



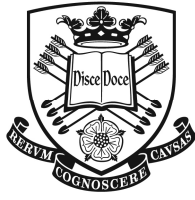
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**WOMEN'S IDENTITY FORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION
IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN:
A GENDERED APPROACH TO FAITH-BASED VOLUNTEERING**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Social Sciences
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A9JD1004 (Tohoku University)

January 2012

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the extent to which women's everyday interaction and agency in faith-based volunteering helps in cultivating social stewardship and articulating new trajectories of self in Japanese society at large. The project is guided by the idea that social work sponsored by religious organizations provides women with a non-institutional channel through which they can become active civic actors in the social contract by locating themselves between the market and the state.

The research draws upon a survey conducted in Japan between October 2009 and February 2010 on five faith-based volunteer groups: two Shinnyoen-sponsored groups; two Risshō Kōseikai-sponsored groups; and one Catholic group. By making an eclectic use of social constructivist theories of identity, practice and performativity, this study examines the micro-social constitutive normative and generative aspects through which women move toward different trajectories of self. The analyses highlight that women engaged in faith-based volunteering tend to use their religious identity strategically and loosen it in a process of self and social reflexivity that fosters further social engagement. This makes their belonging to a religious group a resource for broader meaningful images of the self beyond religious ideological normative or structural regulative logics.

By reporting the life-stories of women engaged in faith-based volunteering, this dissertation aims to provide examples of the kind of trajectories and empowering or disempowering practices generated in the cultural context of the Japanese faith-based volunteer group. The research demonstrates conclusively that it is not the presence (or absence) of religiosity that makes a critical difference, but how women exploit their institutional and non-institutional — the faith-based group — channels to generate or inhibit everyday practices that can serve to ameliorate their lives. The approach is especially important in view of women's larger engagement in society, thus in terms of empowerment and democratization.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to all the women volunteers I met and interviewed during the fieldwork, who made this research possible. I would like to thank them for their enthusiastic support, interesting accounts and comments, and for finding time to talk despite their busy lives. Thank you to the staff and coordinators of the targeted religious organizations as well as the staff at the various eldercare and homeless agencies and facilities, for welcoming me and providing friendly help and information throughout the fieldwork. Their thoughts, insights and practices were invaluable source of information and inspiration.

This research work would not have been possible without the guidance, support and advice of my supervisors at the School of East Asian Studies, the University of Sheffield. Dr. Takeda Hiroko deserves the greatest credit for intellectual stimulation and encouragement, as well as for helping me to be organized and adhere to deadlines. Her warm-hearted guidance and constructive criticism, along with hands-on advice on personal matters were invaluable in helping me to improve my work and balance it with my family commitments. Gratitude is also extended to Professor Glenn D. Hook for being always welcoming and supportive and for reading through all the draft chapters of this dissertation very carefully. His very insightful and detailed comments have been extremely valuable to my knowledge and for further understanding of the relationship between religion, gender and volunteering.

I would also like to thank Professor Shimazono Susumu at the University of Tokyo, who first inspired me with his stimulating courses and his books about contemporary Japanese religions during my 2-year research studentship sponsored by the Monbukagakusho in 2002-2004. Since then, he has constantly advised me and provided invaluable suggestions for my research, as well as contacts which enabled me to conduct my fieldwork. He gave me very valuable advice on my survey and has provided with continuous support for my research work and academic career.

I am grateful to Professor Tsujimura Miyoko and Professor Ōnishi Hitoshi at Tohoku University Global Centre of Excellence (GCOE) 'Gender Equality and Multicultural Conviviality in the Age of Globalization'. The seminars and conferences, as well as the academic networking I established in Sendai during the period October 2009 – February 2010, improved the study in many ways. I also wish to express my thanks and deep appreciation for the support I received from the staff at the Tohoku University GCOE office and the Institute of Social Science (ISS), the University of Tokyo.

I express my gratitude to the following funding bodies for their generous support: the Japan Foundation Endowment Committee (JFEC) for a generous research grant facilitating my fieldwork in Japan; and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation for a research grant covering travelling expenses from and to Japan.

I owe a big thank you to my father, for being a genuine example of a community volunteer. Thank you to my mother for igniting motivation, and to my sisters and brother for their support and words of encouragement.

Finally, a special thank you goes to my daughter, who was born five weeks after returning from the fieldwork in Japan: since then she has been the most lively and gratifying presence in my life, often turning frustrating moments into rewarding and unforgettable ones. And to her father, who has enjoyed accompanying me around the world as a 'globetrotter dad', from Italy to the UK and Japan. Thank you for keeping me sane in many ways during this adventure.

NOTE

Throughout the dissertation the names of all interviewees have been changed to maintain their anonymity. Exceptions are for those who gave their informed consent for their real names to be used. Ages are those of the participants at the start of the project. Translations from Japanese to English are by the author.

Where they appear, Japanese names are given in their proper order, i.e. the surname first and the given name second. Long vowels are expressed in the form of a macron except in the cases of 'Tokyo' and 'Kyoto'. North American spelling is maintained in citations from North American publications; otherwise British spelling is observed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Actor Network Theory	ANT
Non- governmental organization	NGO
Non-profit organization	NPO
Parent-Teacher Association	PTA
Not elsewhere categorized groups	NEC
United Nations Development Program	UNDP
United Nations Children’s Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation seeks to elucidate the extent to which women's everyday interaction and agency in grassroots faith-based volunteering helps in cultivating social stewardship and articulating new trajectories of self in contemporary Japanese society. The project draws upon the idea that social work sponsored by religious organizations provides women with a non-institutional channel through which they can build opportunities to acquire knowledge and social skills, gain personal and interpersonal understanding, expand their social map by building significant relationships, increase awareness of the socio-economic and political environment within which they are located, transform private concerns into public issues, and play an active role in the social world. The focus of this research is, therefore, on women's religious volunteering as a discursive site where women communicate and interact with different actors located in diverse sites within a range of social arenas. By doing so they enrich their own resources through the benefits gained through the variety of experiences and environments they come across, and the multiplicity of roles they perform. It is expected that this process becomes at once the source of agency for women who can explore newer social roles, thus fostering further inclusion in broader social spheres, beyond gender and religious ideological normative or structural regulative logics.

As such, the argument of this dissertation straddles three main areas of disciplinary interest in the social sciences: religion, gender, and civil society. Sociology of religion and gender studies have largely explored the relationship between women and religion. They have mainly highlighted the structures of power and knowledge inherent in both the construction of gender and the roles of women in religion as an enactment of structural conditions of society. On the other hand, the literature on volunteering regards religion and gender as two important components positively related to civic engagement, which in turn is deemed to foster citizenship and democratization. Thus far, studies produced in the sociology of religion and those discussing the relationship between religion, gender and volunteering, have been oblivious of their interrelated core investigations: they have largely ignored the important presence of women in faith-based volunteering and the social significance of their active participation, especially in view of their empowered role in Japanese society at large.

This dissertation as a whole challenges such consolidated disciplinary divisions by exploring grassroots faith-based volunteering as a cultural context enabling women with opportunities to

become active civic agents in the social contract, and explore alternative trajectories of social self. The purpose is to make an empirical contribution in order to fill existing gaps in the literature by looking at two Japanese new religious movements and one Christian denomination in Japan. It aims at developing the discussion of women's faith-based volunteering at a theoretical level by testing the hypothesis that religious volunteering works as a gateway for women's expanded social participation, thus encouraging empowerment and democratization.

Firstly, it tests to what extent belonging to a religious group may be accounted for as the core driving force channelling women's social commitment. Specifically, it questions whether and to what extent religious membership may become a resource for exploring broader meaningful images of self, rather than a passive embodiment of normative and structural constraints as claimed by most extant studies on women's religiosity (Hardacre 1984; Ōgoshi 1997; Ozorak 1996; Jones 2002; Woodhead 2007). By reporting life-stories and giving a voice to women engaged in faith-based volunteering, this dissertation aims at providing examples of the kind of trajectories and empowering or disempowering practices generated in the cultural context of the faith-based volunteer group.

Secondly, and related to the above empirical examination, the development of a methodological framework concerning women's religious volunteering will be discussed. This consideration will highlight how focusing on actors tracing the interactions among the plurality involved may help in identifying and describing what common knowledge is shared that guarantees their coordination with their situated world. This consists of framing the actors in their shifts, trials and changes while describing what competing agencies (e.g. working woman; religious believer; volunteer; mother) and what margins of interpretation can be possible during interaction, negotiation and discussion (e.g. mother vis-à-vis volunteer; working woman vis-à-vis religious believer). The micro-sociological analysis suggested here is conducted drawing upon "practice theories" (Giddens 1984 and 1991a; Bourdieu 1977 and [1980] 1990; Butler 1990 and 1993) and the recently developed Actor Network Theory (Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 2005), which has thus far not found application in the field of religious volunteering.

This introductory chapter situates the investigation by outlining the key arguments of this dissertation. Firstly, it introduces the concept of identity and the levels of investigation covered. Next, it lays out the social role of Japanese religions by discussing the origins of faith-based social ethics in contemporary Japan. Thirdly, it discusses the structural and cultural ideals influencing Japanese women's lived experience, in terms of gendered roles and mainstream

identities including the volunteer narrative. Finally, this chapter presents the research questions driving this study, the sites of study and the structure of the dissertation.

1. Examining identity: the levels of analysis

This section offers an introductory discussion of the concept of identity by presenting the levels of analysis that will be covered in the course of the dissertation. Detailed considerations on the notion of identity and its implications adopted for this study will be discussed extensively in the following chapter.

Goffman (1963) describes an individual's social identity as 'the categories and attributes anticipated by others during routines of social intercourse in established settings' (1963: 2). Goffman uses yet another distinction between 'virtual' (1963: 2) and 'actual' social identities (1963: 3). The former is an identity constructed based on what is expected in society via social attributions based on a person's presentation. The latter is an identity constructed from the inside via the accumulation of facts specific to a person's biography.¹ This suggests that identity is relational to the situation individuals come into contact with: they will perform roles and behaviours giving a representation of themselves according to the specific place and the people with whom they interact. It also highlights that the concept of identity is situational and constituted by individuals' everyday practices through which they form themselves as subjects in a given community.

These arguments suggest that a study of identity implies three different levels. Firstly, the formation of identity concerns the becoming of an individual in her or his condition of social actor in interacting with each other, with the contingent aspects of attributes of self to be cultivated, supported, and recognized through both routinized and innovative activities. The level of analysis is, therefore, on individuals' formation of identity in everyday social experience developed by people as active social actors. It requires examining how those actors use everyday settings to make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share, and how they are similar to, as well as differ from, others. The socio-economic and political milieu may provide patterns of identification within which Japanese women are called upon to trace their trajectories by resourcing from different institutional, ethical and cultural discourses. Exploring these patterns at the individual-level helps to discern how they signify themselves in the social world. For example, in the Japanese context the act of being a married woman not engaged in a full-time paid work may be expressed by the *senjyō shufu* [full-time housewife] model. A woman recognizing herself in this model will likely represent her identity as a full-time housewife embodying the values and expectations of this role in the

lived experience. However, understanding her identity only through her individual-level role-based analysis may *de facto* shift the focus of the analysis from the actor to her role, thus running the risk of rigidifying the lived process of acquiring and maintaining a certain identity.

This leads to the second level of analysis. Identity should be accounted for as a specifically and temporally-related collective self (Somers 1994: 607), denoting the sameness of practices shared among members of a group. Being a volunteer in a faith-based group expresses a collective identity shared by participants of the community-based activities where women are engaged. In order to understand what makes a collective identity implies examining individuals' relationality, emplotment (embeddedness), and historicity (Somers 1994: 606) that everyday social practice as well as the institutional and cultural practices, allow for the sort of sameness in the group. Accordingly, Japanese women's identity, acting in the field of faith-based volunteering, should be explored as an ongoing process where self is constituted by connecting a constellation of relationships of the social networks within which they are embedded, plotted in time and place, and composed of symbolic, institutional, and material practices.

Approaching the agents and the environment as constitutive of identity leads to the third level of analysis. Identity should be considered as an ongoing product of multiple and competing discourses, therefore highlighting the mutable, fluctuating and generative nature of self. Butler (1999) offers an analytical tool to express this fluidity by viewing identity as performative, 'tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylised repetition of acts*' (Butler 1999: 179, emphasis in original). Applying this performative approach will help to focus on the direct lived experiences of Japanese women in their everyday life, and their generative capacity to confront prevailing ways of self with others beyond the spaces they are socially and culturally assigned.

Dealing with issues of women's identity formation and agency in terms of performative and mutually constitutive processes between agents and the environment within which they are situated means approaching spheres of activities and influence where patterned practices are conventionally the norm. In this respect, the aim of this dissertation to sketch out processes of identity formation and aspects of contextualized agency would give a more detailed picture of how acts believed as complying or resisting cultural and structural modes, such as the religious ideology or the gendered role, may in fact exceed their immediate sphere. They may show the context of a process of restructuring everyday practices and its potentiality for transforming both the individual's and the collective behaviours and norms that once shaped them.

2. The social role of Japanese religions

In the present work religion is approached in terms of its social and cultural dimension, as suggested by Geertz (1973: 89).² Rather than doctrine and belief, this dissertation treats religion as a matter of practice, of social and cultural influences and behavioural patterns located in everyday life activities, as concerned with ameliorating the present state of life and offering ways of lifestyle improvements and hope (Ammerman 2007). Therefore the term *shūkyō* [religion] will be used as an elastic framework inclusive and intermingled with cultural, social and historical themes.

Although *shūkyō* is a rather new term in Japanese,³ religiosity, its influence on ethical behaviours and the close relationship between religious institutions and political power have a long history in Japan (Kisala 1992: 20-6; Yoshida 2003). The unconditional surrender in 1945 to the Allied powers demanded the abolition of wartime laws regulating religion, which entailed the disestablishment of the civil religion (known as State Shintō, which had been moulded during the nationalistic and ultra-nationalistic periods), and the subsequent registration of all religious organizations, including Shintō shrines, as *shūkyō hōjin* [religious corporation] (Hardacre 2003a).⁴ Even though legislation has given religious groups 'equal footing as "voluntary" organization' (Mullins 1993: 78), the practice of religion in everyday life has been closely monitored by those holding political power, and religious institutions have been conforming and promoting traditional values, rites and festivities that help shape Japanese cultural identity (ibid.).

The position of those groups falling into the category of *shinshūkyō* [new religious movements],⁵ such as Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai in this study, is even more controversial. Over the years they have often been the target of criticism by public opinion because of their materialistic nature, aiming mainly at practical benefits for the members, attracting people with the promise of hope and relief in this world (Shimazono 1993: 223). The sarin gas attack on the Tokyo metropolitan subway by members of the Aum shinrikyō in 1995 also signalled an important turning point in the relationship between the *shinshūkyō*, public opinion and the state (Shimazono 1995; Reader 1996 and 2000; Kisala and Mullins 2001; Hardacre 2003a).⁶ Nevertheless, new religious movements that have emerged in post-war Japan, or have largely expanded during the 1970s, have generally reached a form of accommodation with secular society, despite traits of intense leader worship, magic rites, apocalyptic ideologies and world-renouncing stances (Shimazono 1993: 223). The effort to redress the overall image of religion in Japan is likely to have resulted in an increased

everyday practical ethics with religious organizations promoting philanthropic engagement in social work and volunteer activities that average lay people would acknowledge.

From an historical point of view, Shimazono (1992c) traces the origins of today's practice of altruism performed by most Japanese new religious movements in the critical social and economic condition of nineteenth century Japan when the rural population suffered most in the transition from a feudal to capitalistic economy. The scholar suggests that the idea of altruism [*aitashugi*] in contemporary Japanese society should be considered as the outcome of a popularization process of the pre-existing 'traditional harmonic ethics' [*dentōteki wagō rinri*] of the *ie* [extended household],⁷ and a 'vitalistic' [*seimei shugi*] view seeing the world as an interconnected whole (1992c: 43). The focus on Confucian ideals emphasizing loyalty, filial piety and respect for hierarchical relationships as the base of the social harmony and social order of feudal Japan went through a stage of 'utilitarian harmonic ethics' [*kōriteki wagō rinri*] (Shimazono 1992c: 44) during the phase of modernization, stressing the idea of the mutual moral responsibility of individuals as a group contributing to building a prosperous country (1992c: 44-5). Post-war Japan shifted the emphasis from the group to the individual, stressing the centrality of self, and emphasizing positive self-representation in everyday life. This has developed into the 'expressionist harmonic ethics' [*hyōgenteki wagō rinri*] (1992c: 46) of contemporary Japan, implying that the transformation of the inner level of the self has repercussions within the family, the neighbours, co-workers and surrounding society. This type of philanthropy emphasizes the importance of individual self-cultivation, focused on the virtues of thankfulness [*kansha*], sincerity [*makoto*] and harmony [*wa*] (Ibid.). Altruism in Japanese society nowadays, therefore, merges both original Neo-Confucian views of the virtues of solidarity for the sake of social harmony and welfare; utilitarian views of constructive actions as good means both for individual moral cultivation and the well-being of the community (both in disaster situations, when state intervention is lacking, and in ordinary daily life to fill in the gap where government support is inadequate); and the need to give those actions a public expression, which can also enhance an individual's image in Japanese society. In religious groups this comes under different names, often *hōshi* or *tsutome* [service] to mean the various altruistic acts individuals perform to contribute to the community in their everyday life. In this framework, volunteer activities and social work performed by religious organizations are particularly controversial because they tend to constitute highly diversified and multifunctional enclaves between *kōei* [public good] and the critical status of religious corporations. Their practical contribution to civil society through voluntarism lets them stand outside the direct target of governmental supervision. However, their status makes them fall

under the web of government control, which is responsible for protecting society from potentially dangerous groups.⁸

With the goal of this dissertation of exploring how women perceive their contribution to civil society, and assessing the level of adaptation to and deviance from consolidated motivations and roles coming from that, the evaluation of their reliance on the philanthropic motivation associated with their belief may help understanding how they use their religious identity for creating newer meanings and attitudes.

3. Understanding women's faith-based volunteering: cultural ideals and social models

The current section offers an overview of the cultural ideals and mainstream narratives women can draw upon in their exploratory trajectory of identity formation. This discussion is framed in terms of "roles" which means the 'set of practices performed and/or idealized, reflective of the social discourse where the individual is positioned' (Dales 2005: 143); and in terms of 'narratives' (Somers 1994) that are 'guided by pattered regularities, social-constructed categories that organize our experience and thinking' (Ammerman 2003: 212). An additional term used in this dissertation is the "model" in order to convey one patterned aspect at a point of time that occurs on a daily basis in the lived experiences of individuals (Dales 2009: 13). For example, the *sararīman / sengyō shufu* [man-salaryman / woman-full-time housewife] family model is discussed in this dissertation as a pattern of family developed in the socio-economic context of the 1960s.

In order to understand whether newer trajectories of self are occurring through the lived experience of grassroots faith-based volunteering, this study will need to examine what roles, narratives and models are implicitly and explicitly relevant in informing women's interpretation of their lives and the lives of others in contemporary Japan. Media, state policy and legislation, and culture may promote particular frames of reference. In these terms, in order to disentangle women's identities, understand their motivations toward preferences for religious voluntarism, the remaining section outlines women's lifestyle choices according to government policies, as well as gender socialization processes.

In her analysis of the structural reform report on family policy, Takeda (2011a) extensively highlights how Japanese femininity has been historically closely associated to women's role in the family. In Imperial Japan, the catchphrase *ryōsai kenbo* [good wife, wise mother] exemplified the feminine ideal prescribed by the Meiji state, which reinforced the reproductive role of women who were expected to perform self-sacrifice, obedience, and family-centred duty (Fujita 1989: 72; Kanbayashi and Miura 2003: 104). According to Molony and Uno (2005),

the ideology of 'good wife and wise mother' remained *de facto* influent until the end of the 1980s (Molony and Uno 2005: 303).

The post-war political economy system similarly enforced a structural gender stratification by requiring virtuous strength from women in order to support and develop the national economy through the domestic responsibilities of full-time housewives (Takeda 2005: 100). The strictly gendered division of labour backed by full-time mothers and housewives caring for and socializing children, insured the post-war Japanese economic miracle (Ōsawa 1993). Education guaranteed the route to secure national policies to be implemented, shaping in the 1960s women's role of *kyōiku mama* [education mother], who should help her children with homework, manage the *juku* [after-school courses], participate in parent-school activities, decide the best schools for her children and provide moral support and physical presence during the years of preparation for college entrance exams (Allison 1996: 106-22). Due to the rooted Japanese *gakureki shakai* [academic pedigree society], the career of an adult depends largely on their educational career.⁹ Therefore, mothers should be able to hold a double-edge role of imposing on children habits of study and performance, yet also cushioning the child from this regimentation with nurturance and comfort.

Since the economic downturn of the 1990s, the long-standing premises of 'man-breadwinner / woman-family-carer' family model have been significantly undermined. In 2008, the workforce participation rate of Japanese women constituted 48.4 per cent of the total paid workforce.¹⁰ A survey of the labour force published by the government in 2009 reports that female employees are working mainly in such industries as wholesale, retail trade, restaurants, manufacturing, and in the service sector of tertiary industry, such as sales, finance and insurance, as well as medical, healthcare and welfare.¹¹ Compared with the situation in 1997, in 2007 the participation rate of women in the 25-29 age group increased by 7.6 percentage points, while the participation rate of women in the 30-34 age group, which formed the bottom of the M-shaped curve,¹² has risen 7.8 percentage points (Sōmushō tōkeikyoku 2008: 131). This rising rate may have been influenced by the abolition in Fiscal Year 2003 of the 'special allowance for spouse' which limited the dependant's earnings to 1.300.000 yen per annum so that the working member of the family could benefit from a tax deduction.¹³ Such a tax distortion in the structural framework, together with women's life-cycle perspectives and economic conditions, have consolidated a trend channelling female labour into part-time or temporary jobs, mainly as a supplement the household budget rather than integrating with the wage for a full-time job (Kanbayashi and Miura 2003: 100). The Statistical Handbook of Japan 2008 reports that in 2007 there were 51.74 million employees (excluding company

executives), of whom 17.32 million (33.5%) were non-regular staff (*Sōmushō tōkeikyoku* 2008: 137). The ratio of non-regular employees among all male employees was 18.3%, while the corresponding ratio for females was 53.4%, revealing a large majority of women holding non-regular jobs. In Japan part-timers are not only those who cover a daily limited working hours, such as in the case of home carers, but also those who work as regular full-time workers but are hired on a fixed-term basis and paid hourly rates without enjoying the employer's benefit system. This type of occupation seems the dominant option for women who need to balance family and work (*Naikakufu, Danjō kyōdō sankaku kyoku* 2009: 28-9).

The government has felt an urgent need to respond to the rapid changes occurring in Japan's socioeconomic situation since the 1990s, mostly related to the increased participation of women in the labour market (*Sōmushō tōkeikyoku* 2008: 130), the trend towards fewer children (*Kōsei rōdōshō* 1998), the ageing of the population (*Naikakufu* 2002), and the maturation of domestic economic activities. The hybrid solution was to combine expressions of individuality with family and community. Women were central in 1990s' government plans directing them to enjoy individuality and 'richness of life that changes with life stages' (*Keizai kikakuchō* 1991: 271). Individual life, however, was discussed in terms of a new form of family where husband and wife 'support each other' (*Kōsei rōdōshō* 1998: 46): not the hierarchical household of old, but 'a place of the couple's love, a place for raising and supporting children' (*Keizai kikakuchō* 1992: 309). By 1998 family came to be defined as 'a place of psychological rest' where all members 'respect diversification of individual values' and supported each other's independence with compassion and responsibility (*Kōsei rōdōshō* 2001b). The post-war role models of men working outside and family-caring housewives inside the home were redrawn placing the family with community participation where both men and women could cultivate self-reliance, empathy, and cooperation, as an ideal family model in society. The outcomes of this new orientation are reported in the 2008 White Paper on Gender Equality, extensively dedicated to women's remarkable contribution within local communities where they revitalize the diluted ties between neighbours and 'all living areas near at hand' (*Naikakufu, Danjō kyōdō sankaku kyoku* 2008: 4) by contributing in areas of environmental conservation and social welfare (*ibid.*).¹⁴

These actions have overlapped with government policies of the last two decades focusing on the importance of child-rearing in the ageing society denoted by the declining birth-rate. It significantly shows how government policies have been inferred into familial relationships where, on the one hand, 'women are increasingly urged to be responsible, productive agents' (*Takeda* 2008: 208) somehow implicitly reasserting the 'breadwinner man / full-time housewife

woman' model. On the other hand, it suggests that caring for the elderly is an issue of home care, thereby not extensively burdening the public system. In this respect, governments in the 2000s encouraged elders not to burden the young, and to use their own assets and psychological strength to stay independent for as long as possible.¹⁵

The state has long encouraged the role of the community in providing eldercare, and the idea that community volunteers should alleviate the family burden (Avenell 2009).¹⁶ The community volunteers should contribute by helping the elderly in their everyday life with shopping, cleaning, cooking, visiting the elderly living on their own and by creating a social life for those living in old people's homes and hospitals. At the same time, senior citizens are urged to be self-responsible, and encouraged to remain independent, healthy and socially active as much as possible, especially by providing volunteer activities. By offering this twofold image of the aged, state discourses have been shaping two principal modes of identity for the elderly: the healthy senior citizen who is self-responsible and willing to contribute to community wellbeing by volunteering; and the recipient of the social welfare programmes and volunteer activities, who should find in the community a supplement for the state assistance, so that the younger members of their family can remain in the labour market.¹⁷

Moreover, in order to make a mandatory appeal to citizens to support eldercare, in 2000 the government introduced a long-term care insurance by which everyone over forty must pay a tax that will support the home helper and public care system for the elderly.¹⁸ Day-care services at the local level and short-stays at nursing homes would be also implemented. At the same time, policy makers encouraged more participation of individuals as members of the family and community, appealing to citizens' 'volunteer spirits' (Rosenberger 2001: 163). The government programme advertised for new types of care-workers, such as home helpers who come to clean, cook and care.¹⁹ Those people would work at half-volunteer level wages to aid the bedridden elderly in their local community.

All-in-all, both government policies and social expectations have made family members or relatives attend personally to their elderly. In 1970s and 1980s, these tasks were essential in supporting what was called the 'Japanese social welfare model' [*nihongata fukushi shakai*] where women (mainly housewives, although working women were also subjected to this request) contributed to childcare and elderly care welfare provision.²⁰ Government discourses and economic policies channelled women's role so that they would be full-time family-carers by caring for children and the elderly of the family. Thank to their contribution, the Japanese welfare system could keep the expenditure for social welfare services at a level much lower

than the other industrialized countries (Ōsawa 1994: 158). In a survey conducted in 2001, women were caring for bed-ridden senior citizens in more than seven out of nine cases.²¹

This new type of “work”, promoted through national policies, has been encouraged also in the name of independence and individual compassion beyond blood relationships as the word ‘volunteer’ conveys. In fact, it implies the sort of flexibility and nurturance mainly attributed to Japanese women in the face of their family responsibilities and gender socialization. The 2008 White Paper on Gender Equality mentions ‘making good use of women’s willingness and ability to promote regional activities’ (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2008: 3). The type of ability mentioned in the White Paper targets a range of activities covering medical health service, eldercare and childcare, life safety, *machi tsukuri* [revitalize the locality], conserving the environment, and disaster relief (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2008: 15). Women in their late thirties and forties, an age that matches the valley in the M-curve made of those who drop out of the labour force for childrearing and child education, are the majority in those activities (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2008: 16).

If in Japan nowadays it is widely accepted and encouraged that women devote part of their time to their community as reported in 2008 White paper on Gender Equality, it means that the process of women’s role redefinition as volunteers has gained the level of recognition and social acceptance that makes it normal rather than innovative. However, given the above contextual factors, it comes as no surprise that the volunteer narrative expected of women favours mainly a caring role towards the elderly and children. The tendency to favour gender-specific goals may reflect their significance in women’s identity and reveal the extent to which gendered roles have been incorporated into women’s everyday practices. It means that volunteering is accepted as long as it complies with women’s feminine ideal: those of wife and mother.

Overall, the 2008 White Paper on Gender Equality gives official voice to the public view supporting women’s participation in social life and their active contribution to the promotion of convivial society expanding ways currently most accessible to them. Both government policies and mainstream opinion consider *borantia* [volunteer] as a socially recognized identity and an accepted part of the national policy, popular consciousness and everyday vocabulary. It is an area where women take public speaking positions, manage budgets, work with governmental officials and assume responsibilities for others in their neighbourhood.

In this context, women’s volunteering in faith-based groups may be seen as channelled both by mainstream volunteer narratives substantiated by a religious identity fostering a philanthropic attitude, and a search for community participation where they can perform a

broader social role. In these terms, their decision remains within an acceptable range of mainstream lifestyle choices expected for women because they maintain the cultural priority of family-related duties and consolidated gendered roles expected in society and preserved within the religious context. At the same time they fit into the institutional framework that demands their economic and social contribution. Yet, in so doing women explore alternative life choices supplementing or revising mainstream identities, and when they choose the volunteer narrative alongside or ahead of culturally privileged identities, they in effect question, to some extent, mainstream logic and assumptions (Tsunematsu 2004: 107). As Tsunematsu (2004) argues, by informing themselves with mainstream identities as mother, wife, and public (unpaid) actors, women volunteering can use the culturally informed identities to explore space and power in the public arena (2004: 111). Therefore, more refined research is needed to specify the role of faith-based volunteering in the construction of women's social identities alongside the changes of contemporary Japanese society.

4. Research questions

This dissertation analyzes how women take action while complying with and resisting the discourses and conditions that shape their lives, and interrogates women's capacity for action and its consequences. Therefore, the main theoretical significance of this dissertation lies in the explicit analysis of the several aspects of agency in relationship to the possibilities of the socio-structural and historical context where women are located. The dissertation explores four key questions:

- What resources and opportunities, in the context of faith-based volunteering, do women source in their process of identity formation?
- How do women account for their volunteer role vis-à-vis the recipients, internal actors (the religious organization, fellow members), external actors (local authorities, professionals, staff, and other volunteers), and society at large?
- What knowledge and skills do women acquire in their everyday practice of volunteering, and what strategies do they deploy to source them beyond the given setting so that they can develop alternatives for their identity?
- What are the opportunities for agency that the cultural context of faith-based volunteering creates for women, and how do women employ those opportunities to exercise agency beyond that setting?

The purpose of this dissertation is to fill in the lacunae in the extant literature by giving an in-depth insight into the internal dynamics of faith-based groups, the strategies that women

employ to reach their aims, their position vis-à-vis society and religious institutions, and what social identity they develop from that. As a result of focusing upon women's everyday volunteer activities, women appear as the main agents in this dissertation. This work attempts to locate women in the Japanese cultural context of the faith-based volunteer groups as autonomous agents and, by doing so, elucidate in detail, according to their own accounts, how and to what extent their active participation exercises influence on their social identity. In order to do so, this study explores how they locate themselves between religious organizations and civil society; how they negotiate religious identity and social identities; and how their struggles and debates between individuals, religious organization and state discourses may open new ways of formulating relationships among citizens. It is argued here that an analysis of women volunteering in community-based religious social work is a viewpoint we can adopt in understanding changes and transformations that are occurring in Japanese society today. Accordingly, the present work will be mainly driven by a critical social approach exploring women as the main actors in their own trajectory, their degree of flexibility leading to change in their social identity and the effect in their situated social world.

5. Sites of study

This study draws upon a survey the author conducted in Japan between October 2009 and February 2010. The project has been given ethical approval from the University of Sheffield ethics reviewer. The respondents of this survey are members of three religious organizations: two Buddhist-related New Religions (Rishshō kōseikai, and Shinnyoen); and members of one Christian denomination, the Roman Catholic Church of Japan. A total of 82 women were surveyed. The table below lists the targeted volunteer groups, the number of respondents, and the membership in each group.

Table 1: Targeted faith-based volunteer groups and number of respondents

Religious organization	Location of the volunteer group	Number of respondents	Total number of volunteers in the group
<i>Rishshō kōseikai</i>	Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association (Tokyo, Itabashi Ward)	19	58 women; 2 men
	Kawagoe Church Volunteers (Saitama Prefecture)	15	130 women
<i>Shinnyoen</i>	Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division (Tokyo, Tachikawa city)	16	110 women; 34 men;
	Univers Foundation (Shinnyoen-sponsored NPO; Tokyo, Tachikawa city)	13	153 women; 80 men
<i>Roman Catholic Church in Japan</i>	St. Ignatius Church (Tokyo, Chiyoda Ward)	19 (3 respondents were non-religious)	30 women; 10 men

Source: author

The rationale for the targeted religious organizations will be discussed in Chapter 2. The characteristics of each organization and the targeted volunteer groups will be detailed in Chapter 3.

6. The structure of the dissertation

As mentioned above, this dissertation aims to make a contribution to an interdisciplinary field of sociology of religion, gender studies, and scholarship on civil society. For this purpose, Chapter 1 illustrates the state of research on women and faith-based civic engagement in contemporary Japan by exploring the literature belonging to the three pertinent areas:

1. A gender perspective on religion: the development of gender perspectives in the study of Japanese religions, the state of research of a gendered approach to Japanese New Religions;
2. A gender perspective on voluntarism, an examination of the relationship between religion and volunteering, also exploring the role of Japanese religious institutions in facilitating philanthropy; and a specific examination of the tradition of maternalism characterizing Japanese women's social engagement;
3. A gender perspective on civil society, focusing on women's role in grassroots social movements in Japan; and a discussion of empowerment through social work that may help exploring women's identity formation in grassroots activities.

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical stance, the qualitative methodological approach, and the principles of narrative analysis adopted in this research project. In order to illustrate the micro-social constitutive normative and generative aspects through which women move toward different trajectories of self, this study draws upon an eclectic use of "practice theories": the idea of the interdependence of structure and action developed by Giddens (1984 and 1991a); the logic of practice as theorized by Bourdieu (1977 and [1980] 1990); and the idea of performativity, emphasizing how the passing of time in combination with the repetitiveness of social practice can extend the opportunities for the exercise of agency (Butler 1990 and 1993). The analysis of women as both autonomous and relational actors is performed by applying some core concepts of Actor Network Theory (Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 2005). Moreover, by analyzing women's narratives, this study explores how women engaged in faith-based volunteering conceive their actions and express their experiences, how the community interpret women's practices, and how sometimes the process opens opportunities for newer trajectories of the social self.

Chapter 3 outlines the targeted religious organizations and the surveyed volunteer groups. The chapter presents a profile of Risshō kōseikai, Shinnyoen and the Roman Catholic Church in Japan illustrating those key doctrinal aspects, ideological concepts, and religious practices that are relevant to explaining women's attitudinal and behavioural expectations in relationship with their volunteer work. The chapter then presents the five volunteer groups that are surveyed for the present study: two Risshō kōseikai groups located at Itabashi and Kawagoe Church; two Shinnyoen groups (the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department- Youth Division and Univers Foundation, a Shinnyoen-sponsored NPO); and one volunteer group supported by St. Ignatius Church of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. The outline informs about the location, the structure, membership, the range of social activities, and the detail of those surveyed in the present study.

Chapter 4 provides a profile of respondents by analyzing findings of questionnaire data concerning socio-demographic characteristics, perceptions and expectations in terms of religiosity, volunteer work, and gender. By comparing overall findings of the questionnaire survey with extant literature on volunteering and other official data, this chapter highlights similarities and divergences with general patterns, thus attempting to locate informants within the larger context of Japanese society.

Chapter 5 presents six life-stories selected among the 46 interviews collected during the fieldwork as being representative of the socio-demographic characteristics of the overall sample. Interviewees describe their biographical experiences, the interaction inside and beyond the volunteer group, the relationships with the religious organization, the ties they build, and the trajectories they attempt while engaging in social activities. Their stories show the complexity and dynamism of their identities and how participating in faith-based volunteering affects on the identity formation.

Chapter 6 explores the findings by taking into consideration two complementary dimensions: 1. women's religious and social identities, their symbolic boundaries, potentiality and resistance of agency, and the generative potentiality of resources in faith-based volunteering enabling women's formation of identity; and 2. the group's dimension, with its customs and *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977) that may enable or constrain its members to develop self and social reflexivity. This chapter discusses the intrapersonal (self-awareness, critical thinking) and interpersonal (knowledge, skills, assertiveness, problem-solving, access to resources) components resulting from participating to faith-based volunteering. It also examines the group's customized practices informing the way members communicate and interact with

external actors, thus informing their capacity to spiralling out creating newer meanings and attitudes.

Finally, based upon the discussion of the previous chapters, the concluding chapter summarizes the findings and suggests the empirical, theoretical and methodological contribution to the literature, substantiating the bottom-up perspective on faith-based volunteering that focuses on women's practices in everyday life. The chapter concludes by discussing the limitations, and suggesting directions for further research.

CHAPTER 1

Women and faith-based volunteering in contemporary Japan: The state of research

Introduction

This chapter explores the relevant body of literature which engages with women in religion and civil society in order to understand what scholarship has already unearthed as resources and opportunities in the context of faith-based volunteering that women may source in their process of identity formation.

Since faith-based volunteering stands at the intersection between religion and civil society, approaching women in religious social work requires examining both religion and volunteering from a gender perspective. In an attempt to bridge gender and religion with grassroots volunteering, this chapter comprises two core themes exploring women in relationship with religion and women's collective volunteer activities as an expression of their role in civil society in the form of community-based movements.

The chapter opens with an introductory section outlining the state of research with a gender perspective in faith-based volunteering in Japan. It presents the extant literature on Japanese religious volunteering and the reasons for the overall lack of studies about women in faith-based volunteer groups. The thematic arguments introduced in this section shape the structure of the chapter.

The second part of the chapter examines the importance of a gender perspective in the sociology of religion by mapping the historical development of Women's Studies in Japan up to a contemporary gender perspective in Japanese religions. It also offers a review of the extant literature on gender and Japanese New Religions, including an analysis of contemporary new spirituality movements.

The third part explores the influence of religion and gender on philanthropic behaviour. European and American literature examining the relationship between religion and civic engagement is abundant and has largely explored both the societal role of religion, and the forms of beliefs and behaviours of large populations. Because of its empirical evidence, this dissertation uses some conceptualizations developed in the non-Japanese body of literature that are relevant for the present study to describe how religion is experienced in individuals' everyday life. However, it does not suggest that such conceptualizations can be generalized to the whole Japanese context, as this would require extensive empirical confirmation. The

chapter then gives an evaluation of the influence of Japanese religion as an institution and a cultural context posing doctrinal and behavioural predispositions toward volunteering. This part also takes into consideration the influence of gender on volunteer care work in order to understand whether the volunteer role can be accounted for as gendered in its institutionalization. The discussion focuses on the tradition of maternalism as a consolidated rationale behind Japanese women's social engagement.

The fourth part of the chapter shifts the focus on women's faith-based volunteering as an expression of participatory citizenship: in this study it is argued that faith-based grassroots volunteer groups may be accounted for as a form of collective initiative that aims at responding to contemporary social problems. In order to elucidate the significance of such collective activities, the chapter examines recent scholarship in political science exploring grassroots women's movements and the characteristics of community-based movements in Japan. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the empowerment discourse in social work, which has been a consistent theme in recent American scholarship. The review explores the conceptual framework appropriate to assessing the extent to which women's agency in grassroots activities may empower them and has an impact on their society and politics.

By linking extant studies on a gender perspective in the sociology of religion with scholarship on civic society, this study attempts to establish an original framework for understanding women's identity formation through participation in grassroots activities sponsored by religious organizations.

1. Outline of the state of research

This section outlines of the state of research concerning a gender perspective in faith-based volunteering in Japan and the relevant arguments related to the topic that will be further discussed in the present chapter.

In Japan, people openly expressing and practicing their religiosity, or adhering to a specific religious group by individual choice, tend to be a minority (Inaba 2011: 15). However, almost 70% of the Japanese assert they perform rituals for their ancestors, celebrate the New Year with a visit to a Shintō shrine and return to their hometown to pay respect to their family tomb during the summer festivity, while 60% think it is important to have a religious spirit (Ishii 2007). Inaba conceptualizes this elusive religious component in Japanese people as 'unconscious religiosity' (Inaba 2011) and accounts for it as a grounding cultural element

fostering the spirit of relatedness [*tsunagari no kankaku*], gratitude [*okagesama no nen*], and harmony [*wagō*] that characterizes Japanese society (Inaba 2011: 15).²² The author suggests that attending occasional religious ceremonies or rituals helps in cultivating this unconscious religiosity, which in turn may breed a philanthropic endeavour where individuals can refine their spirit of relatedness, gratitude and harmony (ibid.).

A few studies have explored the role of Japanese religious organizations in civil society. Extant literature focuses on charitable activities and social work sponsored by well established non-profit organizations (NPOs) working in disaster relief, peace-oriented-activities, environmental protection and international assistance (Kisala 1999; Watts 2004). Mukhopadhyaya's (2005) work examines community-based activities operated by two new religious movements, by approaching them as an expression of engaged Buddhism [*shakai sankā bukkō*]. Yoshida (2003) delineates the role of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity in contributing to the development of a Japanese welfare society from a historical perspective. Inaba (2001 and 2011) and Sakurai (2005 and 2011) explore how altruism is nurtured in Japanese society discussing the correlation between religion and social capital in civil society in Japan.

When focusing on everyday activities performed at grassroots level in the local community, or women engaged in faith-based volunteer groups, the review of the extant literature reveals that the argument has been largely omitted. Yoshino and Terawaza (2009) examine community-level volunteer activities sponsored by local Shintō, Buddhist, Christian and New Religions groups in Sapporo city. Their investigation, which does not reveal the gender orientation in the surveyed groups, concludes that although philanthropic activities may be initially inspired by the doctrine and belief, religiosity is but one of the aspects characterizing them, while the pro-social component and the social setting are the preponderant driving factors. Moreover, the multiplicity of modalities through which the activities are operated makes a macro analysis of grassroots level faith-based volunteer groups all the more difficult. Macro-sociological analyses of Japanese civil society, on the other hand, have helped in demonstrating how the state influences civic engagement, facilitating institutionalized forms of social work (Kurihara 1999; Schwartz and Pharr 2003; Pekkanem 2006; Avenell 2009 and 2011; Ogawa 2010). In those studies gender is treated as one of the socio-demographic variables, thus not exploring whether volunteering may be gendered in its institutionalization. Although women's community-based groups have been given reasonable attention (LeBlanc 1999; Bouissou 2000; Etō 2001, 2008a and 2008b; Lenz 2006), the overall English and Japanese literature lacks investigations into the substantial presence of women involved in

faith-based volunteering at the grassroots level and the social significance of their active participation.

Such lack of academic interest may be related to four main arguments. Firstly, the contribution of Japanese religious organizations to society is limited as compared with the involvement of lay civil society (Tsujinaka 2002: 17), and is much more limited in Japan than in all other parts of the developed world (Özerdem and Jacoby 2006: 36). In addition, while religious-affiliated NPOs can offer official data on membership size and financial resources, religious-sponsored civil society groups working at grassroots level are difficult to aggregate into macro-data, as they rely on the voluntary day-to-day commitment of virtually all their adherents.

Secondly, there are implications with the word “religion” in the Japanese context that still render problematic its use by faith-based groups working in the local community, and by its members outside the religious context. As mentioned in the Introduction, religious groups, especially those categorized as New Religions [*shinshūkyō*], sometime are viewed as controversial in public opinion. After Aum shinrikyō’s sarin gas attack in Tokyo in 1995, religious organizations traditionally involved in charitable activities and social work have come under intense scrutiny both from the state and public opinion and their position in civil society has been significantly undermined (Hardacre 2003a: 135). Christian denominations, on the other hand, are treated as a foreign import, and traditionally associated with the upper class of society that has attained a high level of education and cultural refinement (Shimazono 2004: 9). Therefore, despite the active social engagement in activities for the needy residents in the community, non-Christian Japanese still tend to relate a Christian’s social commitment mainly with the leisure time enjoyed by the upper class (Stevens 1997: 73).

A third reason is a resistance towards gender concerns in the religious context. For many feminists, religion is a tool of patriarchy that is still used to oppress and exclude women and to deny them the opportunity to make their own decisions (Ōgoshi 1997; Kawahashi 2000; Fox 2001; Juschka 2001). This perspective fosters an assumption that women’s activities in faith-based groups are first and foremost an expression of altruism informed by normative and conservative gendered ideas substantiated by religion. This normativist assumption focuses on what religion makes women do and be, while neglecting what women do with religion, and the potentiality in terms of agency of their inclusion in broader areas of practices.

Finally, feminists’ criticism of women’s volunteer work should not be underestimated. Feminists hold a rather negative view of women volunteers, considering them as repressed or conservative, or simply manipulated by the state into accepting low-status and unpaid work

that the state should be managing itself (Brown and Ferguson 1995; Makie 2000: 193; Ueno 2008). This critique overlaps the above-mentioned controversial role of women in religion, where they either 'bargain with patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988) or adopt tactical strategies (Hardacre 1984; Woodhead 2007) to redeem their submissiveness.²³ This gloomy stance goes along with the sceptical idea of voluntarism as having little or no effect on empowering society because Japanese women possess nothing more than a superficial understanding of their political identity: Japanese civil society is made up of 'members without advocates' (Pekkanen 2006).

However, Ueno (2007) argues that women frequently take an active role in volunteering and in so doing they build support networks, establish a framework of resources and services they can rely upon in case of need and have broader access to what society has to offer. Moreover, in her recent publication about the sociology of care (2011), Ueno suggests going beyond the 'unpaid work' debate by approaching women's volunteer care work as a form of actor-driven activity involving multiple sectors, such as the family, the state, civil society, and the recipients, each one with its own rights and responsibilities. As such, volunteer work should be counted to the same extent as other forms of labour, with rules and rights that actors must acknowledge, negotiate and respect in order to build an 'inclusive society' bridging volunteer groups to other sectors in a 'community business' where participation, opportunities and benefits are granted to all (Ōsawa 2011b: 40).

Along with this latest trend in the Japanese scholarship, the purpose of this dissertation is to challenge the above arguments and redress the lack of analysis of the role of women in faith-based volunteer groups. Its aim is to fill in the gap in the extant literature by giving an in-depth insight into the internal dynamics of faith-based volunteer groups, the strategies that women employ to reach their aims, their position vis-à-vis society and religious institutions, and what social identity they develop from that. In order to do so, the following sections explore the above arguments in detail, reviewing the extant literature concerning the two dimensions intersecting women in faith-based volunteer groups: women's roles in religion and in civil society.

2. Women and faith: a gendered approach to Japanese religion

At the beginning of the 1960s, parallel to the second wave of feminism, the sociological understanding of gender roles and relationships between men and women inclusive of both men's and women's agency has elicited the complexity and the diversity of religious

experience (Neitz 1989). A gender perspective in religion emphasized how women had been virtually ignored and underrepresented across the field (Dely 1973; Gross 1977). By adopting a 'hermeneutics of suspicion',²⁴ American and European feminist scholars have engaged in a critical analysis of traditional sources, methods and interpretations, challenging the male-dominated "value-neutral" stance (Ramazanoğlu and Holland 2002: 36-7). As a basic source of content and a primary critical principle, 'women's experience' has transformed both the subject of religious research and the method of research (King 1995: 2; Young 2002: 17).

Contemporary scholarship has recently shown a concern to integrate gender into a matrix of other variables that contribute to a person's identity and strategies (King 2002: 60; Neitz 2004). Considering gender as embedded into a number of other equally determinant variables, such as age, social economic status, or religiosity, may explain how women's actions and attitudes are not merely a result of their gender socialization, but also a construct or variations of those other factors. Thus far, rich interdisciplinary and cross-cultural debate has opened up new controversial issues on religious theories and methodological approaches for analyzing the gender patterns of religious phenomena (Juschka 2001; Sharma 2002). Scholars have started working cross-culturally, involved in various disciplines, and merging experiential and empirical data gathered in different social, cultural and religious contexts in order to advance arguments and understanding (Sharma 2002: 369; King 2002). It is hoped that this dissertation may be regarded as an example of this new interdisciplinary trend.

2.1 *The development of gender perspectives on Japanese religions*

Following the trend of gender studies in other disciplines as discussed above, a gender approach to Japanese religions has focused primarily on the reasons why women have been underrepresented across the field in proportion to the significance of women's roles.

