager said, “if you don’t feel good of yourself, you have nothing to give, so certain egoism can be a good thing”. Individualism or egoism (e.g. fulfilling a dream to be a teacher, gaining satisfaction or happiness themselves by being useful to others) is indeed not necessarily being negative especially for volunteers as long as it comes from the inside to feel good to help people or to help people to feel good. In fact, it is such individualism that keeps

many respondents committed to voluntary work in the sense that if they totally identify themselves with the organization that has suffered from an image crisis, they may lose faith in not only the organization but also their abilities to help people. Thus, even though many respondents thought their work was enjoyable and fun, they stayed engaged more based on intrinsic motivations, which could be further referred to the spirit of volunteering.

As one respondent said, “Since I have this education (nursing), I could be able to combine this with the Red Cross things... to give something back” (R8). This respondent, who was adopted by a Swedish family when she was five years old, worked as a nurse in a community and wanted to use her knowledge and experience to pay back the society. According to another respondent, “guilt” was a strong motivation why he kept volunteering.

When you see what’s happening in the world, in the society. I could feel a little guilty...I think I’m kind of people...there are people in Sweden, across the world, they could be rich, could live in a castle, close their eyes to the outside, maybe they feel good, have a good life so on. I’m not that kind of people, I wouldn’t mind being rich of course, but I cannot close my eyes. You must see what’s going on. (R2)

This respondent is currently working as a Swedish and history teacher at an elementary school in Lund and has a deep interest for what is happening around the world. His guilt grounds on the fact that he thinks he lives a better life than many others in the world and by helping and giving back, this guilt can be reduced making him feel a bit more satisfied. Therefore he may keep doing voluntary work as long as he possesses these feelings. Thus being a volunteer does not necessarily rely on the identification with a voluntary organization, but more importantly to be continually driven by intrinsic motivation. This also explained why everyone answered that voluntary work is not about feeling pride or success but it should be done in silence. “I don’t think I could feel very proud. Because when you do a little, you see there is much more to be done. The needs are endless. I don’t think I could feel pride” (R2). Volunteering never ends because there are always things to contribute with. The humble statement indicates that their perception of the spirit of volunteering: “I think it is when the engagement is natural, not a force. And they feel really enjoy of what they are doing, then it comes to natural.” (R8). Highlighted here is this spirit of volunteering could be so natural to be a part of one’s lifestyle. As one respondent said: “I like helping other people, I guess it is a part of me” (R7). This respondent has been active at the international house for 25 years and

helping others is a personal quality she possesses and part of her lifestyle. Therefore, her long commitment to voluntary work at Red Cross corresponds with her volunteering spirit as an individual.

Moreover, many respondents answered the questions whether they thought there was any competition between the Red Cross and other voluntary organizations or not. The answer remarkably reflected the spirit of volunteering in them:

One could say yes, but I don't think so because we have the same goals, we try to help people. If the money comes from me, it doesn't really matter as long as it comes to people who really needs. But some people may say that why you give money to them, but I don't think it like that. (R8)

In this quote, the respondent didn't care whether one gave money to the Red Cross or to another organization since the money in the end was going to a good cause. Therefore even though competition exists between voluntary organizations in terms of attracting volunteers or collecting money perceived by other people, yet our respondents seemed to be more "open-minded" as they value the spirit of volunteering more than the Red Cross itself. What we could infer from this is that volunteers don't identify with a particular voluntary organization by seeing it as a trademark, a logo or a platform to help people but are more committed to what true volunteering involves.

5. Discussion

The empirical section has provided certain insight for understanding the relationship between volunteers' identification and commitment to an organization that has suffered from image disgrace. This section aims to further discuss the findings. Three themes have been elicited to understand how volunteers identify themselves with the Swedish Red Cross, and factors keep them stay after the image crisis within and beyond identification.

5.1. Individual identification in the context of an image crisis

The image crisis did affect the individuals to some point since the scandals did evoke reactions. In the findings of Johan af Donner's Scandal, we identified three main reactions, labeled as: "Disidentification by being critical: Red Cross has failed in internal control", "Disidentification by defending: He is not Red Cross", "Non-identification: I don't care".

Dis-identification by being critical: Red Cross has failed in internal control

In line with the literature of disidentification, people might disidentify themselves with the organization because the image crisis questions the alignment of individual and organizational identity. As a result, they might maintain who they are by emphasizing who they are not (Elsbach and Bhattacharaya, 2001). If members and volunteers believe the organizational values or their actions aren't consistent with what they want to be perceived as, they will instead chose to dis-identify with the organization. The group categorized as "Disidentification by being critical: Red Cross has failed in internal control" is considered to be the most negatively affected by the image crisis since they expressed disappointment, lost faith and criticism towards it.