The rise to *joseigaku* [women's studies] and its significant contribution to the research on women, originated in Japan in the late 1970s as an effect of the second wave of feminism that had developed in North America and Europe since the 1960s.²⁵

As early as 1983, the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, a semi-annual journal based on Nanzan University, which incorporates works in English dedicated to the academic study of Japanese religions, published a special issue on 'Women and Religion in Japan' edited by Nakamura Kyōko.²⁶ In her introductory remarks, Nakamura comments that 'the contributions of women have been too significant to be ignored in the Japanese history of religion' (Nakamura 1983: 119), although scholars had done little research on women in that connection (1983: 115-7). Nakamura's edition of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*

opened the way for another significant publication in 1989 by the Japanese Association for Religious Studies [*Nihon shūkyō gakkai*]. It was a special issue of the *Shūkyō kenkyū* (Journal of Religious Studies, vol. 68-1, no. 280) titled 'Shūkyō to josei' [Religion and Women] collecting contributions by Ōgoshi Aiko, Okano Haruko and Igeta Midori, who had long affirmed the importance of feminist perspectives in Japanese religious studies.

This tendency has been encouraged also by the work of members of the *Kokusai shūkyō kenkyūjo* [International Institute for the Study of Religions], who have been actively advancing religious and women's studies in Japan, as well as promoting cross-cultural studies and international scholarship. A brief overview of recent academic events related to the study of women and religion suggests the growing influence of feminism in the field.

In 1995 the International Institute for the Study of Religions [*Kokusai shūkyō kenkyūjo*] held a symposium, whose proceedings were published as *Josei to kyōdan: nihon shūkyō no omote to ura* [Women and religious organizations: the front stage and backstage of Japanese religion] under the editorial supervision of Nomura Fumiko and Usui Atsuko (Nomura and Usui 1996). By that time the word 'gender' had already started to be used by Japanese academics and in government writings reflecting the growing influence of women's and gender studies on policies in the 1990s (Ōsawa 2002a: 43).²⁷

With the development of gender studies in academia, in 1997 the *Shūkyō to shakai gakkai* [Japanese Association for the Study of Religion and Society] held a workshop on 'Religion and Gender' whose proceedings were published as a separate volume of *Shūkyō to shakai* [Religion and Society]. The workshop gave a platform to the most important representatives of contemporary scholarship, such as Kawahashi Noriko, Kuroki Masako and Usui Atsuko among others.

A panel on 'Religion and Women' was held at the Japanese Association for Religious Studies in 1999 with the participation of Usui Atsuko as well as Komatsu Kayoko. A collection of presented papers is contained in *Shūkyō kenkyū* [Journal of Religious Studies] vol. 73/4, no. 323. Usui and Komatsu also contributed to the recent publication in the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* of the special issue titled 'Feminism and Religion in Contemporary Japan' (2003, 30/3-4).

The study of women in Buddhist history has also been growing steadily along with the significant development of *Sōgō joseishi kenkyūkai* [The Society for Research on Women's History]. Since 1984 several scholars involved in the association: *Nihon no bukkūō to josei* [Study Group on Buddhism and Women in Japan] have been working on a collaborative project, focusing on the re-interpretation of the theoretical stance 'examining history from the

different perspective of what Buddhism was for women in Japan' (Yoshida, Katsuura and Nishiguchi 1999: 33). Much work has been done by both Japanese and non-Japanese scholars in order to develop a comprehensive history of women in Buddhism (Ruch 2002; Faure 2003), including analyses of pollution notions and related topics²⁸ (Igeta 1996; Ushiyama 1996; Kurihara 1996; Kanda 2000; Suzuki 2002; T. Inoue 2002: 108-9), women as nuns (Arai 1999; Ruch 2002; Mori 2003; Kawahashi 2003; Dobbins 2004), and Buddhist women's social movements (Kawahashi and Kumamoto 2007).

The development of a gender perspective in Japanese academia has steadily advanced since the end of the 1990s. However, Japanese feminists have tended to remain reluctant to study religions.²⁹ Considering religion a tool of patriarchy used to oppress and exclude women, and to deny them the opportunity to make their own decisions, feminist theorists have tended to see religion and feminism as mutually incompatible (Kawahashi and Nomura 2001; Kawahashi and Kuroki 2003: 20). The feminist scholars Kawahashi Noriko and Kuroki Masako have also acknowledged that feminism in religion still occupies a marginal position in Japan and remains an issue for the future (Kawahashi and Kuroki 2003: 208).

The review of Japanese scholarship presented above, however, shows that women's studies, gender studies and feminist approaches have had an important impact on the study of Japanese religions. Evidence may be found in the increasing number of publications presenting in their comprehensive view of feminist and gender studies in Japan a section on religious studies (e.g. Ehara and Kanai 1997; Aera 2002; Inoue et al. 2002). Similarly, volumes on the study of religions have integrated their section on women and religions with an account on religion and feminism (e.g. Hosoya and Fujita 1999).

2.2 Gendered research in Japanese new religious movements

In terms of women's roles in Christian denominations, the situation in Japan has not been much different from other European or American countries of Christian tradition. In Japan, the observance of the traditional Christian faith draws upon the conventional European elite white male theology (Yamaguchi 2003: 319 and 2007:42-5). As a consequence, women have remained in the minority in decision-making positions, despite accounting for the majority of adherents and taking most of the responsibility for practical matters in church activities (Yamaguchi 2003: 317).

In contrast, the indigenous Japanese New Religions [*shinshūkyō*] present impressive examples of religious change, especially in the case of the appearance of a large number of women in active and powerful positions in those lay groups founded since the early nineteenth

century (Hardacre 1988: 215). An attitude of anticlericalism after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 influenced the way women could participate in more traditional religious associations, such as temples and shrines (Inoue et al. 1994: 24). Shintō was reorganized, completely separated from Buddhism [*shinbutsu bunri*], and brought within the structure of the state administration (Hardacre 2006: 282). It was regarded as inseparable from the fundamental ethical and social code of Japan, which made it superior to other religious forms, as it was understood to be the pillar for national integration (Shimazono 2005: 1080; see also Earhart 1997: 252-5). This fact, together with compulsory education and urbanization (Inoue et al. 1994: 49), led to important changes that accounted for women's participation in new religious movements.

Japanese New Religions are all, to some extent, related to the traditions of Buddhist, Shintō and folk religions in Japan, favouring a religious synthesis, innovating and combining religious elements from the pre-existing cultural milieu (Inoue et al. 1994: 9-10). Scholars have tended to classify these movements in three historical waves (Hardacre 1986: 4) or four including the contemporary new spirituality movements (Shimazono 1992: 9). Kisala (1999) maintains a classification into three waves, but distinguishes them by the religious traditions predominantly represented by the groups that emerged over a certain period of time in modern Japanese history (Kisala 1999: 211).

According to Kisala, most of the groups founded toward the end of the nineteenth century were based on the Shintō and folk religious traditions of the rural society (Kisala 1999: 3). Several studies have examined the significant role of women founders in Japanese New Religions of this period (Nakamura 1981; Hardacre 1988 and 1994; Ooms 1993). However, the introduction of a feminist perspective has led to a re-examination of previous positive stances of female founders. Ōgoshi (1997) observes that when the spiritual qualities of these extraordinary women are brought to bear on other women, they are limited to a ratification of common, established morality. 'A reality of inequality has been concealed under the guise of a doctrine of religious equality' (Ōgoshi 1997: 158).

A second wave of New Religions came shortly after World War II, under the influence of increasing urbanization with large rural populations moving to live in cities (Ikado 1968). Religious groups of this period are described as lay Buddhist movements, offering a sense of community as well as providing a new city population with those rituals for the dead that they could no longer perform in their family temples left behind in the countryside (Kisala 1999: 3). Within this climate of religious innovation, taking over family ceremonies from the temple or gravesite rites led to a widening of the scope of the rituals including not only the husband's ancestors but also those of the wife (Hardacre 1984: 208-21; Igeta 1992). This new way of

performing religious rituals had a radical impact on women's role, building familiarity with the doctrine and rituals turning into what Iannaccone (1990) calls 'human capital'.³⁰ As Iannaccone suggests, human capital enhances the satisfaction one receives from participation in that religion and builds a propensity for religious participation, production and activism (1990: 298). For Japanese women of that time, taking over family rituals was a new role affecting both religious and family consciousness: it began to give them a sense of equality and independence inspiring more female participation in those religious organizations emphasizing ancestor rites.

A third wave of new religious movements came into being in the 1970s as a new culture to overcome the defects of both traditional religions and rationalist modern science, as well as the problem of meaningless and loss of fulfilment in life in industrialized society (Shimazono 2004: 232). Those movements focused on spiritual practices, offering the opportunity for a transformation of consciousness through meditation and ascetic training, often linked with attainment of psychic powers (Kisala 1999: 3). Alongside this trend, under the pressure of followers in the organizations, social issues started to be included in the religious study sessions, promoting the founding of several discussion groups, indicating the need for more socially involved religious activities. Usui (1994) gives a significant example of this new trend. In her study on *Shūyōdan hōseikai*, the author focuses on a group of young women called Tokyo Misses founded around the 1970s as a women's section within the religious organization. Usui describes how it originated from informal gatherings of women followers, built on the need to share concerns and knowledge about childbearing, marriage, caring for the aged, work and other issues related to their role of wife, mother, daughter-in-law and new ones as working women (Usui 1994: 122).

An overview of religious organizations developed around the 1970s shows a common tendency in relation to women, as nearly all of them have a 'Women's Division' [*fujinbu*] in their structure (see Inoue et al. 1994: 132-52). The development of *fujinbu* within religious organizations parallels the spreading of *josei sentā* [women's centre] established with the support of prefectural and municipal governments in the 1980s as part of the project based on the Women's Action Plan adopted by the government in 1977 (Tsunematsu 2004: 98). Although the activities in the *fujinbu* should be related to doctrine and proselytism, they have also tended to be focused on family-centred issues in order to give support to women followers by counselling them in a mutual-help endeavour, thereby overlapping the institutionalized activities of the *josei sentā*. Most religious organizations see the Women's Division as an example of their gender equal attitude, as they are both giving formal

recognition and initiative to the large number of women in their group, in conformity with government policy. However, in the organizational structure women usually do not go beyond the post of Director of Women's Division [*fujin buchō*], and only a small number of female followers have taken senior positions normally occupied by men. In this respect, it may be assumed that those Women's Divisions support the structure of male-dominance within the organization by emphasizing female roles, such as that of wife and mother, that is, by not deviating greatly from the gender roles in society in general. Therefore, an analysis of the Women's Division could reinforce the image of gendered dynamics underpinning a male-female relationship in religious organizations and society at large.

A gender orientation marks the membership of groups largely developed in the 1970s, including those of the first wave, as the number of men and women followers varies according to the type of doctrine and teachings of the religious organizations (Shimazono 1992b). Shimazono observes that those groups holding a moral orientation, such as Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen targeted for this study, stressing an ethic adapted to the concrete situations of daily life, embrace a majority of women followers who make the broad base of the pyramid of the religious organization. These movements are classified as the 'moral-cultivation type' [*shūyō dōtoku gata*] (Shimazono 1992b: 70), as they enhance a religious vision where moral cultivation is taught to be achieved through daily life experiences and practice, rather than by intellectual training and interpretation of difficult religious texts (Shimazono 1996b: 115). They focus on work ethic that includes not only honesty and industry but also working for society and for one's neighbours, and regard work as a form of self-expression. It is an ethic of citizenship that encourages service to the local community (Shimazono 1992b: 70). Those groups usually preach a family model fostering the mutual support of equal partners in a nuclear, rather than a patriarchal, family (Shimazono 1996b: 115), often enhancing female submissiveness and forbearance as women's points of strengths to be cultivated by both male and female followers.³¹ Other movements focusing on intellectual cultivation, mainly related to the study of the sutra and a deep understanding of the religious texts, count a prevalence of male followers (1996b: 115). As examples Shimazono offers Sōka gakkai, Seichō no ie and Sekai kyūseikyō (1992b: 68) that were founded by men of intellectual ability who were familiar with history, religious doctrine, modern thought and science. In some cases, such as Ōmotokyō, groups originally founded by women and showing strong connotations related to folk religions shifted to an intellectual mode when the leadership was taken over by a man (Shimazono 1992b: 68). This type is called 'intellectual-thought type' [*chiteki shisō gata*], in that the theoretical framework and intellectual training is prevalent (Ibid.).³² A third group is

composed of movements like Tenrikyō, Konkōkyō and Tenshō kotai jingukyō that were founded by women between the mid-nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, most at home in the world of folk and oral tradition, or by male founders lacking in literary knowledge. These are called 'indigenous-emergent type' [*dochaku sōshō gata*] (1992b: 67), where the popular ideas of character building and virtue come to be linked to a salvation belief (1992b: 68). Women seem to be the majority of followers in these groups (*ibid.*).

Inose (2007) offers a typological analysis of women's role in Japanese New Religions by applying the analytical framework developed by Palmer (2004) in the field of American new religious movements. The three conceptualizations formulated by Palmer are sex complementary, sex polarity and sex unity. According to Palmer, sex complementary sees men and women as gifted by diverse natural, emotional, psychological and spiritual qualities (Palmer 2004: 381). They are tied by a horizontal relationship where they hold different roles meant to mutually compensate their different nature so that they can become one harmonious entity (Inose 2007: 96). Marriage is the ideal example of the balanced union among man and woman and family is the highly valued corollary of their joined endeavour (*ibid.*). Palmer considers the majority of Christian denominations as representative of this typology, which is characterized by a preponderant men's presence in the top-rank positions (Palmer 2004: 381). According to Inose, *Sōka gakkai* shows this typical pyramidal model with the majority of men in the top organizational structure holding decisional positions and women at the middle-low level engaged in everyday activities and missionary work (Inose 2007: 98-101). Male dominance in leading positions appears as not contradictory with the emphasis on gender equality promoted by the religious group: the complementary approach on gender developed from the doctrine makes different roles between men and women as a requirement for the pursuit of a harmonious society (Inose 2007: 96). *Shinnyoen* and *Risshō kōseikai* targeted in this study may be similarly classified within this category. The second typology suggested by Palmer is sex polarity, which sees men and women as distinct and separate, stressing that they should not unite as they are inessential or irrelevant to each other's salvation (2004: 381). Religious groups showing this model tend emphasize the superiority of one sex as purer, more intelligent or closer to divinity (*ibid.*). Inose suggests that the Jehovah Witnesses can be seen as example of sex polarity among Japanese new religious groups (2007: 101-4). Finally, the third typology is sex unity. This approach regards men and women as different on a physical level, but sharing the same nature on a spiritual level (Inose 2007: 97). Body is regarded as a superficial layer of false identity, obscuring the immortal, sexless spirit (Palmer 2004: 381). Religious groups advocating sex unity might dress unisex and emphasize

androgynous social personas; or they might play traditional gender roles while maintaining an inner detachment from them (ibid.). They also tend to stress on the importance of the spiritual world, while clinging to a negative attitude towards worldly relationships like friendship, marriage and family. Inose offers the Japanese case of Raelian movement as an example of the sex unity typology (2007: 104-6). Aum shinrikyō, which required its followers to detach from any non-member including family and friends (Shimazono 1995b: 384) and practiced the sex unity by requiring members to wear same neutral clothes (Inose 2007: 97), may also be classified in the sex unity typology. In those groups gender is seen as something that can be chosen or changed, a message rather innovative by itself, but hardly accepted by society at large (Inose 2007: 97), thus enforcing them into *kaguri kata* [isolationist type], seeking to break away from society at large and encouraging its members to cut off their ties with non-believers (Shimazono 1992a: 15-22).

In view of the above, the question arises as to the reason why some Japanese women choose to affiliate with and support new religious organizations such as Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen whose organizational structure tend to be male-dominated. Several scholars have attempted to answer this question. Hardacre (1984) mainly focuses on the collapse of family structures and sees in New Religions an attempt at the revival of the *ie* [extended household] ethic as opposed to the nuclear family. Women followers perform the rites of ancestor veneration and observe the traditional family ethic, especially deferring to one's husband, in order to restore and support the family structure (Hardacre 1984: 208). This corresponds to Woodhead's idea of a 'tactical form' of religion, where the individual accepts prevailing patterns of meaning and power-distribution, but maximizes their advantage for those who are disadvantaged by them (Woodhead 2007: 569). Hardacre (1984) calls this the 'strategies of weakness', that is, strategies whereby those of inferior status create a situation advantageous to themselves (1984: 208–21). Wives who are economically dependent on their husbands use the authority of the doctrine of the group to justify their economic dependence. It is also related to a religious attitude, a common feature in Japanese New Religions, of first changing one's own mind [*kokoro naoshi*], one's own way of relating to others and not trying to have the other changed in order to adapt to one's self (Shimazono 2006: 224). By doing so, wives make their husbands and children emotionally dependent on themselves and, as a result, they acquire the power to influence them. Igeta (1992) suggests a definition of new religious movements as 'salvation mechanisms or therapy cultures to overcome the situation of political and economic crisis that accompanied the process of modernization' (1992: 187). She refers to Hardacre's study on Reiyūkai (1984) where she sees a view of gender roles as a system of

dependency on the volition of women to subjectively accept their status as women (Igeta 1992: 187).

The above-mentioned interpretations of women's faith may as well relate to the 'deprivation theory' suggested by Glock and Stark (1965), in that affiliation and belief depend on the logic of those who feel they are in a disadvantageous position.³³ As Glock and Stark elicited in their deprivation theory, an awareness of being deprived compared with other individuals or groups, or compared with one's own desires, tends to turn to religion.

Watanabe (2007), in her analysis of women's conversion in Risshō kōseikai, sees deprivation as crucial for women to approach religion (2007: 9). However, she also emphasizes the relevance of the 'free social space' (Sherkat and Ellison 1999: 374) that women build within the religious group, with its interpersonal relations, social network and involvement.³⁴ Watanabe's further analyses of religious practices performed by Reiyūkai and Konkōkyō show how gender socialization (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi 1975; Francis 1997: 87-9; Miller and Stark 2002) is influential in Japanese women's formation of religious social identity.³⁵ Her work also suggests that a closer examination of women's activities and their understanding of religious practices may be significant for their intersections with family and society in general, revealing significant elements related to the ongoing changing role of women in society (Watanabe 2007: 297-302).

An example of such analysis is given by Usui (1994) in her examination of the historical development in the above-mentioned Shūyōdan hōseikai women followers' group, the Tokyo Misses section. In comparing the first generation of Tokyo Misses of the 1970s with the younger ones of the 1990s, Usui finds that younger female members in their thirties and forties desired looser ties with the religious organization and less family-centred activities. The author suggests that this tendency is mainly related to the fact that most of them had a job that they kept both before and after marriage and childbirth, as they normally returned to work after that (Usui 1994: 146). They also show an increased sense of independence and initiative, and a tendency to convey in the group their new needs and expectations, which eventually led the organization to take new actions (Usui 1994: 148).

Shimazono also elicits that in religious movements that have been developing or that have achieved some measure of growth in Japan since the mid-1980s and 1990s, views of gender have become rather fluid and flexible giving women an equal chance and the possibility to relate work, marriage and motherhood to spiritual growth (1996b: 115). This trend is interrelated with socio-economic factors underlying contemporary society, as discussed in the Introduction. The change has become more visible in women's attitudes toward marriage and

the family system: women have started to work and wait till later in life to marry (Nakano 2011), living independently, or with their parents (Dales 2005), and driving money into the economy with their disposable income (Nakano 2011: 141). In recent years there has been a trend away from arranged marriages and many young women acknowledge that they take paid employment mostly in order to find a husband on their own (Nakano 2011: 134). Moreover, once married, many women continue to work, and increasingly, return to work after childbirth, something which was inconceivable a generation ago (Usui 1994: 146-7).

Along with this socio-economic trend, a fourth wave of religious movements grew larger between the 1980s and the 1990s, called New New Religions [*shinshin shūkyō*] (Shimazono 2001: 1-16).³⁶ Those groups tend to promote belief in the spirit world, but also tie this with the contemporary demand for personal development; and they encourage their believers to strive for transformation through spiritual techniques and experiences (Shimazono 2004: 272). In contrast to the older New Religions with their stress on this-worldly benefits, the New New Religions focus more on questions of meaning and on problems of contemporary anomie and social unrest (Shimazono 2004: 261-74). In terms of a gender perspective, Shimazono (1996b) suggests that the movements of the fourth period show distinctive features compared with those of the third one. While movements developed in the 1970s are characterized by the dominant participation of middle-aged housewives, those of the 1990s present an increased participation of young devotees and a relatively equal number between men and women followers (1996b: 114).

Finally, Shimazono has also drawn attention to a kind of spiritualism that started to spread and grow beside the New New Religions. The scholar has introduced the term 'new spirituality movements' [*shinreisei undō*] to describe those movements that are oriented towards some kind of loose community or network, but that are not structured as religions (Shimazono 1996c). Shimazono maintains that despite their lack of structural elements, such movements promote a worldview or way of thought that can be called religious (2007: 110-24).³⁷ Although participants are vaguely interested, if not at all unconcerned, in religious views and get loosely involved in concerted action to achieve shared goals (Shimazono 2007: 49), there are certain features that can be related to the sort of 'secular humanism' Shimazono suggests for the New Spirituality Culture [*shinreisei bunka*] (2007: 82).³⁸ The idea of an individual's experience of transforming the self and the tendency in stressing a spiritual betterment through active social engagement are elements shared by both New Spirituality Culture movements and New Religious Movements. In both cases, participants see their practice as a way for transformation on the most immediate level of inner self, which will have repercussion within

one's nuclear group, their family, the surrounding society and, eventually, on the universe as a whole (Shimazono 2004: 276). They nurture a sense of solidarity by which they can achieve self-realization and self-emancipation.

This view raises interesting questions, as the boundaries among the spheres of faith-based social work, New Spirituality Culture movements, and civil society remain rather fluid. Beyond the specific differences and features, these phenomena seem to emphasize the role of the individual in society, for positive action can lead to personal and social change, rather than the religious factor as the core motivation behind one's social commitment. In this respect, involvement in social work and volunteer activities can act as a source for new social identities beyond the religious rationale, which is the topic to be examined in this dissertation.

3. Facilitating philanthropy: the religion and gender factors

Literature on volunteering regards religion and gender as two important components correlated to civic engagement. Extant studies, predominantly in English language, are in these two separate areas: religiosity related to prosocial behaviour (Wilson and Janoski 1995; Smith 1996; Janoski et al. 1998; Wilson 2000; Chaves et al. 2002; Chaves 2004; Becker and Dhingra 2001; Wuthnow 1991, 1999 and 2004); and the influence of gender on civic engagement (Wilson and Musick 1997; Taniguchi 2006 and 2010; Themudo 2009; Musick and Wilson 2008: 171-96, for a review³⁹). Research focuses mainly on the ideological influence and the socio-cultural circumstances that the religious context and gender socialization bring about in motivating women to engage in social work. Only a limited amount of work is devoted to understanding the intersection between the two fields, that is, women's engagement in faith-based volunteer groups. Most of the extant literature focuses on American or European-based women's associations sponsored by Christian denominations or inspired by Christian social thought, operating in the turn of the twentieth century (Ginzberg 1990; Skocpol 1999: 486-7; Stebner 1997; Clemens 1999; Wollbæk and Selle 2004; Capek 2005). No extant work is in the Japanese context.

The following sections examine the relationship between religion and prosocial behaviour. The discussion summarizes the review of the latest theories on the relationship between religiosity and volunteering and the state of research on Japanese women's social engagement.

3.1 The religion factor in social engagement

Religious beliefs and practices are often treated as a component of values related to increased individual civic engagement (Park and Smith 2000; Wilson and Janoski 1995; Janoski and Wilson 1998; Musick and Wilson 2008: 89-96). Scholars have found that individuals participating in religious organizations learn transferable civic skills that they can use in political mobilization (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Wood 1994 and 2002). In reviewing survey results on religion and volunteering, Wuthnow (1999) summarizes three arguments tying religiosity with volunteering: 1. active members are more likely to be influenced by religious teachings about loving their neighbourhood thus fostering being responsible citizens; 2. they are more likely to have social capital, in terms of networks they can rely on to mobilize their energies; and 3. they are more likely to be aware of community needs and problems as a result of attending the social activities promoted by the religious organization (Wuthnow 1999: 334).

Recent scholarship has largely focused on capital-based themes and emphasized the resources in the form of skills and networks that individuals acquire when they adhere to religious organizations, which in turn promote civic engagement (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Wilson and Musick 1997 and 1998; Park and Smith 2000; Nepstad 2004). These studies focus on religious members' civic involvement as an outcome of the relationships and knowledge individuals acquire informally through their religious participations. However, Wuthnow suggests that the connections may also be structured more formally (1999: 354). Individuals who participate in community welfare activities organized by the religious organization often establish cooperative relationships with secular non-profit agencies (Wuthnow 1999: 356). This trend leads to an increasing variety of formal partnerships between faith-based groups and non-religious organizations (*ibid.*).

Wuthnow has recently reconsidered the role of faith-based social services in American civil society (2004). He maintains that, nowadays, asking what role faith-based volunteer groups play with and within civil society is especially important: it helps in assessing their position in relation to non-religious organizations and government policies, and, therefore, as elements contributing positively to the functioning of civil society (Wuthnow 2004: 6). He claims that if faith-based volunteer groups play a supportive role behind the scenes, government policy might be directed to these formal service programmes sponsored by religious organizations and it might raise fewer questions about the separation between state and religion, especially if these groups refrain from proselytizing (*ibid.*). He stresses the need to examine the civic role of faith-based volunteer groups and assess their civic contribution: faith-based volunteer

groups must be considered quite distinctly from the religious organizations and in closer relation to the 'larger social networks of which civil society is composed' (Wuthnow 2004: 7).

The research about such a critical topic is advancing, albeit mainly produced by North American scholars examining the civic life of American religion (Wuthnow 2004; Ammerman 2007; Lichterman 2005; Lichterman and Potts 2009). A gender perspective to grassroots faith-based volunteering in Japan, however, is still largely unexplored. Similarly, Japanese women's engagement in faith-based groups from the point of view of its position in civil society is still uncharted. This dissertation addresses precisely this gap.

3.2 The role of religious institutions in contemporary Japan

The majority of religious organizations in Japan operate in schools, museums, parks, hospitals, homes for orphans, the elderly and the handicapped, nurseries, and dormitories for houseless families. They also run rehabilitation facilities for infirmed and released prisoners and counselling centres.⁴⁰ They support a large variety of volunteer services: helping the elderly; providing support to families and children in need; promoting the growth and preservation of healthy forests; cleaning up parks and other public locations, and several others. They actively cooperate with existing organizations, such as the Red Cross, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Green Peace, and the World Health Organization to raise funds and support international projects (Kisala 1992: 26-9).

In the past decade there has been some academic interest in the social role of religious organizations (Kisala 1992 and 1999; Yoshida 2003; Watts 2004; Mukhopadhyaya 2005; Inaba and Sakurai 2009; Yoshino and Terawaza 2009). Mukhopadhyaya's (2005) work on Hoōnji and Risshō kōseikai sheds light on the reasons behind their social activities in terms of doctrine and motivation. According to Mukhopadhyaya, the social activities of both groups do not simply involve welfare and volunteer work, but have a religious significance that is rooted in social ethics based on 'modern interpretations of traditional Buddhist philosophy' (2005: 293). In her conclusion she notes that 'socially engaged Buddhism reveals the activities of Buddhism in the public sphere' (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 291).

Mukhopadhyaya's perspective overlaps Kisala's (1999) and Watts's (2004) research on the peace-oriented activities of various Buddhist groups, including traditional as well as new movements: they explore their charitable activities with regard to the role of belief in cultivating and promoting altruistic attitudes and actions. Yoshida (2003) similarly offers a historical analysis of the contribution of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity to the development of the Japanese welfare society. Inaba (1998, 2001 and 2011) focuses on the role of belief and

religious settings in nurturing altruistic attitudes. Sakurai (2005 and 2011) analyzes the social capital component facilitating philanthropy in religious organizations. These latter studies represent a newer direction of the scholarship discussing the correlation between religion and social capital in civil society in Japan.⁴¹ However, neither women nor faith-based community-based volunteering has been given specific attention in such extant research.

In her study on the applicability of the concept of civil society on contemporary Japanese religious groups, Hardacre (2004) takes a historical, rather than sociological, approach. She finds an overall convergence of religious and secular civil society in terms of shared impetus and the timing of the formation of organizations (2004: 411). Contemporary religious organizations share many characteristics of civil society organizations: in term of time of foundation, mostly paralleling the overall development of civil society; the range of issues of civil society that religions are engaged with; the extent of intervention by the public sphere; and the extent to which they are known in society as a whole (Hardacre 2004: 397). The general correspondence between the two suggests regarding Japanese religious groups as a normal part of the associational life in modern society

rather than as a vestige of premodern society, an anti-modern mentality, or as compensatory responses to the contradictions and disruptions inherent in modernization.

(Hardacre 2004: 390)

To what extent believers freely choose to participate in those voluntary activities sponsored by their religious organization is still debated (Shimazono 1998; Hardacre 2003a). Hardacre (2003a) points out that while membership in voluntary associations typically arise from a choice made by adults, the majority of religious affiliations arise from being born to parents already affiliated with a particular religion or as a result of a sort of obedience to a moral code and a religiously ideal vision of community (2003a: 141). In this case, voluntary work may be seen as a form of obedience to an ethical code of behaviour required from the family and group setting. However, when affiliations are built upon conversion, then the involvement in religiously based voluntary activities is similar to the one in civil society (Hardacre 2004: 392). Accordingly, Shimazono (1998) observes that in general religious organizations and others who provide religious services claim self-sacrifice (mainly monetary donations and volunteer work) as the result of individual volition (1998: 181). This is particularly true in the case of the New Religions, and the New New Religions that sprang up after the 1970s (ibid.).

However, beyond the pressure on propagation of the faith and volunteering, demographic and socioeconomic factors as well as social capital variables may affect the follower's choice

in volunteering. Wilson (2000) observes that theories explaining volunteering by pointing to individual attributes can be grouped into those that emphasize motives of self-understanding and those that emphasize rational action and cost-benefit analysis (2000: 222; see also Miller 1995 and 2000; Miller and Hoffman 1995). Other theories seek to complement this focus on individual level factors by pointing to the role of social resources, specifically social ties and organizational activity, as explanations for volunteering (Wilson and Janosky 1995; Wilson 2000: 222). Although findings largely support those theoretical assumptions, the issue related to the grade of spontaneity versus coercion in the followers' agency remains unresolved. Nevertheless, both Wilson's analyses and Shimazono's (1998) study on two new religious movements, Tenrikyō and Sōka gakkai, confirm that religiosity has to be considered a significant predictor of volunteering, as devotion may affect the choice of individuals in giving time to help others.

The survey data derived from Inaba's (1998) investigation on Risshō kōseikai show that the more intensely a member is committed to the religious practices of the religious organization, the more interested he or she will be in social problems and the more he or she will take part in charitable activities (1998: 13). However, while a religious setting based on teachings and practices can be considered a facilitator of members' attitude to altruism, it is hard to identify it as the one single factor. According to Inaba (2001: 14) three factors should be considered as significant in the development of an altruistic attitude in New Religions: teachings and practices, the leaders and founders as role models, and socialization. The author observes that the moral sense in New Religions, based on the ethics of harmony as discussed in the Introduction, tends to lead to universal altruism and consequently members increasingly become involved in charitable activities (2001: 14). He also sees that members of the group intensely involved in practices and activities of New Religions may find support, stability, confidence and security in the organization (2001: 15). Socialization in the group gives followers the chances to share their problems and interact with one another. In such circumstances, the relationship among members based on the same faith may make them more altruistic (*ibid.*).

Taniguchi (2010) similarly suggests that among the predictors of volunteering in Japan, social capital in the form of religious setting providing networks, values, rules and norms, is the strongest variable compared with demographic (e.g. gender, age, marital status, rural residence) and socioeconomic (e.g. education, income, employment status) factors (2010: 15). The emotional value created by voluntary work based on face-to-face personal ties may result in greater commitment to the volunteer group. This argument largely supports the explanatory

approach found in recent European and American literature on religiosity and volunteering (Sherkat and Ellison 1999; Sherkat 2003; Ammerman 1997a and 2007; Davidman 2007; Lichterman 2007; Bartkowski 2007).

Usui (1996a) considers this characteristic as crucial for Japanese female believers, as they find in the faith-based group a place where they can freely participate and offer their contribution without the pressure of duties they feel towards the family and kinship (1996a: 42-3). As discussed earlier, European and American studies have also found that religion may open opportunities for believers to build a free space, becoming a source of collective self-help and community development, moral reform, social service, community leadership and political mobilization (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Sherkat and Ellison 1999; Wood 2004). Moreover, while supporting the whole organization in terms of the number of affiliates (Inoue et al. 1994: 136), women's groups gain a certain independence both from the hierarchal structure of the organization and from their own family as their activities are organized at the grassroots level of their local neighbourhood (Usui 1996a: 42).

In summary, the analysis of faith-based volunteering may be significant because of its implications not only for the overall supply of volunteers, but also for women's opportunities to become involved in the community, cultivate social networks, attain personal growth, increase life satisfaction, build a propensity to activism and gain power in the public arena (Caputo 1997). As Taniguchi's recent study on Japanese volunteers confirms (2010), religiosity is one of the most significant facilitators of volunteering in Japan. Therefore, more refined research is needed to specify the important role social networks based on faith-based women's groups and circles play in volunteering. Equally, further studies on how women's participation in volunteering affects the construction of new social identities alongside the changes of contemporary Japanese society are also demanded.

3.3 A gender perspective to voluntarism

Literature reveals that women tend to outnumber men in volunteer care work (Musick and Wilson 2008: 171) indicating that some forms of volunteer work may be gendered. In order to complete the analysis concerning women's attitudes toward philanthropy, this section focuses on the influence of gender on volunteer work in order to understand whether the volunteer role can be accounted for as gendered in its institutionalization. Further, the next sections examine a gender perspective on Japanese volunteering and the tradition of maternalism informing the logic behind Japanese women's social engagement.

3.3.1 Theorizing a gender perspective to voluntarism

In her analysis of American women's association from a historical perspective, the historian Ann Scott (1991) commented that the beginning of the twentieth century was dominated by a 'nearly universal assumption that women were responsible for the community welfare' (1991: 21). The idea of women as "naturally" assigned to voluntary work drew upon middle-class ideals of the traditional male breadwinner ideology. The two primary characteristics of volunteer work, specifically being unpaid and requiring compassionate and nurturing attitudes, found the best expression in the gendered role of women. Volunteering was, therefore, denoted as a women's role, and women were asked to learn the volunteer role as part of the cultural expectation of the era (Scott 1991: 15). In this respect, volunteer work contributed to reproduce gender ideologies on two levels: on the one hand, it reproduced traditional gender ideologies resulting from socialization channelling women into nurturing and caring roles; on the other hand, it corroborated structural conditions by allowing women to participate in the public sphere as long as they fulfilled cultural expectations through their nurturing and caring roles in the community.

Research about American and English women contributing to volunteer work shows that, overall, the traditional male breadwinner ideology helped to make volunteer work a gendered institution (Scott 1991; Hakim 1996).⁴² Such an idea has endured over time and has given volunteer work the characteristic of socially accepted alternative activity to paid employment for women whose caring and nurturing role is considered primary (Musick and Wilson 2008: 174).

Feminist critics think that volunteer work continues to combine gender socialization and structural normative behaviours making it a gendered institution, although in a less manifest way (Brown and Ferguson 1995). According to such feminist analyses, volunteer work tends to maintain public and private spheres, considering men's work on behalf of the community as an extension of their authority in the workplace, and women's social contribution as an extension of their expertise and authority in the private domain (Brown and Ferguson 1995: 160). In these terms, their presence in civil society can be depicted as a form of mothering taking care of the moral side of the community's life. Because of that, volunteer work has acquired the non-political connotation that it still has today (Musick and Wilson 2008: 173). In the Japanese context, this tendency has similarly developed into a logic of maternalism, as it will be discussed in this chapter.

In contrast, Rossi (2001) thinks that more often than not, women volunteer due to what she calls 'compulsory altruism' (2001: 303). In her study of the domains and dimensions of social

responsibility, Rossi marshals evidence to demonstrate how women's volunteer role is hardly voluntary at all. Instead, it is the extension of a duty shaped by the institution of motherhood and the motherhood role combined with the expectations of the prospect of the volunteer work. She draws on the example of mothers who volunteer in children's day care centres: they do so in order to realize more caring places for their own children, rather than for a genuine altruistic purpose.

Women volunteering may as well reach leadership status and many of them ascend to important positions in the local community. However, this is usually because they choose to describe themselves as guardians of morality rather than activists (Musick and Wilson 2008: 176). Moreover their local leadership is usually invisible outside the community, although they might have learned valuable social and political skills and knowledge (Musick and Wilson 2008: 173). This argument is related to the meaning that women give to volunteering. Musick and Wilson maintain that men tend to have an instrumental approach to volunteering, while women understand caring as an expression of their selfhood because of their gender socialization (2008: 177). This does not mean that women do not favour instrumental attitudes toward volunteer work, but they tend to rationalize these roles in social and emotional terms rather than in terms of specific rewards (Musick and Wilson 2008: 178).

3.3.2 A gender perspective on Japanese volunteering

As discussed in the Introduction, the act of giving one's time to help others to contribute to social harmony has a long tradition in Japan. However, the notion of volunteering and the word *borantia* are relatively new in Japan (Nakano 2000: 93).⁴³

Hōshi, the Japanese word to describe volunteering, is widely used both among religious organizations and *chōnaikai* [community organizations] to denote their social work. In contrast to *borantia*, which is associated with spontaneity, individual fulfilment and self-realization (Avenell 2010: 76), *hōshi*, is traditionally more related to notions of obligation and service to the community (Tsujiyama 2002: 8). Moreover, *hōshi* is associated with state intervention and responsibility to *kō*, the 'public' (Yoshida 1999: 25), while *borantia* refers to an 'individual who on his or her initiative helps others in a spirit of goodwill' (Nakano 2000: 93). For this reason, *chiiki borantia* [local volunteer] are now the words used among neighbourhood associations [*jichikai*] to designate those who take turns in cleaning public spaces, such as parks, sidewalks, and garbage collection sites, and organizing local festivals. Similarly *PTA borantia* is the name for those who assist the Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) in organizing various activities for school-aged children. All those activities, along with many others aiming at

community well-being, have been part of the community life for a long time in Japan (Yoshida 1999; Yamamoto 1999), thus confirming that the basic idea of social harmony and individual responsibility in creating a good society is well rooted in Japanese social ethics.

Although most existing studies on volunteering in Japan include women in their analyses, gender is often treated only as a variable, which means that the pattern of volunteering is assumed to be the same for men and women. However, as Nakano (2000) has observed, volunteer behaviour differs from men to women according to the social context and expectations. Most of the volunteer activities conducted by Japanese women followers include, for example, organizational tasks during meetings and events in the centres, food and meals preparation during the religious services and ceremonies, preparing and sending relief goods for typhoon victims, supporting families in need, consolation visits accompanied by the donation of clothes and food to social welfare facilities, holding courses for young mothers on child-caring (Nakano 2000: 102-4).

In her study of the activities of a *fujinkai*, local women's associations, Tsunematsu (2004) maintains that feminist arguments of the negative aspects of women's volunteer work as unpaid and conducted in structured organizations in the public sphere, which is the domain of paid work, should not be underestimated (2004: 108). Historically, Japanese women have been working in the public sphere to boost family income and contribute to community welfare (Garon 1997: 115-44 and 207-30; Avenell 2009: 270). However, voluntary work is a peculiar form of labour, since it is not paid and it does not contribute to family income, although it serves for the well-being of the community. Taniguchi (2006) elicited the different effects of employment and family characteristics in volunteer behaviour between men and women. The author further shows in her recent analysis that income and socioeconomic class influence the level of exposure to volunteering (2010: 5). If, on one hand, wealthier Japanese people may be pressured to volunteer more regularly because of the social expectation that the wealthy would take the initiative in helping others (Taniguchi 2010: 6), only women with financial security of income of other family members can engage in such activities (Tsunematsu 2004: 109).

In examining the Japanese volunteer sector, Nakano (2000) observes how women often discuss their decision to volunteer in contrast to the expectations of a family caregiver or as supportive for the family income by doing a part-time job (2000: 95). However, since *borantia* has become a socially recognized identity and an accepted part of the national policy, popular consciousness and everyday vocabulary, as discussed in the Introduction, women may choose volunteering in order to both develop the self and contribute to society (Nakano 2000:

93).⁴⁴ For those whose social role has kept them outside the primary avenues of public recognition in society, volunteering may serve as alternative means of achieving meaning, status and organizational affiliation (Nakano 2000: 95). Conversely, for those who are satisfied with their contribution to public life, volunteering may serve as a supplement to the ways they already participate in society. In both cases, volunteering for both men and women represents a combination of mainstream duties, breadwinner for men and family caregiver for women, and personal interests (Nakano 2000: 104). Therefore, women tend to take on a volunteer role once they have fulfilled mainstream expectations as wives and mothers, making evident how institutional structures influence the choice of volunteering.⁴⁵

3.3.3 The logic behind Japanese women's social engagement: the tradition of maternalism

Focusing on the interrelation between gender consciousness and leadership, Etō (2008a) categorizes post-war women's movements into three types: elite-initiated movements of feminists; the second wave participatory feminist movement; and participatory non-feminist movement (Etō 2008a: 121-35). In line with Ehara's analysis that feminist activities have hardly had any influence outside their circle (Ehara 1990: 8), Etō points out that non-feminist women's groups have mobilized more women and involved a wider range of people in their activities than have the feminists (Etō 2008b: 45). According to the interpretation offered, the reason lies in the low participation of women in the labour market, which occurred in the 1970s when the women's liberation movement appeared in Japan (2008b: 46).

The ideals of self-sacrifice, obedience and family-centred duty inherent in the model of femininity prescribed by Imperial Japan (the period spanning 1890-1945) were the background for the full-time housewife feminine ideal of post-war Japan (Dales 2009: 14). The full-time housewife model acted as a complement to the *sararīman* [salaried worker] and epitomized the modern feminine ideal, but also the sole road to upward mobility for women (Ueno 1987: 81). Working outside the home was a divergence from the domestic ideal and working women were seen as low class (Dales 2009: 17). However, the rapid economic growth required women to participate in the workforce whenever their family duties were not a priority, that is, before marrying and after child-rearing (Ueno 1988: 175). As a consequence of such irregular participation to the labour market, Japanese women were scarcely aware of the unfairness of the gender division of labour, and, therefore, less prone to take social action to gain equal opportunities and wages. At the same time, the cultural tradition of motherhood maintained its influence on Japanese women's consciousness and attitudes (Etō 2008b: 46).

Borrowing a concept from social movement studies, such social and economic conditions surrounding Japanese women provided the political opportunity for the emergence of ameliorative movements indifferent towards feminism.⁴⁶ More fundamentally, the role of mother has largely influenced non-feminists' consciousness and attitudes toward involvement in civic activities.

Sakurai Yuko (1990) maintains that Japanese society values women for their status as mother, which entails self-sacrifice and altruism and, therefore, legitimizes women's involvement in social movements when they aim at protecting their kin (1990: 138). According to Fujita (1989), the motherhood discourse in the 1800s that further idealized the deep-rooted tradition of maternalism developed in the Meiji era (1868-1912) and during imperialist Japan encoded three main aspects: 1. the mother as the ideal caregiver; 2. the mother-child relationship as essential and natural; and 3. mothering as the most suitable job for women (Fujita 1989: 72). According to Long (1996), these three dimensions are modelled upon three key strands: 1. a focus on physical comfort, translated into a total dedication and physical attention to children and husband; 2. a stress on harmony and minimization of conflict in providing care; and 3. the inherent value of the 'totality of the caring experience' (Long 1996: 160). Cultural analyses of Japan have often focused on the maintenance of harmony and the avoidance of conflict inherent in Japanese society (Nakane 1970; Hendry 2003: 43-6 and 203-4). Such analyses concentrate on the traits of endurance and self-sacrifice best represented in the mothering role (Iwao 1993: 138). Dales comments that the self-sacrificial demands of child-rearing may also incorporate an implicit long-term contract between mother and child: mother's dedication for the child in young age will be returned in the form of caring for the mother in her old age (2009: 23).

Because of the idealized primary caring role of women, any other activity that does not relate to this care, such as paid work, are viewed as secondary priorities (Long 1996: 162). Entering the labour market with a part-time job may be seen as contributing to the logic of care for the family in that it contributes to the family budget in order to pay, for example, for children's very expensive education (*ibid.*). However, Dales insists that since part-time work actually detracts from women's physical capacity for care-giving, it remains counter to the feminine ideal (2009: 23).

On the other hand, during the economic growth period of the 1970s, the idea of taking up the role of full-time family-carer rather than entering the labour market with a full-time job was also influenced by negative perceptions of the highly competitive workplace and the career path available to women (Dales 2009: 21). Therefore, opting to become a housewife rather

than entering the labour market was read as an exercise of agency (Dales 2009: 21). In the Japanese context, such agency conveying adherence to traditional motherhood, known as 'housewife feminism' (Dales 2009: 22), conflates care with self-fulfilment, ostensibly averting tension between self-actualization and femininity (Long 1996: 162). Because of their constructed and entitled role as caregivers and moral custodians of the future through child-rearing, women are imbued with the rights and agency that those roles convey (Johnson and Lloyd 2004: 27). Therefore, women's engagement in activities outside the family, which tends to be organized to protect family and facilitate improvements in policy and practices in education, environmental and social issues, is legitimized and expected by society. Gelb (2003) calls them 'housewife activists' (2003: 33-5) and LeBlanc (1999) characterizes their collective activities as 'a housewifely movement' (1999: 121).

Hasegawa (1991) asserts that, because of the primacy of the caring role, it is easier for Japanese women to speak out as mothers than as women, but this makes them 'second-class citizens' whose voices are socially and politically neglected (1991: 52). Nonetheless, non-feminist women's groups' success in mobilizing a large number of people stands as testimony to the strategic ability of women to downplay the mothering logic for 'practical gender needs' (Moser 1993: 40).⁴⁷ A significant example of such non-feminist women's groups is Life Club Cooperative Society (Life Club in short) where mainly middle-class housewives engage in a consumer movement with parallel community activities promoting environmental protection and welfare services.⁴⁸

An example concerning women's volunteer care work for the elderly and disabled, as well as childcare is also worth mentioning here. As discussed in the Introduction, women are the majority in caring work and the most popular providers volunteer social welfare services of groups developed since the 1980s (Itō 1993; Avenell 2009: 270; Ueno 2011: 112-19). Avenell explains in his detailed historical analysis of the 'resident participation-style in-home welfare service groups' [*jūmin sankā-gata zaitaku fukushi dan-tai*] that these voluntary-based welfare activities have been often incorporated in the government's policy schemes (2009: 268). When, in 1990, the central government transferred the administrative jurisdiction on social welfare services for the elderly to the municipal governments, the solution to the problem was eventually left to local families, especially female family members (Etō 2002: 190). Etō reports the case of the small village in Akita Prefecture (northern Japan) where an organized women's movement to support a new social welfare plan for ailing elderly people was put forward in 1994 against the government policy scheme. The project received the consent of

the majority of the population and it was eventually approved by the municipality in 1996 (Etō 2002: 190-6).

Other forms of women's movements are represented by the women's anti-nuclear movement, and a more recent case of women's activities developed after the Great East Japan Earthquake and the related nuclear fall-out from Fukushima nuclear plant. In explaining the gender orientation in the anti-nuclear movement in Japan, Hasegawa (1991) indicates that after the disaster at the nuclear power station in Chernobyl in 1986, Japanese mothers feared the effect of nuclear fallout on their children and reacted against the risk of nuclear power (see also Sakurai 1990). Those women's groups were community-based, but could reach organized forms influencing wider society by collecting funds to publish their concerns in two national newspapers and a weekly magazine (Hasegawa 1991: 47-8). Recently, a similar women's mobilization occurred soon after the nuclear fallout from the Fukushima Nuclear Plant as a consequence of the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011. Mothers with elementary school-age children in Chiba prefecture organized a sign-in campaign asking the local authorities to perform a daily check for nuclear contamination of the water in their area. They also put pressure on the Board of Education to reduce activities outdoors and suspend sport activities such as swimming.⁴⁹ These mothers' groups, which are locally-based, put pressure on the local authorities, but the means, methods, and strategies adopted to reach their goals express the capacity of mobilizing structures as in the form of social movements.