Many authors have claimed that if volunteers feel unsatisfied with the organization, they may minimize their commitment or choose to leave the organization (Tidwell, 2005; Lavelle, 2010; Harris, 1998, Bang el al. 2013). However, in the situation of Red Cross's image crisis, although some sort of disidentification was elicited in this group, due to the fact that they became cynical towards the organization, they still stayed with the organization and continued committed to their voluntary work. Without making any move to leave or other actions as a reaction towards the scandals, this group was quietly and passively disidentifying in the sense that they didn't try to change the situation to the better or the worse.

Dis-identification by defending: He is not Red Cross

Organization members are said to gauge how outsiders judge them mainly based on how they believe others see the organization (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991). When individuals identify themselves with an organization they tend to make sure their self-concepts correspond with the construed external image of the organization. Thus, they may gain recognition from the outside world for working at a well-known organization and accordingly feel proud and enhance the self-esteem (Dutton et al. 1994). In that sense, the external image of the organization in the society is assumed to play a vital role in impacting how the individuals think other people perceive them. When the organization's reputation is tarnished, as in our findings, the individuals for instance might have felt embarrassed to be associated with Swedish Red Cross because of the scandals affecting their role as a volunteer perceived by outsiders there. Consequently, as many scholars (e.g. (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996; Terry, 2003) suggest, this might lead them to try to employ tactics to protect and repair the organizational image to regain self-esteem, for example, through defending the organization by separating the "bad" person from the rest of the organization. The attempt to try to make excuses, justify, deny, or explain in order to show that the organization and oneself is "good" (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996), indicates that individuals are to some extent feeling identified with the organization.

However, in our findings, it was rather difficult to judge if the intention of the justification was more related to their identification to the whole Red Cross itself, the local chapter, or voluntary work in general or the mix of them. For instance, if the sullied reputation of the organization has made their work as a volunteer dirty (Frandsen, 2012), and their main intention is to justify oneself, it instead would be insufficient to justify their individual's identification with the organization. Therefore, we have further divided this group of people into two categories: 1. Individuals who are identified with the organization will defend the organization so they can maintain their identification with the organization 2. Individuals whose identification is hardly self-evident will defend the organization in order to enhance their self-esteem. No matter if the intention is to enhance self-esteem or maintaining their connection to the organization, this second group of people more actively defended the organization. This stands in contrast to the first group who more passively demonstrated their disidentification with the organizations. However, one common result may still exist despite the different reactions. That is they all may gain psychic satisfaction and relief from realizing that they can protect 'who they really are' from those that they don't identify with (Fleming

and Spicer, 2003). Therefore the organization's image crisis did not necessarily negatively affect the individual's identification process. They may ironically feel more satisfied and in turn work more effectively with the awareness of their autonomous identity.

Non-identification: I don't care

The third group identified in the findings with an "I don't care" attitude indicated that they didn't get affected primarily by the image crisis and their identification with Red Cross was relatively neutral. This group showed neutral perception of the organization by regarding it just as a label or a trademark instead of a unique, substantial organization representing all the people working there. As to say, changing the label "Red Cross" to something else wouldn't matter because the people who are doing the voluntary work remain the same. As for this group, the identification isn't with the whole Red Cross but to, as one respondent said: "the soul of people working there". Moreover, as Ashforth and Mael (1989, p.23) state: "an individual can score high on commitment not because he or she perceives a shared destiny with the organization but because the organization is a convenient vehicle." In the same vein, as the authors are using "convenient vehicle" our findings showed that this group objectified Red Cross as a platform for people to do good things. Due to Red Cross's well-known establishment in the society and ability to provide resources such as contacts and knowledge, which could facilitate for example fundraising or applications for subventions, it could be seen as a good tool for individuals to fulfill the spirit of volunteering. Therefore, their identification with Red Cross is rather neutral, so when an image crisis occurs, any impact on their relation to the organization will as such be limited because of their perception of Red Cross as a label. As indicated through our findings, despite the different reactions from the image crisis, volunteers still continue their voluntary work at Red Cross. There should be meaningful exploration of the reason behind this phenomenon.

5.2 What keeps them stay: multiple identification targets

To understand the implications that have been discussed and presented above, this section will elaborate on what keeps volunteers staying with Red Cross after being different affected by the image crisis.