Some feminists criticized women's collective activities, such as the Life Club, for their essentialist feminine logic assuming the gender division of labour as a natural fact (Etō 2008a: 135). However, Japanese scholars maintain that even radical feminists could not distance themselves from the logic of motherhood (Ehara 2000: 87; Ueno 2002: 162-3). In the 1980s the feminist academia revived the 'motherhood debate' by questioning how much support should the state provide to mothers (Mackie 1997: 86-9). Such debate centred around three issues: how motherhood should be valued; whether women's participation in the labour market could really liberate women; and how mothers could balance work and childrearing (Ehara 1990: 11-21). The nature of these themes reveals clearly that Japanese second-wave feminists could not distance themselves from the deep-rooted tradition of motherhood.

In summary, a rooted motherhood discourse appears to enable non-feminist women to engage in effective collective activities in the community and the potentiality of their success resides in the appeal of the maternal role they manifest. When considering women engaged in faith-based volunteer groups, this argument seems to prevail on religiosity in terms of its social impact. If we approach women as agents of social change through their involvement in

faith-based volunteer activities, then we should also assess whether faith-based volunteer groups can be accounted in the form of associational life that scholarship defines as civil society. This argument is discussed in the following section.

4. Grassroots women in faith-based volunteer groups: questioning participatory democracy and empowerment

4.1 Locating grassroots faith-based volunteer groups in civil society

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, because of the overall correspondence between the times of development, the range of issues, and the extent of public intervention, Hardacre (2004) maintains that a concept of civil society is pertinent when examining religious organizations. Therefore, she comments

it will be useful for social scientists to consider religious groups as one kind of organization in civil society, and useful also for scholar of religion to view fluctuations in the religious world alongside changes in civil society as whole.

(Hardacre 2004: 411)

Calhoun (2001) argues that civil society entails the organization of social life on the basis of interpersonal relationships, and a system of exchange linking people beyond the range of intimate family relations and without reliance on or direction by the government. As mentioned in the Introduction, the situation in Japan has changed in the aftermath of the Aum shinrikyō sarin gas attacks in 1995 and the state monitoring of religious organizations has increased since the introduction of the so called 'New Aum Laws' in 2000 (Hardacre 2003a: 149-50). Still, so long as they do not violate public morals or the public welfare, religious organizations are recognized as self-governing bodies with which the state should not interfere (Hardacre 2003a: 138). In this parlance, if civil society refers to a part of society located beyond the ties of kinships and local authorities as Calhoun signifies, and between the state and the market outside the scope of state control (Hardacre 2003a: 141), then faith-based volunteer groups should be legitimately considered as one type of voluntary association composing civil society. Therefore, the analysis should explore the 'space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks – formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology – that fill this space' (Walzer 1992: 89).

Avenell (2006) offers a comprehensive review of the development of civil society arguments in Japan in the early post-war period (1945-1970) and traces the rise of new civic movements from the 1970s (Avenell 2009). Pekkanen (2006) has shown that Japanese civil society,

defined as the 'organized, nonstate, nonmarket sector' (2006: 3), counts a comparatively conspicuous number of groups. However, Pekkanen views Japanese groups as enjoying little political identity to develop advocacy, while Tsujinaka (2003) emphasizes that the expansion of what he calls 'not elsewhere categorized' (NEC) groups such as 'civic' and 'semipublic groups' (2003: 91) since the 1980s demonstrates an 'increasing pluralization and growing maturity in Japan's civil society' (2003: 115). The majority of those NEC groups are listed by Pekkanen as 'other civic groups' without legal status and are reported to be as many as 598,000 out of the roughly 1.6 million groups in Japanese civil society overall (2006: 30). Most of the religious community-based volunteer groups belong to this category of "other civic groups", although with the passing of the NPO Law in 1998, some of them are now incorporating as non-profit organizations.⁵⁰

Avenell (2010) also elicits how the understanding of contemporary Japan's new civic movements as a voluntary sector independent from the state has been shaped by the state itself by tailoring policies to provide material, financial and logistical support for independent groups, especially in the domain of welfare and education. According to Avenell, legislative developments from the late 1990s, such as the NPO Law (1998) and Long-Term Care Insurance Act (2000), broadly enhanced service-oriented volunteer activities while marginalizing, or simply ignoring, politicized or contentious volunteering (2010: 90).

Many women involved in faith-based volunteering are engaged in a variety of activities dealing with issues like eldercare, childcare, care for the disabled and environmental protection. They are characterized by a small-scale organization and a typical proposal style (Avenell 2009: 272) in relating, working with, sometime resisting or even manipulating institutions. For these reasons, faith-based volunteer groups could be defined as 'community-based movements' (Etō 2008b: 44). Following Etō's definition, community-based movements are initiated by members living in the same community where they become aware of problems and needs, and respond to them through their everyday volunteering (ibid.). Volunteers employ local resources, share equal responsibility and transform private concerns, such as eldercare or childcare, into collective issues. Because they aim to change the existing conditions for the better, they put forward initiatives challenging the established structures and existing institutions. Their collective activities, therefore, can be counted as social movement activities without the trait of 'contentious politics' (Hasegawa and Machimura 2004: 20) that has long been attributed to social movements.⁵¹ As Hasegawa and Machimura contend, since the 1980s social movements have lost their contentious style, although there are a few exceptions such as protest movements against globalization (ibid.).

Scholars, however, tend to hold different positions as to whether and to what extent voluntary associations, such as non-governmental and non-profit organizations, charity groups and community groups, can play a real role in civil society. Critical theorists maintain that civil society is a site of resistance and emancipation, and, therefore, favours social movements as best matching the role (Chambers 2002: 96). On the other hand, liberal theorists count any form of voluntary activity as equally important in terms of participatory democracy. Walzer (2002) asserts that all the different interest groups, including religious congregations, serve as sources of ideas and sometimes of activists for some future forms of politics, even if they regard themselves as apolitical and take no part in everyday political debate (Walzer 2002: 39).

In this respect, this study is in line with the liberal approach and views faith-based volunteer groups as sites facilitating participatory democracy and as potential sources of political awareness. Women volunteering for faith-based groups in elderly day-care centres, nursing homes or organizing childcare activities become aware of new problems that the government has overlooked or has still failed to consider. By complementing the extant services and proposing alternatives, women engage in practical activities that may have some future influence on the government's agenda. Therefore, counting faith-based volunteer groups as community-based movements contributing to the community's well-being helps to delineate their democratic function within civil society. Ginsborg suggests that civil society's aim is to make 'the society of modern democracies more civil' (2005: 133) by creating an

area of social interaction [...] to foster the diffusion of power rather than its concentration, to use peaceful rather than violent means, to work for gender equality and social equity, to build horizontal solidarities.

(Ginsborg 2005: 133)

This definition helps to introduce a further argument that will be discussed in this dissertation: the potentiality of faith-based volunteer groups, as a form of civil society, to be sites for reforming gendered perspectives and promoting gender equality. In order to eradicate stereotyped perceptions of gender roles, and gender and age gaps, the White Paper on Gender Equality 2009 similarly attaches importance to cooperation and collaboration in civic collective activities (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 49). According to the White Paper, participation in local community life allows individuals to establish a network of diversified entities in various fields and cultivate participants' awareness of gender equality by finding solutions to a variety of specific everyday problems (ibid.). In this respect, the boundaries between women's movements with feminist orientation

and mixed gender volunteer groups with no specific feminist agenda become blurred. In this parlance, women engaged in faith-based volunteer activities may fulfil their social and religious endeavours by contributing to society, as well as generating new values and raising awareness of the need for social reform and promoting equality. If this is the case, then this study proves that it is worth challenging the paradox of linking empowerment and social change with religious settings that tend to be connoted by conservative gendered practices. Women's belonging to a religious group becomes a resource for broader meaningful images of self and the social, rather than normative sites preserving conservative views of gender as claimed by most extant studies on women's religiosity, as discussed in the first part of this chapter.

In summary, approaching women's faith-based volunteering as an expression of civil society helps to rationalize the democratic potentiality of women to create the needed form of association and agency that can supplement or provide alternatives to extant services and gendered actions bringing new issues onto the public agenda. This approach does not ignore the ideological influence that religion may play, as discussed in the previous sections. However, it suggests that faith-based volunteer groups operate for what contributors deem as the public good as defined in the local community. In these terms, they need to be accounted for in the form of associational life that scholarship defines as civil society, not integrated but in a compensational position toward ideological religious discourse. Women's engagement in faith-based volunteering is viewed in this study as a vehicle for democratization to the same extent of many other community-based movements.

In order to assess the actual potentiality and impact of such phenomenon, one argument needs to be further examined: the assessment of the outcomes of their volunteer agency in terms of empowerment.

4.2 Grassroots women and volunteer social work: questioning empowerment

Most studies on women's position in Japanese society have mainly focused on sociological examinations of their potential but constrained social participation affected by the controlling power embedded in gender structures, corroborated by cultural traditions, institutions and ideologies that strengthen their limitations (Lebra 1984; Kondo 1990; LeBlanc 1999; Rosenberger 2001). Scholars in the political and economic area seem to agree with such observations, often concluding that, in spite of legislation guaranteeing equal workplace opportunities and influences from international discourses likely to increase awareness of political participation, Japanese women have achieved little in the way of public power (Pharr

1981: 6; Iwao 1993: 214-41; Rosenberger 2001: 99-121; Etō 2008a: 117; Takeda 2008: 197). Scholarship has tended to measure women's empowerment by analyzing data related to women's participation in politics, attainment of corporate positions and representation in the media.⁵² From a quantitative perspective the number of Japanese women in leading positions and actively involved in national public discourses may indeed raise a legitimate concern. The male-oriented political community and the established men's networks in Japanese politics hinder women's prospect to become politicians, even if they wish to stand for elections. Tsujimura (2003) maintains that both the government and political parties in Japan have not yet undertaken any positive plan to lessen the political disadvantage women suffer, in contrast to many EU countries and, for example, South Korea that have recently introduced a quota or parity systems to increase female candidates in elections (2003: 9).

While the government should provide women with institutional channels from above in order to facilitate democratic participation (Iwanaga 1998), women can as well exert practical influence on society and politics by engaging in social activities at the grassroots level that can bring about improvements in everyday community life and society through non-institutionalized channels. Voluntary welfare activities offer one of the gateways for becoming aware of the socio-political structures and develop a political consciousness. In these terms, empowerment discourse may help to explore what occurs in volunteer social work practice.⁵³ As suggested by Gutierrez, Parson and Cox (1998): 'as a philosophy, approach or method of practice, empowerment provides one way to rethink social work practice' (Gutierrez et al. 1998: xix). In order to understand whether empowerment occurs in faith-based volunteer activities, this section considers a conceptual framework by combining key concepts of women's empowerment in feminist literature and the theory of empowerment in social work.

One initial observation should be discussed before examining empowerment and assessing whether it is relevant in understanding women's agency in faith-based volunteer groups. Women volunteers do not necessarily engage in volunteer work to empower themselves and they may not understand their ameliorative contributions as empowering the recipients of their actions. Therefore, when analyzing women volunteering in faith-based volunteer groups, it is important to understand the facets that may relate to a concept of empowerment practice without depicting women's activities in such a way respondents would not recognize themselves in the study. While bearing this in mind, research on grassroots women's social activities should help in clarifying whether empowerment discourse is a valid approach when studying women's grassroots social engagement.⁵⁴ It is suggested here that women's community-based activities may develop a type of women's movement different from typical

feminist activism and the forms of empowerment this entails. Women engaged in everyday welfare activities, or those who support the homeless or become involved in cleaning the streets, rivers and parks, do not see themselves as 'feminist' and do not aim at enhancing women's position in society. In the case of faith-based volunteer groups, women often comply with a religious organizational structure where men tend to dominate the majority of leading positions. In summary, for the most part women do not participate in collective activities contributing to society to empower themselves. However, as a by-product of everyday volunteer practice, where women engage in interpersonal relations, problem-solving discourses interfacing with institutions and getting individual confidence and capacity, they can ameliorate their status and bring about social change. In these terms, the process of empowerment is likely to be unpredictable, and hardly measurable, depending on the volunteer groups' dynamics and its spontaneous response to social needs, institutions, and socio-political environment.

Therefore, in order to evaluate whether empowerment occurs for women engaged in faith-based volunteer groups it is necessary to establish a conceptual framework. According to Gutierrez and her colleagues (1998), the empowerment process involves four components (1998: 4-5):

1. a critical review of attitudes and beliefs about oneself and one's socio-political environment;
2. the validation of one's experience through collective experience;
3. an increased knowledge and skills for critical thinking and action;
4. the action(s) taken for personal and political change.

In social work, empowerment occurs on three levels: personal, interpersonal and environmental (Gutierrez et al. 1998: 8).

1. On a personal level, it entails thinking self-critically in order to develop feelings and perceptions regarding one's ability to influence or resolve the issue at stake. Such critical thinking entails individuals evaluating critically their own potentialities in relationship with the socio-political environment within which they are located (Gutierrez et al. 1998: 4). In so doing, they can develop a feeling of individual control to affect larger social systems (ibid.). Feminist researchers working in the empowerment discourse in developing countries have also recently incorporated social and political factors, including institutional environments, into their studies (Charmes and Wieringa 2003; Mosedale 2005; Diener and Biswas-Diener 2006). Such a component is defined as an "opportunity structure", which is a concept borrowed from social movement theory.

Approaching faith-based volunteering from the perspective of “opportunity structure” highlights that altruism fostered by religious belief by itself cannot be conducive to social commitment if the individual lacks the potential to conduct a critical review of her potentialities in relation to the context where she is located. This observation helps to shift the focus from the prevailing role of religious ideology to the individuals’ critical capacity for evaluating her circumstances.

A concept of “resources” is inherent in the evaluation of the individual’s potentiality and its relation with the socio-political environments. Resource is defined by feminist researchers as the context where choice occurs (Kabeer 1999: 435-8), being not only the immediate access to material, human and social resources, but also future claims to them (ibid.). Material resources such as economic assets and intellectual resources such as education, as well as knowledge, information and ideas, are likely to be influential in women’s empowerment. In her analysis of Japanese non-feminist participatory movements, Etō (2005) maintains that most activists in groups such as the Life Club can be characterized as non-working married women, the so-called housewives [*shufu*], who enjoyed the education to see social problems which arose from their everyday lives as political issues (Etō 2005: 316). After their children had grown up, the housewife could spare time to join community activities, while living expenses are provided largely by their husbands, whose incomes are above average (ibid). In their case, economic stability, education and time were essential resources enabling women to engage in problem-solving campaigns.

Religion may be counted as one resource in terms of doctrinal precepts, social networks and shared knowledge (human and social capital, in sociological terms). In exploring the meaning of women’s empowerment, Batliwala (1994) maintains that ‘control over ideology is the ability to generate and sustain specific sets of belief, values, attitudes, and behaviour’ (1994: 129). In a religious context, women’s capacity to make use of the religious ideological aspects in order to achieve their philanthropic goals may be viewed as a form of control over ideology rather than uncritical indoctrination. Not all women belonging to a religious organization engage in volunteering; therefore, those who actively join the volunteer groups exercise choice and channel their ability to sustain specific sets of belief, attitudes and behaviour for that purpose. In Kabeer’s words, such exercise of choice entails agency, which is defined as the content of the choice, ‘including processes of decision-making, as well as less measurable manifestations of agency such as negotiation, deception and manipulation’ (Kabeer 1999: 435). She also considers the meanings, motivations and purposes that individual bring in their exercise of choice as agency.

2. The second level of empowerment suggested by Gutierrez and her colleagues is interpersonal empowerment. In collective activities, the individual and the others recognize shared experiences and such recognition legitimates the individual experience, as well as increasing the tendency to look beyond the personal, thus raising consciousness of the surrounding world (Gutierrez et al. 1998: 4). Collective experience can motivate the individual to seek change beyond the personal level toward other systems, such as the community (Gutierrez et al. 1998: 5). To a certain extent this concept overlaps with the idea of social capital through which individuals establish a certain degree of trust favouring civic commitment (Putnam 2000: 116-7). Gutierrez and her colleagues, however, emphasize that in the process of mutual sharing and support, individuals can learn to think critically about the internal and external aspects of a problem (Gutierrez et al. 1998: 5). Participants can identify macro-level structures and their impact, as well as explore how they have acquired their values, beliefs and attitudes, and how these affect the problem (ibid.). The authors define this process as consciousness-raising, through which participants learn to place problems in a socio-political context and see the roots of social issues. Anticipating one finding that will be discussed later on in the dissertation, this argument proves particularly significant for most respondents surveyed for this study, as they claim that by volunteering they have learned to think critically, learned to look at the larger picture and to locate the specific problem in the context of macro-structures.

Feminists also consider relational empowerment to be a critical aspect of the empowerment discourse. Rowlands (1997) explores the concept by means of three dimensions: personal, relational and collective empowerment. Personal empowerment is defined as 'developing a sense of individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression' (Rowland 1997: 15). Relational empowerment is defined as 'developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decision made within it' (Rowlands 1997: 14). Relationships with men are an important element for women engaged in collective activities, as it may bring about changes in gender relationships, which may be seen as a manifestation of empowerment (Batiwala 1994: 129-30). Collective empowerment is defined as 'where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone' (Rowlands 1997: 15). As discussed above, women who engage in faith-base volunteering may not be motivated by the degree of empowerment they can develop through active participation. However, following both Gutierrez et al. and Rowlands' definitions, internal dynamics and activities may empower members because of their relationships and collective action.

3. According to Gutierrez and her colleagues, the third level of empowerment practice occurs on the environmental level, focusing on societal institutions that can facilitate or thwart ameliorative efforts (1998: 8). Feminist researchers have similarly adopted an idea of “structural availability” in explaining the circumstances surrounding women’s struggles and their involvement in activism. Narayan (2006) maintains that ‘societies are always stratified to a greater or lesser degree’ and these ‘social political structures’ will mediate empowerment outcomes (Narayan 2006: 9).

The issue for this study is to understand the structural availability where a religious component plays an important role, and how such availability changes over time, according to the place women are situated and according to women’s needs. At the same time, by examining women’s practice at the micro-level of the individual’s action, this thesis focuses on the ‘reflexive action (praxis)’ (Gutierrez et al. 1998: 5) through which women can ‘develop action strategies and cultivate the resources, knowledge, and skills necessary to influence internal and external structures’ (ibid.).

According to the above-mentioned theorists of empowerment in social work, the struggle for the actualization of values guides both consciousness raising and action. The strategies and dynamics to reach the goal include activity in four dimensions: personal; family and peer groups; service delivery systems; and political structures (Gutierrez et al. 1998: 14-8). These dimensions are closely interrelated and serve as a continuum of consciousness raising and agency, taking place with the recipients in a situated socio-economic and context.

In summary, in order to evaluate whether empowerment occurs for women engaged in faith-based volunteering, a study needs to address both the process and the outcomes in terms of interpersonal (knowledge, skills, assertiveness, problem-solving, access to resources) and intrapersonal (self-awareness, critical thinking) outcomes. These two levels of outcomes should be intersected with the evaluation of community outcomes, defined in terms of the ability to make a contribution, taking control of a problem and acting for it, and the involvement in policy-related activities with the local authorities. In discussing the findings of the surveys conducted in Japan, this thesis will attempt to take into considerations these elements in order to evaluate whether empowerment occurs in women engaged in faith-based volunteering.

Summary

Three main sets of studies have been explored in this chapter:

1. literature concerning women's religious experience, its relationship with organized and institutionalized religions and its influence on women's social life;
2. investigations on volunteering and the influence of gender;
3. scholarship exploring women's social engagement, examining it as an expression of civil society and as a potential site of empowerment.

The review of the extant sociological studies on religion in contemporary Japan and the literature on religious contribution to civil society reveals an overall lack of research concerning the large presence of women engaged in faith-based social work at the grassroots level and the social significance of their active participation in terms of identity and social participation. The reviewed literature relating to the above arguments has raised a number of key points relevant to this study.

Firstly, a point of analysis concerned the role that religion can play in reinforcing and legitimating dominant power interests, as well as becoming a resource for groups with little social power. The review of the extant literature in this area reveals that the debate has gone beyond patriarchy, suggesting a view of religions as offering conceptual and institutional spaces for gender roles to become fluid. As such, religion can be counted as a site where women can broaden their understanding of the social and the political, which is an approach that is valued in this study.

Secondly, the review of extant research on gender in Japanese religions and that concerning the contribution of religions to civil society reveals that both types of studies have been oblivious of each other's core investigations. Works on women and Japanese religions have highlighted the high female membership rates and the significance of their activities in Japanese New Religions. However, studies exploring charitable activities and social ethics sponsored by movements have mainly focus on well established NPOs working on projects on a large scale, counting gender as a variable.

Thirdly, macro-sociological analyses of Japanese civil society consider gender along with other socio-demographic factors and focus on the cultural specificities of forms and purposes of Japanese volunteering. The chapter explored the deep-rooted tradition of maternalism in the Japanese context, which helps to delineate the socio-cultural significance of women's volunteer activities as related to the social construct of their identity.

Fourthly, in order to construct a framework of utility to depict women's experience in faith-based volunteer groups as a form of community-based movement, the last part of the chapter explored religious volunteering by locating it within the scope of civic society.

Finally, the chapter reviewed a theory of empowerment in social work practice revealing the importance of identifying individuals' resources, as well as the influence of structural opportunities. Above all, it is the individuals' critical thinking in the form of self and social reflexivity that appears as a key process in enabling women to exercise agency and broaden the meaning of their social selves. These concepts will be central in designing the theoretical, as well as the methodological, approach adopted for this study. The following chapter will discuss them in detail by making an eclectic use of theories on social construction of identity, practice and performativity.

CHAPTER 2

Researching women's identity formation in faith-based volunteer groups: Theoretical and methodological considerations

Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical and methodological foundations for the present study. The first section examines the recent theoretical development in the field of sociology of religion, one that emphasizes the individual's everyday practice as a means to investigate social change (Ammerman 2007; Shimazono 2007). American sociologist Nancy T. Ammerman has suggested the 'everyday religion' approach in order to shift the emphasis from the role of religious institutions in society onto the individual's everyday life and practices. This stance enables researchers to explore the role of religiosity outside the religious institutions that inform the adherents.

The second section presents the theoretical toolkit adopted for exploring the process of identity formation occurring in the everyday practices of individuals in relation with religiosity, structural conditions and socio-economic settings. This study makes an eclectic use of "practice theories" drawing upon Giddens' theory of structuration (Giddens 1984, 1991a and 1991b), Bourdieu's logic of practice (Bourdieu 1977 and [1980] 1990) and Butler's idea of performativity (Butler 1990 and 1993).

The third section presents the methodology. This study is an example of qualitative research that sees individual action as always occurring within a framework of specific social relationships and cultural practices. Therefore, the research aims to portray women as central actors while giving due recognition to the conditions and structures enabling and constraining them. In order to do so, this study borrows a number of concepts from Actor Network Theory (ANT), which focuses on the actor's trajectories and shifts, and the consequences of such shifts in the framework where the actor is located. Such investigation requires framing the social field and networks, and the specific context where individuals act.

The third section then discusses the research design by presenting the rationale for the targeted groups, the research process, sampling method, methods of data collection (questionnaire, interview and participant observation) and analysis.

The chapter concludes with a consideration of the role of the researcher in investigating women in faith-based volunteering, acknowledging the interplay between the researcher and the respondents in creating situated knowledge (Haraway 1991: 183).

1. Theoretical considerations

1.1 *Religious belief and practice: the “everyday religion” approach*

Japan has long been known for its syncretism and religious pluralism (Shimazono 2004: 2) and the phenomenon of Japanese New Religions appears as a contemporary form of religious traditions conveying culturally available symbols and rituals that have informed Japanese people's life for centuries. However, those groups have also enhanced traditions and religious behaviours with more unofficial religious ideas raised by individuals' new expectations, intersecting multiple settings in which people create a life: work, family, leisure, education, local communities and nation. As result of this inherent transformation, religiosity is not anymore something solely managed by religious specialists to whom lay people delegate their soteriological purposes. It has become a dynamic religious culture in which religious belief and practice are shaped into everyday strategies of actions (Shimazono 2007).

As such, although the elusive presence of religious culture in the contemporary world may not reveal its actual influence on the individual and on the collective level, the effect on the social and political level of what people do with religion in their everyday life cannot be ignored. According to recent developments in social theory in the sociology of religion (Shimazono 2007; Ammerman 2007), social change emerges from the interstices which everyday practice goes through, and beyond, official doctrines and institutionalized religious roles, involving actors in movements between existing religious structures and emerging social practices occurring in a broader cultural and socio-economic setting where individuals are located (Ammerman 2009: 53). More often than not, actors are unaware of the change they are enacting and the effect that is newly produced, and ignore their potential power to modify the reality around them (Latour 2005: 58-62). This stance suggests that change involves many layers with intricate interactions and inter-dependences with non-religious actors and discourses that may play a heavier role than religiosity in individuals' action.

In view of the above, an analysis of faith-based volunteering should first and foremost avoid taking for granted the normative expectations informing the individual social behaviour that religion may impart to their adherents. In fact, the “everyday religion” approach suggests that the researcher should examine the dynamics underpinning the encounter between the religious organization and society (Ammerman 2009: 49). As Ammerman (2003) suggests, if we remove the ‘radical functional differentiation between religious and nonreligious (or between “public” and “private”)’ (2003: 217), we may be able to ask important questions about the circumstances under which religious identity and other narratives come into play. The focus on the interplay and social interaction allows for an understanding of how identities are

initiated, situated, structured and constructed in the blurred area between religion and civil society of faith-based volunteering.

This approach acknowledges the role of religious organizations in providing individuals with what Somers calls 'public narratives' (Somers 1994: 619). That is, religious organizations supply structured religious biographical narratives, establishing the common cultural language adopted by people to share stories, in order to create a community where, in turn, the individual can define her or his (religious) identity. As such, religions are important sites where individuals can find reassurance concerning their essential role in the world, build relationships and construct a mode of identity: they are, therefore, places creating widespread social arenas in which action (both religious and social) can occur (Ammerman 2007: 12).

Ammerman (2003) clearly points out that it has been common sense to assume that religion gives people a core identity that defines a person in all social settings (2003: 209). Sociologists of religion have invested heavily in the study of the significance of beliefs, doctrines and rules, on the one hand, and family, education, friendship and social networking (summed up as "religious socialization"), on the other, considering them both as a source of influence and influences for agency (Sherkat 2003). Religious belief has been seen as a fundamental worldview that shapes what people do, sometimes as a basic status characteristic like ethnicity and gender (Sherkat 2003: 163). Following Ammerman's (2007) theorizing, it is argued in this dissertation that religious identity alone cannot explain the action that is observed in the everyday practice, as in the case of women involved in faith-based volunteering. Women's faith-based volunteer practice should be embedded in its context, thus examining the way women use the institutions and the resources related to religious identity. The following sections discuss the components constituting identity and the 'socio-culturally mediated capacity to act' (Ahearn 2001: 112) that makes religion but one of the possible causal variables.

1.2 Theorizing identity formation: a matter of structuration, agency, practice and performativity

The fact that a significant number of Japanese women choose to become engaged in volunteering sponsored by religious organizations they belong appears to be indicative of at least three key issues:

1. we are observing a group of women located in a specific place and living in a particular span of time, thus sharing a common socio-economic, historical and cultural environment;
2. those women have been similarly cultivating a religious attitude related to their everyday life concerns;

3. they have all been brought together by a similar need of, and predisposition towards, ethical behaviour entailing altruistic actions.

In order to examine the above arguments and highlight differences and singularities among identities within the field of faith-based volunteer practice, this study draws upon a constructionist perspective to knowledge (Berger and Luckmann 1966) and social reality (Giddens 1979 and 1984; Bourdieu 1977 and [1980] 1990).⁵⁵ Accordingly, the analysis moves between subjectivities, with their individual narratives, and how they experience their identity by taking distance or approach available identities within the variety of social representations and expectations, and the institutional and state discourses available.⁵⁶ Rather than as resistance to internalized social norms or responses to externalized constraints, such conceptualizations allow for a distinctive approach to Japanese women's formation of identity: one that couples identity with agency in a generative process, where subjects are both an effect and a stimulus for further development of their selves.

1.2.1 Theorizing identity as practice

According to Giddens (1991a and 1991b) what people are, in terms of the formation of identity in the post-traditional order of modernity (1991a: 5), should be approached as a

reflexive project of self, which consists in the sustaining coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, [which] takes place in the context of multiple choices as filtered through abstract systems.

(Giddens 1991a: 5)

Giddens suggests that in such a process can be found many different connections between individual experience and abstract systems (1991a:7) and a trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future, for which the individual is responsible (1991a: 75). Two dimensions characterize the dialectical process inherent in the individual's reflexive project of self: structures, or rules and norms that shape people's practices; and resources made of what is knowable and available to individuals (Giddens 1984). The duality of structure that recognizes the social structure as both the medium and a by-product of human actions is theorized by Giddens as the 'duality of structuration'. The concept helps representing the social structure as a creative process where the individuals negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options and contribute to innovating those structures that once have shaped them (1984: 28).⁵⁷ Giddens' theorizing focuses on the construction of self as the individual's self-reflexive project where she or he chooses among opportunities that are homogeneously available to them. The individual's 'trajectory of the self' (1991b: 70) entails a 'reflexive project' (1991b: 75) of 'self-formation' (1991b:76), which may not be fully ascribed to a deterministic or

structuralist approach. Individuals go through a journey of discovery that implies a cognitive anticipation of the state of affairs to be realized in the future in conjunction with the influence of large scale social systems, institutions, culture and abstract systems (1991b: 7). As Giddens (1991b) states

the self [is] seen as a reflexive project, for which the individual is responsible [...]. We are not what we are, but what we make of ourselves.

(Giddens 1991b: 75)

Therefore the theorist recognizes the transformative capacity of subjects in their constructing process of self-identity. The trajectory of self-formation is, of course, not linear or predictable: in the case of religious voluntarism, for example, a woman may show a predisposition to such activity before affiliating with a certain religious group and vice versa; or she may develop her philanthropic attitude and practical life ethics along with her conversion story; or by devoting herself to the needy 'other' because of pre-existing narratives embedded in her contextualized environment.

From this point of view, Bourdieu's (1977) notion of *habitus* helps to illustrate the logic of practice inherent in a process of identity formation. Bourdieu defines *habitus* as temporally durable structures defined by a 'social trajectory' (Bourdieu 1977: 86). *Habitus* is a subjective but 'not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class' (ibid.). Bourdieu views the subject as engaged in practical action with and within the social in a 'doxic experience of the social world' (Bourdieu 1998: 22): the course of a mutually constitutive process between individuals and social fields endow subjects with particular sorts of knowledge and dispositions. The social is insinuated in the subjective not in random idiosyncratic ways, but in ways that are socially structured and carry a history with them (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 54). Socialized subjectivity, or *habitus* (1977: 72 and [1980] 1990: 52), is a sort of generative structure and embodies ways of being, which includes orientations, values and ways of behaving that are formed in interaction and dynamic relation with specific 'games' or social fields of practice (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 67). Bourdieu describes fields as structured contexts that shape and produce interactions and practices (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 67); and subjects' interactions with the fields as a matter of learning 'the rules of the game' (ibid.). *Habitus*, therefore, is not a matter of conscious learning or of ideological imposition, but is acquired through practice and is composed by a set of dispositions that incline subjects to act and react in certain ways. What is central here is the relationality of *habitus*, in that it makes sense only in specific local

contexts or fields, the “games” for which ‘the rules of the game’ equip individuals (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 67).

Using Bourdieu’s idea of *habitus* to explain volunteering, we may suggest that individuals acquire the habit of volunteering when they are routinely placed in social situations and relationships where they can develop social skills and dispositions needed for the volunteer work (Janoski, Musick and Wilson 1998: 498). Here lies the importance of a social practice perspective: it downplays the role of individual’s values and attitudes (e.g. the normative role of belief), in order to emphasize the binding role of practice. This view entails two interesting implications: firstly, that women who volunteer in a faith-based group may not have predisposition, or attraction, or faith-fostered philanthropic attitudes before engaging in social work, but some favourable individual and social circumstance might develop once they find themselves in the setting. Secondly, it suggests that women might ignore their potential power to modify the reality around them and might be unaware of the effects of their volunteering on their social identity.

Both Giddens and Bourdieu emphasize the importance of everyday practice through which individuals learn to signify themselves according to biographical experiences, occurrences and the dispositions that enable socialized subjectivities. The ongoing process of identity formation conveys the idea of self-actualization (Giddens 1991b: 78). This may be understood in terms of an individual’s ability to balance between the opportunity of potential new ways of being and the risk of breaking away from established patterns of behaviour (ibid.). This process implies the individuals’ ability to enact decisions that they favour among an indefinite range of possible different behaviour patterns (1984: 14-15). By doing so, people, as ‘knowledgeable agents’ (Giddens 1984: 281), show a degree of control of their own lives, a fact that, according to Giddens’ theory, accounts for both structural influences and the different levels and contexts in which power operates (Giddens 1984: 282). The power of putting forth new images of self, and expanding their behavioural choices, shows the agents’ transformative capacity (Giddens 1984: 15).

1.2.2 Theorizing identity as narrated and performative

The above discussion emphasizes the fluidity of identity, constructed upon the basis of an individual’s agency, and ‘the ways in which each encounter leaves the individual identity slightly (or radically) changed’ (Ammerman 2003: 211). However, in order to avoid the risk of over-emphasizing the individual capacity of action vis-à-vis the role of collective interventions, such as government policies and acts, and collective struggles informing the production and

reproduction of structure (Mouzelis 1989: 625), this dissertation suggests examining identities as both narrated (Somers 1994) and performative (Butler 1990 and 1993).

This approach implies that individuals constitute their identities through narratives constructed in the context of the discourses by which they are framed and formed (Somers 1994). Simultaneously, individuals are active agents enacting their subjectivities in the everyday practice constituting the narratives they are embedding (Butler 1993). Examining individuals as both narrated and performative enables the researcher to highlight the constitutive normative and generative aspects through which individuals appropriate and create meanings for their identity as well as their reality. From this point of view, giving a more varied and precise account of women's identity formation in terms of appropriated narratives, and the agency inherent in that process in terms of performatives should, therefore, more cogently elucidate the motivations and the ways in which they seize and transform structural and cultural meanings into resources for new modes of identity.

a. Narrated subjects

Narratives may be viewed as existentially and critically useful modes individuals employ to understanding selves and the world (Somers 1994: 617): they allow constituting experience in terms of rules and resources (Giddens 1984); construct subjectivities informing them of ways of being in specific fields of practice (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 67); and assure historicity that determines their formation and portrays the passing of time as well as the changing of cultural beliefs, their interpretation and use (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 56).

Narratives show the interrelations of events, ideas and individuals. Therefore, they provide an important framework for the organization of disparate experiences into relatively coherent structures (Bourdieu 1977: 86). These often invoke symbols and metaphors (or 'symbolic capital' in Bourdieu's terms; [1980] 1990: 112-21) for the explanatory or justifying purposes of the prevalence of some narratives over others. Thus narratives exist within discourses or fields of 'collective practice' (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 141) produced by institutions that allow styles and stories that operate and determine social roles. For this reason certain narratives are granted greater social power and status than others. For example, a narrative of a new religious movement created within the religious tradition is likely to be seen as more acceptable and credited with more value than one produced as new from a non-indigenous religion. This observation may explain the relative success of many Japanese new religious movements that share a lineage with traditional doctrines vis-à-vis Christianity that still

struggles to reach a membership enabling it to compete with others in the Japanese religious market.

Somers (1994) points out four types of narratives at play in identity constructions: ontological, public, conceptual and metanarratives (1994: 617). For the purpose of this study, only the first two will be discussed here.⁵⁸ Ontological narratives are the socially constructed stories that individuals carry as a way of orienting and emplotting their own life. They may be called personal narratives, in that people will fit stories to their own identities and will tailor reality according to their stories. In these terms, ontological narratives are social and interpersonal in that they exist only in the course of structural and social interactions. Ammerman (2003) calls them 'autobiographical narratives' that enable individuals to respond to each other and impart a certain trustworthiness and integrity to their action (1994: 213). Interpersonal relations sustain and transform these narratives into what may be called a sort of historicized narrative or, in Somers terms, 'public narratives' (1994: 619). These are cultural and institutional narratives attached to groups (e.g. "volunteers"; "full-time housewife", "working mothers") or categories (e.g. "religion"; "gender"). In order to gain understanding of their identities and their lives and to communicate that understanding to others, individuals narrate themselves and are narrated by others as subjects located within certain narratives of particular discourses that become mainstream narratives.

According to Calhoun, a crucial aspect of the project of identity formation is 'recognition' (Calhoun 1994: 20), that is, the interrelated problem of self-recognition and recognition by others. Recognition implies individuals' reflexivity, that is 'any capacity to look at oneself, to choose one's actions and see their consequences, and to hope to make oneself something more or better than one is' (Calhoun 1994: 20), an activity that is integrally related to issues of recognition or non-recognition by others.⁵⁹

Religious organizations are suppliers of public narratives as they create social spaces in which action can occur and provide individuals with 'religious biographical narratives within which the actor's own autobiographical narrative can be experienced' (Ammerman 2003: 217). Specific to the religious identity, however, is that enacting it implies a social interaction taking of a religious character which 'directly or indirectly invokes the co-participation of the transcendence or the Sacred Other' (Ammerman 2003: 216). In this parlance, faith-based volunteering could be counted as a religious action if the doer expresses the expectation of spiritual achievement related to their philanthropic action. Moreover, such expectation should be validated by the recognition of it by those interacting with the doer. Such a dynamic is not always demonstrable and quantifiable, thus suggesting that there is no *a priori* reason for

assuming that because of its philanthropic component, religious identity should be regarded as the driving narrative representing women's agency in faith-based volunteering. Following Ammerman's theorizing, it is necessary to account for religious identity as 'potentially part and parcel of the multiple narratives that shape all of social life' (2003: 217). In summary, in order to determine the presence or absence of religious narratives, an analysis needs to take into account 'ordinary episodes of social interaction' (Ammerman 2003: 217) and establish whether the individual recognizes it as religious, as well as whether the action is understood by others as conveying a religious character.

According to this view, the question of self-identity vis-à-vis narratives is a matter of understanding the social relationships in a given community, which is approached as a variable and not as a given site of identity. Specific social fields (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 67) produce standard narrative stories that act as constitutive modes for individual narratives, and which make demands upon any individual who comes into contact with the discourse. Bourdieu uses the term 'symbolic violence' (1998: 60) to describe the subtle domination exercised upon a social agent with his or her own complicity (Bourdieu 1998: 55).⁶⁰ However, in Bourdieu's theorizing, individuals are always subjects of praxis engaged in practical action, a stance that stresses reflexivity as an essential requisite to knowledge, thus suggesting the generative nature of *habitus* and the potentialities for creativity and change (McNay 1999).

Group, sub-group or personal identity should, therefore, be viewed as an expression of complex and interrelated issues. Each individual comes to hold several expressible identities, although within a given social field the acceptable range of diversity may be limited and, to some extent, normatively structured. In spite of this sort of structural limitation, personal experiences, the interrelation with webs of relationships in the community within which individuals are embedded, and the fluidity of networks, become a framework for self-interpretation and reinterpretation as well as further articulation of individual social identity.

On the other hand, if narratives are an individual's primary mode of accessing experience, then an experience which is not mediated by narrative interpretation becomes unintelligible to the community where an individual is situated. However, as Calhoun (1994) suggests, even though individuals represent themselves and are represented by others through discursive positioning and narrations, they are not fully cast by those narrations (1994: 20). Although some experiences and subject positions, like religious experience and belief can only be narrated in certain discourses and not in others to be intelligible to others, the intersection with different narratives may change how individuals perceive that experience and can effect what is perceptible. For example, an individual may find her philanthropic attitude best fitting a

religious narrative, thereby positioning her volunteering experience within a discourse where religious identity becomes the primary subjective representation. Conversely, religious identity may be evoked by individuals because they see it as an at hand representational form of self conveying a philanthropic component that others can easily recognize. In both cases, religious identity does not become the foundational narrative for their every-day life experience and it tends to blur individual representations by swinging as a pendulum of different available narrative modes.

In summary, while individuals and events are constituted through narrative, and narratives actively reproduce them, it is the individual's ability to use narratives and their level of creativity that will determine how experience is narrated, communicated and understood. From this point of view, narrative is foundational of self but not totalizing because there are always elements of everyday experience that will be creatively enacted when faced with factors which do not create a narrative. The recurrence of these incidents highlights the generative potentiality that the process of becoming self entails and the intrinsic performative dimension inherent in the process of the formation of identity.

b. Performative subjects

What has been discussed so far highlights how individuals express multiple stories and have many narrative identities available to enact. The intersectional character of identity, borrowing Goffman's (1959) words, is observable in Japanese women believers, who may be seen as narrating many stories of self at once: female in gender, daughter, mother, wife, believer, volunteer, part-time worker and so on. By acting within and between structures, across time and space, Japanese women cumulatively build up an identity and collectively shape the communality of which they are a part.

Identity, therefore, is not entirely reducible to a single narrative constituted in a particular social field or mainstream narrative. Following Butler's work in *Bodies that Matter* (1993), subjectivity (as it is called in the post-structuralist parlance) implies many subject formations that are not reducible to any one of them (1993: 188). The idea of identity as a performative construct suggests that individuals are an 'ongoing discursive practice [...] open to intervention and resignification' (Butler 1990: 33). In Butler's words subjectivity is effected and emerges over specific and contextualized moments of life, shaping a dimension of distinction from the others and yet establishing communality with a set of others similarly distinguished. Borrowing Ammerman's (2003) words, they are 'both structures that constrain future action and sites for continuous revision and improvisation' (2003: 212). A performative act, however,

is not quite the same as a performance, since it is not a bounded act that an individual performs self-consciously. A performative act consists of 'a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain and exceed the performer' (Butler 1993: 234) and are not completely the outcome of the individual's will or choice.

In order to trace the conditions of emergence of subjectivities, Butler suggests a genealogical analysis that implies the 'mapping of power relations that in the course of a genealogical process form a constructed effect' (1993: 245).⁶¹

"Genealogy" is not the history of events, but the inquiry into the emergence (Entstehung) of what is called history, a moment of emergence that is not finally distinguishable from fabrication.

(Butler 1999: 15)

Such analysis entails investigating the subject as the site of endless transformation and resignification, and its constituted character as never fixed but always in progress: 'the constituted character of the subject is the very precondition to its agency' (Butler 1995a: 46). She argues that the idea that there is a 'doer behind the deed' (1995b: 133) is a fictive structure set up for the purpose of morality (1995b: 135). In Butler's theorizing, the 'doer' is constituted in and through the action, and her theory aims precisely at capturing the sense in which signification and action are coincident. Individuals' agency is, therefore, located by Butler in the very instability of the subject. Borrowing terminology from Actor Network Theory, which informs the approach of this study, individuals signify themselves along the shifts and controversies they face (Latour 2005: 12).

All-in-all, in Butler's theorizing, identity can never be fully harmonized or unified due to the range of available potential and actual subjectivities, and the specific process of self-signification that each individual enacts.

Drawing upon such conceptualizations, this study concentrates on the examination of the instability of the subjects in their identity formation, looking for those transformative moments in which self-signification and agency are coincident. The emphasis will be on situations where an identity narrative may be enacted within one discourse but somehow disallowed in another, thus causing a sort of discursive clash that may lead to change in one's trajectory of self.

1.2.3 Gender as practice

The theoretical stance discussed in the previous section is especially important when approaching the concept of gender. Gender, as the social significance of what sex assumes within a given culture and society, is discussed by Butler (1993), who understands its

construction as a 'process of materialization that stabilizes over time' (1993: 9). In *Gender Trouble* (1990) Butler describes how gendered practices somehow solidify into a form that makes it appear to have been there all the time. Such theorizing helps in understanding gender identity as what concerns reified gendered practices in everyday people's lives and gender as a category of analysis. Such a dual perspective provides an avenue to avoid the sort of essentialism that risks taking for granted that gender exists beyond gendered practices. In this parlance, gender exhibits the duality of structuration suggested by Giddens (1984) in that individuals influence and are influenced by what is constructed by the social within which they are embedded. As Butler (1990) suggests, gender is essentially a performative notion in that it 'is performatively produced and compelled by regulatory practices of gender coherence' (Butler 1990: 23).

In view of the above, approaching gender as an everyday practice that appears as the natural way to see the world means to consider it as a system of actions that are widely recognized and historicized. As Bourdieu (1998) suggests, gender is a *habitus* (1998: 53) where gendering practices are readily recognized by societal members as features of a gendered institution that is both local and society-wide (ibid.). Outside or away from the gendered social field (e.g. outside the institution of the family or the religious institution maintaining or promoting gendered practices), those practices would not or could not be viewed or interpreted or understood as gendered. Similarly, some social fields may require specific practices that hold more relevant constitutive values as compared with gendered practices. For instance, in faith-based volunteering the 'rules of the game' (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 67) that promote a shared purpose of philanthropy may matter more than the sort of discriminatory determinism that gendered practices compel. This suggests that when some practices are distanced from the site of the gendered social field, and localized as in the case of grassroots religious volunteer groups, gendering practices may become secondary or optional actions that can be invoked or ignored during interaction.

Approaching gendering practices in these terms helps in accepting the notion that not everything women and men do signifies gender: it is because women and men are situated within gendered institutions (e.g. family, the religious group) that they can construct each other as gendered. Knowing when, where, and how men and women see and interpret each other and themselves as gendered, and when and why they do not, may offer a better understanding of how individuals construct themselves within and beyond gendered practices.

Giddens (1991b) suggests that gender can be partly defined as a sort of differential access to forms of self-actualization and empowerment (1991b: 6). In his view, institutions of late

modernity offer the possibility of emancipation, but at the same time they create mechanisms of suppression, rather than actualization, of self (ibid.). Still, patriarchal ideas, institutionalized and social expected roles are persistent social constructions that can be challenged as the ideology of class and race. Social and gendered identities are continuously produced, accepted, resisted, modified and fragmented. The continuous process of reflection and revision (Giddens 1991b: 52) that makes individuals negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options refers to decisions taken in the course of action followed under conditions of constraint (1991b: 6). At this level there can be agency, in the sense that people can accept, resist or counter constructions of identities, and be empowered and disempowered by them.

1.2.4 Agency as a means of change: a generative theoretical approach

Butler's notion of performative identities and Bourdieu's idea of the subject as constituted through everyday practices represent an attempt to go beyond both cultural determinism and a pure voluntarist model of self-determining individuals engaged in a process of identification. In practical terms, it allows focusing on Japanese women as subjects beyond their cultural specificity and beyond that sort of 'liberal' (Butler 1995a: 42) account of agency that equates it with subjective rational capacities for choices and self-determination. In these terms, approaching identity as both narrated and performative as suggested in this dissertation allows an exploration of individuals' agency as both effected and enacted by narratives, and individuals' struggle within and with available discourses in order to achieve self-signification.

Dealing with identity in these terms allows one to approach agency as an effect of discursive constitution of narrated and performative subjects. As Butler (1990) suggests, discourses provide the 'necessary sense of agency, the very terms in which agency is articulated and becomes culturally intelligible' (Butler 1990: 147). Along with Butler's notion of performativity, possibilities of agency and, therefore, change and transformation, lie in the very activity of repetition and identification (1993: 220). Agency is enacted in a process in which individuals are compelled to become involved, as long as they are constituted in and through the relations of power that occur in society (1990: 145). Butler thus locates agency in the 'possibility of variation and repetition' (ibid.), in the resistance of those various sustained social performances that constitute identities.

In these terms, agency may be found

paradoxically, in the possibilities opened up in and by constrained appropriations of the regulatory law, materialization of that law, the compulsory appropriation and identification with those normative demands.

(Butler 1993: 12)

The doxic experience (Bourdieu 1998: 12) serves to re-inscribe constraints into the symbolic and discursive structures that invest subjects with the meanings that individuals generate. The need for a performative reiteration of these symbolic norms highlights the extent to which they are not natural or inevitable and are, therefore, potentially open to change. Thus change arises from the constitutive instability of those symbolic and discursive structures that constrain and shape subjectivities.⁶² Following Bourdieu's theorizing, an idea of 'regulated liberties' (Bourdieu 1991: 102) might, therefore, better help to denote the complex relationship between the dominant (symbolic power and norms) and individuals, rather than a dichotomous logic of domination and resistance that may tend to simplify the composite nature of freedom and constraint that agency implies.

In Giddens' (1991a) view, this means to recognize the historical and social construction of agency, without denying individuals' responsibility for their actions (1991a: 75) or their productive role in the creation of their subjectivities along with their 'reflexive project of self' (1991a: 5). In these terms, subjects are capable of the active redeployment and renewal of discourses through which they are constituted. Therefore, while discourses both limit and enable the formation of subject positions, subjects inhabiting those positions reinvent discourses with each new action, in their individually unique way.