A rather important observation is the fact that the three categories that have been emphasized in the previous section represent the most obvious reactions. However, there might be several

more levels of reactions towards the scandals outside, within and in between the categories. In addition, within each of the categories, identification with the organization can also be very diffuse. Also according to Dutton et al. (1994), individual's identification with the organization may vary significantly. Therefore it wouldn't be appropriate to categorize all types of identifications into one single category since identification is complex, ambivalent and can be very nuanced, moving between the poles of disidentification and identification (Fleming and Spicer, 2003). In spite of the inappropriateness, trying to understand the general and typical types of identifications volunteers had with the organization could enlighten why volunteers stayed despite the public disgrace. Also, the different types of identification which are matched in different categories shouldn't however be excluded in other categories. This is because individuals categorized into certain groups still may share some characteristics with those of another group. Through our findings, such shared characteristics are linked to the identification with other phenomena, e.g. the local chapter, the project group and specific persons.

As identification is defined as the belonging to another individual, relationship or group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), belonging can be felt to different things, which means that there isn't any certainty that individuals will feel belongingness to Red Cross. Following this stream, Kramer et al., (2013) suggest separating volunteers' identification into three types: for an organization, an occupation or specific activity, and the general activity. Based on our findings, it has elicited different levels of identification both with the Red Cross as whole, with the local chapter, the people and projects there. For example, while some feel identified with Red Cross as whole, others feel more identified with the local chapter. Underpinned by Ashforth and Mael (1989), since organizational identity is abstract and non-obvious, people tend to "display subunit-specific identities" (p.22). Therefore, not surprisingly did our findings reveal that respondents seemed to feel closer connection to the local chapter rather than the Red Cross as whole. This is because the International house offers more interaction and gives the respondents more leeway to express themselves and provides them a homely feeling of group belonging, contrasting to their extremely limited relation with the head office. One of the reasons for why the gap between the head office and the local chapter is that big depends on the huge independence every subunit (chapter) has in terms of locally operating and adapting to local requirements and needs. Volunteers have more contact and interaction with the local chapter, and consequently the relation and connection with it grow stronger

(Ashforth and Mael, 1989). As such, identifying with the chapter will accordingly be easier than with the organization.

In addition to the identification with the subunits, our findings also show respondents' identification with their project groups. Respondents did explicitly state that their belonging to their project groups instead of the whole Red Cross was the reason for why they still stayed after the image crisis. Moreover, specifically identification can also be referred to a person (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Group-specific identification is based upon personal interaction and social exchange with one another. In our findings, many respondents accentuated the affiliation with the manager, which is supported by Ashforth and Mael's (1989) saying that individuals may feel identified with a specific person instead of the collective who will become a "social reference" (p.22) for them. As Cooper and Thatcher (2010) suggest, individuals are likely to "identify with a relationship that will help them to fulfill tasks and psychological needs" (p.519), which based on our findings means that volunteers at the International house saw the manager as a person whom they could rely on, and who provided them with stability and happiness and a positivistic feeling. This emphasizes the implication of how personal contact matters in the establishment of identification and commitment.

All of the discussion around our findings presented in the above two sections has challenged the previous research on the organizational identification and commitment, which have been treated as tightly interlinked in the way that organization identification could lead to commitment to the organization. If an organization has suffered from public disgrace, based on this linkage, volunteers' identification would be negatively affected, which in turn impacts their self-esteem and commitment to the organization (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994). Furthermore, according to Tidwell (2005), individual volunteers' commitment to the organization is going to diminish when their identification no longer exists. This in turn implied that those volunteers who still chose to stay with Swedish Red Cross should not be strongly identified with the organization in the sense that they didn't get that negatively affected by the image crisis that they would leave the organization. Then what else keeps them there? Through our findings, we find that volunteers' commitment is prevailed despite not identifying oneself with Red Cross as a whole but with the local chapter, project groups or personal relations. Moreover, as suggested in the first section, both of respondents' attempt to distance themselves and Red Cross from the scandals, actually bring them psychic satisfaction and relief from realizing that they can protect 'who they really are' from those that they don't

identify with (Fleming and Spicer, 2003) because they still stay committed to their voluntary work. Thus, it can be argued that volunteers' commitment still can be maintained as long as they have other identification targets rather than the whole organization or autonomously alter their identification in the processes of cynical distancing and shifting identification targets (Frandsen, 2012). In light of this, we contribute to advancing the knowledge of understanding the relationship between the organizational identification and commitment by showing that they are not necessarily positively linked. Given that organizational identification is a highly individualized experienced process, the degree to which members identify with the organization varies. Beyond the multiple identifications, there may exist other implications that can shed light on volunteers' commitment and worth further exploring.