In view of the above, the close resemblance that Japanese women's faith-based volunteer practices share with gendered practices in other institutions, such as family or education, becomes more understandable when regarded in Bourdieu's terms of 'regulated liberties' or Giddens' notion of the reflexive project of self. Similarly, the sort of resistance to gendered practices arising within the context-specific social field of faith-based volunteering may be employed to assess women's transformative and generative capacity beyond the context-specific ground where they act, therefore, allowing for a wider view of change in society.

In summary, this study suggests a generative theoretical approach by exploring women's agency in their everyday activities of repetition and identification, while also focusing on their specific possibilities of 'variation on repetition' (Butler 1990: 145). The task is, therefore, finding the ways through which those women creatively appropriate and conform to norms and values in concrete practices, and how creative and innovative action detaches itself from its original conditions of enactment and may give rise to a set of new values, foregrounding further actions. The focus will be on the displacement of constraining symbolic norms and values, and how women 'deploy [those] controversies' (Latour 2005: 19) arising from such processes of dehistoricization and relegitimization. Such investigation will highlight how transformative effects of such a process become the source for change in their social identity.

This sort of approach forces us to attend closely to what happens in the empirical world of those women and leads us to observe their shifts, moves and controversies in order to study the meanings, intentions and practices through which they construct their life histories.

2. Methodological considerations

2.1 Framing the micro-sociological analysis: Actor Network Theory

Although it is hard to know exactly what makes individuals act, it is possible to define a list of features which are present when actions do take place:

- What common knowledge is shared which guarantees their coordination with the external social world (culture, rules, procedures, routines or conventions);
- What kind of competing agencies are at play (e.g. working woman, religious believer, volunteer, mother);
- What margins of interpretation can be possible during interaction, negotiation or discussion (e.g. mother vs. volunteer; working woman vs. religious believer);
- What actions allow for the production of possible states of the social world.

In view of the above, the task of the researcher consists of framing the actors and their relations during the transaction or negotiation where these agents express their preference or interest and proceed to evaluate the different possible decisions (Latour 2005: 41).

In order to conduct the micro-sociological analysis suggested here, this study borrows some core concepts developed in Actor Network Theory (hereafter ANT) (Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 2005). ANT makes it possible to focus on actors and their own stories as resource for the constitution of the social. At the same time, it offers the description of the network and how the actors involved are constructed and reconstructed by the relationships that tie them. The distinction between actor and network helps in defining the methodological approach adopted in this study to accomplish this task: narrative analysis will be the tool to explore actors' stories; and some concepts of network analysis will allow drawing a social map and describe its influence on actors' stories.

From a methodological point of view, ANT is based upon the combination of two approaches: social network analysis and actor analysis.

1. Social network approach implies the examination of network relations and connections made by actors and the patterns of relations developed by the targeted group.⁶³ For the purpose of this study the analysis will be focused through the

deployment of some major orienting concepts: embeddedness, density and centrality.⁶⁴ Tie-level is also a component that will be discussed in this study.⁶⁵

2. The second concept framing ANT is that of “actor”.⁶⁶ According to ANT, a group may appear as it is only because of its constant ordinary and extraordinary maintenance and negotiations that the heterogeneous elements temporarily enact in achieving an average level of consent and stability among all the elements (Latour 2005: 43). In this view, any actor may be equally important to be observed as any of them is entitled to perform an action that can have an effect on the whole group. In ANT parlance, actors may be both human (e.g. women, the religious group, facilities, local authorities, other networks) and non-human (e.g. experiences, ethic values, objects, place, time). Moreover, actors themselves are never conceived as fixed: any shift or move may transform their attributions, place and connection. Actors are flowing, circulating entities undergoing trials and their stability or continuity has to be obtained by other trials (Latour 1998). ANT focuses specifically on the instability, the changes and the controversies that the making and remaking of connections implies. A controversy is any disagreement between two or more actors, or any difference in the state of affairs that transforms both the connections and the actors themselves (Latour 2005: 23): that is, ANT is interested in pointing out what makes agency possible and what it provides.

With a crucial aim of this research being the exploration of what results in women engaging in religious volunteering at grassroots level in Japan and how this may be related to a process of social change, an empiricist epistemology employing a qualitative investigation based on ANT methodology will help to trace the interactions among the plurality of actors involved.

2.2 Research design and methods

An interpretative qualitative research approach has been adopted for this study in order to offer a coherent description of ‘the phenomenon within its context’ (Yin 2003: 5). Qualitative analysis emphasizes the importance of the context as informing individuals’ behaviours through historical, ecological, socio-economic, political, cultural and temporal conditions (Patton 2002: 190).

Qualitative research methods, such as questionnaire and interviews, as well as such critical ethnographic methods as participant-observation, are well suited to exploring the dynamics of grassroots level women’s religious voluntarism, understanding their feelings, ideas, values and changes. This study draws on qualitative data collected during fieldwork on volunteer

groups sponsored by Shinnyoen; Risshō kōseikai and the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. The characteristics of the organizations and surveyed groups will be examined in the following chapter. The remaining section of this chapter explains the rationale for the targeted religious organizations and outlines the research process, subjects surveyed, the data collected and the methods of analysis.

2.2.1 Rationale for the targeted religious groups

There are several important overall dissimilarities between Risshō kōseikai, Shinnyoen, and the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. The major element of the distinction is in the origins of the movements, with the Roman Catholic Church in Japan being a foreign import tracing its lineage to Western Christianity, while Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen being indigenous products of traditional Japanese Buddhism. The organizational structure is also a point of distinction between Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen vis-à-vis the Roman Catholic Church: the former are examples of mainly Buddhism laicism, while ordained clerical hierarchy characterizes the latter. Moreover, the relationship between religiosity and social engagement entails a different understanding. Japanese New Religions have a strong orientation in seeking salvation in this world (Shimazono 2009). Adherents are concerned about their individual and group life in this world and are actively involved in improving their lives. As a consequence, religions tend to awaken in individuals an awareness of their identity and promote integration through horizontal solidarity. In contrast, Catholics' advocacy of humanism is grounded in the message of altruism and *caritas* as proclaimed in the Gospels of the New Testament (Khoury 2002: 72). The significance of such messages fosters a belief that every Catholic should bear witness to Christ by engaging in Christ-like daily work and struggle for justice against poverty and discrimination, for which the doer will be rewarded in the next life after death.⁶⁷

Despite the broad dissimilarities examined above, Shimazono (2004) suggests that Christianity and Japanese New Religions can be discussed within the same context because of their historical and soteriological similarities. Firstly, New Religions and Christianity became influential religious forces after the Meiji Restoration, which guaranteed some religious freedom (Shimazono 2004: 7). Secondly, they are alike in being religions devoted to the salvation of the individual, although the function of New Religions and Christianity within Japanese society differs in their worldview and their ideas of salvation (Shimazono 2004: 11).⁶⁸

When it comes to a gender perspective, sociological observations also evince close similarities among them. Firstly, these religious organizations show a gender orientation, with women constituting the majority of members. Both Risshō kōseikai (Bunkachō 2009: 75) and Shinnyoen (Bunkachō 2009: 47) show a higher rate of female membership covering the role of teachers. Although there is no clear data on the male/female ratio for membership of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan, data on St. Ignatius Church in 2009 gives the number of 4.627 male and 9.339 female parishioners.⁶⁹ Moreover, the Apostolic Nunciature in Japan identifies the proportion of male to female adherents as one to three.⁷⁰

Secondly, all three movements show a significantly male-dominated organizational structure limiting women to mid-low organizational ranks, although constituting the majority of adherents in the group.⁷¹ That few women occupy positions of leadership in the groups' decision-making organs is a characteristic shared by both Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen. However, Shinnyoen distinguishes itself from Risshō kōseikai by having a married woman at the head of the organization, a fact that was expected to have an influence on women members' self-awareness and their views on gendered practices.⁷² Shinnyoen, therefore, was chosen to discern how female leadership may have an effect on women members' views of gendered practices, as compared with Risshō kōseikai that is still characterized by a majority of men in leading positions. The Roman Catholic Church is a traditional denomination of Christianity that imposes celibacy on its male-only clergy. There are no women in decision-making positions in the organizational structure, although women are the majority of church attendants and the most consistent in the church-sponsored grassroots level activities.⁷³

Finally, all three movements are fully engaged in social welfare activities in community-based social programmes. The following chapter offers a detailed account of a number of educational and health care facilities, foundations and volunteer groups the three targeted religious organizations manage under their umbrella. As for now, it is worth mentioning that the female orientation in the groups' membership has found a similar pattern in the surveyed volunteer groups, thereby suggesting a higher rate of female adherents engaged in volunteer activities.⁷⁴

In summary, from a sociological point of view, the rate of female membership, a tendency toward gendered practices and the level of women's social engagement are the characteristics that the three organizations share, beyond their essential differences in terms of ideological foundation and origins. These factual reasons, corroborated by Shimazono's theorizing about the historical and soteriological similarity between Christianity in Japan and Japanese New Religions, constitute the rationale for the targeted groups.

2.2.2 Outline of survey process

This study draws upon a survey conducted in Japan from October 2009 to February 2010. The survey was carried out with the initial cooperation of the administrators of the religious groups:

- the Chūō Academic Research Institute at Risshō kōseikai headquarters (Wada, Suginami District, Tokyo);
- the Center for Information on Religions at Shinnyoen headquarters in Tachikawa city;
- the head pastor at Saint Ignatius Church (also known as Kōjimachi Catholic Church) located in Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo.

The administrative staff of each religious organization offered important information on the history of the religious organization, organizational profile and details on activities sponsored by the group. They also provided a formal introduction to representative members of local volunteer groups and offered preliminary information on such matters. Any activity related to the present research work was conducted further to consultation with the head of the organization and subject to participants' consent and availability.

Requesting a formal introduction from the head of the institution was essential to initiate relations with lower-ranked representative members of the targeted groups. Religious organizations, and especially those ranked as New Religions, tend to be cautious about what information is given to the public.⁷⁵ Once lower-rank members were informed by their superiors that the head of the organization had agreed to support the research, they were happy to be involved in the study. Since the focus of this project was on volunteering and social work sponsored by the organization rather than religious activities and doctrinal issues, there was no proselytizing pressure to become a member of their organization. Furthermore, for the same reason there was no pressure from the top-rank staff on the local representative to select the most devout or zealous adherents as respondents.

A snowball sampling method was used for the selection. Three criteria were applied in the process:

- a. preference for an age range between 20 and 40 (the rationale for favouring this age range will be explained in the Chapter 4);
- b. the type of volunteer activity in which women were involved focused on social activities in the community rather than religious-related social tasks;
- c. the availability of the prospective respondents engaged in social work.

In general, both the administrative staff and the respondents were very collaborative and happy to contribute to an investigation with an academic purpose. Interestingly, lower-rank

members did not take the administrative heads' approval for granted: in the initial phase of the fieldwork they were very careful in checking the scope, ideas and expected outcomes of the research. Since the project was also sponsored by the Global COE Program on 'Gender Equality and Multicultural Conviviality in the Age of Globalization' (2008-2012) based at the Tohoku University,⁷⁶ respondents were very interested in the implications for government and non-government institutions, as well as the impact of the study in terms of their own contribution to community well-being vis-à-vis society and institutions. They were looking forward to giving their role in social work more visibility: for this reason they were keen to provide plenty of information on their activities, drawing their social map and giving further contacts for members or experts who could help with the research topic.

All-in-all, while the top-ranked staff's approval helped being quickly accepted by the targeted groups, the representative members of the local groups were crucial to start off the relationships with the grassroots members. Before beginning the fieldwork, introductory meetings with the local representatives of the volunteer groups were held with a sample of prospective respondents to inform them about the purpose of the fieldwork and planned research activity. Shortly thereafter, the research work was begun by observing some volunteer activities in order to become acquainted with regular volunteer members. After two months of participant observation, the informants were administered a questionnaire and interviews were arranged.

2.2.3 Subjects surveyed

A total of 82 women were surveyed:

- 34 Risshō kōseikai adherents: 19 attending Itabashi Church in Tokyo and 15 attending Kawagoe Church in Saitama;
- 29 Shinnyoen adherents located in Tachikawa city, western Tokyo metropolitan area: 16 respondents belonging to Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department- Youth Division and 13 members of Shinnyoen-sponsored Unicers Foundation;
- 19 respondents from Saint Ignatius/Kōjimachi Catholic Church (hereafter St. Ignatius Church) in Tokyo. Three out of 19 St. Ignatius Church respondents were ordinary people who had not converted to Catholicism.

The table below summarizes the number of respondents, the number of questionnaires administered and interviews conducted.

Table 2: Number of respondents, questionnaires and interviews

Number of respondents	Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association	Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers	Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department-Youth Division	Univers Foundation (Shinnyoen)	St. Ignatius Church (Roman Catholic Church)
Total number of respondents	34		29		19 (16 + 3 non religious members)
Questionnaire	15	19	16	13	19
Interviews	11	9	9	6	11

Source: author

The reason for targeting only one Catholic group, as compared with the two groups targeted for both Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen, is mainly based on the numerical difference in membership among the three religious organizations. As of December 2009, Risshō kōseikai counted a membership of over four million people, Shinnyoen added up to about 870.000 adherents, while the Catholic Church in Japan did not exceed 447.000 people.⁷⁷ With Tokyo registering the largest presence of Catholics, with the archdiocese of Tokyo hosting almost 30 per cent of the Catholic population of Japan,⁷⁸ the choice for the survey was based on this being one of the largest churches in the Tokyo metropolitan area. Accordingly, the number of Catholic respondents was more limited compared with Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen.

All surveyed subjects were engaged in community-based social activities sponsored by the organization. None of respondents was a professional social worker or specialist in social welfare, although some of them had prior experience of welfare activities or were currently operating in cooperation with community-based professional social workers. A few young women at St. Ignatius Church stated during the interview that they were not Christian or members of the religious organization, but had joined the volunteer group due to their interest in volunteering. Although they confirmed they were not interested in the church's religious message, they claimed that they shared much of the social thought promoted by the religious organization.

The purpose of surveying only women was to discern general differences between the three religious organizations and within a shared religious tradition (Buddhism) depending on age or location. Therefore, it is worth introducing here the domains of women's main volunteering.

Risshō kōseikai respondents were involved in welfare activities mainly targeting the elderly and disabled, cooperating with local eldercare homes and day-care centres, and organizing regular home visits for old people living on their own. Respondents from Shinnyoen-sponsored Univers Foundation were also largely engaged in activities targeting the elderly,

providing emotional care for the aged. Members of Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division dealt with fund raising, early morning clean-up activities, disaster relief training, environmental protection and clerical work within the organization. The majority of respondents from St. Ignatius Church in Tokyo were engaged in activities targeting homeless people based in the area around Yotsuya Park and Tokyo station, offering free meals and clothes, providing counselling service and support for health care, work and housing. A number of St. Ignatius Church respondents were also engaged in educational activities for children, language support for the disabled or foreigners, charity shows and safety campaigns. Most of the above-mentioned activities were attended as part of the participant observation process.

2.2.4 Data collected

a. Questionnaire survey

A multiple-choice questionnaire was administered to respondents (see Appendix 3 and Appendix 4). After being given ethical approval from the University of Sheffield ethics reviewer, a copy of the research project including questionnaire and interview questions was sent to the head of the organizations for initial review, acceptance and contribution. Upon receiving the consent from the head of the organization, the content of the questionnaire and interview questions were introduced and explained during introductory meetings with representatives of local volunteer groups and a sample of prospective respondents. Participants in the meeting were asked to give suggestions and advise on any necessary revision before starting the survey. Both top-rank administration and local representatives approved the original survey materials submitted and no amendment was required.

The multiple-choice questionnaire was the same for everyone surveyed. The questionnaire was composed of 50 questions that covered themes related to socio-demographic variables, perceptions of women's roles, attitudes toward voluntary activities and religiosity. The range of questions concerning gender perspectives were not included as a specific section of the questionnaire, but were spread throughout it.

The questionnaire was used to:

- collect socio-demographic data and information on religious socialization and attitudes;
- the participation rate of respondents members in social welfare activities of the organization;
- their opinion on the relationship between social activities and doctrine;
- their attitude toward social activism;

- their views on gendered practices, women's social roles and expectations.

The majority of the questionnaires were completed and returned on the same day when administered. Five questionnaires administered to members of Risshō kōseikai Itabashi church and four respondents of Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe church were returned by post.

In order to minimize any disturbance that the activities related to the fieldwork would cause, questionnaires and interviews were usually conducted during visits scheduled before or after respondents' own planned gatherings, social activities, meetings or events.

b. Interview survey

On the basis of acquired responses from questionnaires and subject to the respondents' availability, a sample of 46 interviewees was approached for follow-up semi-structured interviews:

- 20 Risshō kōseikai members
- 15 Shinnyoen adherents
- 11 St. Ignatius Church members

A list of interviewees is offered in Appendix 1. Five out of the 46 interviewees (two Risshō kōseikai members and three St. Ignatius Church respondents) were not initially administered the questionnaires.

Interviews with Risshō kōseikai members usually took place in one of the guest rooms at the churches. Some of the respondents were interviewed in the rooms at residential homes for the elderly or hospitals where they were volunteering. Interviews with Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division members were held at Shinnyoen headquarters in Tachikawa, while respondents from the Univers Foundation were interviewed at Univers Foundation Tōkyō office, also located in Tachikawa. Interviews with St. Ignatius Church volunteers took place at St. Teresia Hall inside the church building. Interviews took from thirty to fifty minutes, averaging about forty minutes per person.

Interviews were semi-structured, based on five primary questions:

1. women's views on religious volunteering and the significance of religious volunteering in their life choices;
2. the role of kinship and friends in decision-making, social networking and inter-relationships;
3. group activities and respondents' role in them;
4. meaning/understandings of their social identity related to social work vis-à-vis the community and the institutions they related with;

5. attitudes toward gendered practices, gender perspectives and expectations.

All interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the interviewees and notes were taken during the conversation. The order of questions and the amount of time spent on each question varied per individual. Interviews were translated from Japanese by the author.

c. Participant observation

In order to examine more closely the culture and practices of the faith-based volunteer group, this study used participant observation. According to the literature, participant observation enables the researcher to explore how a social group produces and is produced by social practices within it (Hoggart, Lees and Davies 2002). Therefore, participant observation allows for a broader perspective of a 'community' and the relationships within it (Valentine 2001: 44). Observation implies minimizing the impact of the observer in the social group and learning the language of the group that can facilitate communication with the informants during the interviews.

Yet, there are two sets of problems generated by participant observation as a methodology. In general, because the observer needs time to immerse oneself properly in a community, there is a tendency to focus on small groups. This fact raises the question 'to what extent can one generalize from the small group that one has studied in depth?' (Dowler 2001: 158). However, although approaching the production of knowledge from a non-feminist perspective, this study favours the sort discussed by feminist scholars: situated (Haraway 1991: 183) and specific because it represents respondents' voices (Knott 1995).⁷⁹

The second problem relates to investigating volunteers, which means collecting data while participating in the activities of the volunteer group. On many occasions participation ended up with volunteering together with the women who should have been the object of observation. The emotional bond that volunteering creates among volunteers enables the forging of close relationships and even friendships with some of the respondents. This allowed for an in-depth view of how volunteers interact with others, especially with the recipients and external actors, such as the local authorities and welfare officials. However, the proximity of the researcher to the observed may raise again the question of whether the data collected offer sufficient objectivity. It is argued here that since the main goal of this study is to examine women on the grassroots level through their practices, a close participatory perspective of their doings and feelings is essential in order to locate the potential new trajectories of self and the role of the researcher in this respect. Because of such a close position of the researcher to the observed during the fieldwork, Chapter 5 presenting accounts of individual stories and Chapter 6

examining the findings of the interview data are, where appropriate, discussed in first person narrative, thus including the researcher in the narration.

2.2.5 Methods of data analysis

The analysis of data collected consisted of three phases: questionnaire data analysis, narrative analysis (interview data analysis) and thematic content analysis.

a. Questionnaire data analysis

For the first phase, questionnaires were analyzed in order to define the socio-demographic profile of the respondents (Chapter 4). Some comparisons with general data are discussed to set the results within the broader context of Japanese society in order to find any macro patterns among respondents' characteristics.

The elements of analysis for the questionnaire data have been sourced from the extant literature on volunteering, as well as studies on the relationship between volunteering and religiosity.⁸⁰ The main theoretical arguments used for the analysis are presented here.

The literature suggests that volunteering may be explored as a twofold matter: 1. the individual resources that help to predict propensity toward volunteering; 2. the consequences at the individual and social levels that volunteer work brings about.

1. Individual-level resources

Family relationships, education, employment, social ties and religiosity are important elements helping to predict the propensity of an individual toward civic engagement.⁸¹

- Higher education levels increase the probability that individuals will engage in civic work, since education tends to heighten awareness of problems, increases empathy and build self-confidence (Wilson 2000: 220).
- Occupational status: part-time employees tend to volunteer more than full-timers because they can afford more free time than those working long hours (Musick and Wilson 2008: 168-70). Women who work part-time are more likely to volunteer than women who work full time (Taniguchi 2006).
- Family and social relations: there are more chances that one of the spouses volunteers if the other also does so. If only one spouse volunteers, it is most likely to be the wife (Wilson 2000: 225). Parents with young children tend to volunteer less than those with older ones, while school-age children correlate positively with volunteering since they help to forge social links to schools, sports organization and other youth-oriented NPOs (ibid.). Social ties may inform individual's interest on the nature of the volunteer work. For

example, family ties might encourage volunteering at a hospice, but discourage taking part in a civil rights campaign. Extensive social networks, multiple organizational memberships and prior volunteer experience increase the chances of volunteering (Wilson 2000: 223).

- Active membership in religious organizations encourages volunteering because religious teachings tend to stress the adherents' responsibility toward altruistic attitudes and charitable work (Musick and Wilson 2008: 278). However, religious belief is not sufficient by itself to foster adherents' voluntary action: social networks formed within and in relationship with the religious group seem to play a pivotal role in fostering adherents' volunteering (Musick and Wilson 2008: 279-84).

2. Effects of volunteering on volunteers

At the individual level, personal development, pro-social behaviours, increased level of trust and expanded social networks are the most recurrent effects claimed by volunteers (Musick and Wilson 2008: 39-110). Moreover, volunteer work often has consequences stretching beyond the individual and the voluntary group. Studies show that volunteering encourages good citizenship for a variety of reasons (Musick and Wilson 2008: 460-515). To mention but a few, volunteering

- helps to increase skills and cognitive capacities, such as the ability to understand social issues and other-regarding ethics;
- it fosters active participation in associational life, thus increasing the number and the range of people volunteers meet;
- it helps to learn more about local issues and local politics;
- it makes people more aware of the structural nature of social problems and the need for political solutions.

For the purpose of this study, Chapter 4 discusses only factors that the literature has found significant to predict volunteering at the community level.

b. Narrative analysis

For the second phase, narrative analysis was adopted as the method of interview data analysis. As discussed above, a narrative approach presents a "storied" account of experience and recognizes the value of individual stories in the construction of meaning. An individual "story" reveals what the subject deals with at the everyday level and interviews provide the account of informants' experiences and happenings, while also inferring the framework where the happenings occur (Reissman and Quinney 2005: 393-4). Among the

typologies of narrative analysis, this study favours the 'performative analysis' (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Liao 2004: 708), which analyzes the different features of the respondents' story: the actor's account of any happenings, the setting, the interplay with other actors and the group's response and moves (ibid.). The results are, therefore, presented in terms of giving selected stories (Chapter 5) so as to remain true to the participants' experiences as reflected in their own words, while also providing essential information on the respondent's setting and the socio-historical circumstances.

c. Thematic content analysis

For the purposes of greater coherence, the third stage of data analysis involved some aspects of thematic content analysis (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Liao 2004: 706). The analysis goes through all the interviews in order to 'create conceptual groupings, or themes, from the data' (ibid.) Themes are generated from the research questions, as put forward in this research, and complemented with further discussion applying the theoretical analytical stance adopted for this study. Focusing more closely on the research questions that drive this work, the discussion of the results (Chapter 6) allows for highlighting the contradictions or the relationships between themes.

3. Investigating women and social change: the role of the researcher

Adopting a relational and generative stance as a means of analysis requires the researcher to be situated in the context and content of the study. This suggests three main implications.

Examining faith-based women's voluntarism at the grassroots level with a focus on identity formation and social change in Japan may sound as somehow oriented, if not even biased, by Western assumptions about the cultural specificity of Japanese religion in informing women within the larger Japanese socio-economic and historical discourses that shape an individual identity. Moreover, using an ethnographic approach may suggest myopia towards the transformative power that the researcher exerts when participating in the daily life of targeted case studies, interviewing or taking field notes, filming and taking pictures.

Feminist theorists have strongly suggested that researchers should be aware of their situationality and how their findings may present a view that is constructed by both the larger social power structures of the informants and the power of the researcher's personality (Ramazanoğlu and Holland 2002: 158-9). This work concurs with Joan Scott's (1992) suggestion when saying that researchers cannot escape the power relations of their work, even when they seek a non-judgmental account of the informants' experiences (Scott 1992:

25-6). However, it is suggested here that power relations are not to be taken as given conveyors of meaning but should be explored as both extant and in-progress multi-layered controversies that informants and researcher experience in their situated space and time. Although this study does not have feminist aims, a standpoint notion (Harding 1993) grounded in women's perspective and experience, and interconnecting knowledge and power, seems the most appropriate approach in terms of the actor-network methodological approach exploring women through their narrative and performative practices. The researcher becomes a 'mediator' (Latour 2005: 39) as her presence is to be seen as relational to others, conveying inputs and outputs that may not happen without her presence. However, it will leave 'the task of defining and ordering the social [...] to the actors themselves' (Latour 2005: 23).

The implication of what studying religions entails should also be considered. In her essay on doing fieldwork with Japanese religious groups, Hardacre (2003b) points out all the debates, ethical dilemmas and disjunctures with the researcher's own philosophical or theological grounds, along with some resistance towards proselytizing sermons or uncongenial ritual practices that a European or American researcher on Japanese religions has to face. Since this study does not deal specifically with the respondents' religious views, the risk of facing any personal crisis or interpersonal clashes during the fieldwork was minimized.

The final implication concerns the generative theoretical approach discussed above. Such an approach implies a bottom-up perspective to public and private narratives intersecting and crossing the discourses, informing the context and the content of the researched groups and participants. Top-down analyses would favour socio-demographic factors as well as socio-economic aspects or national discourses informing mainstreams identities, thus emphasizing the context within which the "volunteer" becomes an alternative, yet media-informed, government-sustained, socially accepted identity. However, this work locates the source of social change in women's decisions about how to construct their lives negotiating personal inclinations, relationships with surrounding and institutional or ideological hierarchies. In these terms, the influence of the researcher's presence on women's doings and decisions on the spot or in their future cannot be ignored, as discussion with informants often involved comparison between Japanese and European styles, customs, policies and public services.

Summary

This chapter has dealt with two core themes. The first part discussed the theoretical orientation grounding the present study. The second part outlined the methodology and methods adopted for the examination of the case studies.

The first part explored the theoretical grounds for pursuing the goal of this research: arguing for a conceptualization of faith-based volunteering as a gateway for women's redefinition and production of newer trajectories of identity.

Firstly, this study aims at investigating how women form themselves in an everyday creative process, rearranging and recreating the elements in a negotiation of complex social relations, within a network of a faith-based volunteer group and other different fields of practice in daily life. In order to explore this in greater detail, the first section presented the 'everyday religion' (Ammerman 2007) approach, which suggests that the researcher should examine the dynamics underpinning the encounter between the religious organization and society by focusing on individuals' everyday lives. The emphasis on the interplay and interaction between the two arenas (religion and society) allows for an understanding of how women's activities are located in a blurred area between religious culture (Shimazono 2007) and civil society, and the consequences thereof.

Secondly, it explores the creative substrata of agency inherent in the process of identity formation by making an eclectic use of "practice theories". The second section discussed Giddens' theory of duality of structuration; Bourdieu's logic of practice; Somers' idea of narrative identity; and Butler's idea of performativity. In so doing this study focuses on individuals' creative potentiality in terms of their own identity by engaging in daily practices and interactions. Such a perspective moves beyond any assumption of the essential passivity of the subject, cultural determinism, or persistent dualisms of gendered identities and normative practices.

Thirdly, the chapter discussed women's agency as an innovative experience of appropriation of new modes of social identities, emphasizing the process of knowledge production and increasing social consciousness and participation. This helps in exploring women's agency as a creative process dynamically interplaying with power relations in contextualized fields, rather than a form of resistance or compliance to them.

The second part of the chapter opened with a discussion of the methodological approach. In order to conduct the micro-sociological analysis suggested by the theoretical approach, this study borrows some core concepts developed in Actor Network Theory (Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 2005). ANT makes possible a focus on actors and their own stories as resource

for the constitution of the social, while investigating the networks and how the actors involved are constructed and reconstructed by the relationships that tie them.

The research process was then discussed by examining its features in six sub-sections. This part of the chapter explained the reason for targeting Risshō kōseikai, Shinnyoen and the Roman Catholic Church as case-studies, emphasizing the sociological similarities among the three religious organizations. It gives information on sampling process and criteria, as well as the content of the study's questionnaire and interviews. It also outlines the notion of narrative analysis in the forms of 'performative' and 'thematic' analysis (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Liao 2004) as the main method adopted for the examination of the survey data.

The chapter concluded with an evaluation of the role of the researcher in investigating faith-based volunteer groups. This study acknowledges the "situatedness" of knowledge produced by focusing on small, grassroots level volunteer groups. In so doing, an emphasis is given to women's stories where broader narratives and discourses are inferred and intersected. In terms of implications for dealing with religion, since this study does not research specifically respondents' religious views and practices, the risk of incurring ethical and interpersonal clashes during the fieldwork was minimised. Still, the presence of a foreign researcher and the exchange of information which occurred during the fieldwork cannot exclude some influence on informants concerning their future decisions and choice.

With the theoretical and methodological toolkit ready for use, the following chapter enters into the specifics by offering detailed information concerning the targeted religious organizations and volunteer groups in order to prepare the context for the detailed analysis of the questionnaire (Chapter 4) and interview data (Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 3

Profiles of targeted organizations and volunteer groups: Shinnyoen, Risshō kōseikai and the Roman Catholic Church

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the basic theoretical and methodological foundation for the dissertation. Primarily, it examined the multi-level, fluid nature of identity and explained how to interpret the interplay between the process of identity formation and the social context where identity narratives develop.

The present chapter is structured into two parts. The first part offers an outline of targeted religious organizations: Risshō kōseikai, Shinnyoen and the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. This work acknowledges that religious identity may facilitate believers' philanthropic behaviour, as suggested by the qualitative works in the sociology of religion discussed in Chapter 1. However, in this dissertation the analysis of this component is limited to the individual-level behaviours that pertain to social engagement. Explicitly, women's attitudes toward faith and expectations toward spiritual rewards are not the core arguments of this study. For this reason, each targeted religious organizations is illustrated only in terms of those key doctrinal aspects, concepts and religious practices that are relevant to explain women's attitudinal and behavioural expectations in relationship with their volunteer work. Hence, the following sections should be regarded as concise presentations in the perspective of the specific topic of the present investigation and not exhaustive discussion in terms of the historical and doctrinal issues of each religious organization.

The second part of the chapter outlines the targeted volunteer groups. This study draws upon a survey of five groups, two sponsored by Risshō kōseikai, two Shinnyoen groups and one sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church in Japan. The presentation provides information about the location, the structure, membership, the range of social activities and the detail of those surveyed in the present study.

1. Outline of targeted religious organizations

The table below summarizes the characteristics of the three religious organizations as case-studies.

Table 3: Targeted religious organizations

Group	Year of Foundation	Religious tradition	Total membership (2009)*	Male teachers/Priests*	Female teachers*
Shinnyoen	1936	Lineage: Shingon school; Doctrine: <i>Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra</i> [The Great Nirvana Sutra]	869.780	10.641	43.380
Risshō kōseikai	1938	Lineage: Reiyūkai kyōdan (Nichiren school); Doctrine: <i>Lotus sūtra</i> and Fundamental Buddhism	4.089.176	19.864	63.190
Roman Catholic Church in Japan	Entered into Japan in 1564	Christian denomination	447.720	1.540	None

*Source: Bunkachō 2009: 47, 75, 77

1.1 *Risshō kōseikai*⁸²

Risshō kōseikai, the 'society for the establishment of righteousness', was founded in 1938 on the initiative of Niwano Nikkyō (1906-1999) and co-founder Naganuma Myōkō (1889-1957) after breaking off from Reiyūkai kyōdan.⁸³ Naganuma Myōkō had a distinctive role in the early period of the movement because of her shamanic powers.⁸⁴ The religious group has grown steadily since its foundation, initially because of the appealing power of Naganuma's shamanic practices on the middle and lower strata of society (Guthrie 1988: 21).

However, after the death of Naganuma Myōkō in 1957 the number of adherents decreased, also as a consequence of strong media criticism of the groups' proselytization activities.⁸⁵ As a consequence, through the leading role of Niwano Nikkyō, the group shifted towards an emphasis on doctrine and teachings [*hō*]: the shamanistic practices were gradually eliminated and the *Lotus sūtra* (*Hokekyō* in Japanese) was declared as the sole basis of the movement's religious activities (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 192-5). Stone (2003) suggests that this shift in orientation coincided with the increasing involvement of the organization in ecumenical activities for peace (2003: 69). It was against the backdrop of these changes that *Risshō kōseikai* became actively engaged in social activities both at the national and international levels (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 195) developing a network of members sharing daily religious tasks and cooperation activities at the grassroots level (*ibid.*).

The current leader of the organization, Niwano Nichiko (1938 -), who succeeded his father

in 1991,⁸⁶ follows his father's determination on disseminating the *Lotus sūtra* teachings and promoting interreligious dialogue and cooperation in order to promote world peace. Risshō kōseikai is involved in international religious cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church, as well as other denominations and religions (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 196-7). The relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Risshō kōseikai has been further consolidated through Niwano Nichiko's daughter, Niwano Kōshō, who has already been designated as successor in the leadership of the organization.⁸⁷ She has spent several years in Italy and established a close relationship with several Christian religious movements, especially with the Catholic Focolare group, with the purpose of creating initiatives to promote interfaith dialogue and collaboration.⁸⁸

Doctrine

Risshō kōseikai's doctrine puts great emphasis on following the Bodhisattva's way, a concept of Mahayana Buddhism that founder Niwano Nikkyō saw embedded in the *Lotus sūtra*.⁸⁹ Therefore, it is a new religion of the *Lotus sūtra* tradition, although it combines the One-Vehicle [*ichijō*] teachings of the *Lotus sūtra*, and *konpon bukkyō*, that is Fundamental Buddhism.⁹⁰ According to Mukhopadhyaya, the idea that all teachings are the manifestation of one universal truth indicates the universalistic aspect of the One-Vehicle teachings of the *Lotus sūtra* (2005: 250). The combination of the original teachings of Buddhism as taught by *konpon bukkyō* and the idea of doctrinal unity as emphasized by the concept of the One-Vehicle teachings of the *Lotus sūtra* provide Risshō kōseikai with a 'universal ethic' (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 253). The centrality of those guiding principles is the basis of Risshō kōseikai's social engagement and contribution to social welfare and civic society.⁹¹

Social ethic

In her analysis of Risshō kōseikai's social engagement, Mukhopadhyaya explains that members' practice of the Bodhisattva's way [*bosatsugyō*] (2005: 251-3) stems from the study of the *Lotus sūtra* and the founders' teachings, which entails the establishment of righteousness that gradually becomes a social practice (2005: 255).⁹² She suggests that the process can be understood as a continuum from religious-related activities (such as *hōza* meetings,⁹³ *michibiki* [proselytism] and religious practices), to social activities including family education, community volunteer activities, peace activities and others. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (see note 74), Mukhopadhyaya finds in her work that the majority of the participants in *hōza* meetings are women (2005: 270 and 444). She also sees a close relationship

between the participation in *hōza* meetings and participants' engagement in social activities (ibid.). As discussed above, the Risshō kōseikai doctrine emphasizes the practice of social ethics, so it is expected that women participants may feel motivated in initiating social activities to address problems in the local community that they have discussed in the *hōza* meetings.

Stone (2003) similarly indicates the hermeneutical perspective of the *Lotus sūtra* as embodying the ideology of peace given by Niwano Nikkyō as the foundation of Risshō kōseikai social engagement (Stone 2003: 69).

In view of the above, the role of Risshō kōseikai doctrine, which informs members with expectations toward the practice of social ethics in their everyday life, cannot be underestimated. The number of women members rendering day-to-day volunteer services and coordinating activities in order to strengthen community solidarity and improve the quality of life, as observed during the fieldwork conducted for the present study, is consistent with such doctrinal grounding. One of the goals of this study is to assess the consistency of this argument.

Activities contributing to society

Over the years Risshō kōseikai has carried out a variety of activities contributing to social life at local, national and international levels.⁹⁴ Further, the movement has been engaged in interreligious dialogue and cooperation for peace, collaborating with several international organizations and a variety of NGOs in order to pursue the goal of peace (Kisala 1992: 93-108).⁹⁵

At the local level, Risshō kōseikai churches are also involved in grassroots cooperation activities throughout the year, organizing events, fund raising and promoting the *Isshoku o ageru undō* [Donate a Meal Campaign].⁹⁶ In the late 1960s, Risshō kōseikai initiated the Brighter Society Movement, *meisha undō*, a Risshō kōseikai-sponsored non-profit organization active on the domestic level, through which Risshō kōseikai churches cooperate with local governments, welfare organizations and volunteer groups.⁹⁷

Facilities⁹⁸

Risshō kōseikai headquarters are located in Suginami Ward, northern Tokyo. The organization runs various facilities dealing with education and social welfare, most of them located in the headquarters area. Educational facilities comprise three Kōsei Kindergarten, one founded in 1953 located in the headquarters area, one in central Tokyo and one in Fukui

Prefecture; the Kōsei Gakuen founded in 1953 includes a primary school, a junior high school and a high school; the Kōsei Gakuen Girls' Junior and High School opened in 1995; the Kōsei Library was founded in 1953; the Kōsei Advanced Nursing School was founded in 1968; the Hōju Women's Vocational College (founded in 1968) educates young women in business and English language communication; and the Kōsei Home Training Institute founded in 1971, teaches mothers how to deal with everyday childcare and education. The organization also supports several cultural activities and runs the Tokyo Kōsei Wind Orchestra established in 1960; the Kōsei Gagaku Society, a group performing ancient Japanese court music and dance; the Kōsei Chorus; and the Kōsei Koto Players Group.

Health care facilities include the Kōsei Hospital established in 1952; and the Myōkoen, a caring home for elderly people founded in 1958. Among the institutions and facilities affiliated to Risshō kōseikai are: the Kōsei Publishing Company founded in 1966; the Chūo Academic Research Institute founded in 1969; the Kōsei Counselling Institute established in 1975; the Niwano Peace Foundation founded in 1978; and the Kōsei Cultural Association of 1984. It also runs a comprehensive cultural centre, the Fumon Kaikan (Hall of the Open Door), located just opposite the Daiseidō, Great Sacred Hall, which is the main centre of Risshō kōseikai's religious activities.⁹⁹ The organization also maintains a cemetery founded in 1951 where members and their relatives may ask to be buried.

Structure¹⁰⁰

The organization divides Japan into 26 districts comprising a total of 239 churches [*kyōka*].¹⁰¹ There are 56 churches abroad.

A church comprises several *shibu* or sub-branches, which are then divided into area-groups, *chiku-hōza*, units containing, depending on the area, a few or as many as several hundred households. Under the *chiku-hōza* are the *kumi*, groups of households, which are divided into the smallest organizational unit, the *han*, a section including family members of a few households. While Risshō kōseikai would not provide any statistics regarding the gender distribution of their religious leaders or adherents as a whole, according to the information collected from staff during the survey, the majority of *shibu* and *chiku* leaders are women aged forty and older.

Each church is headed by the *kyōkaichō*, a salaried member of Risshō kōseikai, who manages the church activities and supervises its administration. The church paid staff is organized into *sōmubu* [general affairs department]; *kyōmubu* [educational affairs department]; *shōgaibu* [public relations department]; and *bunsho fukyōbu* [cultural and

missionary work department] supervising the periodicals *Hōrin* [Wheel of Dharma] and *Daiamondo* [Diamond].

Members' organizational structure and social engagement¹⁰²

Members of Risshō kōseikai are tied to each other through the face-to-face relationship of *michibiki-oya* ("guiding parent", the spiritual guide) that establishes a close, family-like tie between an experienced member and a junior adherent. The religious parent-child relationships are formed regardless of the place where the conversion takes place and irrespective of the location of the convert's residence. The guidance work aims at spiritual development as well as advising, helping and giving practical or emotional support to the newer adherent. The relationships will continue for many years and the "children" will be taught how to recruit new members as their own "children".

Adherents are grouped according to their age and sex. Women members are also organised according their marital status. Members aged 39 and below belong to the Youth Division [*seinenbu*]. It comprises the *shōnenbu*, the children's section for boys and girls from birth to elementary school; and the *gakuseibu*, which gathers students from junior high school to university. Other young members who are not students, usually working people, are grouped by sex: men in the *danshibu*, men's section, and women in the *joshibu*, women's section. Married women aged 40 or older are grouped in the *fujinbu*, the Women's Division, which comprises also the *seinen fujinbu*, the Young Women's Division, for married women aged 39 and below. Single women aged 39 and older are categorized as *ippan kaiin*, ordinary member, while men members aged 40 and older are placed into the *sōnen-bu*, the Senior Division.

Members can engage in social activities promoted by their larger division and sections directed by Risshō kōseikai headquarters as members of the sponsoring volunteer groups, or contribute to their sub-brunch [*shibu*] and *kyōkai* [church] as ordinary members. International activities, for peace, disaster relief and other forms of assistance are organized by the head of the organization (Kisala 1992: 104-5). Activities promoted by the Brighter Society Movement are usually instructed by the head of the organization and then managed by the Public Relation Section of the local church. Social welfare activities and educational activities may also be organized on a larger scale in cooperation with other churches under the supervision of a sub-branch or just work locally based on the church. Grassroots level activities are arranged by *shibu* and *chiku* leaders [*chiku-shunin*]. To name some of those observed during the fieldwork: elderly care activities, such as home visits and assistance, activities for

environmental protection and education, fund raising, and childcare activities were organized and managed by members of the local church.

In terms of the ratio between the male and female memberships, it is not simple to specify the percentage of women in Risshō kōseikai since membership is calculated in terms of households. However, the male-female ratio among teachers as reported in the Religions Yearbook may relate to the male-female ratio among the whole membership, thereby suggesting a very high percentage of women adherents in the church.¹⁰³

For the purpose of this study, the high number of women in the organization, especially at grassroots level volunteer groups, the regular social contribution to community welfare activities, and the international engagement with other religions and specifically the close association with Catholic organizations, were regarded as significant when comparing Risshō kōseikai with Shinnyoen and the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, the announced transition to a woman at the head of Risshō kōseikai was also considered noteworthy for the present study in terms of the expected effects on adherents' view of women as well as on gendered practices.

1.2 *Shinnyoen*¹⁰⁴

Shinnyoen (meaning “borderless garden of truth”) is a Buddhist organization founded in 1936. Originally affiliated with the Shingon tantric school based in the Daigo monastery (Kyoto), it became an independent religious organization open to lay practitioners in 1943. The founders Itō Shinjō (1906-1989), who trained at Daigo monastery, and his wife, Itō Tomoji (Uchida Tomoji, 1912-1967), based their doctrine on the teachings of the Great Nirvana Sutra (*Mahāparinirvāna sūtra*, or *Nirvāna sūtra* in short; *daihatsu nehankyō* in Japanese).

Similarly to the case of Naganuma Myōkō in Risshō kōseikai, Shinnyoen also started with a female co-founder endowed with extraordinary spiritual powers. Itō Tomoji is actually regarded as the spiritual founder [*reiso*] of the movement. Her powers were regarded as quite strong and she was attributed with helping many people suffering from possession through her capacity to communicate with spirits. At the same time, her husband was able to interpret the meaning of her spiritual revelations through Buddhist prayers (Inoue et al. 1994: 117). This activity became the foundation of the *sesshin* (Usui 2003: 225), a form of meditation that consists of the interaction between the practitioner and the spirit world through the guidance of trained mediums called *reinōsha*.¹⁰⁵ Since then, *reinōsha* have given guidance through their *reinō* [spiritual power] on a wide range of issues, from questions about the doctrine, to advice

on individual problems and interpersonal relationships.¹⁰⁶

The current leader at the head of Shinnyoen is Itō Shinjō's third daughter, Itō Shinsō (1942 -).¹⁰⁷ She holds the rank of *daisōjo* [archbishop], the highest rank in the Japanese Buddhist clerical hierarchy. She is the first woman in the one thousand-year history of the Daigo Shingon esoteric school to have received the rank of *daisōjo*.

Doctrine

The core principle of Shinnyoen doctrine is the *Nirvāna sūtra*'s message that everyone, including lay people, can reach enlightenment.¹⁰⁸ Shinnyoen's doctrine aims at three spiritual goals:

1. realizing happiness for all mankind;
2. pursuing true world peace through refining the Buddha-nature innate in all human beings;
3. attaining the realm of *nirvāna* and liberation, and experiencing a joyful world by realizing permanence, bliss, selfhood and purity [*jōrakugajō*]¹⁰⁹ within this world, as it is said to be taught in the Great Nirvana Sutra (Shiramizu 1978: 215).¹¹⁰

These spiritual goals underline Shinnyoen's belief that 'one's concern should be not only with saving oneself but also with helping the others' (Nagai 1995: 305). Therefore, the Shinnyoen doctrine emphasizes that individual spiritual transformation entails contributing to others so that everyone can find the way to realize the four ideals of *jōrakugajō* preached in the *Nirvāna sūtra*, and attain the Buddha-nature.

Another key element in Shinnyoen doctrine is the belief in the spiritual world [*reikai*] where the deceased members of the Itō family (namely, founders Itō Shinjō and his wife Itō Tomoji, and the two prematurely deceased sons) dwell together with guardian gods who protect Buddhism (Inoue et al. 1994: 117). In particular, it is the two prematurely deceased sons that are said to take on themselves the sufferings and misfortune of members through the intermediation of mediums [*reinōsha*]. In this view, the spiritual training of *sesshin* (translated by Shinnyoen as 'to touch the essence'),¹¹¹ where members receive guidance and advice for personal problems, is essential to pursue the aims preached in the *Nirvāna sūtra*.

Shinnyoen practice and social action

According to Shinnyoen's doctrine, one's transformation is not only a matter of spiritual training, but entails a large degree of social engagement. The social connotation of one's spiritual transformation is well represented by the religious activities that members are

expected to perform along with the *sesshin* practice. In order to realize one's Buddha-nature, followers must undertake three forms of actions called *mitsu no ayumi* [three ways]: *kangi* [joyful giving] consisting of financial contribution to the organization; *otasuke* [proselytism]; and *gohōshi* [volunteer service] (Inoue et al. 1994: 342). While the *Nirvāna sūtra* gives the doctrinal ground to the followers' social ethics, *mitsu no ayumi* matter for the actual practice of it. Therefore, the social ethics of Shinnyoen stems from the doctrinal goal of helping the others to attain their Buddhahood along with practical activities of recruiting, giving and helping that are the pillars of the individual's spiritual training.

In addition to the *Nirvāna sūtra*, co-founder Itō Tomoji compiled the "Seventeen regulations for Women" [*josei no tame no jūnana jun*] teaching that a woman should be feminine, gentle, strong, unselfish, non-assertive and concerned for others.¹¹² In September 1998, during a general meeting with the Youth Division at Shinnyoen headquarters in Tachikawa, current leader Itō Shinsō discussed the value of her mother's "Seventeen regulations for Women" as a universal guide for self-cultivation that provides guidelines for male and female alike.¹¹³

Organizational structure

Shinnyoen promotes family members to leadership position, which explains the succession of Itō Shinjō's third daughter to the head of the organization. However, the current leader has no children, which raises a question of who will be the successor.

The present leader, Itō Shinsō, a married woman holding the rank of *daisōjo* [archbishop], is unarguably an example of peculiarly female leadership at the head of a largely male religious organizational structure.¹¹⁴ Below her in the organizational structure are bishops of various ranks, whose responsibilities include overseeing the various departments within the organization, from the General Affairs, to Doctrine Division, Public Relations, Publication Division and International Division.

Any Shinnyoen follower may achieve the rank of bishop, with no distinction according to sex. However, average adherents usually tend to stop after reaching the level of *reinōsha*, which by itself requires long training and is ranked in five levels: it usually takes ten to fourteen years to accomplish the lower grade of *reinōsha*.

Members' organizational structure

Similar to Rishō kōseikai, members of Shinnyoen are tied to each other by a family-like relationship: the basic organizational unit is the *suji*, the 'lineage', which consists of about one hundred households headed by a lineage parent [*sujiyoja*] (Inoue et al. 1994: 315-6).

A person can join a group only if she or he is introduced by an adherent who is, in that case, practicing their *otasuke* [proselytism]. When a person is introduced to Shinnyoen, he or she is automatically connected with a lineage parent and placed under the tutelage of the *michibiki-no-oya* [guiding parent]. The new member becomes *michibiki-no-ko*, the guiding child. The terms “parent” and “child” refer to the spiritual level of the follower rather than the age. The spiritual level is indicated, for example, by different colours of Buddhist stoles worn during home meetings and ceremonies at Shinnyoen centres.¹¹⁵ Adherents are grouped according to their age or their spiritual level. Ordinary male and female adherents aged 35 or below belong to *seinenbu*, the Youth Division. This includes *shotobu* for children up to the elementary school; the *chūtobu*, for junior school children; the *kōtobu*, for high school students; and the *gakuseibu*, for university students. Members aged 35 and over are grouped according to the spiritual level they have reached.¹¹⁶

The main activity of the *suji* is the home-meeting [*shūkai*] led by the *suji-oya* in cooperation with the local guiding parents. In these meetings members perform some religious rituals and discuss their religious life along with personal problems.¹¹⁷ The lineage parents supervise their practitioner’s progress in the study of the doctrine and advise on problems related to both their practice and personal issues. Ten to fifteen lineage parents [*suji*] are grouped into *bukai* [sectional groups] (Inoue et al. 1994: 316). Five to ten *bukai*, make up the *rengōbu*, a cross-sectional structure that is classified numerically: when joining Shinnyoen the adherent receives his or her registration code made of their *rengōbu* number, the *bukai* number and the name of the lineage parent. This identification is necessary when paying the annual fees, registering for a *sesshin*, asking for a memorial pray for ancestors, attending ceremonies at Shinnyoen centres and any other religious-related event.¹¹⁸ The head of each *rengōbu* is called *rengōchō*, a role that is usually covered by a member holding the rank of *reinōsha*.

In the spirit of Shinnyoen teachings, especially related to voluntary service [*gohōshi*], members regularly engage in several civic duties individually or in a group. According to the leader, Itō Shinsō, *gohōshi* is one of the three basic Shinnyoen religious practices, which is ‘an act of serving the Buddha through the giving of oneself to serve others, and an altruistic act’.¹¹⁹ The majority of adherents who have acquired the role of *suji-oya* are women aged between 40 and 60.¹²⁰ They spend a great deal of energy in listening to followers’ problems, thinking out possible solutions and encouraging followers as they try to enact solutions. As it is important to have the attitude of humbling oneself and serving others, they often suggest participating more actively in local volunteer work and organize several volunteer activities during the week.¹²¹ This advice and counsel interacts with general cultural expectations that

hold that women are more sensitive to emotional nuances and the details of personal situations, and, thus, are more desirable as counsellors (Usui 1996b: 13).

Based on the founders' teachings and their daughter's, Itō Shinsō, interpretation of Shinnyoen's doctrine, the organization makes no distinction in terms of gender both at the spiritual and organizational level. The role of bishop, monk, spiritual medium, teacher or lineage parent can be covered by both men and women without distinction.

In terms of the ratio between male and female members covering the role of *reinōsha*, there has apparently been a balance in the number of men and women over the years.¹²² In contrast to that, the number of women members covering the role of *sujioya*, the lineage parent, seem to exceed by far the number of men, although the organization does not record the exact number according to sex. A number of lineage parents are usually included as teachers in official statistical surveys. In 2009 the number of male teachers was reported as 10.641 and women teachers numbered 43.380, indicating that the vast majority of teachers in Shinnyoen are women (Bunkachō 2009:67).¹²³

Spiritual training and volunteering

In an article published in 2008 entitled 'The Spiritual Nature of Service Training', Liane J. Louie-Badua (program officer of Shinnyoen Foundation in San Francisco) and Maura Wolf (consultant to the Shinnyoen Foundation in San Francisco) state that learning to volunteer is a deeply transformative experience that develops 'potential for a spiritual awakening to new understandings' (Louie-Badua and Wolf 2008: 94). However, before Shinnyoen members can volunteer on behalf of their religious organization, they must obtain a *shikaku* [qualification] by attending the Shinnyoen-sponsored Buddhist institute Chiryū Gakuin.¹²⁴

All members can attend the Chiryū Gakuin, which trains adherents to nurture their spiritual level, become teachers, mediums and monks (Inoue et al. 1994: 174). Chiryū Gakuin teaches Buddhist doctrine, the history of Shinnyoen and how to perform Shinnyoen's ceremonies. It offers three levels of study. The first three years are attended by the majority of Shinnyoen adherents who want to engage actively in volunteer service [*gohōshi*] as part of their spiritual practice. In the first year followers study *shūyōka* [preparation]; in the second year they enter *honka* [regular course]; and in the third year they become researchers in *kenkyūka* [research section] (Inoue et al. 1994: 174). After completing the first three years, they are candidates for becoming teachers, which means they can do missionary work on behalf of the organization, and can also actively engage in *gohōshi* outside the Shinnyoen precincts.

In general, rituals and ceremonies are usually led by men, despite the fact that ranks of

monk are open to all without distinction according to gender.¹²⁵ Moreover, nearly all top rank positions in the organizational structure are held by men.¹²⁶ The lineage of the Shingon school, which holds a strict tradition of male clergy, is perhaps the reason behind the tendency towards male-centeredness in the Shinnyoen organizational structure and ceremonies. Since 1998, however, several women have participated in the *goma hōyō*, the fire ceremony for ancestor worship, indicating a trend toward an increased number of women in leading traditional ceremonies.

Social engagement¹²⁷

Shinnyoen does not run educational, health care and eldercare facilities in Japan to the same extent as Risshō kōseikai. However, several Shinnyoen-sponsored associations and foundations manage large-scale programmes dealing with environmental preservation, disaster relief, educational and cultural programmes and interfaith dialogue.

Social contribution activities cover five major areas.

1. Philanthropic activities: On a national level there are two groups: Shinnyoen Relief Volunteer (SeRV)¹²⁸ and Univers Foundation, which has been surveyed for the present work (the profile of this volunteer group will be presented in detail further in this chapter).

2. Educational activities: On an international level Shinnyoen manages the Lanka School, which provides a nursery school in Sri Lanka. The World Terakoya Movement [Temple School Movement] in cooperation with UNESCO World Terakoya Movement, through the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan, which provides women and children worldwide with literacy and numeracy programmes. The Cambodia Backpack Missions distributes handmade backpacks filled with stationery purchased in Cambodia, illustrated books and other items to elementary and junior high school children in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The International Scholarship Programs provide scholarships to underprivileged students around the world.

3. Cultural preservation: Shinnyoen contributes to music preservation through the 'Ancient Japanese instruments reconstructed from records in the Shosoin Repository' (<http://hibiki.shinnyo-en.or.jp>). It runs a project to restore and preserve the ruins of Angkor Wat in Cambodia and manages a photo art museum, the Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts (K'MoPA: <http://www.kmopa.com>).

4. Environmental preservation: Shinnyoen is working to restore the neglected broad-leaved trees of the Ome Forest near Tamagawa river, west of Tokyo (<http://www.omenomori.jp/>). It is

supporting reforestation in Gansu Province, China, and it is contributing to preserve the mangrove forests in Pakistan.

5. Interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue: The founder, Shinjo Itō, initiated a dialogue with Christian denominations, especially Catholicism by meeting Pope Paul VI. Shinnyoen now cooperates at the international level with other Christian, Buddhist, Islamic and Hindu representatives among the others.

In addition to the above, Shinnyoen has established or supported a number of foundations and organizations that promote education, health and economic empowerment for the underprivileged.¹²⁹

Moreover, adherents are regularly engaged in day-to-day grassroots volunteering, such as early morning cleaning, elderly care, helping disabled and community-based activities in cooperation with local governments. Several members of the two volunteer groups targeted for this study, Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department- Youth Division and Shinnyoen-sponsored Univers Foundation, were also active in such activities.

1.3 *Roman Catholic Church in Japan*¹³⁰

Roman Catholicism is a traditional denomination of Christianity brought to Japan by Jesuit missionaries in the middle of the sixteenth century (Miyazaki 2003: 4-6). Despite its long history in Japan, it was only after the Meiji restoration ensuring religious freedom that Christian denominations could become openly active.¹³¹ However, the initial expansion came to an end when the Meiji government began to recast the Japanese national identity based upon State Shintō. The emergence of nationalistic sentiments in the 1890s fostered a negative reaction to Westernization, restricting the growth of Christianity (Ballhatchet 2003: 38). At the beginning of the twentieth century the social consequences of industrialization and the rapidly changing economy created a favourable environment for Christian missionary activity, especially among the fast growing white-collar class concentrated in urban areas.¹³² This trend, however, was hindered again with the imperialist ideology of the World War II. Japanese Catholics did not enter in the debates about whether Christians could be loyal to the Emperor (Ballhatchet 2003: 42). For most of the Meiji period until the end of the World War II, the general trend of Roman Catholicism was to 'ignore political developments and movements for social reform in favour of building a community of believers centered on the priesthood and isolated from mainstream society' (Ballhatchet 2003: 42).

Similar to the trend of several Japanese new religious movements, Christian organizations

emerged from the aftermath of the war as a means of coping with the political, economic and socio-demographic changes, and the crisis brought by wartime devastation and the shock of the defeat (Mullins 1998: 23). Nevertheless, compared with indigenous new religious movements, Christian denominations have remained in a minority, with no more than one percent of Japanese church members (ibid.). Although, nowadays, Christian-style weddings and celebration of Christmas have become increasingly popular, the Roman Catholic Church is still a marginal presence in Japan.¹³³ Church representatives, both Japanese and foreign, have been critical of the spread of the usage of Christian rituals without requiring the individuals to engage in a serious faith commitment. However, they also recognize a positive effect as this trend may be a means to present Christian perspectives to people who would otherwise know nothing of the church.¹³⁴

Structure

The Roman Catholic Church of Japan is divided into sixteen dioceses, including three archdioceses (Tokyo, Osaka and Nagasaki), and 798 parishes.¹³⁵ The Church is run by a men-only ordained clerical hierarchy represented by twenty-four bishops, the apostolic nuncio (diplomatic representative of Vatican City) and 1.497 ordained priests.¹³⁶

Theology, liturgy, administrative and clergy structuring, religious promotion, cooperation with other religions and social involvement, follow the guidelines of the Vatican and operate according to the principles of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).¹³⁷ The Second Vatican Council brought about a deep reform within the whole system of the Roman Catholic Church. Among other things, it required the clergy around the world to use the native language of the host country in the liturgy (Latin was used before) and partake in a process of acculturation. Since then, churches in Japan have become more careful to avoid signs of syncretism and have started a constructive dialogue with different religious traditions that have a much longer history and larger membership.¹³⁸ The great reform of the Second Vatican Council, however, did not challenge the understandings of the relationship between men and women, the family and gender roles. Roman Catholicism is still permeated by a conservative stance maintaining the idea of men as preferred over women as authority figures in the family and religious institutions and perpetuating traditional gendered practices on the grounds of their religious doctrines (Raab 2000).

The diocese of Tokyo is by far the largest in Japan counting over 90.000 lay Catholics in it.¹³⁹ As mentioned in Chapter 2, although there is no clear data in terms of the male/female ratio of adherents, the Apostolic Nunciature identifies a proportion of one man to three women (see

note 69).

In local churches, women take most of the responsibility for practical matters, from parament and vestment arrangements, to directing choruses, organizing social activities outside the church, teaching at children and teenagers' Catholic afterschool, editing bulletins and newsletters, managing administrative work, organizing religious events and much more.¹⁴⁰ Women are also numerous in community-based social welfare activities, which are supported and fostered by local churches in Japan in the spirit of altruism promoted by the Roman Catholic Church.

Social ethics

The philanthropic mission that characterizes the Catholic Church and fosters its numerous charitable activities and volunteer groups, draws upon the belief that any act of charity and assistance for those in need is an act of love toward God: 'as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me' (The Gospel of Matthew, 25:40). Therefore, the very role of the Church is to strive for the temporal and spiritual happiness of all human beings (Khoury 2002: 115-7; Inose 2009: 205). It is in the view of this 'universal ethics' (Khoury 2002: 72.) that Christians have long put much effort into meeting people's physical needs through their charitable activities. *Caritas*, the altruistic love, implies both faith, which centres on belief of God, and practice, which is manifested in loving one's neighbourhood (Endō 2003: 343). Therefore, Christians' charitable activities should be counted as a mission contributing to human happiness deeply entrenched with the endeavour of bringing spiritual happiness through the message of salvation in Christianity (Khoury 2002: 455).

Facilities

In view of the above, although education is not normally considered as a form of charity, the intention of Christian educators in the domain of morality has been understood since the beginning as a form of altruism. The number of Christian-related schools and universities in Japan shows the degree of commitment of the Church in this task.¹⁴¹ To some extent, Christian educators' endeavour has been successful in fostering a process of indigenization of Christianity. A significant number of Catholics are former or current students, or staff of a Christian educational institution. St. Ignatius Church, surveyed for this study, for example, is linked with Sophia University, a private institution: a number of respondents were related to it.

Christian mission schools for girls and women have played an important role in modern Japanese history and culture, pioneering higher education for women since the 1870s (Seat

2003: 321). They also provided the highest levels of education for Japanese women until World War II (ibid.). Spae (1963) relates the higher number of religious institutions for women as the reason for there being a majority of girls' schools rather than boys' schools (Spae 1963: 27)

Charitable acts in the Catholic Church have historically been related to the reception of strangers, the care of the sick, the poor, the homeless, abandoned children, minorities and people on the margins of society (Khoury 2002: 116). In Japan, the social engagement of the Catholic Church covers four main areas: the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace; the Social Welfare Council – Caritas Japan; the Catholic Committee concerned with the Problem of Buraku Discrimination; and the Committee for the Settlement of Refugees (Inose 2009: 205). Activities are supervised by the Episcopal Commission for Social Activities, which works in cooperation with other religious, public, governmental and non-governmental institutions in order to coordinate social support toward people in need.¹⁴²

As of 2010, the Roman Catholic Church in Japan counts 23 hospitals, 8 clinics and 3 geriatric health service facilities.¹⁴³ In terms of social welfare facilities, the Church runs 234 nurseries for children, 204 elderly care homes, and 138 various facilities providing service for women, immigrants and the poor.¹⁴⁴ It also manages community centres, halls, dormitories, retreat houses, training institutes and research institutes for a total of 167 facilities dealing with foreign immigrants, discriminatory tendencies and peace movements.

Moreover, the Catholic Church in Japan is engaged in everyday voluntary work addressing day-to-day social problems. Local churches run several social activities helping the homeless, the handicapped, the elderly and people in economic difficulties. Volunteers provide practical (food, clothes and other essential goods) as well as emotional support.¹⁴⁵ These social activities are managed by lay Catholics with the financial and logistic support of their churches. According to the 2010 statistics released by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, 265.497 women and 174.894 men were operating as lay Catholics in Japan in 2010, suggesting a large majority of female lay Catholics in the active volunteer force.¹⁴⁶ However, it is not unusual that men (laymen or priests) are nominated as representatives of groups and movements.¹⁴⁷ Traditionally, women have remained in the minority in decision-making positions in the church, such as heads of committees and boards (Yamaguchi 2003: 317).

For the purpose of this study, it was considered significant to examine Catholic women's accepting attitude toward conservative gendered roles endorsed by a religion carrying mainly Western cultural values. Most Japanese become Catholic as adults, implying a personal choice, as compared with traditional Catholic countries, such as Italy, where christening (the

Christian ceremony by which a person becomes officially a Christian) is given soon after birth.

Therefore, it is assumed that Japanese Catholic women's views would help in ascertaining the influence of a belief maintaining traditional gender roles vis-à-vis socially expected gendered practices rooted in the Japanese social structure. In these terms, a comparison between the foreign-imported Roman Catholic Church and indigenous Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen was considered significant in that it would give information on the role of religions in building a stable conservative society and women's perceptions of their role in it.

2. Sites of study: the surveyed volunteer groups

This section contains a description of the five volunteer groups targeted in this study giving an account of their organization, goals and activities.

The targeted volunteer groups are as follows:

- two Risshō kōseikai-sponsored groups: Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association (Itabashi ward, northern Tokyo) and Kawagoe Church Volunteers (Saitama Prefecture);
- two Shinnyoen groups: Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department- Youth Division, an association belonging to Shinnyoen organizational structure; and one Shinnyoen-sponsored foundation, Univers Foundation, both located in Tachikawa city, west Tokyo;
- one volunteer group sponsored by St. Ignatius Church (Chiyoda ward, Tokyo) of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan.

Table 4: Sites of study

Religious organization	Surveyed group	Location	Membership	Number of respondents
Risshō kōseikai	Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association	Itabashi ward (northern Tokyo)	72 (2 men and 70 women)	19
	Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers	Saitama Prefecture	130 women	15
Shinnyoen	Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division	Tachikawa city	144 members (34 male and 110 female members)	16
	Univers Foundation (NPO)	Tachikawa city	123 members (18 men and 105 women)	13
Roman Catholic Church	Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama (St. Ignatius Church)	Yotsuya ward (central Tokyo)	40 members (women are the majority)	19 (3 non-believers)

Source: author

2.1 *Risshō kōseikai*

2.1.1 Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association

Structure of Itabashi Church¹⁴⁸

Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church is located in Itabashi ward, within the metropolitan area of northern Tokyo. This branch church was established in 1959, counting at that time four area units [*chiku-hōza*], with a total of about 5,000 households.¹⁴⁹ As of January 2010 it consists of eleven *shibu* [sub-branch] gathering 7,226 households led by 11 *shibu* leaders, 74 area leaders [*chiku-shunin*] and 549 local group leaders.¹⁵⁰

Church administrative staff manages seven sections: *sōmubu* [general affairs department]; *kyōmubu* [educational affairs department]; *shōgaibu* [the Public Relation Section]; *bunsho fukyōbu* [cultural and missionary work department]; the Youth Division [*seinenbu*]; and the *fujinbu*, the Women's Division. The church leader (in charge since December 2007) and four out of seven administrative staff, along with all *shibu* [area] leaders and local group leaders are women. Therefore, Itabashi Church is characterized by a significant number of female adherents in organizational position.

Itabashi Church social welfare activities and volunteers

Social activities for the community sponsored by Itabashi Church started in 1970 with some ten women from the local Young Women Division helping with *omutsu hōshi*, a volunteer activity where women fold hundreds of cloth nappies weekly for local elderly homes.¹⁵¹ This activity still continues with women volunteering *omutsu hōshi* for many local facilities including hospitals and clinics in Itabashi ward.

As of January 2010 *omutsu hōshi* was managed by Itabashi Women's Division leader in cooperation with the local government and it was attended by Risshō kōseikai regular volunteers, as well as occasional volunteers and non-adherents.

According to the Itabashi Women's Division leader (interview held on 20.11.2009), the activity is one of the many promoted by the church whose majority of members are women. In the interview the Itabashi Women's Division leader confirmed that although it is nominally sponsored by the church, volunteer members tend to work independently from it: they organize and schedule the work according to their own commitments and goals. She added that in terms of participants, they tend to include both Risshō kōseikai adherents and non-members living in the neighbourhood. Twelve women were counted at one of the *omutsu hōshi* meetings attended for the present study: five out of twelve volunteers were members of

the local *jichikai*, the neighbourhood self-governing body, which is also engaged in several welfare activities at the grassroots level. Two women had relatives hosted in the elderly home and five were Risshō kōseikai members.¹⁵² This figure represents the average number and a typical pattern of participants observed during the fieldwork.

Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association: activities and members

Helping the elderly is one of the main volunteer activities of Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association [*Itabashi kyōkai shakai fukushi iinkai*], which is a volunteer group established in 1999. About 50 women are regularly engaged with home visits, *yūai hōmon*, giving assistance to aged people living on their own. Other members volunteer on a monthly basis at local elderly facilities, helping the staff during lunchtime, bathing and recreational activities. As of January 2010, 12 women members were regularly engaged in the organization of social welfare activities, in cooperation with a total of 60 members (2 men and 58 women) who volunteer at regular basis. They target 270 households visiting an average of 135, and up to 170, every scheduled day. Regular members of the Social Welfare Association are helped by 150 occasional volunteers who participate in the activities on a weekly or monthly basis. The steering group of the Social Welfare Association is composed of three women who meet at Itabashi Church on a monthly basis; the meeting is open to anyone and it usually gathers other members, adherents and representatives of the local community. Whenever necessary, they also invite agents of the local government to discuss projects and services.¹⁵³ An account of the activities, the number of members engaged and commentary articles are published by the Association in their monthly newsletter *Himawari fukushi dayori*.

For the purpose of this study the above volunteer group was observed and surveyed. A typical volunteer day starts in the morning at around 9:30 when the daily *hōza* meeting finishes. The majority of volunteers arrange the participation in the *hōza* meeting with the volunteer work. In this way, they accommodate their religious practice with their social commitment. A number of regular members (usually 4 housewives aged 55 to 65) engage in activities for the entire day, while the majority devotes their time either in the morning or afternoon. Their frequency ranges from around 2 to 3 days a week, depending on personal commitments as well as the demands of the volunteer work.

Morning activities are usually devoted to assisting local clinics, hospitals and old elderly care facilities in Itabashi ward. Volunteers cooperate with permanent staff helping the residents with lunch, bathing and changing clothes. Then they spend time with them chatting and offering recreational activities while the permanent staff reorganizes the rooms before the

afternoon break. Volunteers generally bring their lunchbox and have lunch at the facility, often together with the staff. They leave the old people's home after lunch.

In the afternoon they split into groups of two volunteers and start their home visits, *yūai hōmon*. Some members call at Itabashi Church to collect the list of scheduled visits. However, home visits are usually scheduled during the monthly meeting, while any last-minute update or rearrangement is quickly discussed in the morning after the *hōza* meeting. Regular volunteers are usually in charge of habitual recipients of *yūai hōmon*, while new volunteers can offer their availability to the coordinator of the group, who is a regular volunteer and member of the steering committee. The coordinator manages the organization of the sub-groups in charge of home visits and the introduction of new volunteers in the *yūai hōmon* system. New volunteers are asked to accompany regular volunteers in their home visits for a month. After this training period, they are usually assigned to a recipient.

Yūai hōmon is performed once or twice a week, depending on the recipient's needs and health. Sometimes volunteers help the elderly with bathing, changing and dressing. More often they spend one hour in chatting and checking the recipient's condition and needs. The evaluation of a recipient's condition is rarely undertaken through straight questions, such as 'Are you in pain?' or 'Are you unhappy?'. Volunteers tend to lead the conversation so that they can detect any uneasiness in the recipient's replies.

In general, when a home visit has been carried out on a regular basis for two months with no particular problems, thereafter the volunteers in charge can manage their visits independently without the assistance or the organization of the coordinator of the Social Welfare Association. As a rule, the volunteer group tends to favour members who can volunteer regularly so that the recipient meets with the same people and can establish a closer relationship. An evaluation process is carried out before a *yūai hōmon* is started, assessing the recipient's needs and personality in order to offer her or him the type of volunteers that better matches individual characteristics. The coordinator is in charge of collecting detailed information about the prospective recipient. Sometimes a family member calls at Itabashi Church to provide such information. More often, the coordinator or one regular volunteer member pays a first visit to him or her, and asks the local welfare service office for advice in case the elderly person is registered with them. After the preliminary meeting with the recipient, volunteers discuss the evaluation in a meeting with all available volunteers who give a self-evaluation in reference to the character of the prospect recipient. Upon consideration, the recipient is coupled with a group of two that closely meets any identified needs.

As a result of observation of these activities, most Risshō kōseikai community volunteering

can be said to be carried out in cooperation with Itabashi ward government, local welfare organizations and other non-religious volunteer groups. It is not uncommon for Itabashi Church volunteers to receive a request of *yūai hōmon* from the local neighbourhood association, the Itabashi ward social welfare office, local eldercare facilities or directly from family members (very often non-Risshō *kōseikai* members). Similarly, Itabashi Church volunteers tend to refer to Itabashi ward social welfare office whenever a specific case needs further assistance.

Apart from social welfare activities, Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association members cover a wide range of volunteer services, such as organizing events, bazaars, cosponsoring lectures for young mothers, parenting classes and helping the neighbourhood associations to organize local festivals. Fund-raising is also a regular activity and money collected from bazaars and festivals is donated to Itabashi ward as a financial contribution for the community social welfare to give assistance to the elderly, the disabled and children.

In addition, Itabashi Church offers several counselling services advising about personal problems, health, family, work, children's care, housing, nursing, elderly care and other issues.¹⁵⁴ Members of Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association are regular volunteers for these services that are open to whoever requests them, including non-Risshō *kōseikai* members. Children's recreational and educational activities, street cleaning, fund-raising, and lectures on health and safety are also among the regular volunteer activities that Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association members render in cooperation with residents.

2.1.2 Risshō *kōseikai* Kawagoe Church Volunteers

Structure of Kawagoe Church¹⁵⁵

Risshō *kōseikai* Kawagoe Church is located in Saitama Prefecture. It was established in April 1964, counting at that time as one *shibu* gathering 885 households around the area of Kawagoe city. Between the 1980s and 1990s Kawagoe Church experienced a consistent growth which reached more than 5.300 households in 1995. By January 2010 it counted 13 *shibu*, 81 *chiku* and 335 *kumi* [local association], adding up to an average membership of 7.500 households.

The church is currently headed by a male church leader (in charge since 2009) who works in cooperation with 4 women and 3 men as administrative staff managing seven sections: *sōmubu* [general affairs department]; *kyōmubu* [educational affairs department]; *shōgaibu* [the Public Relation Section]; *bunsho fukyōbu* [cultural and missionary work department]; the

Youth Division [*seinenbu*]; and the *fujinbu*, the Women's Division. The church also counts 8 men and 19 women members as regular staff. Similar to Itabashi Church, the proportion of female adherents in organizational positions in Kawagoe Church is particularly high, considering that 4 out of 7 administrative staff, all 13 *shibu* leaders, 81 area leaders [*chikushunin*] and 335 group leaders are women.

Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers: activities and volunteers

Activities contributing to community wellbeing sponsored by Kawagoe Church started in the 1970s. In 1976 a number of members of Kawagoe Church attended a series of lectures organized by the head of Risshō kōseikai relating to issues of social welfare, community solidarity and the way to improve the quality of life with social work. In 1977 a volunteer group, the Kawagoe Church Volunteer Group [*Kawagoe kyōkai borantia*], began volunteering at the local central hospital in Kawagoe city and in 1978 members began contributing to local homes for the elderly cooperating with the regular staff. Activities then expanded with home visits, *yūai hōmon*, with volunteers assisting disabled and aged people living alone. This last group was observed and surveyed for the present study.

In terms of membership, the Volunteer Group is formed solely by members of *fujinbu* [Women's division] and *ippan kaiin* (single women under 39). As of January 2010 about 130 Kawagoe Church women members regularly volunteer in homes for the elderly and disabled, usually helping professional staff with caring work and visiting the recipients at home. The modalities and the content of Kawagoe Church Volunteer Group are very similar to those of Itabashi Church. Volunteers operating at local facilities (hospitals, old people's homes, day-care facilities) meet in the morning at Kawagoe Church after the *hōza* meeting and drive from there to the targeted places. Usually 5 to 8 women target one facility. This activity is run once or twice a week, usually on Tuesday and Thursday morning.

Every Thursday afternoon volunteers visit a number of aged people living on their own [*yūai hōmon*] in the area around Kawagoe city. Volunteers arrange for food shopping, repairing, washing and ironing clothes, cleaning their houses, hairdressing, taking the elderly out for a walk, and organizing gatherings and informal events. In these terms, home visits imply an amount of work done before the actual home visit takes place, since shopping, ironing, and organizing for bathing and hairdressing usually requires preparation before calling at the recipient's place of residence.

A steering group (4 women) meets monthly to schedule new home visits and to organize related activities. Similarly to the Itabashi Church, a large number of volunteers are regular

members who have been habitually visiting the recipients and have become familiar with them. However, the Kawagoe Church Volunteer Group has adopted a different style from the Itabashi Church. One recipient is usually supported by one volunteer who visits her or him regularly, while the second one may, from time to time, be substituted by another volunteer. In this way, the church guarantees the continuity to the recipient who sees a familiar face regularly, while creating a habit of meeting different volunteer members along with the regular one. This style allows volunteers to see different situations and learn how to address different problems. At the same time it creates a level of familiarity between all available volunteer members and the recipients so that, in case of need, the regular volunteer can be replaced with the minimum of disturbance.

Further to the activities described above, the women in the survey regularly contributed to the local Kawagoe social welfare both responding to specific requests of the local welfare services, such as home visits, and volunteering at local facilities, and helping with the Social Welfare Festival and other recreational events for the elderly and disabled. They organize and run stalls, and help Kawagoe City social welfare staff with the organization of the event. The money collected during the festivals is then donated to the local government for social welfare.

Some surveyed volunteers were members of the Young Women Division [*seinen fujinbu*]. A group of 8 regular volunteers organizes recreational activities for children, which are held once a month on Sunday at Kawagoe Church. They also provide a counselling service for mothers and families. This service is supplied by members who have attended both Risshō kōseikai Parenting Classes¹⁵⁶ and the counselling training at Risshō kōseikai Counselling Research Centre. Respondents providing such counselling service surveyed in the present study maintained that their counselling volunteer work was often performed outside the boundary of Kawagoe Church, in cooperation with local associations, nurseries and schools (interview held on 17.12.2009). The reason for such interrelation was the fact of being mothers with school-age children, which implied volunteering for the local PTA with patrolling, organizing children's afterschool activities, summer campuses and games for children in the neighbourhood.

2.2 *Shinnyoen*

2.2.1 Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division¹⁵⁷

This study surveyed the Youth Division [*seinenbu*] of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department [*shinnyoen shakai kōkenbu*].¹⁵⁸ This is an association of Shinnyoen members engaged in several volunteer activities ranging from environmental protection, disaster relief

training, local community service assisting the elderly and disabled people, and collecting funds to be donated to international organizations with which Shinnyoen cooperates. Any member aged 35 and over who has trained at the Chiryū Gakuin for at least three years can become a member of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department, while members aged 35 and below can join the sub-section: the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division [*shinnyoen shakai kōken seinenbu*]. Although several activities run by the Social Contribution Department date back to the 1970s (early morning cleaning, environmental protection and international contribution), the group has developed largely with the establishment of the Social Contribution Activities Managing Unit [*shakai kōken tantō busho*] in 1995.¹⁵⁹ In 2002 a Social Contribution Advisor Committee was founded with the role of further exploring the potentiality of Shinnyoen to actively engage in social contribution with external actors.¹⁶⁰ The Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division is based in Tachikawa city (Tokyo).

Structure

The Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division (hereafter Youth Division) started off in 1994 as a subdivision of the general Social Contribution Department. Any young member aged 35 and below who has accomplished at least 3 years of spiritual practice can become a member of the Youth Division. As of January 2010 the Youth Division counts 144 members (34 men and 110 women members). However, there are 35 adherents who regularly engage in activities: 25 women and 10 men. Only members actively participating in the volunteer activities were surveyed.

Although Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department is regarded as a nationwide organization, the Youth Division counts only members living around the Tokyo area and regularly attending the Shinnyoen main temple in Tachikawa for their religious practices.

Social activities

The Youth Division is organized in four sections:

1. the General Affairs Section [*sōmuhan*] (16 women and 2 men members), dealing with administrative and organizational work;
2. the Environment Section [*kankyōhan*] (46 women and 4 men members), promoting the growth and preservation of woods and green, including clean-up activities of rivers and fields;
3. the Disaster Prevention Section [*bōsaihan*] (30 women and 8 men members),

training members how to care for people in the event of a disaster, from cooking a meal, to building a shelter and using a wireless radio station. The activities of this section are organized by and depend on Shinnyoen Relief Volunteers (SeRV), which covers specifically disaster prevention and support.

4. the *kakisonji hagaki* Section (36 women and 2 men members), collecting unused pre-stamped postcards and returning them to the post office to obtain a full refund that will be donated to UNESCO.

In addition to the above four sections, volunteers of the Youth Division are engaged in social activities helping disabled people and the elderly.

The *himawari-go* is a one-day trip accompanying disabled people and their families to visit famous locations around Japan. The trip is organized once a year. Volunteers arrange for a privately hired train, study a suitable itinerary, cater for meals and provide for all specific needs of every single participant and his or her family. More than 50 disabled people usually participate in the trip and are taken care by an average of 30 Shinnyoen volunteers and 15 professional staff. This activity started in 2006.

A group of volunteers visits the local elderly homes twice a year for the Summer and Autumn Festival. Volunteers give their support organizing recreational activities, bazaars and helping people in wheelchairs. Twenty-five women and 10 men members, called *shisei borantia* [devout volunteer], are regularly engaged in these activities. They are supported by a number of occasional volunteers of the same Youth Division.

Members are initially registered with one of the sections and define themselves accordingly by indicating their belonging, such as 'member of the Disaster Prevention Section'. Although members are asked to affiliate to a section, they are actually free to join any of the other activities.

Members usually meet once a month on Sunday when they come to Shinnyoen headquarters in Tachikawa for their monthly religious services, such as the *sesshin*. One member of the section covers the role of coordinator, a task that is assigned by the senior staff of the Social Contribution Department. The coordinator interrelates with the General Affairs Section of the Social Contribution Department, which interfaces between the external facilities requiring services, and the Youth Division. It also initiates and organizes the volunteer activities that the Youth Division members will be required to perform. During the monthly meeting the coordinator informs the participants about the content of the activities to be performed on the day and presents a schedule with further arrangements.

Although the regular volunteer members of the Youth Division gather on the scheduled day

to perform their volunteer activities, each section works differently. The *kakisonji hagaki* activity, for example, is held inside Shinnyoen headquarters and volunteers can attend it every month without any previous scheduled preparations since their work is arranged by the coordinator and senior staff, who collect and prepare the postcards from the boxes around the temple and those delivered by other members from outside.

The Disaster Prevention Section [*bōsaihan*], instead, depends on the Social Contribution Department for its activities because they are in charge of training and materials for the Youth Division. Participants of the Disaster Prevention Section are asked to attend a general meeting once or twice a year when staff of the Social Contribution Department present the scheduled dates and locations for the training, which is run 3 or 4 times a year. In general, on the monthly meeting scheduled for the Youth Division members are usually not engaged in the activity of the Disaster Prevention Section to which they belong. Therefore, they join the *kakisonji hagaki* section.

The Environment Section [*kankyōhan*] similarly meet only a few times a year when the members of the NPO running the environmental activities at Ome no mori, a forest on Mount Satoyama along the Tama river, west of Tokyo, visit the temple to bring their request for volunteer service.¹⁶¹ Before volunteering at Ome no mori volunteers need to attend a training sessions where they are taught the basics of the NPO and how it manages the various projects concerning environmental protection, reforestation and preservation. These training meetings are held at the NPO offices, while introductory meetings are held in Shinnyoen headquarters in Tachikawa. After completing the training, volunteers offer their help in guiding visitors inside the forest or by helping the NPO staff during the reforestation phase. Trained members usually volunteer at Ome no mori once or twice a year. Similarly to members of the Disaster Prevention Section, they usually join the *kakisonji hagaki* section during the monthly meeting.

New participants in the Youth Division initially attend induction meetings and are assigned to a tutor who supervises the work. Thereafter, members are invited to attend the monthly meeting where coordinators present the schedule for the coming month, newcomers are introduced and given basic instructions, and the staff collects the name of those available for the activities to come. Since coordinators are in charge of the activities, volunteers do not cover any organizational task: they are asked to perform short-term tasks once a month or a few times a year.

2.2.2 Univers Foundation¹⁶²

The second Shinnyoen group targeted for this study is the Univers Foundation, a Shinnyoen-sponsored non-profit organization supporting the 'autonomy and productive participation of the elderly in society'.¹⁶³ The fieldwork was carried out in the Tachikawa-based Univers Foundation branch, namely the Univers Volunteers Tokyo.

Univers Foundation was incorporated under Shinnyoen in 1990 as a volunteer group organizing research activities concerning Japan's ageing population, especially in terms of welfare for the elderly. The work of the foundation is based upon three goals:

- 1) contributing to international surveys and research regarding welfare for the elderly;
- 2) supporting the international exchange of researchers of welfare for the elderly;
- 3) encouraging and increasing the volunteer activities performed by the elderly and promoting international exchange in these activities.¹⁶⁴

For these purposes the foundation supports gerontology researchers and practitioners in the field of health care and social services, and sponsors grants, seminars and research exchange programmes with European and American institutions.¹⁶⁵

Parallel to the above commitments, the foundation offers community-based activities supporting the elderly. These activities were central in the development of the foundation in 1995, when in response to the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake the Univers Volunteers Kobe was established. The purpose of Univers Volunteers Kobe was to provide emotional care for elderly victims living in temporary housings in order to confirm their safety and give them support. Since then, the volunteer activities of Univers Volunteers Kobe have expanded throughout the Kansai region, with volunteers holding community gatherings, recreational activities and home visits providing emotional care and support.

In 2000 the Univers Volunteers Tokyo was established to provide friendly visits to elderly victims evacuated from the volcanic disaster of Miyake island. In 2005 the Univers Volunteers Niigata was established in order to support victims of the Niigata Chūetsu Earthquake, which occurred in October 2004. Soon after the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011, Univers Volunteers Tokyo sent a group of volunteers to provide emotional care for those living in temporary houses and shelters. They have also organized a training seminar in Sendai city focusing on emotional care in time of disaster for prospective local volunteers.¹⁶⁶

Structure

In January 2010, Univers Foundation had 338 members nationwide. The surveyed Univers Volunteers Tokyo has 18 men and 105 women volunteers.¹⁶⁷ In terms of permanent paid staff,

2 men and 1 woman are employed at Univers Volunteers Tokyo working in the Tachikawa office.¹⁶⁸

All Univers Foundation Tokyo members (123 people) are asked to participate in the monthly general meeting in order to discuss and arrange the NPO volunteer activities. The invitation to the meeting includes those who are not actually engaged in volunteer activities, such as advisors and academics who are registered with the NPO. Local government representatives and staff of local facilities are met monthly by *unei-iin*, who are the members of the steering group who screen the demands for services. There are 6 NPO members and 3 NPO staff in the steering group and their decisions concerning prospective recipients and activities are further discussed, approved or dropped by NPO members in the general monthly meeting. As a rule, requests for assistance or practical care services are rejected, favouring home visits and day-care assistance where volunteers can offer their emotional support. When volunteers need to report to the welfare agency about a particular case, they tend to delegate the NPO staff, although it is not unusual to contact the social workers directly.

Univers volunteers

Volunteer members of Univers Foundation are called Univers volunteers [*yunibēru borantia*]. Univers volunteers distinguish themselves from other volunteers contributing to the elderly because they focus mainly on emotional care [*kokoro no kea*]. Moreover, they also emphasize the importance of matching the age of the volunteer with that of the recipient. This volunteer style is called *pia borantia* [peer volunteer] because volunteers aged 60 and older tend to help people who are around the same age, so that they can have a deeper understanding of the emotions of their recipients.

Univers Foundation holds a specific training programme once a year in their Training Centre in Shinjuku (central Tokyo) to teach people how to care for the elderly by giving emotional support. *Pia borantia* are trained to perform the role of *keichō borantia* [the caring listener], which consists of listening carefully and silently to what the recipient has to say, in order to respond with emotional care. The training programme is a mandatory requirement to become a Univers volunteer. Once members have obtained their qualification, they can register at Univers Foundation.

Further to the mandatory qualification, once registered Univers volunteers must observe 7 rules in their volunteer work mainly concerning the respect and the privacy of the recipient and the a-professional character of their volunteer role.

Although Univers Foundation is sponsored by Shinnyoen, it is in fact a lay non-profit

organization. Therefore being a Shinnyoen adherent is not a requirement to become a member of it. According to the information collected during the fieldwork, not all volunteers serving at Univers Foundation Tokyo are Shinnyoen adherents or were part of the religious organization before joining the volunteer group. Some members affirmed they became acquainted with or affiliated to the religious organization only after serving as volunteers at Univers Foundation: at a meeting held on November 24th, 2009, 7 out of 11 women volunteers of Univers Volunteers Tokyo acknowledged that they were first interested in Univers Foundation activities and then became interested in Shinnyoen religious teachings only after their engagement with the foundation.

Volunteer activities

By January 2010, the activities of Univers Volunteers Tokyo cover three main areas of service:

1. providing *kokoro no kea* [emotional care] to the elderly who are permanent residents of an eldercare centre in Tachikawa, and organizing recreational activities for those who attend the day-centre;
2. home visits [*yūai homon*] visiting aged people living on their own;
3. assisting elderly during their gymnastic hour at local welfare centres.

Sixty-two women volunteer regularly for 14 days a month, 4 days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) at a local elderly care and day-service centre. Volunteers work two hours in the morning and two and a half hours in the afternoon. They help the recipients in their usual activities supporting staff with meals, bathing, hairdressing and dressing those who are not able by themselves. Their main role is listening to the recipients and giving them emotional support while helping them in their daily activities. They are also in charge of recreational activities, such as games, karaoke, painting and outdoor activities. A representative of the volunteer team meets employed staff at the elderly homes once a month to agree the activities to be carried out.

Visiting aged people living on their own [*yūai hōmon*] is carried out by 44 members for a total of 14 days a month. Recipients are visited once a month by 2 volunteer members. They arrange the visits in agreement with the family and friends of the recipient and in cooperation with the local social care practitioners. Similarly to Risshō kōseikai, Univers volunteers are selected in order to match as far as possible the recipient's characteristics, such as sex and age. However, Univers Foundation gives particular importance also to the recipient's place of birth, education, job career before retirement, hobbies and other factors. When registering at

Univers Foundation, members are required to give detailed information on their socio-demographic characteristics and are grouped accordingly. This helps to speed up the selection of the potential volunteers, although the final decision is carried out during the monthly general meeting.

Volunteers usually spend one hour with the recipient in talking and listening. They avoid addressing directly the issue of the recipient's condition, but they check whether he or she is suffering from health problems or has psychological issues by assessing his or her level of responsiveness and activity as compared to previous meetings. While strictly observing the privacy of the person, they regularly report the situation to the care service manager who, in case of need, will contact the local welfare services for further arrangements.

Twenty-nine members regularly assist the elderly during their gymnastic hour at local welfare centres. Univers Foundation in Tachikawa targets two locations for a total of 6 times a month. The volunteer's role is transferring the instructions given by the instructor to the aged person by paying special attention to their physical and emotional condition.

For the purpose of this study the first two areas of activities, *kokoro no kea* at the eldercare day-centre and home visits [*yūai hōmon*] were observed and surveyed.

2.3 Roman Catholic Church in Japan

2.3.1 St. Ignatius Church¹⁶⁹

Respondents surveyed for this study were women attending St. Ignatius Church in Yotsuya quarter of central Tokyo. St. Ignatius Church is the second most important Catholic parish in Tokyo after St. Mary's Cathedral, which hosts the archdiocese of Tokyo. St. Mary's Cathedral is located in Bunkyo ward, a residential and educational area where the University of Tokyo, Ochanomizu University, Tokyo Medical and Dental University are situated. In contrast, St. Ignatius Church, located in front of Yotsuya underground station, covers the crucial geographical area of Chiyoda ward in central Tokyo where the main government institutions, embassies and landmarks such as the Yasukuni Shrine and the Imperial Palace are situated. The church is popular for offering a large number of religious services in different languages, as well as for organizing a high number of events, volunteer groups and social activities.¹⁷⁰ For this reason, the church gathers a large number of adherents coming from other parishes, thereby extending its actual catchment area to nearby influential wards like Shinjuku, Bunkyo, Shibuya, Minato and beyond.¹⁷¹

In December 2010 there were 14.349 Japanese parishioners registered at the church, 9.589

women and 4.760 men.¹⁷² A large number of foreigners also attend the church, but data are not available since they are not required to be registered.¹⁷³

As explained in the previous chapter, the choice of recruiting respondents from St. Ignatius Church solely, as compared with the two locations targeted for Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen, stems from the number of Catholics in Japan, representing almost half of the membership of both Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen.

Regarding the selection of St. Ignatius Church as the case-study, as compared with other Catholic churches in the Tokyo area, the choice was based on information collected during a meeting held on 8 July 2007 at the Apostolic Nunciature in Tokyo. The decision was made after careful consultation with the general secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature, Mngr. Léon B. Kalenga, who proffered information on church membership, participation of female lay Catholics in community-based movements and the scope of volunteer activities promoted by St. Ignatius Church. Mngr. Léon B. Kalenga explained that St. Ignatius Church counts a large number of regular and occasional churchgoers belonging to other parishes around the Tokyo metropolitan area and beyond. Moreover, it is heavily engaged in volunteering, as illustrated by it sponsoring the most social welfare activities covering a wide area of central Tokyo. Accordingly, it gathers a significant number of both Catholic volunteers and non-Catholics, with a majority of women among them, contributing to volunteer activities sponsored by the church. In addition, over the past ten years it has been actively cooperating with several Japanese religious movements, including Risshō kōseikai, in order to support interreligious dialogue and encouraging Japanese of different faiths to attend the church activities for the promotion of community wellbeing.¹⁷⁴

Social activities

The history of St. Ignatius Church goes back to 1936, after the Carmelite Sisters moved to the area and a church dedicated to St. Therese was erected.¹⁷⁵ It was burnt out in 1945 and from 1947 mass was celebrated in the auditorium of the adjacent Sophia University. In 1947 the pastoral care of the parish was entrusted to the fathers of the Society of Jesus, who started the construction of the new church named after Jesuit St. Ignatius. In 1949, 1200 parishioners attended the dedication ceremony mass.

In 1967 the first church bazaar was held to collect money for the church and parishioners in need, while volunteer activities supporting disabled people and their family were expanding. In 1981 the church started mass with sign reading, with volunteers also helping blind people to read mass and the church newsletter.¹⁷⁶

The church is now running more than 65 volunteer groups categorized into seven clusters:¹⁷⁷

1. activities related to church rituals and ceremonies;
2. church management, including the church chorus, church cleaning and organizing church events;
3. social support targeting people in need like the elderly, disabled people and homeless people;
4. publications;
5. activities related to marriages and funerals, such as premarital classes, and funeral arrangements;
6. activities for children, from after-schools, to summer camps and days away;
7. adult education.

Over the past decade, the number of non-Catholics attending church volunteer activities at St. Ignatius church has increased, although the majority of them are usually regular churchgoers.¹⁷⁸ Some of the volunteers targeted for the present study were regularly engaged in both church-sponsored social welfare volunteering and church-related volunteer activities.

Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama

The church-sponsored volunteer group targeted for the present study is Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama. The group's activity centres mainly on supplying freshly-made *onigiri* [rice balls] every Saturday evening to the homeless in central Tokyo. The group was founded in April 2000 by five students of Sophia University and the activity was included in the list of St. Ignatius Church volunteer groups in November 2001.¹⁷⁹ Since then the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama members have been allowed to use the kitchen and St. Teresia Hall for their activities. Despite the close relationship with the church, the group has maintained a high level of independence and is completely self-managed by regular volunteers.¹⁸⁰ It was originally a project providing assistance for the homeless located in the Tokyo metropolitan areas of Yotsuya, Ginza, Kyōbashi, Hibiya Park and around Tokyo station.

About 40 people are engaged in this group, some of them regularly participating every Saturday, others occasionally.¹⁸¹ In terms of gender ratio, the head pastor of the church maintains a proportion of one male to three female members.¹⁸² However, during the fieldwork a large majority of women were recorded as regular participants, a usual proportion of five women to one man.

Although the group's activity centres mainly on supplying freshly-made *onigiri* to the homeless, the main purpose is giving them assistance, support and emotional care. Six to

eight members meet monthly to discuss the requests collected during the activities, decide the content of the weekly newsletter, assess difficulties and outcomes, and make arrangements for the month to come.

Structure of the volunteer group

The group is divided into five sub-sections.

1. *Sakuseihan* [Food-making group]: This group is in charge of the preparation of hand-made *onigiri*. The making of freshly-made rice balls is held on Saturday afternoon usually starting at around 4pm. A group of five to six female volunteers meet in the kitchen at St. Ignatius Church to prepare the food using rice and other ingredients donated to the church by churchgoers. They usually make about two hundred rice balls, an estimated number based on the number of homeless people who attended at the set locations the previous times.