5.3 Beyond identification: The spirit of volunteering

As the previous two sections have provided us with the volunteer's identification process in relation to an image crisis and an elaboration of how identification with subunit, activities or persons and such matters to explain the reactions and continuing commitment. In this part, we intend to beyond identification further explain the significance of the intrinsic motivations, namely the spirit of volunteering for volunteers' continued volunteering, which we think could neither adequately be replaced by other identification targets nor possibly positive result of autonomous disidentification.

Many authors suggest that extreme situations may not generally exist that individuals define themselves primarily through identification with their organization or totally de-couple themselves from the organization (Alvesson and Empson, 2008; Fleming and Spicer, 2003; Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001). Following this line of thought, Kreiner and Ashforth (2004) suggest an alternative to define individual's perception of him/herself in relation to the organization as "neutral identification"--a state of neither identifying nor disidentifying with an organization and specifically link volunteers' individualism to this phenomenon. An explanation to this is the fact that in the voluntary sector, independence and freedom to act without any musts or being free from attached strings are highly valued by volunteers who have no contractual obligation to the organization (Kreutzer and Jäger, 2011; Pearce, 1982). In our findings, respondents all viewed themselves as free and independent volunteers. Especially, some with stronger individual orientation explicitly mentioned that they wanted the freedom to choose what to identify with or not. "I'm not a Red Cross man" highlights that

the respondent viewed himself as independent, unique and autonomous (Cooper and Thatcher, 2010).

In addition to the freedom and independence, our respondents also perceived themselves to be such as “just a small part”, “spider in the web”, or “passive member” and so on. However, although they wouldn’t identify themselves with the organization, those respondents still came and worked regularly, among which especially one respondent stood out, who had volunteered for 25 years in the International House. Why is this so? Many authors argue that identification is highly individualized and can exist in different levels and different shades, which explains why it is difficult to capture or determine a specific identification. As such, even though they didn’t fully identify themselves with the organization, but just a little part of them, one still cannot call them disidentifying. Instead, it would be safely label it as “neutral identification” (Cooper and Thatcher, 2010; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004). Their identification rather relies on other intrinsic motivations. These could be fulfilling a dream through volunteering (e.g. to be a teacher in our case), gaining satisfaction or happiness themselves by being useful to others, purely doing something for those in needs and such.

Avrahami and Dar (1993) suggest that volunteers could combine altruism with individualism. They may more search for an autonomous identity and independence within a group, not necessarily in conformity with the voluntary organization but with regard to social needs (Avrahami and Dar, 1993). That is, as this is confirmed in our findings, individualist orientation such as self- satisfaction were elicited to be important for the respondents in terms of making others happy to make themselves happy as well. Further, our respondents expressed that a good volunteer is not someone who just engage, but the engagement comes from the natural self, from the heart, which we call the spirit of volunteering according to one respondent. Our respondents claim that one should not so much seek for fun or recognition from the voluntary organization as living up to the spirit of volunteering and making volunteering a part of the lifestyle. For this matter, if the organization has suffered from an image crisis, volunteers could still keep the spirit of volunteering to them and continue working with the organization to help people. Therefore, such neutral identification means that organizational identification that is negatively affected by organizational public disgrace won’t necessarily predict reduced commitment among the volunteers because as long as the spirit of volunteering exists they will still be committed to voluntary work. In summary, as some literatures suggest, volunteers have an “individualist” orientation - not only an “altruist”

(Avrahami and Dar, 1993; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004). Through our findings, we contribute to the literature by further specifying how volunteers' individualistic orientation and altruistic concerns work together to keep them committed to voluntary work. This would offer practical implications on commitment.