2. *Hōmonhan* [Distributing group]: When preparation is finished, members of the *sakuseihan* join some 15 to 20 people who have gathered in the hall near the kitchen. They organize into five to six small groups, each one in charge of the distribution of *onigiri* in one of the targeted areas. Volunteers leave St. Ignatius Church at 7:30pm and by the time they reach the targeted area, the homeless have already queued up and waiting for the “church people”.¹⁸³ Together with the rice ball, volunteers hand out *Onigiri tsūshin*, the group’s newsletter informing everyone about the counselling and welfare activities arranged by the church, the number of beds available at local dormitories, job posts advertised by the local government and other facilities, and recommended health checks.

While the preparation of food is always carried out by a group of women-only volunteers, those engaged in the distribution are usually a balanced number of men and women. In January 2010, the person coordinating the distribution was a Sophia University male doctoral student, who arranged the subgroups and the quantity of rice balls to be delivered in each area. An independent professional male social worker, Iwata Tetsuo, regularly attended the activity, giving advice on how to approach homeless people in order to give useful information on available services or just to have a friendly chat with them for emotional support. On several occasions he also supervised new volunteers joining the distribution group for the first time, in order to give advice on how to provide the emotional care the activity aims at.

3. *Fukushihan* [Social welfare group]: Volunteers distributing *onigiri* on Saturday do not simply hand out food, but perform a check on the health and emotional condition of the population living in the targeted areas. When they are asked for help or find someone who needs help, they arrange a visit with them at the local social welfare office. This service is held

on Monday morning: during the distribution journey on Saturday volunteers arrange to meet with the recipients on Monday morning by 8:30 at Tokyo station. From there they accompany the recipient/s to the local social welfare office where they help them to communicate with the social welfare officer. In some cases they arrange for hospitalization or coordinate a temporary relocation in a shelter, or register the recipient for housing or sickness benefits. During the fieldwork there were four women and two men in charge of this activity. They usually worked in groups of two.

4. *Menkaihan* [Visiting group]: The social welfare group's support activity usually finishes at around 4pm. After that, members join the Visiting group (usually six people, four women and two men) who go around the hospitals, shelters and other locations where previously contacted recipients are staying. They visit them to assess their condition and have a friendly conversation with them in order to maintain a stable relationship.

5. *Henshūhan* [Editing group]: In December 2000, the group started publishing *Onigiri tsūshin*, the group's weekly newsletter. This is usually edited by the male Sophia University doctoral student, with the help of Iwata Tetsuo who provides the latest information about opportunities for the homeless (for example: available places in the shelters; job opportunities; and health care facilities offering free health checks).

For the purpose of this study, investigation was mainly focused on the first two sub-sections of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama: *Sakuseihan* [Food-making group] and *Hōmonhan* [Distributing group].

Rules for Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama volunteers

Not all volunteers surveyed during the fieldwork were regular churchgoers or believers. Among occasional and regular churchgoers, a significant number of them were non-Christians, such as former students of Sophia University, employees of the Catholic Paoline Publications, or just ordinary laypeople interested in the volunteer activities sponsored by the church, with no relationship to St. Ignatius church or the Catholic world. Over the several meetings and activities attended for this study, volunteers never mentioned issues related to doctrine or faith, and despite being known as "church people", and homeless calling at the church in person for the Monday carry rice distribution (see the following section), volunteers never asked them to join the church. This behaviour is based upon one of the four basic rules that all members of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama are required to observe: members must not pursue religious or political aims in their volunteer activities.¹⁸⁴

Parallel activities

The *karē-raisu gurūpu* [carry rice distribution group], offering cooked carry rice for free to the homeless on Monday evening at St. Ignatius Church, is an activity similar to what Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama does. It started off in mid-2008 based on the initiative of the church that wanted to complement the service offered by Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama by providing food and support as a church.¹⁸⁵ As of January 2010 it had about 40 volunteers, the majority of whom are women. Usually 8 women prepare and distribute the rice to a group of around one hundred homeless who gather in St. Teresia Hall. Some of the members of *karē-raisu gurūpu* are also members of the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama held on Saturday. Although the activity is carried out independently from the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama, there are several overlaps both in terms of membership and content. For example, on Sunday afternoon and Monday evening volunteers of the *karē-raisu gurūpu* hold a counselling service providing information on jobs, dormitories and health care. There is a dynamic exchange of information between the two groups which provides the homeless with more opportunities to ask for and receive advice and support.

Church-relate activities

Many respondents were also engaged in church-related volunteer activities, mainly assisting churchgoers in various ways. Some volunteered for *Ukezara B* group meetings every two weeks. They assist Catholics who have recently moved to the area, or those who have recently converted and have been baptized. They give information about church activities and help them to participate in local community life.

Doyō gakkō [Saturday school] and *Nichiyō gakkō* [Sunday School] were also among the activities identified by respondents. These are afternoon classes for children aged four to twelve. On *Doyō gakkō* children are mainly taught about the Catholic faith (catechism), but recreational activities, including summer camps and events for Christmas and Easter, are also organized over the year. *Nichiyō gakkō*, held on Sunday afternoon, targets mainly non-Catholic children. Volunteers are university students with the majority attending Sophia University. As of December 2010, about twenty volunteers were contributing to *Doyō gakkō* and *Nichiyō gakkō*.¹⁸⁶

Some respondents were also engaged in translating and interpreting for foreigners attending mass, as well as assisting blind people with taping the church newsletter and other publications.

3. Connecting sites: External actors

The above shows that volunteer initiatives of the 5 surveyed volunteer groups make public institutions organizing community service and other external actors as part of the decision-making process. The communication between the volunteer groups and the external actors is based upon the following rationales:

- being asked for a service;
- offering a service;
- asking for a service
- being offered a service;

Two factors should be borne in mind when considering the relationships between a volunteer group and external actors:

- a. the four levels of interaction (being asked, offering, asking for, being given) are interrelated components of the dynamic relationship between a volunteer group and an actor. As such, offering a service should not be counted as a one-off inside-out movement from the volunteer group to the recipient/facility, but as a continuous negotiation between the two actors involved in a demand-response relationship. For example, the volunteers offering home visits constantly adjust the service they offer according to the changing demand/needs of the recipient, their family, the guidelines of the local social welfare department and several other interacting socio-economic factors.
- b. several external actors are simultaneously related to the provision of one single service. When volunteers offer a service to a local eldercare day-care centre, they interface with the permanent staff of the facility, the local social welfare officers, the recipients' family members and other volunteers belonging to different groups, to name but a few. All these actors are interrelated with each other to some extent: for example, volunteers are connected with permanent staff, who are connected with family members and social welfare workers; family members are interconnected with faith-based volunteers and other volunteers serving the facility, and the local authorities; and so on. Ueno (2011) conceptualizes this dynamics in care work as an 'interaction' [*sōgo kōi*] of a multiplicity of actors [*kōisha*] (2011:39). As such, the social map that enables and informs volunteers' practices is a complex multi-layered network. It is hard to give a comprehensive view of it; this is a task that would go beyond the scope of this study. However, it is important to view the actors presented below as always being interrelating or interconnecting elements constituting the group's volunteer practice.

This section offers a list of the principal actors with which each group can be said to be

connected during the fieldwork. It also gives a brief description of the content of the activities that caused an interrelation with the volunteer group. The list does not cover all the links that the groups have established over the years, but only those that were observed as being directly or indirectly of relevance to this fieldwork.

a. Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association

1. *Itabashi kenkō fukushi sentā* [Itabashi Health and Social Welfare Centre]. This facility organizes exercise classes for the elderly in which Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church where volunteers help participants; the Centre also organizes seminars about health and wellbeing for the aged, to which Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church volunteers participate for personal training.

2. *Itabashi-ku shakai fukushi iinkai* [Itabashi Social Welfare Association]. The Association organizes volunteer activities, such as home visits and support at the local eldercare homes and day-centres. The Association regularly passes on the requests for service to Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association, which organizes the response. Sometimes the demand goes the other way round, with Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association passing onto the Itabashi Social Welfare Association those cases that Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church volunteers are not able to deal with.

3. *Itabashi royā kea sentā* [Itabashi Royal Care Centre]. This is an old people's home with permanent residents. It also runs a day-care centre. Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association regularly volunteers twice a week in this facility.

4. *Itabashi kuyakusho* (Itabashi City Office). Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association deals with several sections of the City Office that belong to the following three divisions:

- *Fukushi ka* [Social Welfare Division]: upon the request of Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association, the Social Welfare Division sends a *kea manejā* [care manager] to explain the up-to-date changes and implementations of the *kaigo hoken seido* [nursing care insurance] and other related caring systems. They also assist the Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church counselling service by providing up-to-date information about childcare, housing and family benefits. Risshō kōseikai Church also interrelates with the Social Welfare Division when the Itabashi City organized the Social Welfare Festival and related recreational activities for the elderly, the disabled and children.

- *Kenkō ikigaibu ikigai suishinka* [Social Life and Health Promotion Division – Social Life Promotion Section]. This division manages several facilities where they organize recreational activities for the elderly. Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church volunteers contribute to

the organization and the management of these activities.

- *Kumin bunkabu – Chiiki shinkōka* [Ward Cultural Division - Community Promotion Section]. This division interrelates with local neighbourhood association and other locally self-governed bodies. Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church interrelates with them for the organization of local events, festivals, seminars, conferences and other cultural activities.

5. *Itabashi-ku Ōyama-chō jichikai*: this is the local neighbourhood association that organizes recreational activities for the elderly, children, the disabled as well as several cultural activities. Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church contributes to the activities.

6. *Itabashi-ku shōtengai rengōkai* [Itabashi ward shopping district association]. This association asks for Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church cooperation when they organize local events and festivals.

7. *Itabashi -ku ritsu chūgakkō PTA rengōkai* [Association of Itabashi ward junior school PTA]. Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church volunteers cooperate with local PTA in patrolling and supervising public children's areas.

b. Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers

1. *Kawagoe bōi/gyāru sukauto gun* [Kawagoe Boy and Girl Scout Troop] Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church volunteers belonging to the Young Women Division cooperate with the local organizers of Boy and Girls Scout Troop for children's recreational activities.

2. *Shakai fukushi hōjin – Shin-ai kai* [Social Welfare Foundation-Good Heart Association]. This is a private foundation organizing support activities for the elderly, such as home visits, food delivery service and cleaning. It also provides volunteers for the local eldercare homes and day-centre to which Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church volunteers contribute.

3. *Kawagoe-shi shakai fukushi kyōgikai* [Kawagoe City Council of Social welfare association]: this association is sponsored by Kawagoe City and organizes community-based volunteer support activities. Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church volunteers contribute to the following activities:

- home delivery service: delivering ready lunches and food;
- *yūai hōmon*: home visits

Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church volunteers attend to the following activities organized by Kawagoe City Council of Social welfare association:

- eldercare training courses focusing on services in facilities
- eldercare training courses focusing on the aged living alone

4. *Kawagoe shiyakusho* [Kawagoe City Hall]. Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church volunteers

deal with several sections of the City Hall that belong to the following three divisions:

- *seikatsu fukushika / kōreisha ikigai ka* [Social welfare section / Elderly social life promotion section]: these sections deal with the provision of eldercare support as well as organization of recreational activities. Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church volunteers contribute to both areas.

- *kosodate shienka* [Childcare support section]. This section organizes support services as well as courses and seminars on childcare and children's education. Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church volunteers contribute to the activities organized by the section and participate in the courses organized by the section both as counsellors and learners.

- *katei ikuji sōdan ka* [Parenting Counselling Section]. Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church volunteers usually contribute to this section by sharing their counselling service on parenting that is given at Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church. They also participate as learners in seminars and training courses organized by the section.

c. Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Section

1. *Zenkoku shakai fukushi kyōgikai* [Japan National Council of Social Welfare]. This is a national organization arranging volunteer activities in different domains. Shinnyoen offers its cooperation through SeRV volunteers who respond to requests for supplying donations of food and helping in the delivery of materials in emergency times. The Disaster Prevention Section of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Section follows SeRV volunteers' procedures and training that draws upon the guidelines of the Japan National Council of Social Welfare.

2. *Tachikawa-shi shakai fukushi kyōgikai* [Tachikawa City Council of Social Welfare Association]. The association is located in the General Welfare Centre sponsored by Tachikawa City. The General Welfare Centre deals with eldercare, operating as a day-centre promoting support and recreational activities for the elderly. Members of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department regularly volunteer for the association, while the Youth Section participates by occasionally helping with festivals and events.

3. Tachikawa Railway Station Public Relations office. Shinnyoen volunteers regularly offer their "morning cleaning" service at Tachikawa Railway Station. In order to get the permission for entering the station precincts, volunteers make regular contacts with the station office.

d. Univers Foundation¹⁸⁷

1. *Musashi murayama-shi kōreisha zaitaku sentā* [Musashi Murayama City Elderly Center]. This is an elderly care home that also runs a day-centre. Univers Volunteers offer their *kokoro no kea* service to the residents four times a week.

2. *Tachikawa-shi shakai fukushi kyōgikai* [Tachikawa City Council of Social Welfare Association] (see above). Univers Foundation volunteers respond to requests for home visits. A care manager is also regularly in contact with Univers Foundation to discuss particular cases and up-dating about social welfare services. The foundation works with two offices belonging to the above association: the *Shimin katsudō sentā tachikawa* [Tachikawa community volunteer centre] and the *Zaitaku kaigo shien sentā* [Support centre for home caring].

3. *Tachikawashi jichitai rengōkai* [Association of Tachikawa City local neighbourhood associations]. The local neighbourhood associations communicate with Univers Foundation for information about the elderly living in the community so that they can cooperate in the caring service.

e. Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama

1. *Chuō-ku fukushi jimusho* [Chuō ward social welfare office]. Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama volunteers accompany the homeless to this office in order to obtain health or housing benefits, temporary accommodation, hospitalization and other services.

2. *Chiyoda-ku fukushi jimusho* [Chiyoda ward social welfare office]. The same as above.

3. *Tokyo bengoshikai seikatsu hogo sōdan* [Tokyo bar association legal advice]. This is a professional association of lawyers counselling and giving legal support. The association runs several counselling centres in Tokyo. Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama volunteers help the homeless to get advice when necessary.

4. *Homeless sōgo sōdan nettowāku* [Homeless general counselling network]. This association gives advice and support mainly about health centres, work, the legal system, shelter and other accommodation. Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama usually asks the association for advice or redirects the recipient to the association for further help.

5. *NPO hōjin jiritsu seikatsu sapōto sentā – moyai* [NPO Independent Life Support Center – Moyai]. This is an antipoverty NPO supporting the homeless in several ways. Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama volunteers follow the guidelines for help and support recommended by this NPO. They also invite the founder of the NPO, Yuasa Makoto, for seminars held in St. Ignatius Church. The NPO also gathers a number of volunteer medical staff who offers the homeless

free consultations. Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama helps to organize the consultations and keep records of the various cases.

Summary

Risshō kōseikai, Shinnyoen and the Roman Catholic Church in Japan were selected for this study. The three religious organizations share several essential dissimilarities: Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen are independent Buddhist orders founded a century ago from the roots of Japanese Buddhist tradition, while the Roman Catholic Church is a traditional Western denomination of Christianity, with a history of more than two thousand years. Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen are also regarded as indigenous New Religions founded in the 1930s. In contrast, Roman Catholicism is a traditional denomination of Christianity imported to Japan about five centuries ago, but still persisting in a marginal position.

However, when the investigation focuses on sociological questions related to gendered practices and attitudes in day-to-day grassroots volunteering sponsored by the three organizations, the groups show significant similarities beyond their undeniable essential differences. Social activism is also a feature shared by Risshō kōseikai, Shinnyoen and the Roman Catholic Church: all three organizations are engaged in community-based activities and work in cooperation with public institutions and government bodies for the community's well-being.

Five volunteer groups are surveyed in the present study. Two Risshō kōseikai groups located in Itabashi and Kawagoe Church; two Shinnyoen groups: the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department- Youth Division and Univers Foundation, a Shinnyoen-sponsored NPO; and one volunteer group helping the homeless supported by St. Ignatius Church of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan.

The targeted volunteer groups share interesting characteristics: a majority of women members; few women in decision-making positions in the organizational structure; a degree of social engagement in grassroots level activities; and a large presence of women volunteers in the work force in the community-based social activities and welfare programmes supported by the organization.

Beyond differences in terms of doctrine, the above similarities are meaningful and worthy of a sociological observation regarding volunteer roles and practices influencing women's identity.

The following chapter examines survey data. The analysis offers a socio-demographic profile of the respondents based upon the results of the questionnaire data. The discussion offers information on perceptions and expectations regarding volunteering, gender and religiosity.

CHAPTER 4

Women volunteers in faith-based groups: a profile (Questionnaire data analysis)

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the profile of the targeted religious organizations and surveyed volunteer groups. It offered an outline of their volunteer domains, the setting for their actions and the interrelationship with external actors.

The present chapter focuses on the women targeted for the present study. Drawing upon questionnaire data, the following sections provide information on the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, perceptions and expectations in terms of religiosity, volunteer work and gender roles. The analysis attempts to explore the majority of the components informing women's volunteer practices and the perceived effects of such activities in their daily life.

The methodological note on questionnaire data analysis presented in Chapter 2 will guide the examination. However, for the purpose of this study, only selected factors that the literature has found significant in predicting volunteering at the community level are measured, such as education, household composition, occupation, social network and religious socialization. Similarly, when analyzing the effects of volunteering, a few selected components of citizenship were examined through the questionnaire data, such as personal development, trust, self-efficacy, pro-social behaviour and social networks. All those components were examined in combination with the perceptions of gender in order to explore the potential effects on women's social identity.

The number of the table reporting the findings is indicated in brackets at the beginning of each sub-section. For a list of tables with results see Appendix 2.

1. Socio-demographic data

1.1 Age make-up of respondents

People's reasons for volunteering change as they pass from one stage of life to another because they develop different interests and needs, change social relations and acquire different resources.¹⁸⁸

For the purpose of this study a preference for women aged between twenty and forty years old was adopted for the selection of respondents. The rationale behind this choice is the idea that the life course of most women in that age group is marked by important changes, such as entering into the labour market, setting up a home, forming a family and working to support it. The phase of life between young adulthood and middle age is, therefore, a crucial stage in individuals' life course because working, getting married or having children can alter priorities, obligations, resources, and social networks, and generate different ones. In so doing, women of this age tend to face issues of identity construction, with public narratives intersecting with government policies on family and work, within which women experience their own autobiographical narratives (Somers 1994). In this process, membership in religious organizations also supplies public narratives, as well as structured biographical narratives, such as religious volunteer.

Although the preference criterion was a necessary condition for this research, middle age and older women were also recruited. Women aged between forty and sixty tend to have steadier and closer ties, and become agents of influence on children, kinship and friends. Therefore, middle-age women may alter and contribute to their own life stories as well as those of other people, and may provide role models and become a source of narratives where their children, spouses, kinship and friends can locate themselves, enriching their social and individual resources.

A number of older respondents were also included in the sample in order to explore their perspective on social engagement and gender roles as compared with the younger generations. The later stage of the life course, when people usually retire, is usually a time favouring voluntary action. Older people tend to be relatively free of social obligations related to family and work, and they enjoy more free time. Thus, if they live in a community with opportunities to volunteer, they are likely to become engaged (Taniguchi 2008: 4).

(Appendix 2: Table 1) The targeted sample shows an overall age balance, with the number of respondents in their twenties only slightly larger than the group in their forties and sixties. The tendency toward a majority of younger respondents is related to the criterion of selection applied in the present study as discussed above.

A methodological note must be made concerning the Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church samples. The criterion of preference for the selection of the respondents for those groups had to be adjusted in order to: a) meet the average age make-up of available female volunteer members; b) obtain a balanced sample of respondents. Preliminary information on

the average age of the prospective Risshō kōseikai volunteers resulted in a majority of members aged around fifty and over. Accordingly, the criterion of preference was adjusted to recruit members aged between forty and sixty, while a specific call for younger members to join the survey was made. In contrast to that, the initial age make-up of St. Ignatius Church respondents mainly ranged between twenty and thirty. In order to balance the sample, respondents aged between forty and sixty were specifically recruited. As result, the age of respondents in St. Ignatius Church range from twenties to sixties, with the largest group in their twenties.

In the 'Basic survey on social life' conducted by the Statistics Bureau in 2007, the results on participants and participation rates in volunteer activities contributing to welfare services showed that women aged between forty-five and seventy-five were the majority of the female sample (Sōmushō tōkeikyoku 2007). Young women in their twenties and thirties dominate this study, thus showing no correspondence with the average age of female volunteer participants presented in the official data mentioned above. In contrast, Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers and Shinnyoen-sponsored Univers Foundation are close to the overall trend of the female participation in volunteer activities as reported in the survey mentioned above.

There are few available surveys providing the age range of grassroots level volunteers in religious groups and unfortunately none of them gives the age breakdown distinguishing between men and women volunteers.¹⁸⁹ However, there seems to be a close correspondence between the age range of Risshō kōseikai volunteers surveyed for this study and the results reported in works by Mukhopadhyaya (2005) and Kisala (1999) suggesting an age distribution of female volunteers in the organization of mainly women in their forties and over, along with a fewer, but increasing, number of younger participants. A similar trend is also observable in Shinnyoen, with more members in their twenties becoming actively involved in volunteering, although the majority is still made up of women in their forties. Interestingly, the Catholic St. Ignatius Church shows a preponderant presence of young women in their twenties. However, no available data on age range of Catholic volunteers in Japan are available so the findings of this survey cannot be generalized to the whole Catholic volunteer population in Japan.

Overall, from the results of this survey a tendency can be identified toward an increasing number of members in their twenties and thirties engaging in volunteering or showing a willingness to contribute to society and community wellbeing. These figures confirm the data released by the Cabinet Office in 2008 showing a change in women's willingness to participate in social activities, with a higher rate of women at a younger age (Naikakufu 2007; Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2008: 14).

1.2 *Place of birth and dwelling*

The geographical area covered for this study extends from central Tokyo to southern Saitama prefecture. Tokyo hosts the Roman Catholic Church diplomatic representatives in Chiyoda ward, an area characterized by mainly middle and upper-middle class residents,¹⁹⁰ and by far the largest number of churches within the metropolitan area.¹⁹¹ The number of Risshō kōseikai branch churches show that Tokyo and Saitama prefecture, along with Chiba prefecture, are the most densely represented by Risshō kōseikai adherents.¹⁹² Similarly, Shinnyoen has the highest number of its branches in Tokyo and the main urban areas of Kantō.¹⁹³ Hence, it can be assumed that all three organizations hold the largest membership in the Kantō region, especially in the Tokyo metropolitan area and its nearby prefectures.

(Appendix 2: Table 2, Table 3) Respondents of this survey were women living mainly in urban districts of the Tokyo metropolitan area and southern Saitama prefecture. The majority of Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division, Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church, as well as the members of St. Ignatius Church, have lived in Tokyo since birth. Most respondents of Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers have also lived in Saitama since birth. In contrast, only a minority of Univers Foundation respondents were Tokyoite, while the majority had moved and lived there for more than thirty years. A correlation can be seen between this figure and the age of the respondents, mainly women in their sixties, suggesting that they moved to the Tokyo area in the 1960s and 1970s during the time of rapid economic development and urbanization drawing a large population to work and live in the metropolitan area.

Overall, the results show that the large majority of respondents were long term residents in the area. Low mobility tends to increase the sense of belonging to a social group or community, favouring social identification and fostering social engagement (Musick and Wilson 2008: 315). In case of moving to new places, religious communities may help new residents to re-establish their religious identity as soon as they start participating in the local church or centre. Participation in social work sponsored by the religious organization helps both old and new residents to become integrated in the local community, thus providing a way to acquire legitimized public identities. The results of this study show a majority of long-term residents, which is a factor helping to predict respondents' civic engagement. Their active membership in faith-based volunteer groups can also facilitate the process of community integration and interaction fostering further social engagement.

1.3 Educational background

Wilson (2000) notes that the level of education is the most consistent predictor of volunteering because it heightens awareness of problems and increases empathy (2000: 19).

In Japan, schools effectively teach social skills, such as the ability to work in small groups and to cooperate as a group. The Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education released by the Japanese government in 2008 recommends introducing volunteering as part of the curriculum in order to foster social awareness 'as members of society and qualities essential to responsible citizens' (Monbu kagakushō 2008).¹⁹⁴ Taniguchi sees a positive correlation between education and volunteer work in Japan (Taniguchi 2008: 5).

(Appendix 2: Table 4) Conspicuous differences were found when comparing the educational background of members of the three organizations targeted for this study. Respondents of St. Ignatius Church and Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division show an average higher level of education than the members of the other three targeted groups. Respondents of Shinnyoen Univers Foundation and Risshō kōseikai were mainly upper secondary school graduates with a small number of university graduates.

The higher levels of education of the respondents of St. Ignatius Church may be related to its connection with Christian schools and Sophia University. Moreover, the church's location in Chiyoda ward with coverage of central Tokyo may suggest that a majority of the upper-middle class membership receives a level of education that is higher than the average of those living in the outskirts.

Age is also a factor in influencing the respondents' educational background, with more young women currently receiving higher education up to university level, as compared with earlier generations.¹⁹⁵ The samples of Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division and St. Ignatius show a majority of women in their twenties and thirties, with an average higher level of education (typically university level) as compared with respondents of Risshō kōseikai and Univers Foundation, where the majority are women in their forties and fifties with an upper secondary school level of schooling. Overall, the sample shows an average high level of education which, according to the literature (Wilson 2000; Musick and Wilson 2008: 119-24), may account for the respondents' propensity toward civic engagement. The results of this study are also consistent with data reported in the World Value Survey, which shows that two largest groups of active members of charitable organizations are women with a college or university level of education.¹⁹⁶

1.4 Household composition and marital status

Family plays a pivotal role in both gender and religious socialization, as well as in generating volunteer attitudes (Stark and Finke 2000; Sherkat 2003; Musick and Wilson 2008: 225-32). Marital ties are important sources of influence, along with the presence of school-age children (Musick and Wilson 2008: 242-50). Elder members in the family may also be a source of role models for the younger generations in the households (Musick and Wilson 2008: 239-42). In order to understand the respondents' dynamics of their household, they were asked a set of questions concerning the number of family members, household composition, marital status, the number of children in the family and the age of the youngest child.

(Appendix 2: Table 5) The largest number of respondents claimed a household composition of four to six members, while families made of two or three members were the minority. Married couples, couples living with their children, and daughters with their parents, brothers and sisters were the typical patterns of family of the majority of respondents. A small number reported a household composition comprising three generations: married couples with children, living with the husband's or wife's parents or parents-in-law. A very small number of respondents lived alone.

(Appendix 2: Table 6) St. Ignatius Church respondents mainly lived in two-generation households. Among the two Risshō kōseikai churches targeted for the survey, Kawagoe Church had a significant number of respondents living in three-generation households. A correlation may be found between household composition and the geographical area of the respondents. Kawagoe city is located 30km from central Tokyo and the largest part of the city consists mainly of less densely populated areas characterized by houses hosting two to three-generation families.¹⁹⁷ Therefore, the results concerning household composition of Kawagoe Church sample are consistent with the figures of average residency and household composition in the area.

The majority of Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division and Shinnyoen Univers Foundation samples lived in households with two generations. These results may stem from the fact that the respondents lived in metropolitan areas where the density of population (7.663 people per square kilometre in Tachikawa city in 2007) and working life have stimulated a trend toward nuclear families weakening the traditional household model.¹⁹⁸

(Appendix 2: Table 7, Table 8, Table 9) While the results from both Shinnyoen and St. Ignatius Church sample are consistent with the general trend toward nuclear families with one child (Kokuritsu shakai hoshō jinkō mondai kenkyūjo 2010), the Risshō kōseikai samples

stand out for their prevalence of a larger number of children in the family, reinforced by results from Kawagoe Church sample showing a trend toward a traditional model of the extended household comprising three generations as discussed above. The Risshō kōseikai samples thus show a divergence as compared with the demographic changes with decreased birth rates and a tendency toward nuclear families over the past two decades (Takeda 2003: 454). This may be correlated with the rather conservative tendencies in the view of the family advocated by Risshō kōseikai, promoting the image of women shouldering the family and fostering motherhood.¹⁹⁹ However, Nakamura (1997) also found that only a minority of Risshō kōseikai members supported the idea of three-generation households, mainly because they could obtain help in child-rearing from their mothers or mothers-in-law (1997: 109). Similarly, Shinnyoen, where family values emphasizing the female role as wife and mother are also promoted (Usui 2003: 227-30), does not show a significant number of respondents with a large number of children or three-generation households. These results are consistent with the general pattern. According to a research study published in 2004 by the Institute for Research on Household Economics, married women living with their families are more likely to keep working after giving birth (Kakei keizai kenkyūjo 2004: 62-72). In these terms, the extended household represents the way to reconcile employment and child-rearing rather than the ideal of a family.

Therefore, the results from this survey confirm that religious belief does not exert a significant influence over family planning and the tendency toward nuclear families with only one or two children, or extended households with three-generation families is primarily related to individuals' overall social-economic circumstances.

1.5 Occupation

(Appendix 2: Table 10) The employment status most commonly claimed by respondents is split equally between 'full-time employee' and 'fixed-term, temporary, or part-time employee'. The 'housewife' group also adds up to a significant number, while the remaining minority identify themselves as 'self-employed' or 'student'.

However, a detailed analysis examining the breakdown according to the religious organizations reveals interesting differences. The majority of the Shinnyoen sample is made up of respondents categorized as fixed-term or part-time workers. In contrast, full-time employees make up the majority of the Risshō kōseikai sample. The remaining Risshō kōseikai sample is represented by housewives and fixed-term or part-time workers. The St. Ignatius Church sample holds the highest number of students. Thus the St. Ignatius Church

sample shows a tendency toward an educational career, while the large number of fixed-term or part-time workers in the Shinnyoen sample is consistent with the general trend of female participation in the labour market (Naikakufu, Danjō kyōdōsankaku kyoku 2010: 4).

In summary, the majority of the sample can be described as mainly middle-class working women, participating in the labour market either full-time or as part-time workers. Those with a lifestyle centred on the family, or combining family life with temporary and part-time jobs, were also present almost to the same degree. Likewise, women advancing to a higher level of education were also represented. Hence, the sample seems to be comparatively balanced between the number of women devoting more time to family life, to educational development and those regularly integrated into the labour market.

(Appendix 2: Table 12) When asked their reasons for working part-time, the majority of Shinnyoen respondents and Risshō kōseikai members replied 'to supplement family income'. This result is consistent with the general data supplied by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in its survey of part-time workers conducted in 2006. The majority (52%) of female respondents claimed their main reason for working part-time was to supplement family income (Kōsei rōdōshō 2006a). The possibility of working flexible time was also one of the main motives in both the Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai samples, while a smaller number of Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai adherents regarded a part-time job as the solution to balance work with childrearing and housework.

(Appendix 2: Table 11) Concerning the occupation of the respondents' partners, while the majority of Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai respondents' partners are white-collars workers, St. Ignatius Church are mainly self-employed professionals. Overall, the results of this survey are consistent with most research on volunteering showing that volunteer work is a largely middle-class pursuit (Musick and Wilson 2008: 127-47).

2. Gender-role attitudes related to family life and work

In order to evaluate respondents' gender role perception, the questionnaire included six questions related to attitudes about male and female roles as regards work and family. Two aspects of gender role attitudes were investigated: gender role ideology (e.g. institutionalized and socially expected roles about men and women in the family and at work) and women's expectations regarding work, marriage and family. Participants were asked to select one of the available statements listed in the questions, according to the degree of agreement toward it.

2.1 Lifestyle expectations: balancing work and family

(Appendix 2: Table 13) Respondents' opinion about women working after marriage show that the majority aspires to a model of life balancing work and family, suggesting that mothers should continue working after childbirth. Most respondents across the three religious organizations agreed with the statement 'women should leave work temporarily for childrearing, but should return to work part-time after that'. Overall, respondents demonstrate a marked preference for a lifestyle balancing work and family, and look forward to external support in order to fulfil their expectations. Research on Japanese women's expectations based upon official data indicates the same patterns.²⁰⁰ Moreover, in order to achieve a good balance between work and family, women consider men's contribution to household activities, such as childcare, family care and housekeeping, to be very important (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 14).

2.2 Attitudes toward gender roles

In order to examine attitudes towards stereotyped perceptions of gender roles, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following sentence: 'men should be breadwinners, women should take care of the family and children'.

(Appendix 2: Table 14) The results show some disparity among the three religious organizations. The majority of Shinnyoen respondents completely disagreed with the statement, while the majority of Risshō kōseikai respondents said that if they had to choose, they would agree. The largest number of St. Ignatius Church respondents was moderately against the statement.

In summary, although the sample seems oriented toward a rather family-centred idea of women's role, a significant number of respondents disagree. Risshō kōseikai members hold the highest degree of confidence in women's role as family carers, while Shinnyoen and St. Ignatius Church respondents are uncertain about the traditional division of roles. Again, the younger average age of Shinnyoen and St. Ignatius Church samples may be correlated to the propensity to disregard rigid gender role segregation, as socio-economic changes of the past two decades may have affected the younger generations in their perceptions of gender roles. Similarly, the average middle-age of Risshō kōseikai respondents may be consistent with the tendency toward a conventional image of men as bread-winners and women as family-carers favoured between the 1960s and 1980s as discussed in the Introduction.

Comparing the findings of this study with the general trend, the 2009 White Paper on Gender Equality reports that the rate of female respondents who do not support the stereotyped perception of gender roles exceeds that of those who agree with it (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 15). Moreover, the number of those who hold an opposing view has been increasing over the last 10 years and public awareness of gender equality has increased (ibid.). In fact, when looking at the breakdown by age, the 2009 White Paper reports that female respondents of the younger generation, including those in their 20s, have a lower percentage of proponents than those in their 40s and 50s (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 15). This general data reinforces the findings of the present study discussed above.

(Appendix 2: Table 15) In order to further examine the participants' opinion on expected gender roles, they were asked to think about the justification for the stereotyped model presented in the previous question. The majority of the St. Ignatius Church respondents blamed structural factors related to working conditions as the main reasons for hindering women's participation in the labour market. Risshō kōseikai respondents seemed hesitant about employment. Most of them supported the family-oriented model indicating the central role of women in childrearing as women's main reason for being associated with family and housework. These results are consistent with general data reported in the 2009 White Paper on Gender Equality, which shows a higher number of respondents giving such reasons in favour of stereotyped gender roles (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 14).

Shinnyoen respondents added their own comments mainly indicating biological distinctiveness in reproduction as the main reason behind women's central role in the family. Some stated that the idea that men are superior to women (*danson jōhi*) is still prevalent in Japanese society, an opinion shared by those in Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church who also specified their own views.

In summary, while acknowledging structural factors hindering women's roles in the labour market, most of the respondents relate women's responsibility for childrearing to their role in reproduction. Results show that gender socialization in the younger generations tend to shape an idea of women as mainly work-oriented, in contrast with earlier generations that maintain a prevalence of family-centred roles for women. These results correspond to the general trend as reported in the 2009 White Paper on Gender Equality, which shows an increasing number of young women entering the labour market mainly as non-regular employees (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 11) while increasingly regarding household activities as a

burden that should be equally shared between men and women (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 15).

2.3 *Expectations toward family roles*

In order to examine participants' views as regards roles in the family, they were asked to select one of the five statements reported in the question that best matched their expectations.

(Appendix 2: Table 16) The large majority of the St. Ignatius Church respondents agrees with the idea that childrearing and housework should be equally shared between men and women, a statement that was similarly chosen by the largest number in the Shinnyoen sample. In contrast, most Risshō kōseikai respondents think that although women can participate in the labour market just as men do, childrearing is mainly a women's role. However, the Risshō kōseikai sample shows uncertainty about men and women's family roles, as sharing tasks equally in the family was preferred by almost the same number of respondents who, in contrast, supported the conventional view of men as wage-earners and women as family-carers. As discussed above, this finding is consistent with the general trend where an increasing number of young women deem household activities to be a burden that should be equally shared between men and women (Naikakufu, Danjō kyōdōsankaku kyoku 2009:15).

(Appendix 2: Table 17) In order to compare the above results regarding respondents' expectations about work and family with the practice of everyday life, participants were asked to state who was mainly in charge of housework in the family and who, if anyone, usually helped that person. As discussed above, the majority of Shinnyoen-sponsored Univers Foundation and Risshō kōseikai respondents were adult women living with their partners or family. Accordingly, a large majority of Shinnyoen Univers Foundation and Risshō kōseikai respondents were mainly in charge of housework. In contrast, most Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division and St. Ignatius Church respondents still lived with their parents at the time of the survey, thus the results of these samples show that respondents' mothers were mainly doing the housework. A small number of the Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division respondents stated that their partners were doing housework, a figure similarly found in the St. Ignatius Church sample.

(Appendix 2: Table 18) When asked who helped the person mainly in charge of housework stated in the previous question, the majority of the respondents of Shinnyoen, Risshō kōseikai, and St. Ignatius Church claimed that no one else assisted with it, thereby showing that the role model of women in charge of domestic responsibilities is still dominant in family life

practice. The 2009 White Paper on Gender Equality similarly reports that about 90% of the respondents state that women are mainly in charge of household chores (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 13). An interesting small number of the Shinnyoen respondents were helped by their sons and some Risshō kōseikai members indicated their partners, showing, to some extent, a trend in the family everyday life toward integration of spheres of activities beyond gendered practices.

In summary, when these results are compared with those concerning women's expectations discussed above, they show a similar overall trend consistent with the general pattern. The average support for cooperation in the family in order to favour an egalitarian gender model both in the family and in the labour market seems to be hindered by structural factors hampering women's reconciliation of employment and family, along with a diluted but persistent family-centred gender socialization of the majority of the respondents. However, there seems to be a trend away from the strongly family-oriented generations, especially in young women who feel that they should obtain help in child-rearing so that they can balance their work life with family, thereby indicating that age is the most important factor here in forming women's perceptions of gender roles.

3. Joining the religious organization: religious background, motives, the process

3.1 Family religion and personal religion

Religious socialization plays an important role in shaping individuals' religious preferences.²⁰¹ Thus pre-existing family affiliation to a Buddhist temple or Shintō shrine may be a source of preference in individuals. In order to understand the role of religious socialization in respondents' religiosity, they were asked a set of questions exploring family religion, year of joining the religious organization, influence of social ties in channelling their religious preferences and reasons for joining the group. In doing so, the following section draws a profile of respondents' religiosity and will attempt to assess the degree of normative influence of religion on an individual's preferences.

(Appendix 2: Table 19) Overall, the majority of Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai respondents were from a Buddhist background, while in the St. Ignatius Church sample the number of respondents from Christian backgrounds slightly outnumbered those whose family religion was Buddhist-related.²⁰²

The Shingon school seems to typify family religion in both Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai, while the families of the St. Ignatius Church respondents largely belonged to Christian denominations with a minority associated to the Nichiren school. There may be a correlation between the prevalence of respondents coming from families affiliated to the Shingon school, and the emphasis that Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai place on ancestral rites performing memorial services for the dead. Shingon places great importance on memorial rites for one's ancestors, along with Risshō kōseikai whose members are regularly required to perform rituals for the dead as part of their regular practice.²⁰³ Shinnyoen, which is an off-shoot of the Shingon school, shares many doctrinal characteristics with it and closely relates self-cultivation to ancestral spirits who give their guidance through the practice of *sesshin*.²⁰⁴ In short, Buddhist-related Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai tend to maintain religious worldviews that are associated with established Buddhist traditions. This may be a factor facilitating the transfer of a member from a religious tradition to the new religious movement. In these terms, respondents' personal religion does not clash sharply with the family religion associated with established Buddhist sects. In contrast, personal religion clearly prevails over family religion when Catholic respondents, whose families are affiliated with the Nichiren school, identify themselves with a Christian denomination. The different attitude toward family religion is an element of distinction between Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai members, on the one hand, and Catholic adherents, on the other.

3.2 *Joining a religious group: the process*

(Appendix 2: Table 20) When asked the year of joining the religious organization, the majority of Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division and Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association replied that they became members at birth, indicating that an older member of their family was already affiliated to the organization. Interestingly, for those respondents, being a member of those organizations since birth had no relationship with family religion as shown in the results discussed above. In this case, personal religion, both of the respondents and the other member of the family who was already an adherent, did not function as a substitute of the established traditions in the role of family religion, but simply integrated the mainstream belief. In contrast, the findings from the St. Ignatius sample show that the majority of respondents who were born into the religion deem it as their family religion as well, thus proving a stronger religious identity in this latter case.

(Appendix 2: Table 21) In order to explore the role of religious socialization in terms of family members influencing respondents' preference about religiosity, participants were asked to state how many generations of adherents there were in their family. The majority of Shinnyoen members, and the St. Ignatius Church respondents were first-generation adherents. In Risshō kōseikai, the majority were second-generation.

There seems to be a correlation between the year of joining and the age of the respondents: the majority of Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division and St. Ignatius Church were young first generation adherents who had affiliated to the organization in recent years, appearing to be mainly young women seeking a faith of their own. In contrast, most Risshō kōseikai members were second-generation who affiliated some decades ago, introduced to the group by a family member. In summary, Risshō kōseikai members seem more family-oriented, while Shinnyoen and St. Ignatius Church show a rather individualistic attitude toward religiosity.

(Appendix 2: Table 22) In order to explore the level of identification with the church or the centre respondents were attending at the time of the survey, they were asked to state where they registered their affiliation. The majority of respondents across the three organizations were originally members of the church or the centre they were attending. Shinnyoen Univers Foundation shows the highest variation with about half of the respondents attending Tachikawa centre but originally registered at a different place.

Overall the sample shows a very low level of mobility in terms of religious attendance, giving a profile of respondents who were accustomed to the church or centre they attended, the organizational staff and the activities promoted. Results may suggest that most respondents had a high level of identification with the local church or centre to which they belonged.

(Appendix 2: Table 23) When asked about their role within the religious organization, all respondents indicated that they did not cover specific religious roles, thus confirming that the sample is made up of regular lay adherents not involved in religious tasks.

(Appendix 2: Table 24) When respondents were asked who introduced them to the religious organizations, the majority of Shinnyoen, Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church claimed they knew about it since birth or childhood. Most respondents confirmed during the interview that they were brought to the religion by their mothers who were already members. Overall, data confirm the central role of family and relatives in religious socialization, as suggested by the literature on the matter (Sherkat 1997 and 2003).

The results of this question give further information about the role of networking and relational setting on religious socialization, with a small number of Shinnyoen respondents

stating they were introduced to the organization by friends, co-workers, schoolmates and neighbours. Similarly, a minority of Risshō kōseikai respondents indicated they were first approached by neighbours or a friend living in the area. In contrast, none of St. Ignatius Church respondents had the same experience, although some respondents indicated schoolmates played a role in their conversion, a result that can be explained by the fact that women tended to become Catholic while they were students in Christian schools and universities.

(Appendix 2: Table 25) The reasons for joining differ among the three religious organizations, and are quite varied. In Shinnyoen, the majority of the respondents joined the organization to seek help from religion order to address their personal problems. Among those adding their own motives, performing *mizuko kuyō* (memorial services – *kuyō* - for dead, aborted and miscarried babies, *mizuko*) was claimed as an important reason. Professing a religious belief inherited by an older member of the family is the main reason for the majority of Risshō kōseikai respondents, while performing ancestral rites was also one of the motives respondents added. The majority of the St. Ignatius church respondents claimed they approached Catholicism because of their interest in the doctrine. Esteem for the church priest, the sociable environment of the meetings and gatherings were also selected as reasons for joining.

In general, the motives of the Catholics tended to be doctrinal; those of Shinnyoen are more personal, related to the individual's search for self-improvement, both spiritual and physical; while Risshō kōseikai seems more family-oriented. However, despite their overall differences, a significant number of members of all three organizations claimed motives that are social in nature, emphasizing a search for personal interaction, a friendly atmosphere and human warmth.

(Appendix 2: Table 26) When asked the reasons for their belief in the group's doctrine, the majority of the Shinnyoen, Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church respondents replied it provides them with the strength they need in everyday life, with a number of respondents commenting that their faith provides a sense of purpose and self-esteem that increases their social awareness.

Overall, there seems to be a trend toward individualization where religious belief helps strengthen an individual's social identity, stimulating personal development and social awareness. It also fosters a feeling of belonging to the community. These results are consistent with qualitative studies exploring the positive role of religiosity in reinforcing the

individual's social identity and sense of belonging (Warner 1997; Ammerman 2003 and 2007; Wuthnow 2004).²⁰⁵

4. Religious volunteering: the process, motives, changes

In order to evaluate women's perspectives and expectations toward volunteer work, the respondents were asked a set of twenty-three questions. These ranged from motives for joining volunteer activities; preferences; perceptions of civil engagement; changes that engagement have brought about on the individual and social level; the perceived benefits; and the expected impact on both the individual and social level. Furthermore, in order to ascertain the perceived impact of religious volunteer activities on community well-being, respondents were asked to comment on the relationship between religious activity in civil society and the state, and their influence on political actors.

4.1 Year of joining, volunteer rates, and influence of belief in volunteering

Year of joining

(Appendix 2: Table 27) The majority of the sample started volunteering in their religious organizations between 2000 and 2005, along with a second large group who joined volunteer activities during a period from 2006 to the time the respondents were administered the survey questionnaire (November and December 2009).

Volunteer rate

In order to measure the respondents' propensity towards volunteer work, one of the questions regarded the frequency of participation in volunteer activities. The rate of volunteering helps to define whether respondents were regular or occasional volunteers, thereby suggesting the degree of respondents' social commitment.

(Appendix 2: Table 28) The respondents of St. Ignatius Church split into two groups: the majority stated they volunteered every time activities were held; the remainder claimed a slightly lower frequency rate of every two or three times. The majority of Shinnyoen respondents regularly volunteered every time, with a smaller group participating every two or three times. The largest number of Risshō kōseikai respondents claimed a rate of attendance of every two or three times, followed by a second large group who claimed they participated every time.

It should be noted here that activities organized by Risshō kōseikai are usually held twice or three times a week. Therefore, when the majority of Risshō kōseikai respondents report a frequency of every two or three times, their rate of attendance corresponds to, or it is close to, participation on a weekly basis, thus showing a habitual commitment. Similarly, Univers Foundation activities are held throughout the week, thus requiring members to make a weekly commitment. In contrast, the activities of the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division are usually held once a month. Therefore, the frequency rate of those claiming every two or three times corresponds, in fact, to a few times a year.

Beyond the specific group's customs, the results confirm an overall presence of regular volunteers in the sample, validated by a tendency toward a high frequency rate of participation in volunteer activities. This result is consistent with general data as reported in the 2008 White Paper on Gender Equality, which shows that 81.4% of the surveyed women tend to volunteer regularly (once a week) and favour *shimin katsudō* [community-based volunteering] dealing with eldercare, childcare and support for the disabled (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2008: 13).

The role of informal social networks

Extant research studies show that informal social relations have a positive influence on volunteering, increasing the chances of engagement (Musick and Wilson 2008: 284). In order to evaluate the role of social relationships in creating a propensity toward regular social engagement, respondents were asked to state their frequency of participation in cases where none of their friends or acquaintance was joining the activity. The question in this survey helped to assess the above idea exploring the role of social ties in individual decision-making and the degree of the dependence of the respondents on a particular informal social relationship within the volunteer group, as compared with the extended framework of relationships within the religious organization.

(Appendix 2: Table 29) The respondents of the three religious organizations displayed the same pattern of response, with the majority claiming that in cases where none of their friends or acquaintances was joining, they tended to reduce their rate of volunteering. Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church show the most significant difference as compared with the results of the previous question concerning frequency of attendance. Shinnyoen shows the least variation, with the majority of respondents confirming the 'every time' option, along with those who marked 'every two or three times'.

In general, Shinnyoen respondents seem to confirm an overall frequency rate very close to the results of the previous question, suggesting the low influence of informal social ties, such as friendship and acquaintances on their individual decision-making. In contrast, respondents of Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church show an average high degree of dependence on social relationships within the volunteer group influencing their propensity for social engagement. A correlation can be found between these findings and the group's customs in terms of organization and management. As outlined in Chapter 3, both Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church volunteer groups were largely independent of the religious organization and self-managed by members who were acting under the approval of the head of the church, but were not managed by it. Hence, members have an active role in that they are personally in charge of the organization, design and assignment of tasks, arrangements and schedule, and overall management of volunteer groups. Because of their active organizational and managing role, members tend to establish informal social relationships within the groups, which may correlate with the higher level of dependence of Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church volunteers as presented above. In contrast, Shinnyoen activities are arranged by coordinators and senior members of the volunteer groups. Therefore, members of the Youth Division have a passive role in terms of planning and management: they are free to participate in any of the scheduled activities according to their preference about volunteering and availability. Therefore, although they may have friends and acquaintances within the volunteer groups, their choice is primarily based on personal preference and availability rather than being influenced by social ties.