5.4. Practical implications on commitment

In terms of volunteer's desire to participate on the premise of freedom and independence, it has become a challenge for many voluntary organizations to attract as well as create a bond between the organization and the volunteer to maintain volunteers who have no contractual obligations to the organization without receiving payment. Moreover, given that identification is very ambivalent, it is risky for organizations to rely on volunteers' identification with the organization, to enhance their commitment and thus increase the effectiveness and so forth. More importantly, although many scholars argue that organizational identification is essential to individuals' commitment, the effort that organizations make for acquiring volunteers' commitment through directly bonding them with the collective organization may not necessarily be productive in the way they expect or predict. This is because the volunteers may want the independence and freedom to choose what they want to identify with and consequently they will stay committed when they have other identifications. For example, our findings have shown that it is because volunteers have close relation to their project groups and the manager, and the spirit of volunteering embedded in their heart that they continue committed to voluntary work. Therefore, to remain volunteers' commitment, the maintenance of local belongingness and personal relationships as well as consistently corresponding organizational values with volunteers' perception of the spirit of the volunteering are more important than just expecting individuals' commitment from their identification with the organization as a whole.

5.5. Concluding remarks on discussion

In essence, challenging most studies on the simplistic link that organizational identification will lead to commitment, our research has given insights on the complexity of this relationship due to different types of identification as well as the incitement based on spiritual volunteering. The complexity and variety of identification is a significant factor behind why individuals choose to stay despite the organization facing bad reputations. Even though reaction from the scandals were mixed where some changed their identification with the

organization while others didn't care, it all, to some extent, comes down to the fact that identification with subunits or relationship with persons have kept them committed to their voluntary work. Therefore, in contrast to the commonly suggested relationship between identification and commitment, we believe that it doesn't have to be linear, because there's nothing definitive but instead ambiguous in terms of the various identification processes and the many other incitements there are.

Furthermore, a nuanced understanding of identification and commitment becomes especially important in the voluntary sector as it's greatly driven on the premise of the spirit of volunteering due to the unique characteristics of voluntary work, namely the strong combination of individualistic and altruistic orientation of volunteers. The synergy of them beyond organizational identification, if not more, are as important reasons as other identification targets in explaining why individuals still stay with the organization that has suffered from a public disgrace and continue committed to their voluntary work.

Even though individuals in the voluntary sector wants to be independent and free from musts, it doesn't mean that they aren't connected or committed to their work, instead it implies how the freedom enables them to choose which of the different shades of identification they want to have and other motivations to set their basic ground for volunteering. Therefore through elaborating on these implications found in our research, we aim to contribute with understanding of complexity in the identification and commitment relationship especially in the context of a public disgraced voluntary organization. We suggest that the desire of being independent and free may not lend support to identify with the organization, but the neutral identification does not preclude one from devoting and committing oneself to voluntary work.

We have in this chapter discussed implications on why individuals have stayed and kept working at Red Cross despite being impacted by the image disgrace. This will further be concluded in the following chapter where we also answer our research question, providing contributions as well as discussing future research and practical limitations.

6. Conclusion

This thesis advances our understanding of how individual volunteers identify themselves with the organization that has suffered from a public disgrace and how this has impacted their commitment. We firstly challenge a simplistic link between organizational identification and commitment commonly suggested by the existing organizational studies and voluntary sector literature. That is individuals' organizational identification leads to their commitment with the organization. Specifically in a context of publicly disgraced organization, the organizational literature suggested that a tarnished organizational image has significant negative impact on individuals' identification with the organization and in turn leads them to be less committed. However, in our study of Swedish Red Cross, we observe the opposite. Despite respondents' different identification reflected by their varied reactions towards the image crisis, they all stay with the publicly disgraced organization and continued their voluntary work. This stands in stark contrast with the majority of literature suggesting necessarily decreased identification and commitment based on that simplistic link. Thus we further investigate the reason behind this phenomenon, which leads to our further contributions to the literature.

We expand the existing literature on identification in general as well as voluntary management by showing that the existence of different identification targets and individuals' freedom to choose between them could offer more insight into volunteers' staying after organizational image crisis without the expected positive influence of organizational identification on commitment. Our findings suggest that individual volunteers identify themselves with the local chapter, project group and specific persons instead of the whole organization. This contributes to volunteers' staying committed to their voluntary work at Swedish Red Cross despite being affected by the image crisis. The importance of individuals' autonomy to alter their identification and shift to other targets are especially highlighted through our findings in the process of volunteers' disidentification with the organization. Through our findings, although respondents show disidentification with Red Cross confronted with the public disgrace, this doesn't necessarily cause their decreased commitment because they could alternatively shift to various things such as identification with the local chapter, project groups, and persons there. In addition, the dissatisfaction caused by the image crisis seems to be reduced by the feeling of autonomy to choose what to identify with.

Furthermore, we contribute to the voluntary sector literature by incorporating the concept of neutral-identification into a more nuanced understanding of the spirit of volunteering, namely the combination of individualistic orientation and altruistic concern (Avrahami and Dar, 1993; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004). Our study suggests that volunteers' commitment could be further explained by volunteers' individualistic orientation in terms of the autonomous identity and independence that enable them to act, not necessarily in conformity with the voluntary organization but with regard to social needs (Avrahami and Dar, 1993). It is the spirit of volunteering that sets the prime premises for understanding why individuals keep working as volunteers despite which identification one may have in the context of the image crisis. Moreover, it could be safely expected that, as long as volunteers themselves keep the spirit of volunteering and believe the organization do the same, their commitment to do voluntary work in the organization will still be promising.

As such, we aim to provide voluntary organization with practical implications not only on how they could react towards specific context like an image crisis but also general situation of remaining volunteers' commitment. In the former context, to retain volunteers in the organization, the maintenance of local belongingness and personal relationships can be seen more important than expecting individuals' commitment from their identification with the whole organization. In the latter situation, consistently corresponding organizational values with volunteer's perception of the spirit of volunteering would bond them with the organization in the long term. As has been suggested, this spirit of volunteering not just refers to pure altruistic concerns to do things for others but could be the combination of volunteers' altruism and individualism. Volunteers' desire for independence and freedom has been seen as a challenge for many voluntary organizations to attract as well as maintain them within the organization. But we suggest that it may at the same time become an opportunity for the organization to gain their commitment by respecting such independence and freedom of choice and action. In this sense, voluntary organization should realize that volunteers are not really "free" workforce regarding to monetary payment but individuals who deserve investment in terms of being listened to and cared. Based on understanding their ideas, interests and motivations, voluntary organization could create opportunities and platforms for them to implement their ideas, and combine their personal ends with social needs, namely turn their interests into passion for the projects launched by the organization, and eventually keep them committed to voluntary work.

Limitation

Caution needs to be paid when generalizations are derived from a very contextualized case study, which mostly aims to offer new insights in another context and not by providing generalized findings but more of the specific kind. In our research we aim to find implications and insights on how individual's identification is processed. This further means that the information about identification based on our contextualized case study might not be the best way to understand identification as the whole concept. Moreover, although 10 respondents out of 20 volunteers in total from the chapter could give reasonable amount of information and insight of the crisis, yet other stories might have been anticipated if the respondents were more or had other roles in the organization. For example, the perspectives on the crisis differ relatively much between a manager and a volunteer working one hour a week. Unfortunately, those inquiries were due to time and convenience outside the scope of our study.

For future research

Throughout our research study, we acknowledged that some areas that were under-represented in the literature were not as developed enough in our study. For future academic research we would like to propose more understanding and concerns of the various types of identifications since there's high ambivalence around the concept and deserves further clarifications. In the study we have touched on three types of identification, referring to identification, disidentification, and neutral identification which we realized might be rather general and too simplistic categories to cover all individuals since individuals are likely to move between different poles of identifications which makes it difficult to determine and explain why individuals react in the way they do. Therefore future research on ambivalent-identification and positive identification can be further looked into in order to widen the spectra of understanding identifications.

Highly relevant in our research is the commitment in the organization. What is interesting is that commitment can be elaborated as there are several types of commitment. Different types of commitment are popular in researches of business organizations, but as we have acknowledged from our research, we see a promising way to incorporate those concepts in the study of voluntary organizations and volunteer's identifications. For example Allen and Meyer (1990) refers to affective, normative and continuance organizational commitment, which all provide different ways of attachments to the organization and thus might give more insight and profound understandings of voluntary work.

In light of a public disgraced organization, a damaged organizational reputation might have impacted the individual's identification with the organization in a way that makes their work feel dirty. The influence on the individual image from a tarnished organizational image can thereof be more investigated to offer deeper insight into volunteer's reaction to the image crisis. Knowledge about the mechanism of "dirty work" (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Dick, 2005) can also be helpful in understanding how and why individuals use different tactics to justify and protect themselves from being associated with a "dirty" image.

In conclusion, our research challenges the commonly suggested simplistic link that organizational identification leads to commitment to the organization. We contribute with to advancing the understanding that individual identification could be highly personal experienced process and displayed in different levels and nuances. In a publicly disgraced organization, volunteer's commitment could still remain due to the wide range of identification targets. In addition, the spirit of volunteering that goes beyond identification based on the combination of individualistic orientation and altruism, will in essence keep volunteers committed. We therefore wish that our research would lend support to further academic research within the area of volunteering, identification and commitment as well as organizational image disgrace.

7. References

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