Influence of belief in social engagement

As discussed in the previous chapter, beyond doctrinal differences all three religious organizations at the heart of the present study promote altruistic behaviours by teaching their members values elevating the significance of caring for others to a position of spiritual achievement. In order to evaluate whether religious involvement has a crucial role in generating respondents' propensity toward social engagement, they were asked two interrelated questions exploring their propensity toward secular volunteering.

(Appendix 2: Table 30) The large majority of Risshō kōseikai, Shinnyoen, and St. Ignatius Church respondents confirmed they used to volunteer in secular social work before joining the volunteer group sponsored by the religious organization.

(Appendix 2: Table 31) Moreover, civic engagement in non-religious volunteer groups at the time of the survey shows an overall propensity toward volunteering not exclusively related to

their religious organization. The Risshō kōseikai sample shows the highest number with half of the sample involved in secular social work outside their organization. Similarly, the Shinnyoen sample holds almost half of the respondents in the sample who were involved in secular volunteer activities at the time of survey, along with St. Ignatius Church respondents who claimed as such.

In general, the results of the above interrelated questions confirm that: 1. respondents had a propensity toward volunteering before engaging in religious volunteer activities; and 2. that their attitude toward social engagement is not exclusively related to achievements in their religious practice or philanthropic attitudes guided by their religious belief. Therefore, the results show that religiosity may strengthen individuals' civic awareness and foster volunteer behaviours within and outside the religious organization as suggested in the literature presented in Chapter 1. However, religious involvement is not the prime factor in generating civic engagement, as suggested by the large number of respondents who claimed they had experience in social work before joining the activities sponsored by the religious organization. This finding suggests that individual civic engagement should be explored as an action constituted by several intermingled multi-layered factors where religiosity and religious identity are just but two interrelated elements informing it.

4.2 Reasons for volunteering

The results of the previous questions show that although religiosity can be considered a facilitator of members' attitude to altruism, it can hardly be pointed out as the one single factor. In order to identify respondents' reasons for volunteering, they were asked to choose three statements out of thirteen available in the question. Statements covered three main aspects:

1. contextual effects of religiosity, including normative effect of teachings, influence of organizational membership and values;
2. motives related to personal development, including increasing knowledge and social skills, extended network and social ties;
3. social awareness, comprising fostered civic attitudes and perspectives on gender.

After choosing the three statements that best matched their motivations, respondents were also asked to rate their preferences.

An explanation of the statements listed in the question is necessary before discussing the findings. Two initial statements concerned the normative role of faith and the influence of organizational membership on an individual's choice for volunteering. The first statement was

about the sense of responsibility fostered by religious teachings, in that the strength and content of religious beliefs can motivate volunteering behaviour (Shimazono 1998). People selecting the second statement related volunteering to a form of obedience to ethical behaviour required from the group setting (Hardacre 2003a: 141). In contrast, the sixth option represented the choice for those respondents who weighted their personal values more than their religious belief: the statement did not include the word 'religion' or related expressions, therefore people selecting it implied that they acted according to their set of values, such as altruism, empathy and solidarity. However, since they were engaged in religious volunteering, the influence of religious belief on their personal values cannot be ignored. Therefore, although the statement does not explicitly relate personal values to belief, it can be partially regarded as an element of the contextual effects of religiosity. The motivations suggested in options three to five, along with statements seven and ten, focus on personal development. The reasons suggested in the statements are associated with actors' acknowledged benefits achieved by volunteering, both on the personal (emotional) and social level. Options three to five suggest that respondents engage in voluntarism fostered by religious practice as a way for self-realization on three levels: 1) fulfilment by feeling complacent through one's accomplishments in volunteering (statement no.3); 2) self-esteem, for giving a purpose in life (statement no.4); and 3) self-promoting, in that it allows individuals to generate time for activities according to personal preferences, outside everyday family and work responsibilities (statement no.5). Furthermore, the seventh statement suggests that individuals volunteer because it allows them to form wider social networks, learning how to relate with many new people in different situations. It also included the possibility that volunteering provides more opportunities to develop deeper and closer friendships with other members of the group. The eighth statement is concerned with the willingness to engage in activities for community revitalization. Similarly, the ninth statement is related with civic awareness and social responsibility. The tenth statement is linked to the level of self-understanding and knowledge acquired while volunteering. Finally, statement number eleven concerned gender awareness. Respondents supporting this statement related their social engagement to the fact that volunteering helps in transcending social expectations in terms of gender roles, creating a 'field' (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 67) where individuals are viewed primarily in terms of their civic skills. Hence, their social commitment was motivated due to the benefit in terms of achieved equal gender roles beyond gendered ones compelled by the practices of everyday life. This last option, together with the two above, may be grouped in the category of social awareness. The twelfth option suggested that people engaged in volunteering because it is supported by

politicians or influential people participating in volunteer groups. Respondents choosing this statement confirmed their positive opinion of political involvement in volunteering, in that they regarded social engagement as potentially effective on the political level. They acknowledged a relationship between social issues and government policies. Finally, respondents could add their own comment when none of the above listed statements matched their motives.

(Appendix 2: Table 32) The results show that the number of respondents who answered 'to contribute to others' as the reason for participating in volunteer activities is by far the highest in all three organizations. Among variations, the two second largest groups are found in the Shinnyoen sample: those who regarded volunteering as part of their religious practice and those who considered it as a way to give a sense of purpose in their life. Only one regarded volunteering as a context characterized by gender equality. The Risshō kōseikai sample results demonstrate the normative role of faith and the influence of organizational membership on an individual's choice for volunteering, a result that is consistent with Mukhopadhyaya's (2005) work. Volunteering as a field of gender equal roles was selected as the reason by only one Risshō kōseikai respondent. In the St. Ignatius Church sample, the second largest group replied that volunteering was a practice fostered by their religious life that gave them a sense of satisfaction. A significant number regarded it as a way to build networks with other people, while others valued it for personal growth. A gender equal environment was selected by one St. Ignatius Church respondent.

As regards respondents' ratings of the three selected statements, data further confirm the above results. A detailed analysis shows that Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association respondents also rated a feeling of obedience toward senior members as nearly as important as the other statements. This result suggests that Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association members tended to value their social relationships, both hierarchically within the religious organization and horizontally, almost as important as their personal development. However, the result is limited to one sub-group, so it cannot fully corroborate the idea that religious organizational identity and belief are crucial factors in members' motivation to volunteer.

4.3 Type of volunteer activities respondents are engaged and activities aspired

Respondents were asked five interrelated questions investigating the type of volunteer activities with which they were engaged, the frequency of attendance, the reasons for joining them, along with the type of activities with which they wanted to get engaged, and the reasons

for not being able to join them. Respondents were also asked to order their preferences and motives according to the level of importance, indicating the most important with the number 1. The purpose of these questions was to examine the degree of volunteers' engagement in social work as compared with the level of their commitment expressed by the type of activities to which they aspired. Comparing the activities, the respondents were engaged with those to which they aspired, and by ordering selected activities and reasons according to respondents' preferences, helped to evaluate to what extent civic commitment was guiding volunteer engagement vis-à-vis personal development and self-realization.

A note concerning the vocabulary used in these questions to express volunteer work (*borantia* vs. *hōshi*) and the sort of activities listed is necessary before discussing the results.

a. *Borantia* vs. *hōshi*

Hōshi [service] is the word traditionally used by many Japanese religious organizations to define charitable activities and social service that members are expected to perform as part of their religious practice (Tsujinaka 2002: 8). According to Tsujinaka, *hōshi* belongs to the traditional form of Japanese civic engagement that implies supporting society or even sacrificing oneself for the public welfare (ibid.).

In case of both Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai, *hōshi* is a word commonly used within the organization in expressions such as *imon hōshi* [visiting people in need], *seisō hōshi* [clean-up activities], and *sōchō hōshi* [early morning clean-up activities]. Therefore, members are familiar with the usage of the word *hōshi* to express voluntary service. In this case, however, the word conveys a religious nuance as it is counted as an extension and *jissen* [praxis] of members' religiosity within and outside their religious milieu. However, when discussing whether to use *hōshi* or *borantia* in the questionnaire and interviews with representative members of local Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai volunteer groups, they recommended using the latter term.²⁰⁶ They explained that *hōshi* tended to be counted as activities closely related to the religious organization, such as assisting new-comers or converts, helping during organized events, or clean-up activities. In contrast, community-related social work to be performed outside, such as welfare activities for the elderly and disabled, garbage disposal and traffic safety campaigns, were generally called *borantia katsudō*, volunteer activities. To clarify such a distinction they observed that participants volunteering within and in relation to the religious organization are all members who share the values and the same religious vocabulary of the religious setting. Thus *hōshi*, which entails religious connotations, is commonly used in those cases. In contrast, in community-related activities, when members

work in cooperation with non-religious people (neighbourhood associations, the local government, NPOs and other secular associations) the neutral word *borantia* is preferred. Information collected through participatory observation and interviews during the survey also confirmed this trend: both Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai respondents described their volunteer activities as *katsudō*, such as *shakai katsudō* [social activities] or *borantia katsudō* [volunteer activities] rather than *shakai hōshi* [social service]. They also used the word *borantia* when referring to a fellow volunteer member, while *hōshi* was used on the occasion of the specific activities mentioned above, such as welcoming visitors at the church, entailing some sort of private, spiritual connotations.

In contrast to both Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai, during the survey at St. Ignatius Church volunteers never mentioned the word *hōshi* to mean their social work. Volunteers at St. Ignatius Church used always *shakai katsudō* to mean their social work for the community, alternating it with *taigai shien* [outside support], and called volunteer members *borantia*.

b. Activities listed in the questions

Concerning the activities listed in the questionnaire, information was drawn mainly on the sort of social work that the organizations promoted. In detail, the questions included the following options. Firstly, in order to understand whether paid volunteer service was an opportunity among members, respondents were initially asked to choose between 'non-paid voluntary service' (statement one) and 'paid voluntary service' (statement two).

Four categories of activities were then listed in the question:

1. community support activities: as a form of *hōshi* (statement three); activities related to neighbourhood associations (statement four); charity events, campaigns promoting children and adults-friendly communities (statement five); activities appealing to public service and government policies (statement thirteen); social welfare activities for the local community, such as contributing to hospitals, hospices, and elderly homes (statement nine); and activities helping the elderly and disabled (statement fifteen);
2. educational activities, such as childcare and classes on family education (statement six), along with study groups, workshops and conferences (statement seven);
3. activities promoted on a national level, such as environmental preservation and consumers' lifestyle (statement eight), peace movements (statement eleven) and international cooperation (statement fourteen);

4. religious-related activities promoted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and NPOs sponsored by the religious organization (statement ten), movements promoting interreligious dialogue, memorial services and international cooperation (statement twelve).

Respondents who could not find an appropriate option among those listed above were asked to add their own comment in option sixteen, while those who were not engaged in any sort of social activities could select the final seventeenth option.

(Appendix 2: Table 33) As regards the volunteer activities in which respondents were engaged at the time of the survey, the Risshō kōseikai sample shows the most variety. The activities most frequently mentioned were peace activities and *hōshi*. Other options largely selected by Risshō kōseikai members were activities supporting social welfare, such as helping the elderly and visiting them at home, childcare and family education, and recreational activities for the community's wellbeing. Shinnyoen respondents indicated mainly *hōshi* as their prevalent activity. As noted in Chapter 3, the majority of the activities in which participants were engaged, such as the *kakisonji hagaki* or the disaster training, were held at the Shinnyoen headquarters and were managed by Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department. Therefore, activities were conducted in close relationship with the religious organization and within the religious organization precincts, which may explain the respondents' prevalent use of *hōshi* to describe their social engagement. St. Ignatius Church evidenced the least variation, with the majority selecting the general statement 'not-paid voluntary service', which relates to activities for the homeless in the area, since the targeted group was engaged in that programme.

(Appendix 2: Table 34) As regards the activities which Risshō kōseikai and Shinnyoen respondents attended most, the majority confirmed *hōshi* and social welfare activities for the disabled and elderly. The St. Ignatius sample also gave social welfare activities for the homeless as the most attended. The Risshō kōseikai sample shows a high attendance in peace activities, which relates to the high degree of engagement for the promotion of peace that the religious organization performs both at the national and international level (Kisala 1992: 104-6 and 1999).²⁰⁷ When rating the selected activities, the majority of the preferences across the three religious organizations gravitated towards the general assertion of 'non-paid voluntary service' as the most important. Shinnyoen respondents selected *hōshi* as the second most important, while Risshō kōseikai members chose 'peace activities'.

(Appendix 2: Table 35) As for the activities respondents would like to join, Shinnyoen respondents selected mainly those contributing to the local community such as

neighbourhood associations, along with international exchange. Results from the Risshō kōseikai sample show a similar trend, although peace activities received a large number of preferences by respondents. The majority of the St. Ignatius Church respondents selected international cooperation and exchange as the activity to which they most aspired.

When asked to rate their selections, the respondents of the Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division confirmed activities related to international exchange as the one to which they most aspired. Members of Shinnyoen Unvers Foundation selected social welfare activities as the most desired. Peace activities were the most popular for the Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church sample, while Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers respondents prefer neighbourhood associations. St. Ignatius Church respondents were mainly concerned about activities related to international exchange.

Two intermingled questions asked respondents to state their reasons for further social commitment and why they were not able to join other activities according to their aspirations.

(Appendix 2: Table 36) The majority of the respondents of the three organizations claimed that they wanted to volunteer more to contribute to others. Some Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai respondents also sympathized with the content and the purpose of the activities, while others were motivated by *ikigai* [self-fulfilment], a feeling volunteering generates in them. The St. Ignatius Church respondents were mainly encouraged in volunteering because they felt it granted them a meaningful life, as well as because of the content and the purpose of the activities. It should be noted here that since the 1980s the mass media, as well as official discourse, often linked volunteering to words like *ikigai* [self-fulfilment], *jiko jitsugen* self-realization self-discovery [*jiko hakken*] and self-responsibility [*jiko sekinin*] (Avenell 2010: 84). Therefore, popular conceptualizations of voluntarism around those concepts cannot be underestimated as a form of motivation socially recognized and accepted in which respondents sourced their rationale.

(Appendix 2: Table 37) Looking at the reasons individuals proffer for not participating more in volunteer activities, the majority of the respondents of the three organizations claimed financial burden, along with limited time because of being busy at work. Some Shinnyoen members also claimed they were not motivated to increase their volunteer engagement because no other people around them were engaged in volunteering. Therefore, while on the one hand, respondents felt that securing financial stability was a reasonable priority over their social commitment, a number of them also assigned to interpersonal relationship a significant relevance in fostering their volunteering.

In summary, the results show that respondents tend to regard their volunteering as a form of non-paid social service in which they participate in order to meet the needs of the community. Since this study deals with religious volunteers, it was expected that because of their religious teachings a majority of the respondents would aspire to activities in the domain of person-to-person care and other daily services for people in need in the community. The samples of Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers and Shinnyoen Univers Foundation show a correspondence between the activities in which respondents were engaged and those to which they aspired, as both tend to be locally oriented. The results from Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division and St. Ignatius Church samples, in contrast, show a divergence between the locally oriented engagement and the internationally oriented aspirations. A correlation can be found between the results and the age of the respondents, with a majority of middle-age women in the Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers and Shinnyoen Univers Foundation sample and a majority of the young women in the Shinnyoen Social Welfare Department - Youth Division and St. Ignatius Church samples. In summary, while the results show that community-related social work is largely practiced, the younger generations tend to favour activities supporting a cause, thus showing more globally oriented aspirations.²⁰⁸ When comparing the results with general data available in the 2007 survey on Japanese volunteers, we find that international activities peak among women aged between 15 and 19, which is the second largest group after women aged between 40 and 50 (Sōmushō tōkeikyoku 2007).²⁰⁹ The 2008 White Paper on Gender Equality reports similar data, also confirming a general trend for women aged between 40 and 60 to be active in the domains of eldercare, support for the disabled and childcare (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2008: 16). Overall, the data of this study are consistent with the general data showing an overall trend of the younger generation toward globally oriented activities and middle-age and older women favouring more routine forms of volunteering dealing with civic and community groups.

4.4 Life course and volunteering

In order to explore the volunteer's other-oriented (pro-social) personality (Musick and Wilson 2008: 50), as compared with individualistic traits of self-realization and self-interest, respondents were asked to characterize appropriate pattern of volunteering for women going through life events, such as getting married and having children, according to their own experience or just as a personal opinion. They were then asked their views of their own personalities.

(Appendix 2: Table 38) The results show that the majority across the three religious organizations agreed that women should continue volunteering after getting married and having children. Respondents expressing such views acknowledge that once women become mothers, their expectations and roles may change. However, they do not dismiss women's social commitment and their role in civic participation. This opinion was contrasted by a proportion of respondents indicating that women should start, or restart, volunteering only after the children have grown up, thereby emphasizing the role of mother over their volunteer commitment.

As discussed in Chapter 1, a tradition of maternalism is rooted in Japanese women's social movements, emphasizing the primary nurturing role of women in mobilizing women at the grassroots level. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the respondents of this study prioritize their mothering role over their volunteer role, although the latter is also favoured since it belongs as well to the sphere of maternalism legitimized and expected by society. The results, therefore, show that the motherhood discourse is still rooted in social expectations channelling women's social engagement in relationships to the maternal role they manifest. However, the results of this study show that such a component cannot explain the civic engagement of younger women who are yet to be mothers or wives, or the engagement in activities supporting the homeless, which are not related to the mothering role. Therefore, maternalism by itself cannot provide a comprehensive explanation for women's social engagement and their choice of volunteer domain. Chapter 6 will further examine this argument on the basis of results from interview data.

(Appendix 2: Table 39) Concerning the volunteers' views of their personality vis-à-vis their social propensity, the question in this survey asked respondents to select a statement that best matched their opinion. The respondents of the three organizations show an overall sense of responsibility toward their community wellbeing, a fact that is further confirmed by the average propensity of the respondents toward a harmonious community rather than an individualistic society. However, their other-oriented concern was not valued as more important than their need for a living a full, stable life. Overall, while respondents tend to favour a pro-social personality, they also show a sense of self-control and self-confidence. Since volunteering is a way of showing self-confidence and the ability to interact with others comfortably (Musick and Wilson 2008: 87), the results concerning the respondents' self-commitment are not incompatible with those related to altruism, as volunteer work may be a means of expressing one's individuality.

(Appendix 2: Table 40) Moreover, there may be a relationship between the level of social engagement and the level of confidence that one's own efforts will bear fruit (Musick and Wilson 2008: 47). When asked to rate their previous statements, respondents valued the contribution to society almost as much as self-control and having a stable and satisfying life. The results suggest that respondents tend to be efficacious people, believing that their volunteer work may help to enhance the quality of life in their community, which in turn can provide tangible effects on their own quality of life. Therefore, they are likely to set realistic goals, such as helping former members of the organization who are now old and living alone, a service that has then been extended to the elderly of the community.²¹⁰

4.5 *Perceived outcomes of volunteer work*

The results discussed above show that altruism, understood as the desire to help others or help a cause, is one of the main reasons for volunteering. The following section analyzes the responses concerning respondents' perceived outcomes at the social level in terms of social contribution, trust and social connectivity.

Perceived social contribution

(Appendix 2: Table 41) When asked about their activities and outcomes in terms of social contribution, the majority of the respondents of the three organizations emphasized three main results: building a sense of solidarity and harmony expanding from the family to society the social; giving the necessary support to people in their everyday life; and generating social ethics. Risshō kōseikai members also evaluated volunteer work positively in promoting children's education and social awareness.

Trust and social networks

Although this study does not directly measure the strength and size of the respondents' social network and their level of trust toward their social contacts, it included three questions concerning the respondents' perceived level of trust and social connectivity. One question deals with the volunteer group and two concern social relationships outside it, including the respondents' preference according to gender (male, female, or both) and the degree of importance they attribute to their relationships.

(Appendix 2: Table 42) The majority of respondents had a positive opinion of their volunteer groups, mainly claiming that they offered an atmosphere of mutual trust and support. This aspect was rated as the most important as compared with a friendly and informal atmosphere they felt free to join with ease. A very few Risshō kōseikai members and St. Ignatius Church respondents were critical towards fellow volunteers complaining about their opportunistic, self-promoting and unthinking, inconsiderate behaviour.

(Appendix 2: Table 43) The question concerning respondents' perceived level of trust outside the volunteering group covered interactions with neighbours, co-workers, friends sharing recreational time, school-age friends, members of the religious organizations, social contacts acquainted at school or activities, and relatives. All members tend to have significant interaction with members of the religious organizations and relatives. This tendency coexisted with some variation. In terms of the perceived importance of their relationships, relatives and members of the religious organization received the most preferences across the three religious groups. The majority of the respondents stated that they usually interrelate mainly with women, or both men and women, while interaction with only men was selected by none of the respondents.

(Appendix 2: Table 44) The third question asked how many people within the volunteering group respondents used to exchange greetings with, how many with whom they could have a chat and how many they felt they could count on for help if needed. This question aimed at exploring the level of the respondents' interpersonal trust, from a rather low rate in the case of exchanging greetings to high in the case of requesting help. The results do not show a significant difference among the three options, indicating that respondents have an average trust in people they work with in the volunteer groups, a factor that helps to produce further voluntary cooperation and networks of civic engagement (Musick and Wilson 2008: 44-5).²¹¹ Overall, the results of this question are consistent with the literature on volunteering which suggests that while a certain level of interpersonal trust may foster volunteering, it is not clear that volunteering makes people more trusting in people in general (Musick and Wilson 2008: 469).

(Appendix 2: Table 45) The above results are further confirmed when respondents were asked how they benefitted from volunteering. Feelings of happiness for helping others, as well as expanded social relationships, are the two main perceived benefits claimed by the respondents. Overall, the social component of volunteering, that is the possibility of expanding one's social map, the social skills and the improved knowledge that individuals master in the process of interrelating, seem to exert the most important effect on the volunteers. It may

suggest that social relationships, rather than generalized trust (volunteers becoming in general more trusting and cooperative), have a larger influence on citizenship behaviour, and an expanded social map may instil confidence in people that they can engage in projects for getting things done.

4.6 Perceived benefits: personal development

The respondents were asked to assess how volunteering affected mainly their close-tie relationships and friendships by choosing one of the eight statements.

(Appendix 2: Table 46) The majority of the Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai respondents emphasized a positive achievement in terms of mutual understanding, improvements related to their relationship with their family and acquired knowledge about other people's lifestyles. In the St. Ignatius Church sample those who claimed a decreased amount of time for their family outnumbered the response of those emphasizing better friendships and independence from the family.

(Appendix 2: Table 47) The overall positive opinion on perceived benefits was confirmed by responses from a different question. The majority across the three organizations claimed that volunteering enriched their life, giving them a sense of fulfilment. Valuing the time they devoted to volunteering, and getting better interpersonal relationships and understanding from the family, were also among the statements that received a significant number of responses.

(Appendix 2: Table 48) Those options were also rated as the most important perceived benefits.

4.7 The potentiality of volunteering to build gender equal relationships

Four statements concerning the potential role of volunteering in generating gender equal relationships were purposely mixed in the previous question relating to personal development. The rationale for that was to give respondents the option to choose gender related statements vis-à-vis perceived benefits of self-fulfilment and self-realization, in order to ascertain whether they were concerned with gender equal relationships. The statements covered the potentiality of building egalitarian relationship in three fields: within the volunteer group; among people with whom respondents have close ties, such as family, friends and relatives; or in society at large.

(Appendix 2: Table 47) The sum of the respondents who selected gender-related statements was on average half of those who chose the options concerning self-fulfilment and self-realization. The majority across the three groups claimed that within the volunteer group men and women can develop collaborative relationships redressing ideologies or the social restraints of society at large. A number of Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai, and a few St. Ignatius Church respondents claimed that that volunteering helps to generate gender equal relationships with people with whom they have close ties. A very small number assigned volunteering the role of creating equality outside the groups. Thus, the results show that almost half of the respondents were concerned with the effect of their social work on gender ideology and women's roles, both in their private life and in society at large, thus linking their volunteering to the potentiality for social change.

4.8 Opinion on the relationship between state and religion

Since the promulgation of the constitution in 1947, Japanese religions have become entities independent from the state and excluded from political activities.²¹² However, organizations such as Shinnyoen, Risshō kōseikai and the Roman Catholic Church are recognized by international bodies for their international development programmes and peace work,²¹³ and consult with employees of the local government in order to serve the public good. Because of that, some members may feel their volunteer groups should cooperate more closely with the state, others may think that their philanthropic work is antithetical to any governmental or political intervention.

The respondents of this survey were asked to give their opinion on the matter. Firstly, they were asked to consider their social activities vis-à-vis government bodies. Furthermore, respondents were asked about their views on the relationship between the state and religious organizations.

(Appendix 2: Table 49) The majority of the respondents across the three organizations confirmed that in cases of charitable activities, their religious organizations should promote a cooperative relationship with government bodies. A minority was of the opinion that their religious organizations should act independently.

(Appendix 2: Table 50) Similarly, the results concerning the relationship between the state and religious organizations show that a majority of the respondents were of the opinion that religious organizations and the state should cooperate in the realm of social contribution. A smaller number claimed that religious organizations can support political parties or politicians,

although they should not engage in politics. A similar small group of respondents across the three organizations confirmed the view that the separation between religion and state should be strictly observed. Fewer respondents were of the opinion that politics should improve religious life by guaranteeing freedom of faith.

Overall, the respondents tended to have a positive attitude toward the relationship between religious organizations and the state, suggesting a collaborative stance toward government bodies. They also seem to be aware of the political impact that their charitable activities may have on the political level and do not deny the possibility of supporting political parties and politicians if they are representative of their expectations.

Summary

In terms of socio-demographic variables, the overall findings of the questionnaire survey are consistent with the extant literature on volunteering showing a positive correlation between personal resources and the propensity toward volunteer work. A significant number of respondents were married women in their forties with school-age children. Others were younger women holding a high educational level, some of them working part-time while others were regularly employed. The majority had previous experience in volunteering and tended to favour activities related to social welfare.

Concerning the relationship between religious belief and volunteering, although some respondents acknowledged the role of their doctrine in fostering an altruistic attitude, this aspect is rather overshadowed by personal development and social responsibility as main motivators.

In terms of the outcomes and effects of religious volunteering, the respondents mainly emphasized the value of their civic work in meeting social needs, along with personal development, and expanded social networks. Therefore, the respondents show a degree of awareness of the structural nature of social problems and the need for solutions, which in turns encourages them to develop civic and social skills.

As regard gender role socialization, the conventional breadwinner-housewife family model appears to be on the wane in the younger generations who require structural changes in order to support women's participation in the labour market and favour equal roles within the family. In contrast, the typical post-war model of the family centred in breadwinner-man/care giver-woman appears resistant to change in women aged between forty and sixty. However, their

expectations match those of the younger generations in regard to expecting family tasks to be equally shared between men and women, and further participation of women in the labour market. In this regard, the respondents' participation in volunteer work is perceived as a way to perform free and autonomous activities, improving the quality of their lives since they can seek to reach their own potential both at family and social level. In doing so, they feel they increase self-confidence, expand social networks and raise the prospects of being asked to cover a wider variety of public roles.

In summary, the results of this survey illuminate the profile of respondents who are aware of expectations towards gender roles, as well as the influence that religiosity may have vis-à-vis their social engagement. However, the social and relational outcomes that the activity brings about seem to prevail over gender ideology and religious motivations. The participants acknowledge the importance of their role as wives and mothers vis-à-vis the family, but they do not feel confined exclusively to those tasks and look forward to more egalitarian roles both in the public sphere and in the private sphere of their families. They reveal expectations for egalitarian relationships between men and women, and acknowledge their roles as pro-active actors both in their private and public lives in debates concerning both individuals' well-being and gender relations. They regard social engagement as a way to create community well-being, but they do not disregard the potentiality of self-realization that volunteer work entails. More often than not, the respondents' own projects of self-realization seem to channel altruistic attitudes into activities where women can improve their social skills. All in all, they are critical towards their social roles and do not appear to be passive recipients of ideological convictions and structural obligations. Rather, they tend to be attentive agents expressing preferences and interests, and evaluating possible alternatives for the trajectories of the self.

The next chapter presents six examples of those trajectories collected from the interview material. Women's voices express how, in the process of self-actualization, they evaluate factors including gender-related variables of constraints and opportunities, individual preferences as well as normative influences deriving from national policies and the social context.

CHAPTER 5

Changing identities through volunteering: women's voices

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, the stance adopted for this study focuses on a theory of social practice emphasizing the relational interdependence of individuals and the world where they are located. This view claims that meanings, learning and knowing are inherently socially negotiated and are situated in the historical development of the person's ongoing activities.

Portraying how individuals 'do things together', therefore, is the best way to highlight the transformations and changes they undergo, and to tell us about how self-identity shifts in the learning process. To this end, telling individuals' stories by focusing on their process of learning in a group setting (the faith-based volunteer group) helps us to explore the historicizing of their identity formation. The following narrations describe individuals' struggles, fears, hopes, successes and failures, while they negotiate and renegotiate the meanings of the world in which they participate. Biographical details are also emphasized when they have a significant part in the process of self-understanding and developing.

This chapter presents six stories selected from among the others for being representative of the socio-demographic characteristics of the overall sample. The transparency of their social map, their practice of reflexivity (Giddens 1991a: 5) and the level of mastery in using resources make their narrations good examples of women's transformative capacity in exploring their social trajectories (Bourdieu 1977: 86). Interviewees tell us about their biographical experiences, the interaction inside the volunteer group, the relationships with the religious organization, the ties they build within and beyond it and the possibilities of learning new meanings of the social world they encounter while engaging in social activities. Through the stories, the narrators offer a view of themselves in relation to the social and show the dynamism of their identities. Religious volunteering becomes the field of practice where individuals learn 'the rules of the game' (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 67) and make use of them to explore new modes of self beyond the given field.

In summary, the remainder of this chapter not only gives voice to the individual, but also articulates important insights of the constitutive normative and generative aspects through which women appropriate and create meanings for their identity and move beyond different modes of self.

The table below summarizes the socio-demographic information of informants whose stories are recounted in this chapter.

Table 5: Socio-demographic information of informants

Informant	Volunteer group	Age (yrs)	Occupation	Level of schooling	Marital status	No. of children	Date of interview
T-san	Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association	70	Housewife	Upper secondary school	Married	2	17.11.2009
O-san	Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers	29	Housewife	Upper secondary school	Married	3	17.12.2009
S-san	Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division	34	Company employee	College graduate	Married	None	20.12.2009
F-san	Univers Foundation (Shinnyoen-sponsored NPO)	58	Housewife	College graduate	Married	1	21.12.2009
D-san	Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama (St. Ignatius Catholic Church)	27	Doctoral student	University graduate	Single	None	12.12.2009
M-san (D-san's mother)		52	Housewife	College	Married	2	
E-san (non-Christian)	Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama (St. Ignatius Catholic Church)	22	University student	University student	Single	None	19.12.2009

Source: author

5.1 Faith-based volunteering as a civic duty: the ability to transfer resources

Case no.1: Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association
 T-san: 70 years old; married; two sons; retired
 Interview held on 17.11.2009

Introduction

The majority of social welfare activities for the elderly organized by Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church are primarily social in nature. Volunteers assist the local residential home for the elderly by organizing events and recreational activities, conducting senior exercise sessions and involving the recipients in the creation of small art-crafts to sell in the annual bazaars. While they emphasize their roles in creating opportunities for the elderly to socialize and make friends [*fureai*], they also give practical support to the staff by serving and feeding the

residents, bathing and dressing them, and helping the staff run the day-care programmes. While doing so, they spend a lot of time in talking with recipients, in groups or individually, and give advice on health and psychological issues.

The women volunteers for the elderly met at Itabashi Church were friendly women talking calmly about their volunteer work, their tasks and the outcomes. They often expressed their uncertainties and worries, and discussed together the way to find solutions. However, when those women were observed at work they looked different: they were confident and resolute. In addition, despite claiming a lack of professional training, they seemed to know how to approach old people, take care of them, talk and interact: the case of T-san narrated below tells how she looked and acted like an experienced member of staff endowed with cheerful, sympathetic, nonjudgmental and respectful attitudes.

Most Itabashi Church informants showed a degree of mastery of their volunteer role and an ability to adjust their performances according to the context and people they met. In terms of commitment, the ability to use resources and reflexive attitudes toward self and society, T-san's case presented here represents the average respondent surveyed in the Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association. In general, respondents tended to have an ontological narrative related to the family, a characteristic that was nourished through their belief, as T-san will explain. In certain situations, however, attitudes and activities that could be in line with religious belief or social expectations were put forward for reasons other than those inherent in faith or normative expectations of mainstream themes. Their social commitments reflected more a dissatisfaction with a social system that tended to value segregated tasks and context-specific roles, while demanding flexibility and cooperation.

The following section explores the way a woman in her seventies approached such situations mainly by reflecting critically on her experiences and social expectations, which helped putting forward alternatives, rather than beating the customary narrative paths. She refers to themes of family, work, education, and religion in explaining her life choices. However, she thinks critically about them: T-san's story tells that rather than mainstream narratives, her decisions to perform certain identities were grounded in an awareness of socio-structural problems, acquisition of social skills, achievement of leading positions in local public arena and a personal leadership style. Her accounts reveal the ability to use personal and public resources strategically in order to make a difference in her situated social context.

T-san's story

T-san, a 70 year old, works as a volunteer in a state-run residential home in Itabashi ward three days a week, usually from ten to four. She is known for being energetic and cheerful, and for her extensive knowledge about traditional Japanese food. When I met her in the old people's home, she was conducting a music session singing with the residents a Japanese folk song [*minyō*]. At the end of the music session, T-san gave some information about the programme of social activities for the next day and greeted everyone by calling them by name.

Creating an eldercare community network

When we meet in the room for the interview, she greets me and starts immediately explaining how she learned to care for old people.

When I was young, my grandmother was bedridden. She could not move, so I started inviting old people, her friends, to our home, to have a chat and spend time with her. They taught me what to do to take care of her. At the beginning, I just sat and listened to them chatting. But little by little, we started doing other things together, like cooking *daikon* [Japanese radish], or making tea. Then they began bringing their *obentō* [lunch box] and eating together at home. We exchanged opinion on food and how to cook it, and my grandmother was very amused. At a certain point, we decided to organize a trip. They helped me to take my grandmother along. Then the one-day trip became a two-day trip. And so on. This is how I have learned to deal with old people.

In T-san's view, *fureai* [interaction] and creating human relationships [*ningen kankei*] are the most important tasks of volunteers dealing with the elderly. She thinks that by promoting interaction, volunteer activities can encourage the creation of effective eldercare community networks: they can be the way to generate the community spirit that may lead to building a network of care in times of need.

As discussed in the Introduction, the state has long encouraged the role of the community in providing eldercare and the idea that community volunteers should alleviate the family burden. T-san fits in the "independent, healthy and socially active" model and she is an excellent example of how healthy senior citizens can make a difference in the community. Born in pre-war Japan, she has witnessed the change of the family from the extended type, to which she belonged, to the contemporary nuclear one. She has experienced the increase in the number of elderly requiring long-term care due to the rapid ageing of society and the changes in the environments of families that have been supporting those requiring long-term care. She is aware that an ageing society may exert pressure on the working population, which is destabilizing the socio-economic situation of the country. Therefore, she acknowledges that the provision of social welfare is a social issue that the community should care for.

Community volunteers monitoring the state

Although she thinks that eldercare should be approached primarily with social means, T-san is not uncritical of the state discourses emphasizing the role of community volunteers in contributing to eldercare. She believes that those discourses tend to mask some inadequacies of state programmes, mainly due to the arbitrary way used to assess what the local community and the recipients really need.

Owing respect for our senior citizens is part of our culture. The state, of course, insists that we, the community, must respect and help them. While they say so, they [state] set limits on the amount of money available to fund eldercare, so that the community is forcibly called to do something to supplement. Although putting limits may be reasonable due to our economic situation, I think in the long run it creates social divisions.

T-san believes that all individuals should enjoy the same rights and dignity, and cannot passively accept state policies and implementations that can bring benefits to some, while weakening others. In order to address this problem, members of the Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association have been cooperating with local social workers, experts and professionals in order to plan actions and projects to carry out at the local level. The research group organized by Itabashi Church volunteer group in cooperation with the local authority meets regularly once a month and discusses how volunteers can interact more productively with related actors while working within the scope of social welfare policies. 'State policies tend to regulate much of our everyday life, but the government is not really aware of what is going on at the local level', T-san comments.

Itabashi Church volunteers: the link between social welfare and families

When discussing the volunteer role, T-san insists that community volunteers can deal to some extent with the social and psychological side of the caring, by visiting the elderly, spending time together to interact and socialize. They can also cooperate with the social workers by reporting the recipient's condition and needs, and by putting forward specific requests. However, families still play a major role in elderly caring and the burden on them is heavy. In T-san's view, although the family is primarily responsible for the physical and psychological well-being of their old relatives, it is important that they can find information and support in the community before reaching a critical situation. If the family can establish a trustful network of people to count on for their elders before there is an urgent need, the burden on them can be alleviated. She recalls her own experience, saying that involving her grandmother's friends in the caring since the early stages allowed her to develop a network of

people she could rely on thereafter. She is convinced that creating a social network is the first step in creating a genuine community of mutual assistance.

As presented in Chapter 3, in pursuing this purpose the volunteers of Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association map themselves into a larger world of social welfare agencies, local facilities, community volunteer groups and neighbourhood associations. For some junior volunteers like H-san, a 55 years old woman, it was a simple map with the church group on the one side, the recipients on the other side and a constellation of ill-defined entities (facilities, social workers, etc.) floating around (interview held on 20.11.2009). However, for the majority of Itabashi Church Social Welfare volunteers, it was a complex net that stretched as far as the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare where one Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church member was employed. He was in charge of providing fresh information and inside views about state policies, especially concerning social welfare services.

T-san was one of the most largely networked members. Her extended social map was the result of years of volunteering and networking since her experience with her grandmother and with her mother-in-law, who was a resident of the eldercare home where we met at the time of the interview. She has dynamic ties with local social workers and professionals, and people she met in the Risshō kōseikai Parenting Classes fifty years earlier: some of them are now doctors or psychologists and she consults them on practical issues related to her volunteer work. Others are friends living in the countryside in south or north Japan: they regularly send local products for her cooking classes or for the events at the old people's home. In return, she provides up-to-date information about welfare services and remotely manages eldercare volunteer services for acquaintances living as far as 500 km away by asking the local Risshō kōseikai church members for help.

Building an elderly-friendly society

T-san knows from her own personal experience that establishing relationships and exchanging information are two essential features in networking. She complains that those components are still to be realized in her community where the residents lack comprehensive information on what sort of services are available. She laments that there is no communication between the state-funded social welfare services and the several volunteer organizations already offering a wide range of projects targeting the elderly.

When a family faces the necessity of service for elderly caring, they go to the city office and get into the spiral of social welfare. I am not complaining about it, but I think they [city office] should inform the citizens that around the state-funded social welfare

there is a network of NPOs and volunteer groups that could give the first quick help. People simply don't know, so they face a lot of difficulties and are distressed.

T-san is confident, and believes that people are still in the process of learning how to deal with Japan's ageing society: the government is still trying to figure out the most effective socio-economic policies; families are slowly getting used to relying on the support of 'strangers' [*kankei no nai hito*], like helpers and community volunteers, for their elderly; and volunteers are learning how far they can stretch themselves in dealing with their tasks with families and local facilities.

Reshaping the goal of the Women's Association

T-san started volunteering in the old people's home in Itabashi ward in 2003, but she had volunteered for the local community welfare centre long before that. She says that the introduction of the *kaigo hoken* [Long-term Care Insurance System] in 2000 brought about an increased demand for volunteers dealing with eldercare because the government assessment system tends to exclude those with minor needs from receiving care.²¹⁴

Although she spends most of her time in activities organized by Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church, such as the social programmes at the residential home, and visiting elderly people living alone [*yūai homon*], T-san is also engaged in other community activities. For the past eight years she has been the leader of the Women's Association sponsored by the local residents' association [*jichikai*] where she volunteers together with thirty other women. T-san explains that the Women's Association used to be a club organizing recreational activities for its members only, such as dance or singing classes for the middle-aged and older women members. However, since she took over the head position, she has convinced the members to shift their goal by devoting their time to recreational activities for the elderly living in the neighbourhood and in residential homes.

In so doing, we can achieve a twofold purpose: members of the Women's Association can keep entertaining themselves as before, while getting more motivated to learn new things to show their residents; and the elderly enjoy the events, and socialize with us.

Since then, the range of the activities at the Women's Association has broadened consistently. Nowadays members hold lunches serving traditional food, cooking classes, tea sessions, reading classes where they read and comment on some Japanese classics, embroidery and sewing clubs, and, of course, dancing and singing classes. One popular new

activity is making blankets by using old kimonos. They have already made thirty so far and once sold, the money is donated to the local social welfare association.

Instead of taking for granted the commonly understood role of the Women's Association as an entertaining group for its members, T-san used her leadership and resources to extend the boundaries and the content of it, and merged it effectively in the community. She could have found opposition from the members, but she showed both organizational and practical skills. Moreover, she put forward social goals and members had to adopt positions of responsibility for them. In so doing, she did not challenge the group identity because she maintained its purpose of organizing recreational activities for women of the community. However, she broadened the group's scope and its social map by contributing to the community while preserving the members' interests and the group identity.

Narrative identities

When asked about her life, T-san narrates that when she was young she worked at Daimaru department store near Tokyo station. She was part of the staff managing the shop assistants of a floor section. At that time, she was already a member [*kaiin*] of Risshō kōseikai; her sister had introduced her to the organization. There she met her future husband, who had been brought to Risshō kōseikai by his mother, 'a woman very active within the religious organization'. Her husband is now retired and volunteers for the local neighbourhood association organizing recreational and sport events for the community.

When she was young, T-san used to attend the Risshō kōseikai Youth Division and the kimono-making class [*wasai kyōshitsu*] held by Naganuma Myōko, the Risshō kōseikai co-founder.

Myōko-sensei taught me how to cut and sew. She used to say that women should become woman-like [*onnarashii*], to be good wives and mothers. And she taught us never to waste things. I learned the lesson, and what I learned is still alive in me now.

T-san describes herself as a typical 'full-time housewife' [*sengyō shufu*], but she does not agree with the idea that her social commitment comes as an extension of her role of daughter, mother and wife, or because of her practical skills gained through past work experience. Belief substantiated her motivation toward voluntarism: Risshō kōseikai taught her to 'respect, preserve and make full use of your own resources' including the skills one has learned. She expresses her altruism by using words she has learned at the religious organization: doing things for others [*hitosama no tameni*] and interacting with others with humility and respect, *omou kokoro*.

Risshō kōseikai teaches you to interact with others with *omou kokoro*. By learning that I have become able to think about other people's feelings, approaching each person as an individual and not as one of many. Risshō kōseikai teachings gave me the way to approach and understand others. However, learning the doctrine is not enough, the practice is very important.

She comments that in the past young women were taught to sacrifice their own life for the sake of the family, and to take care of their parents and relatives in need. She also devoted her youth to her grandmother, but such action was not from a sense of obedience toward expected social duties, but for her own sympathetic respect towards a member of the family who brought her up. She does not think she sacrificed her life for her family. 'Sacrificing yourself means enduring and put up with things [*gaman suru*].' Simply, she does not believe in merely 'putting up' with things.

Gaman suru is bad, especially with your family, or at work. Myōko-sensei taught me the importance of discussing and facing problems rather than putting up with them. If you just put up with problems, the situation becomes worse and worse. [...] In everyday life you get accustomed to things, you take for granted most of what happens around you [*atarimae koto ga ōi*]. But if you pay careful attention, you can notice the details and find something important. You can make the difference working with what looks obvious. I found my role in doing things in this way.

The effects of religiosity in everyday life

T-san found her role in the family and in society by practicing her religious teachings in everyday life. She mentions that she tried to live and educate her two sons according to the value of equality [*dōtai-zukuri*] she learnt from Risshō kōseikai. When asked what she foresees for women in Japanese society twenty years from now, she replies that she believes it will be a more egalitarian society, where people will better know how to interact respectfully with each other. She recalls that when she was a young mother it was a hard task educating her sons based on the belief that they both should have the same rights and opportunities: the conventional education required a preference between the first and second son, and an attitude of deference toward the head of the family, siblings and community.²¹⁵ She adds: 'I think young people now have an easier task [to build egalitarian relationships], because their parents did it before them'. She gives the example of her elder son, who is also a member of Risshō kōseikai, and got married to a Risshō kōseikai adherent. She comments that it may be just chance, but her grandson is extremely openhearted and respectful, and she praises the Risshō kōseikai Parenting Classes for having taught her and her daughter-in-law how to educate their children.

The structural context that legitimated the traditional 'breadwinning men/ full-time housewife women' family model, and the religious belief that emphasized self-fulfilment in helping the others channelled T-san into philanthropic work associated mainly with caring roles. She fulfilled the cultural expectations of her sociological framework. However, by extending her expertise and authority through activities promoting community welfare, she established a new trajectory of self by relating her expected roles with new practices. Members of the Women's Association and volunteers of Itabashi Church, who interacted with her, also changed the forms of their participation and changed their understandings of what participation in community activities entails.

The blurred boundaries between altruism and advocacy

During the first part of the interview, when she explained her volunteer role and her social map, T-san never mentioned doctrinal validations for her social actions, although she was open in her critical analysis of social issues and criticism towards government policies. Despite claiming her primary motivation is religious in nature, she was actually articulating her social engagement in terms of awareness and advocacy to redress ongoing social issues within the socio-political environment in which she was situated.

For a 70 years old woman whose biographical narrative denotes a high degree of identification with the available cultural narratives of her age (the full-time housewife, the religious identity, the community volunteer), T-san's social awareness and advocacy was rather impressive. In her life, she has not been uncritical of the status quo, and tried to put forward variations or alternatives to mainstream and accustomed narratives, both for the housewife model and the volunteer role. Although she represented the ideal of the healthy senior citizen contributing to the local residents' wellbeing, she criticized the state discourses about community volunteers when they did not translate into comprehensive assistance for the local community. Therefore, she pressed the local officials so that they informed the residents about alternative non-state-funded services and encouraged families to call on NPOs for support in order to develop a network of mutual assistance.²¹⁶ She also lamented about the social welfare services when they disregarded the recipient's perspective, and insisted on the necessity to think about volunteer practices by operating in cooperation with the recipients. She had reshaped accustomed practices at the Women's Association by filling it with new meanings.

T-san narrates that religious teaching promoting altruism generated in her the idea that women should be active and aware social actors. Accordingly, she has developed the identity

of a social advocate without over-shadowing her mainstream role of wife and mother. Her autobiographical narrative largely draws upon her religious identity, which has influenced both her social engagement, her stance toward family relationships and life-choices. However, she shows a generative capacity in that she shifted compelling roles into advocate ones with expanded tasks. In so doing, she recreated herself as an active volunteer whose public action influences fellow volunteers' and residents' life. For her discreet advocacy style, T-san is widely accepted and respected both in her religious institution and in the community.

T-san's actions have affected the way the volunteer group approached the local authority, social welfare agencies and the recipients. Many interviewees reported that since they met T-san, they have learned that volunteering is much more than just doing things for the needy other. They have learned to talk reflexively about social issues and their role in addressing them: they have learned to use skilfully their tasks and roles for networking and gathering information and support as effectively as they can. In addition, they feel their role is more efficient if they talk critically about the resources and the needs. They claim that such changed attitude has given them a different image within the religious organization. Mainly, it reshaped their religious identity by adding a stronger social component that entails an active social engagement.

Analysis

Before getting married T-san spent some years working at a department store where she acted in a coordinative role. T-san represents one of those women in post-war Japan who, as a consequence of the economic growth of the 1950s and 1960s, and the increased demand in the labour market, could gain access to paid jobs. Although she enjoyed her work career, she left it after getting married in order to perform her reproductive role. As discussed in the Introduction, this is the typical pattern of life course shared by many Japanese women, which is graphically represented by the M curve.

T-san narrates herself as 'full-time housewife' [*sengyō shufu*] whose role was to care for her family, while her husband contributed financially with his full-time job. As mentioned in the Introduction, the ideal of 'full-time housewife' developed in the 1960s and 1970s along with the Japanese post-war economic boom, when the 'breadwinning men / family-carer women' became the dominant family model. Becoming a mother and wife in T-san's times (between the 1960s and 1970s) required women to undertake two specific socio-economic functions: educate their children so that as adults they would become productive agents in the labour

market; and take care of the elderly of the family. She duly performed both roles, thereby showing a high degree of identification with her 'full-time housewife' narrative.

Moreover, since she was born in the 1940s, she was also socialized into the ideology of the 'good wife and the wise mother' [*ryōsai kenbo*]. The dictates of such an educational line sustained T-san's family-oriented role. However, by the time she became a wife and a mother, the 'good wife and the wise mother' ideology had been gradually shifting into the 'full-time housewife' model, which circumscribed women's role to family carers, albeit the prescriptive norms of primogeniture and subordination toward the male members of the family had been weakened. However, according to T-san, the custom of primogeniture was still solid at her time and she disliked it. T-san is quite explicit: she expressed her aversion toward the customized preference that mothers had to give to the first son, and made use of her religious belief to rationalize it. T-san is proud of having challenged the traditional idea of the family by raising her children according to the ideal of egalitarianism she had learned in Risshō kōseikai Parenting Classes. From this perspective, the message that Risshō kōseikai Parenting Classes were sending at T-san's time was rather progressive, despite being substantially conservative in terms of promoting women's exclusive role in the family.

Contesting primogeniture is the episode that bridges T-san's religious identity with her ontological narrative of her role as a housewife. The doctrine professed by Risshō kōseikai played an influential role in shaping T-san's social identity. Her ethic was imbued with moral values and models of behaviour that she had acquired in her young age by attending Naganuma Myōko's groups. T-san's account of the co-founder's teachings allows us to ascertain the model of women promoted by the religious organization: one that is denoted by an essentialist view reinforcing the ideal of women as mainly family carers because of their reproductive role.

In T-san's case, Risshō kōseikai doctrine reinforced her level of identification with her family role, which helped the social role to expand out into volunteering and caring for others. However, she did not perform her role uncritically: she always reflected about her role and its potentialities, and made skilful use of both her personal (religious) resources and socially expected tasks to reach out into the social. Three episodes narrate this process: when she arranges caring for her grandmother; when she engaged in the Women's Association and begins doing social work for the elderly; and her commitment for the research group involving Itabashi Church volunteers, government representatives and professionals. In all those cases she uses her personal and social resources to interact with different actors and improve the quality of her life, and the people of her social map.

In summary, although her account shows a high level of identification with mainstream identity narratives of post-war Japan, she reveals an ambivalent relationship with the conservative family-oriented roles expected for women of her generation. She maintains her dedication toward the family in terms of gender socialization and the sense of shared responsibility with the community promoted by the education of her times. However, she thinks critically about her experiences and suggests an expanded perspective of what a woman should be, with tasks, functions and understandings as part of a system of relations that extends beyond the family and the religious organization toward the community.

From a broader perspective, Itabashi Church volunteers' approach can be said to affirm the equality of all individuals and worked in order to realize it. Being a faith-based group, they sourced their endeavour from religiosity. However, T-san's case explains that rather than conforming passively, they used their belief as a source for critical thinking and to communicate dissatisfaction with state policies that, in their opinion, tended to increase social divisions instead of working against them. Itabashi Church volunteers were committed to being flexible in their volunteering in order to negotiate with the ambiguities and the limitations of the state discourses shaping customary voluntary ways of dealing with social issues. However, they tried to reflect on their role in relationship with structural factors beyond their religious volunteering. Reflexivity was a form of practice that drove the faith-based group to look at habit-changing and relationship-changing ways of approaching the social.

5.2 Raising children: reshaping the mother's role

Case 2: Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteers
O-san: 29 years old; married; three school-aged children; housewife;
Interview held on 17.12.2009

Introduction

The majority of Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church interviewees were mainly engaged in activities dealing with childcare, children's education and children's life in the community. Being married mothers aged between twenty and fifty, it should come as no surprise that the respondents' main interest was the wellbeing of their children.

Known as 'Little Edo' for its resemblance with Edo, the old Tokyo, Kawagoe city preserves some traditional buildings in the city centre that reminds both residents and visitors of what the place was like a few centuries ago. The city is also known for hosting an influential

religious centre, the Kitain temple, the second most important centre of the Tendai school, one of the oldest Buddhist schools in Japan. Being just 30 minutes away from Tokyo by express train, Kawagoe is in fact one of the capital's satellite cities. However, it does not look like the busy metropolis where many residents commute to everyday. The city has developed its identity around its glorious past, and the numerous boards inviting visitors and tourists to enjoy sightseeing at the traditional warehouses and the museum contribute to maintaining its image.

Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church is a 20-minute walk from Kawagoe station toward a newer area of the city. This part does not share the image of Kawagoe suggested in the tourist guides: grey concrete structures mixed with residential buildings make it look much more similar to the majority of urbanized Japanese areas.

Most Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church respondents lived in the newer urbanized side of the city. When talking with them, they offer a picture of a place whose identity is related to the nearby capital more than to the vestigial traces of its past. Kawagoe is not immune from the social trends of most urbanized areas in Japan: young couples and nuclear families living in small apartments, working people living on their own in larger apartments, and the elderly simply left behind. During an informal conversation with a group of respondents held in December 2009, they agreed that most Kawagoe residents feel virtually interrelated by the celebrated identity of the old city. However, that is not enough to make a solid community: the reality was that ties among the residents of local neighbourhoods had weakened consistently and community relationships had almost disappeared. The NHK special titled *Muen shakai* [disconnected society] aired a month after our meeting presented some social issues that were not unexpected for my informants: they had long been witnessing the social disconnection in everyday life in Kawagoe and they were very concerned.²¹⁷

The interviewees' main worry was related to the diluted community ties, especially among families with children. They complained that cities had become unfriendly and unsafe places for children, and families had by then lost their social role in the community: there was no interaction, let alone mutual support. As a consequence, children were left to spend their free time at home, rather than enjoying the company of friends outside and learning how to socialize.

This point comes out clearly in O-san's story, which is the focus of this section. She narrates about her endeavour to build a suitable social environment for her children where they can learn to socialize and grow up. Her narration gives an account of the personal tension between motherhood, which she presented as part of her identity, and the social role of

mother, a putative identity burdened with social expectations that did not describe her experiences and hopes. O-san offers an interesting perspective on how and why a young mother sources her civic commitment from her belief, while distancing herself from the volunteer activities sponsored by the religious organization. Religiosity encompasses her social commitment; however, its praxis takes her into non-religious contexts where she explores social-structural issues, acquires social awareness and articulates a new social identity.

O-san's story

O-san is a 29 year old mother, with three elementary school-aged children. Her husband is a self-employed electrician who works long hours and usually gets home late at night when the children have already gone to bed. O-san is confident she has a good relationship with her partner: she always tells him about her day's activities with the children and the people they meet. Although she manages the majority of her children's school-life decisions, she always asks her husband to step in and make his contribution to the decision-making process. In every situation, her husband is cooperative and constructive, and supports her in her task of caring for the children.

The source of volunteer commitment: the primary role

When her first child entered kindergarten, O-san joined the PTA and other local community children's groups. Since then, she has spent a great amount of time and energy in volunteering in those groups. When discussing the source of her social commitment, O-san comments that initially she did not have altruistic goals, such as a genuine willingness to contribute to children's wellbeing in the community. Her motivation was mainly related to her uncertainties about her own children's social life because of the lack of an extended family and weak neighbourhood relationships that have left both adults and children isolated and lonely.

My generation of parents are confused on how to raise children because they are isolated within the context of the nuclear family. Because of that, we tend to cushion the children rather than teach them how to face problems. This is because we, parents, are not able to relate with other adults in the first place.

Her commitment toward children-oriented volunteering stems mainly from her role as a mother living in a progressively competitive and individualistic society, where

the increase of small nuclear families with few siblings around and limited relationships with the neighbourhood, give children little opportunity to develop their social skills.

Risshō kōseikai Parenting Classes: a framework for contemporary mothers' social role

O-san credited Risshō kōseikai Parenting Classes for offering her the view of contemporary family life. As mentioned in Chapter 3 (note 156), parenting classes focus on families' responsibility in redressing the children's problems emphasizing principally women's childrearing and educational roles. In so doing, Risshō kōseikai Parenting Classes promote conservative views of motherhood mixed with religious precepts of altruism and caring.

Despite the doctrinal connotation of the classes, however, O-san and many other Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church respondents' accounts seemed to echo more state discourses on Japanese families and society than the religious organization's ideology. O-san's emphasis on the need for responsible parents in educating their children with the values of interaction and social ties mirrors one of the recurrent messages of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in its White Papers concerning the birth rate decline.²¹⁸ The comments reflect the state's vision on how community volunteers should play a central role in ensuring that children are protected and nurtured by concerned adults, especially when they are experiencing problems in their families and at school. Women, in particular, are called upon to cover this role so that they can contribute to the participatory-style welfare society that the state has long pursued through its discourses and government policies.²¹⁹

A role model: childrearing women

Risshō kōseikai Parenting Classes offer a clear idea of what a family should be: a context where parents play different complementary roles for the benefit of all members. O-san acknowledges this model and supports it within her own family: she is a full-time housewife and sees her role as being as important as her husband's.

In these terms, she agrees with the 'breadwinning men/childrearing women' family model: 'I think children's education is very important as a woman's role'. She sees herself as a middle-class housewife fully devoted to her childrearing role and she criticizes those families that need two incomes just to pursue their individualistic and materialistic lifestyles. She emphasizes the role of parents in conveying values of a work ethic, sharing and cooperation.

O-san insists on her main argument: the problem with children is, in fact, a problem with their parents. Nowadays, parents are not able to communicate and interact with their children, and their off-spring in turn are unable to establish solid social ties with their peers.

Many children are not able to face those situations [arguments and disputes]. They suffer from that, and tend to close in on themselves. If you are a working mother, you are too busy, you can't really see they are unhappy, and the situation becomes worse and worse.

O-san addresses the socio-economic changes of the past two decades as the main cause of this trend. The increased participation of women in the labour market and the reduced time women spend in the family to look after their children because of that is, in O-san's opinion, one important cause of today's children's difficulties in establishing social relationships.

She is aware that in criticizing two-income families she is in effect criticizing women of her generation. However, she cannot avoid pointing at 'young mothers' who tend to be 'too soft and protective toward their children,' or working mothers who tend to be 'absent from their children's lives.' She picks them out as being mainly responsible for their children's hardships in social life.

Criticizing the educational system

O-san is also critical towards the government that has structured the education system, in a way to prioritize school success in order to get a good job, to the detriment of the kids' social life.

I think the government should put more energy into children's education by changing its goal: children need to grow up as connected individuals [*musubi no aru hito*] with healthy social relationships. [...] Children's education has changed sharply. Because of that, they are becoming very weak, both physically and psychologically. They can be easily harmed and can't find help because they don't know how to ask for help. They even don't know how to talk with their parents. They are disconnected [*musubi no nai kodomo*].

Despite her commitment to her middle-class family, O-san is not devoted to the middle-class ideal for her children of achieving educational success in order to get a well-paid job after that. Instead, she stressed the role of parents in acting as a role model for their children, so that they will find their own way afterwards. 'I think that children just need the right example in the family'.

Risshō kōseikai membership as a source of volunteer commitment

O-san's views of the family and women's role have been robustly informed by the worldview promoted by her religious organization. She has been a *kaiin* [member] of Risshō kōseikai since birth: her mother was already an adherent and her grandmother before her. In her childhood her mother never pressed her to practice the religious rituals or attend the ceremonies and volunteer activities. Despite the examples of social engagement in her family since a young age, O-san became a *kōseikai borantia* [Risshō kōseikai volunteer] and started participating in Risshō kōseikai activities when she was 22. It was after her first child's birth, seven years earlier, when she faced the responsibility of childrearing.

She began devoting one day a week to the early morning cleaning activity and joined the mothers' group organizing events for Risshō kōseikai members' children. O-san is now a regular member of Kawagoe Church volunteer group and joins the activities whenever she is asked. However she does not regard it as a form of duty because of her religious belief, neither does she think she has a missionary task to perform.

Dissatisfaction with the PTA and the community groups

In the educational institutions and facilities where O-san's children are enrolled, PTA mothers are asked to contribute to their children's school life by organizing events, bazaars, seasonal festivals and sport events. O-san finds it important to be a member of the PTA and contribute to her children's life at school: it helps to create a continuum between the family and the educational institution and gives parents the opportunity to gain an insight into children's activities and their performance.

It also gives us a chance to monitor the educational staff and their system. And we can have our say in case we find that something is inappropriate.

For a long time O-san was sincerely committed to the PTA and the other children's groups organized by the residents' association. However, she was not really happy with the groups' role in the community because of the business-like ties and relationships established there.

Most mothers O-san met were of her generation. She categorized them in the 'young mothers' group' who 'lack experience and self-consciousness of what their role implies'. They also tended to 'judge other mothers, and give opinions about others' rather than endeavouring to establish a cooperative ground for children and mothers to develop a nourishing social environment. In O-san's view, relationships in the PTA and other community groups were based on materialistic goals and connoted by a tacit rivalry requiring children to compete against each other for internal rankings in order to get better chances to enter a better school.

In general, in the PTA group O-san encountered socio-economic and personality differences, as well as a discrepancy in the group's social goal that hindered the development of genuine social relationships and a productive setting. After some time O-san realized that despite its potential and its well-known social identity, the PTA group was in fact a gathering of young mothers who were there just because of their school-age children and not for an authentic commitment to help in building a community for their children. She had also entered the PTA group, but with little motivation, when her first child went to school. However, she had grown up by then and developed a genuine concern for her children's social life.

De-legitimated by the community

Eventually, the PTA group and her neighbourhood started considering O-san as a 'bit weird' [*kawatte iru*, literally 'different'], an expression that in Japanese conveys some derogatory implications.

Sometimes people say my children and I are different [*kawatte iru*]. They say that my children like hardships [*kurō ga sukī*] rather than just having fun when they can [...] It is that by doing things on their own, they know how things work. And something good will come at a certain point. Well, maybe we are really different [laugh].

In the eyes of the PTA members and the community groups, O-san was considered too dynamic because she tended to have an all-encompassing style that aimed at bridging mothers and children of different groups and neighbourhood clubs. Other mothers were reluctant to join in O-san's way of doing things because they tended to favour easy and short-term tasks, both for them as volunteers and for their children.²²⁰

Moreover, O-san had an unusual approach to children. She was expected to protect them and deal with their troubles, but she usually let them find their own way, as in letting them 'confront each other and fighting, just waiting for them to find the way to keep on going together again'. In O-san's view, adults are responsible for creating the opportunities for children to learn to socialize. However, adults must step back when children are interacting, leaving them to explore and learn the way they can negotiate and settle their arguments. PTA mothers could not understand her methods and could not match the image of a mother and housewife with the role of non-interventionist educator emphasizing that children may need to fight each other and learn by their own trial and error. They wanted the other PTA mothers to be protective and favour a 'mothering' approach in order for their children to avoid any further hardship beyond the school requirements.

Despite her genuine commitment, O-san's role as a community volunteer was deemed inappropriate because she did not conform to the mainstream way of behaving. The level of trust she was granted gradually decreased, which in turn reduced her access to resources and hindered her practical PTA volunteer role.

Difficulties with Risshō kōseikai-sponsored children's group

The PTA and the other community groups did not match O-san's expectations. On the other hand, she had also not found a proper counterpart in the activities for children sponsored by Risshō kōseikai. There were two main issues leading her to refrain from committing towards the activities promoted by her religious organization. Firstly, Risshō kōseikai children's activities tended to be held only occasionally, which reduced the chances for her children to build solid relationships and friendships. Secondly, children who gathered at Kawagoe Church came from different parts of Kawagoe city, which prevented them from cultivating their relationships in the neighbourhood outside the church. Therefore, although O-san was grateful for advice and moral guidelines she received in the parenting classes, she felt the Risshō kōseikai-based children's group did not offer the sort of environment she was looking for.

Finding an alternative: the Japan Nature Game Association

O-san started looking for an alternative to both the faith-based and community children's groups. Her endeavour to find a proper context to express her views and for her children to develop a healthy social map, drove O-san to the Japan Nature Game Association.²²¹ Since 2006 she has been volunteering for the Kawagoe representative group of the association.

In Japan the activities are called 'nature games' where children experience the nature under the guidance of Nature Game leaders and friends. Adults who wish to become active volunteer members can attend specific training courses to obtain the official certification of Nature Game leader. O-san obtained her certification soon after joining the group in 2006 and she now leads the activities for some thirty regular children living around her neighbourhood.

In the Nature Game group O-san works in cooperation with another ten regular volunteers, six women and four men, to arrange the schedule, places and activities (games) to be carried out. Leaders take turns to be *madoguchi* [the person to contact] for the scheduled activity, collecting the names of participants, the number of accompanying parents and giving information about the planned events. Outdoor activities are usually held twice a month on Sunday. Sometimes children work indoors, studying the materials they have collected or

making objects by using what they have found in the woods. Participants do not need to be members and are not required to have specific skills. Moreover, physically or mentally disabled children are also welcomed. On the scheduled day, three to five Nature Game leaders are in charge of the participants, while parents offer supervision and help the staff to conduct the games. They meet at a pre-determined place, usually a hill, a forest, along a river or just the park in the neighbourhood. Three or four times a year the group organizes a two-day camp, so that children can explore the environment at night, while enjoying their time together.

Apart from giving children meaningful environmental education experiences, O-san believes that nature games provide them with the opportunity to face small dangers under adults' supervision. In so doing, they can learn how to solve problems and the importance of cooperation and helping each other to get out of trouble. This is the model of experiences O-san envisages for her children: self-transforming encounters where children develop social dynamics by establishing ties that help them to sort out difficulties.

O-san says she 'received the wisdom' [*oshie o itadaita*] at the Risshō kōseikai Parental Classes where she was taught to regard children as individuals with their own personality and with their own right to develop their identity by trial and error. So far, she has been trying to practice that wisdom in her own life, but in the contexts she has been through (the PTA group and the neighbourhood children's club) she has faced the resistance of other parents who tended to spare their children 'unnecessary hardships'. O-san has long wondered whether she was burdening her children with 'unnecessary hardships'. She has always come up with the confidence, consolidated by the teachings of parental classes, that to become self-reliant adults, her children need to learn and experience how social dynamics work in society, including disputes or unpleasant incidents.

Practising faith-informed ideals in a lay context

In O-san's view, the Nature Game group has given her children the opportunity to learn the basic values of sharing and sensitivity, which are lessons that she hardly found at school where children are led toward a competitive society.

By participating in Nature Game I realized that this [sort of knowledge] is a real educational necessity for children. I would like the government to provide it for all.

Having found a way to build a social environment for her children, she extended her volunteer task in the Nature Game group, which has become an almost daily commitment.

After a while, Nature Games became popular among her children's schoolmates and in the neighbourhood, and parents started appreciating her new volunteer role.

When asked about how she benefitted from her volunteer commitment as a Nature Game leader, she emphasizes the increased chances of meeting people and establishing interpersonal relationships. She comments that she has had the opportunity to meet and work with people of different social status, which has given her a different perspective of herself and the neighbourhood.

In the Nature Game volunteer group there are professors, mothers, housewives, professionals, workers, and other types of people. They all come for their children, we play together, and emphasize that we are all equal, also newcomers, whoever they are. So everybody feels on the same level, parents too.

Thus according to O-san, the Nature Game group articulates an egalitarian social environment in spite of the diversity of status and the social aspirations of the neighbours. None of the other participants are Risshō kōseikai members. Nonetheless, she feels the group is linked to the sort of harmonious society she was taught by Risshō kōseikai. There are often newcomers, in terms of children accompanied by parents, and she has learned to accept everyone according their level of experience, not for the social expectations related to their status. In O-san's view, the relationships and the dynamics within the Nature Game group represented a learning site where she could cultivate the ideal of 'harmony' she was taught at Risshō kōseikai.

Re-defining her social self

O-san appreciates the role of the religious institution in giving her values to draw upon in her everyday social life. However, she finds in volunteering for the Nature Game group a more effective way to practice her values, so that she can transfer them to the community. Her religiosity encompasses her social commitment, but her social identity of community volunteer for children prevails over her private religiosity and her socially expected role as housewife.

As mentioned above, the singularity of her approach, with children and adults centring on a journey of self-discovery, led some of the group she was in branding her as 'different' [*kawatte iru*]. However, becoming a Nature Game leader gave her a recognizable social identity whose role was based on educating by trial and error, and by exploring the unknown. When she integrated her ideals with the goals of the group, she became a well-accepted actor both in her neighbourhood and at school.

The fact that other Nature Game group's members already had a recognized social status (professionals, teachers and managers were the majority) surely speeded up the process of re-legitimization of O-san's social role in the community. However, it was the redefinition of her identity into a volunteer role alternative to the mainstream ones that led to her own social recognition. As she mastered more and more of her social task in the volunteer group, she increased her legitimacy within it and the local community. At the same time she personally identified increasingly with the part of community that legitimized her practices.

Thanks to the trust and respect she has gained by operating with the Nature Game group, she has expanded socially, reaching the school and other community volunteer groups dealing with children-related activities. She is now offering Nature Game trainings to schoolteachers and public workers. She cooperates with the local board of education in the organization of extra-curricula activities and organizes nature events for the elderly and disabled of the local centres. She also offers guided walks for companies so that employees can join the company-trip with their families.

Analysis

O-san completed upper secondary school, got married, had three children and became a full-time housewife in one of those one-income households that have witnessed a decrease in the overall population over the past two decades.²²² Her level of education may count as a facilitating factor in her choice to become a full-time mother and housewife. However the World Values Survey shows that Japanese women who completed secondary school agree with the statement 'Being a housewife is just as fulfilling' at almost at the same rate (69.7%) as women with a university degree or higher education (69.6%).²²³

What plays an important role in O-san's identity is her motherhood and she narrates her life accordingly. Her life course since she got married has been a dynamic sequence of happenings, changes in social relationships and life-choices with only one stable inner core: her motherhood. In order to generate a suitable environment for her children she has long been cooperating with the community, although sometimes she was at odds with it because of what she perceived as the too materialistic approach of its residents. Her uneasiness with the community associations she dealt with was due sometimes to socio-economic differences (full-time housewife in a one-income family vs. working mothers) or to ideological grounds.

O-san was motivated by a concern for her children, which was an endeavour that implied working for the children of the community by giving time and energy. She acted without expectation of return, which somehow violated other mothers' understanding of volunteering:

mainly, devoting time so that their children could get a better scholastic career, provided that it did not imply too much extra work and additional commitments. In her narration, O-san often expresses the tension between motherhood, which she presented as part of her identity, and housewife, a putative identity burdened of social expectations. She does not seem uncomfortable with the label she has been given, but she feels a discrepancy between her own subjective reality and the cultural narrative of it, which does not describe her experiences and expectations.

In her narrative, O-san places herself at the cross-road of two worldviews: the traditional full-time housewife who devotes her life to her children and the modern dynamic mother who promotes independence and democratic participation in family and in the community. By presenting her decision to turn away from groups and associations sponsored by the community and the religious organization, O-san shows a high level of self-awareness that allows her to grow apart from mainstream narratives. Her story conveys Giddens' idea of self-actualization (1991b: 78): O-san's ability to balance between the opportunity of potential new ways of being and the risk of breaking away from established patterns of behaviour accounts for her 'transformative capacity' (Giddens 1984: 15). She acted according to what Wuthnow (1998) defines as emotional and instrumental motives: she engaged in civic life for the sake of her children (emotional motive), but weighted selectively the costs and benefits of her embeddness in the local institutions (instrumental motive). In these terms, she performs as a 'knowledgeable agent' (Giddens 1984: 281) who holds a degree of control over her own life, and acknowledges both structural influences and the different levels and contexts in which power operates.

Her membership in a religious organization was the source of values providing her with the ability to make skilful use of social relationships in everyday life. However, her religious identity is secondary to her social role as a mother and volunteer. On the other hand, while she contributes actively to Nature Game group, she does not identify herself as a Nature Game leader, neither does she refer to other participants on the basis of their social status. Rather, she emphasizes their level of experience and the degree of knowledge they could share with others. She maintains this approach when moving in different fields, such as the school, the PTA group, the city hall and companies. She is still criticized sometimes for her way of relating in different social fields in the same way she operates as a volunteer. However, the increasing number of those who appreciate her approach and ask for her service signify that she has developed the ability to perform a successful social identity and carry out changes in the community in which she volunteers.

5.3 The level of independence from the religious organization matters for self-reflexivity

Case 3 Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division

S-san 34 years old; married; no children; company employee
Interview held on 20.12.2009

Introduction

Early morning cleaning [*seisō hōshi*] is a regular volunteer activity among Shinnyoen members. This activity was started in 1970 by adherents attending Shinnyoen main temple located in Tachikawa with the purpose of cleaning public spaces around the headquarters. Today it is a nationwide movement with around 5.850 locations targeted every morning starting at around 5am.²²⁴

In Tachikawa, where Shinnyoen headquarters are located, members gather in front of the station and then go around quietly picking up rubbish. A small group is also allowed inside the station precincts to clean up the aluminium drinking fountains, the handrails and the toilets. The number of participants varies from day to day, with a larger number during the weekends. On a Saturday in late November 2009 eight people showed up: there were five middle-aged ladies, one man in his fifties and two young women members of the Youth Division. One of the ladies was a lineage-parent in charge of giving instructions and handing out waste bags. Among the members of the Youth Division was S-san, whose story is narrated below.

The large majority of Shinnyoen social contribution activities are managed by the Shinnyoen-related foundations or through cooperation with external NPO and other associations. *Seisō hōshi*, instead, is considered the representative volunteer activity based solely on the adherents' own initiative.²²⁵ It summarizes the three purposes set out by Shinnyoen Social Contribution Advisory Committee: to create opportunity for people to happily contribute to society; to link people who have similar social purposes; and to give the religious organization a social role.²²⁶

All informants of this study agreed with the above goals and were highly committed to increasing their social contribution. Thanks to the number of NPOs and volunteer organizations within Shinnyoen itself, and the Social Welfare Group – Youth Division offering a wide range of volunteer activities for young members, any adherent can easily join whenever they please. The head of the religious organization manages the partnerships and the volunteer projects, so that volunteers do not need to engage directly in a dialogue with state institutions and the market. This volunteer style creates easy access for adherents to contribute to society, without requiring them to take organizational roles or work out

alternatives to mainstream political and economic institutions. While it helps to nourish the public profile of the religious organization facilitating its significance and legitimacy vis-à-vis public institutions and the state, this form of social contribution tends to limit volunteers' chances to explore alternatives and refrain from generating opportunities for new trajectories for themselves. S-san's accounts will tell the reasons.

S-san's story

S-san is one of the members of the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division and a regular of Tachikawa early morning cleaning group. She usually joins the activity at the weekends because she is busy at work during the week. She is a designer and works in a fashion design company where the majority of the employees are women aged between twenty and fifty.

Joining Shinnyoen

When S-san started working in the fashion design company ten years earlier, a colleague invited her to join the *shūkai* [home meetings] at her Shinnyoen lineage-parent's home. After a year of informal attendance she decided to become a Shinnyoen follower [*en no shinto*]. She got married soon after registering with her lineage-parent and, having no children, she continued to work. Her husband has come to accept her religious practice over the years, but has maintained a distance from it by not getting involved.

Volunteer activities at Shinnyoen

Work, family commitments and religious practice do not leave S-san much time for other activities. Nonetheless, she is a *shisei borantia* [devout volunteer], that is, one of the members of the Youth Division and attends the activities as much as possible.

Once a year she volunteers for *Himawari-go*, the one-day trip accompanying disabled people to visit tourist spots. In 2009 they went to Isawa hot spring in Yamanashi prefecture. Around one hundred disabled people were accompanied by almost the same number of volunteers, the majority of them being Shinnyoen members coordinated by members of staff of the centre for the handicapped.

Twice a year she helps in the bazaars at the local elderly care home, when they celebrate the Summer Festival and Autumn Festival. The staff of the old people's house manages the organization of the festival, while Shinnyoen volunteers are asked to assist with the arrangement of tables and chairs, selling at the stalls, accompanying the residents and their relatives around, clean-up and waste disposal.

Once a year she volunteers as *shinrin borantia* [forest volunteer] at Ome no mori, the forest on Mount Satoyama along the Tama River, west of Tokyo.²²⁷ S-san explains that she first attended the training where she was taught the basics of the NPO learning about activities for reforestation and preservation of Ome no mori. Then she was introduced to the hiking course running all around Mount Satoyama where she guided visitors and schoolchildren, and gave information about the conservation projects and the activities sponsored.

The role of religiosity in restoring social commitment

Contributing to the community and doing something for people in need have long been S-san's private commitments, both before and after joining Shinnyoen. The first time she entered a residential home was when both her grandparents went to one of those facilities some fifteen years earlier. She recalls that visiting them was a frightening experience because a large number of residents were in a critical condition and close to death. Her sister, who worked as a helper at that time, asked whether she wanted to volunteer at the centre and she accepted. She was asked to take care of a person who was in very bad condition: she suffered very serious head injury. 'I was seized with panic, and never went back again' she concludes.

By the time she decided to join the activities of the Youth Division, she had already spent six years practicing her religious belief, attending some classes at Chiryū Gakuin and doing the *hōshi* activities suggested by her lineage-parent, mainly the early morning cleaning.

Three years ago, I was asked to join a volunteer group helping at bazaars at a residential home. When I went there I wasn't afraid, I wasn't sized with panic by the gravity of their condition, by their physical appearance, whatever problem they may have had. This was because I had shifted my attention on how to help them rather than how I was feeling and what I could do for the recipient. I had shifted to a sympathetic attitude, trying to be considerate about others. I wasn't scared at all. That was the main consequence of practicing my religious belief.

Religiosity helped S-san to get over the distressing experience that had kept her in a self-protective stance for several years. Over the past three years, she has been participating in the activities at the residential home with the strength of her new confidence. She comments 'I can say I have reached a broader sense of what life means [*jjinsei ni fukami ga deta*]'.

The level of dependence from the religious organization

The altruistic commitment and the new attitude toward volunteering and its recipients have brought about new commitments in S-san. She has come up with the idea of engaging in

some volunteer activities outside and unrelated to the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department, offering her contribution to an old people's home she passes by everyday on her way to work. However, she feels insecure as she does not know how to approach the facility and what sort of task she may be required to perform.

The sub-group coordinators and the staff of the general affairs division of the Youth Division carefully manage the volunteer activities both inside and outside Shinnyoen headquarters. As mentioned in Chapter 3, new participants initially attend induction meetings and are assigned to a tutor who supervises their work. They are given basic instructions and give their own preference as to the type of activity in which they would like to be involved. After the meeting, participants move to the project they chose (usually the group collecting postcards or the disaster training group) and perform their tasks for the day.

No volunteer task is regarded as easier and every single assignment is carefully supervised and checked when in progress. The kind of mothering attitude that senior members of the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department have towards junior participants helps the latter to acquire skills in a short period with little apprehension. Participants do not need to bother trying to work out how to organize the task or solve specific issues, nor are they required to figure out how to approach community institutions and how they relate to Shinnyoen. Coordinators and the general affairs division of the Social Contribution Department, which mediates with the community facilities and, as need arises, with government agencies, cover all those tasks.

To give a sense of belonging to the community, during the monthly meeting coordinators share a vaguely defined social map of local institutions, facilities and authorities relating to what volunteers are asked to do. However, since volunteers are required to accomplish short-term tasks a few times a year, coordinators tend to focus on instructions, rather than locating them in the larger picture of social services. From this perspective, S-san's concern for the unknown and unfamiliar she might find outside in case she approaches a facility without the mediation of the Social Contribution Department justifies her hesitation: she depends on her religious organization for assessing and training her potentialities and relating with the community institutions.

S-san's social map

As it turned out, S-san's social map in relation to her volunteer engagement was rather simple. It was shaped upon direct, loose ties with other members of the volunteer group. The majority of people she knew belonged to the Youth Division, along with a few coordinators of

the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department. She sometimes meets professional staff, such as social workers, helpers and carers, at the festivals in the old people's house or during the day-trip with the disabled, but those are occasional encounters. In this sense, her bonds in the groups are rather weak, a respectful coexistence within a context denoted by a shared religious belief with others. Relationships within the group are based upon weak ties that do not require indefinite commitment to the group as a whole. The 'plug-in' model developed by the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division can accommodate the busy schedules of working women with families, such as S-san, as it does not require regular attendance and long-term commitment.

The Youth Division's plug-in volunteer style: pros and cons

All interviewees highly valued the task-oriented, short-term, plug-in volunteer style offered by the Youth Division: it granted them the opportunity to get easily engaged in volunteer work, most of them for the first time. Respondents claimed that their participation in the volunteer projects makes them feel part of the community, giving them real opportunities of facing social problems; it increases their self-awareness and understanding in terms of potentialities and limits and offers the ground to practice the compassionate self according to their belief.

Nevertheless, because of their peripheral participation, members rarely endeavour to introduce new ideas for volunteer projects or new modes of volunteering, and hardly ever encounter the opportunities to access wider range of information and expand their network outside. The volunteer groups supported by the Youth Division draw upon weak ties (Granovetter 1973) where members earnestly engage in specific tasks and projects for the community well-being, but never engage in exploratory discussions concerning the social-structural issues behind the individuals' conditions.

The intrinsic rewards of volunteering

Despite the sort of peripheral participation she is involved in, S-san has developed a view of what volunteering is about, who are some of the actors involved and what can be learned through such activities. Volunteering has given her the opportunities to understand how her efforts may actually contribute to other's wellbeing and how institutions outside the religious organization value the contribution, thereby providing the immediate basis for self-evaluation.

S-san admits that she used to be bad at communicating with others, expressing her feelings and thoughts freely to anybody. Although she wanted to be understood by others, she tended

to withdraw into herself. Because she had always been like that, she did not consider it was a problem. Starting volunteering at the Youth Division was a turning point in her life.

If I compare myself now with my life before volunteering, I can say it has changed a lot: my viewpoints, my way of being, my way of approaching things and people, the quality of my life in general has changed for the better.

Generating social awareness: focusing on the individual

Overall, S-san feels her contribution is a worthwhile one, both on a personal and social level. She has gained a degree of self-confidence and has learned how she should approach new opportunities for volunteering.

S-san shows the performative dimension inherent in the process of the formation of her volunteer narrative as discussed in Chapter 2: she learns about other social groups and develops a self-knowing dimension by doing something for others and with others. In these terms, she learns to source her individual actions from the volunteer narrative, but also carries out actions beyond it that enable further exploration.

The literature on volunteering emphasizes how it generates social awareness because it gives participants the opportunity to understand the social experiences of other groups of people.²²⁸ S-san confirms that by volunteering she has trained herself in how to consider alternative viewpoints and approach critically mainstream attitudes.

I have learned it is important to consider the person in her or his individuality, and understand his or her own situation. It is important to listen to what he/she says without using the lens of generalized ideas and mainstream views you get from the information available. I have realized that you can operate more successfully if you shift your perspective by filtering what the person/recipient says, rather than drowning in common ideas of what you should do with certain people in a certain situation.

The large majority of interviewees in all five targeted volunteer groups mention the above argument. In their narrations, respondents suggest that volunteering has taught them to move beyond generalizations, to shift their perspectives from categories (e.g. elderly, disabled, homeless) and focus on the individual they are approaching. They have developed an understanding of the bargain between the person and the society: differences among participants and recipients can be negotiated and multiple perspectives can be coordinated. In so doing they have learned to respect and trust others, gained awareness of social groups and have become more aware of the mainstream discourses that tend to channel the individual into expected designated social roles.

Raising gender consciousness: the role of the researcher²²⁹

When asked about her view of women's roles within the volunteer group, S-san's response was that, before participating in the present study, she had never given much attention to differences in gender roles.

So far I have never paid attention to gender differences because I feel have been working in a rather gender-free environment. But after meeting you, I have started thinking about it.

She relates her inattention about this matter with the fact of been a married woman working in a company where women cover the majority of the leading positions. She considers her workplace a gender-free environment, where male colleagues have an open mind and all employees advance in their career on seniority basis rather than skills, merit or gender.

When reflecting about the situation within her religious organization, she sees Shinnyoen as rather progressive in terms of gender.

It is not because we are taught to count the others as gender equal, but because the doctrine of Shinnyoen stresses the idea of mutual respect, for any individual, regardless of gender.

In terms of gender, Shinnyoen itself was different ten years earlier when she joined the organization. S-san mentions the fact that at that time there were no men in charge of cleaning the bathrooms at the temple and no women performing roles at official ceremonies and religious rituals. S-san reports some recent religious events in the United States where women officiated the ceremony with the current head of Shinnyoen. In commenting on those facts, S-san realizes with surprise that over the years she has actually been witnessing important changes in the organization. Because of her junior membership, she took for granted that men had been cleaning toilets and women performing rituals in official ceremonies ever since.

By taking part in this survey and being asked about my views of women's role in the organization, I have realized that there have been important changes concerning gender relationships in the group, and other changes are to come. Especially because the current leader stresses the importance of women's role in society.

Changing gendered habits: learning by doing

Although S-san appreciates the head of the organization for her personality beyond the fact that she is a woman, she acknowledges that the leader's emphasis on 'equality' has already shown outcomes in terms of gender equality within the religious organization. S-san

envisages a similar trend toward weakened segregated gendered roles that will bring about more equality among people in society at large.

Social issues like the ageing society and low birth rate, along with environmental preservation, are making people aware that individuals need to act jointly to find solutions. In this view, S-san thinks that in the future people will be increasingly aware of their 'self-responsibility' [*jiko sekinin*]²³⁰ and the need for cooperation and interaction in order to tackle problems. This process will leave no room for role segregation.

Volunteering and developing customary self-reflection

S-san appreciates the stimulating environment she finds in the volunteer group, which helps her in the process of developing civic responsibility along with an expanded self-identity where encounters and experiences give her food for thought and reflexivity. She narrates that although members of the Youth Division tend to build easily detachable connections within it and almost no new civic relationships with actors outside it, participants develop customary routines of action and reflection that help them to acquire community and civic-minded attitudes. S-san's volunteer experience itself does not teach her how to relate with local facilities or service agencies. She has not learned how to develop a project by herself, but has gained self-confidence and communicative skills that she uses to transfer the knowledge she acquires to unrelated others.

Nevertheless, the level of outward-spiralling is low and so is the collective imaging and communication that a volunteer group should have if it wants to make a difference in the work undertaken. Participants may need to acquire the habit of talking critically about their tasks and the recipients. In her way, S-san seems already to be moving in that direction.

Analysis

S-san depicts herself as a working woman and a substantial part of her narration focuses on her job and the relationships in the workplace, which makes it central to her narrative identity.

With the number of double-income households increasing year by year (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 9), the narrative of the married working woman is increasingly a well-constructed source of self-identity. Nevertheless, the trend reveals some elements of continuity. The 'Labour Force Survey 2010' published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication finds that the rate of married women in their 20s and 40s participating in the labour force is much lower than the unmarried ones.²³¹ Moreover, married women in their 20s exceed by far those in their 30s, a trend that is thought to be related to taking on child-

rearing.²³² S-san has been working for the same company for more than ten years since she was employed there. Being a married woman in her 30s, she is grouped with the relative minority of those who continue to work after marriage. Having no children has facilitated S-san's career, a fact that categorizes her with the increasing number of women who have been employed for 10 years or more, and whose length of continuous employment tends to get longer (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 26).

While the working woman is the narrative that S-san uses to depict herself, two other main cultural accounts can be found in her story: religious identity and volunteer. Her married life does not appear in the narration: S-san mentions her husband only in association with her religious membership, to which he has taken a non-judgemental stance. Motherhood is mentioned only in relationship with her workplace where female employees are able to maintain their job and position after returning from maternity leave. For an external observer, marriage and motherhood are not primary components in S-san's view of self.

Religion, in contrast, is discussed in terms of being a source of well-being, giving her strength in daily life, favouring social interactions, helping her to overcome traumatic experiences and bringing new challenges. Moreover, S-san associates her religious identity not only with the religious organization, but also with the workplace where she shares it with one of her senior colleagues. Because of that, the workplace becomes a place where she can express, to some degree, her religious identity with familiarity and confidence, a condition that she cannot enjoy in the intimacy of her marriage. This is an interesting finding, since cultural assumptions tend to keep religion in the private, thus unavailable beyond religious organization precincts and the privacy of one's life.

In S-san's story, volunteering is closely associated with, and contained within, the religious organization: the volunteer identity is depicted more as an extension of religiosity than a role *per se* performed for personal choice. In her narration, S-san emphasizes how she attempted to fulfil the cultural script implied in volunteering before joining Shinnyoen and why she failed because of her lack of guidance and self-awareness.

S-san expresses a tension between her idea of volunteering and her actual actions. She feels the tension of negotiating between her wish to become independent from the volunteer group sponsored by the religious organization, and the attachment to a group and a context she knows and that gives her confidence. She seems to be looking for a counter-narrative to the image of volunteering offered by the religious group, while maintaining the communality of the altruistic goals. From this perspective, among the three main narrative identities that S-san offers in her accounts, the volunteer one is still unfulfilled, and she is striving to find a way to

construct it. S-san's accounts give interesting details of how individuals engage in a dialogue with available cultural narratives, some of which they fulfil, while for others they need to find binding institutions and customized practices to garner self-confidence.

In summary, S-san's story informs us that the 'rules of the game' offered by her volunteer group are specific to the group's identity and cannot be translated into different settings outside the context of the religious organization. By volunteering, she becomes ever more inclined to explore newer modes of self. However, the modes of her volunteer practice are specific and monitored, thus limiting the scope of *habitus* she can exercise in other similar contexts. Her *habitus* of volunteering is group-specific rather than field-led, a fact that does not equip her with the potentialities to engage in volunteering without the bonding group. For this reason, interactions and relations in fields of practice outside the religious organization can hardly become a source for further engagement generating newer trajectories of self.

5.4 The Big Tree Group: the housewives' NPO

Case study no.4 Univers Foundation (Shinnyoen-sponsored NPO)

F-san, 58 years old, married, one son, housewife

Interview held on 21.12.2009

Introduction

On April 4th, 2010 the Nihon Keizai Shinbun published an article commenting on the valuable work of Univers Foundation volunteers [*uniberu borantia*] in helping old people living alone to maintain a social life.²³³ The article describes Univers volunteers' work, which consists of building a network with and within the senior citizens living in the community: they visit them at home twice a month, call them on the phone, and organize gatherings and events. Univers volunteers typically spend time in talking with the elderly, listening to their stories about their past and present life, and taking note of their problems and needs.

The women actively involved in Univers Foundation's *kokoro no kea* [emotional care] were of the opinion that their volunteer work for the elderly was a necessary effort for a twofold reason: to improve the present life of the elderly and build a better future for the next generations of the aged. On the one hand, they aim at supplementing family caregivers by providing the emotional care that is sometimes neglected by social welfare workers. On the other hand, they endeavour to build an efficient and caring environment from which they will be able to benefit personally in their old age without imposing a burden on their families or the

government. Given their main purpose of improving the quality of life of such senior residents, including those who are ill or disabled, they do their best to organize a ready-to-use resourceful framework from which the next generations of senior citizens, including themselves, will be able to benefit.

Although volunteering is deemed as an altruistic act, a degree of self-interest for the prospects of volunteer work cannot be ignored. In Univers volunteers' case, self-interest is understood in terms of increased awareness of state discourses and institutions so that they can create spaces for alternatives and work from the within in order to reconfigure and redesign elderly care that would suit them. Sociologist Ueno Chizuko (2007) urges women to take this stance in her work *O-hitorisama no rōgo* [Singles in their waning years]. She suggests that women should plan for their future economically and socially, including eldercare and living arrangements. She argues that most women will end up single in their old age (Ueno 2007: 14). Therefore, they need to create networks of friends and services to find support.

On a micro level, the following story gives details of how the endeavour of reconfiguration of eldercare service becomes successful when the protagonist knowledgeably recognizes her identity as not fixed, and engages in practices and institutions that lend alternative significance to herself. Religious belief becomes a space for reworking the performance of self, a source of a self-transformative process bringing to a successful story of social contribution and inclusion in the local community. In her performative journey the protagonist's identity emerges as neither fully constituted by the discourses informing her, nor completely reliant on power relations inherent in them. She sources the situated knowledge she gains to enable collective practices that bring benefits to the individual and community both in the short and long term.

F-san's story

In 1999 F-san, a 58 years old member of Univers Foundation, founded with other women a non-profit organization called *Gurūpu ōkina ki* [the Big Tree Group]. The NPO supplies several caring services for the elderly living in Yokohama and Kanazawa: they provide meal delivery service, helpers, home cleaning and supply rental equipment to help in caring for the elderly at home. The Big Tree Group's motto is 'If these services are available when we are old, we will be much happier!' ²³⁴ The phrase echoes Univers volunteers' motivations and goals introduced above and summarize the idea behind the whole project: improving current

facilities so that the next generations of senior citizens, including themselves, will enjoy a more comfortable late stage life.

Biographical notes

F-san is a vibrant and active woman. She is married and has one adult son who moved out after graduating to live independently. Her husband retired recently, after working as an administrator in the same company for almost forty years.

She recalls that when she was a child she was always looking for something to do in her neighbourhood. 'Not for money. If you have enough to eat and live on, you don't need more. I did it because I wanted to meet people'. After completing the university college, she moved to Yokohama from Shizuoka to marry her future husband. Her experience as a wife-to-be after moving to Yokohama provided her with awareness about the cost of living, the essential and the unnecessary.

Community volunteer activities

F-san says that she has always been involved in some sort of volunteer activity. Sometime after moving to Yokohama, she married and became a full-time housewife.

I could count on my husband's salary, so I could engage in social activities a bit more than before. But I was careful not to affect the family income.

She used to be the parents' representative when her son went to kindergarten and to school. She regularly joined the PTA group, the *kodomo no kai*, and other activities for children sponsored by the *chōnakai*, the local neighbourhood association. However, her main assignment was at the local branch of the *Seikatsu kurabu* [The Life Club Consumers' Cooperative] where she often played the role of the group's representative.²³⁵

At the beginning we were a bunch of mothers [*bota*] gathering in an association called the Life Club. We started without a place to meet, and we didn't have money to rent a room. But we had this feeling: we wanted to do something good for the community. I used to be the representative of the group.

In the 1990s, the Life Club was already a nationwide organization of mainly housewives aiming at creating a new life-style in order to protect the environment and health. F-san emphasizes that they endeavoured to stop passive and resource-wasteful lifestyles based on commercialism, while discussing everyday local community issues and potential solutions.

At that time, we discussed what we needed in our everyday life. For example, we wanted a park, or we wanted to pay the school canteen each term rather than in one

instalment, and we wanted our children to have healthy food at school. We had children, and we wanted to improve the system for their wellbeing.

Creating a community volunteer group providing eldercare

F-san reports that over the years the Life Club she belonged to has become a strong grassroots movement cooperating with the local authority for the introduction and implementation of separate waste disposal and collection, local safety actions, maintenance of green areas and town planning.²³⁶

Moreover, one of the urgent issues was elderly care. Many of us had old relatives to look after, and we thought that sharing the burden would help us all.

F-san was very critical of the quality of the public welfare care system for the elderly and suggested establishing a sub-group to supply the services she hoped she herself could obtain when she became old.²³⁷ In 1992, the group gathered in Kohoku ward, Yokohama, where they lived. F-san says it started as a community-based housewives' movement [*shufu undō*] working together to pursue two targets: providing a better quality of life for the community elderly through suitable care services; and working for the protection of the local environment through recycling and reuse activities. Since the beginning, F-san has been one of the main supporters of the group, as she was convinced that those two issues were crucial in Japanese society.

They started by cooperating with the Life Club for the waste disposal and recycling activities, while focusing on their main goal by offering volunteer services for the elderly as a form of mutual help targeting, initially, relatives of members of the group, neighbours and acquaintances. Everyone provided their peers' relatives and acquaintances the sort of help they would give to members of their own family. In order to save money, they rented and lent goods to each other, such as beds for the elderly, wheelchairs and other everyday items. They also collected unwanted stuff from the neighbourhood, which they later spruced up for reuse.

Joining Shinnyoen: redefining the self

A few years later, in 1996, F-san started attending *shūkai*, the local Shinnyoen gatherings. She accepted an acquaintance's invitation, although she was not very interested in religious matters. She was initially fascinated by the considerate attitude of the participants and went to attend some activities at the local temple. Within a few months, she registered at Shinnyoen and started practicing regularly the *sesshin*.

By practicing her belief, F-san says she learned one important thing: that individuals are different with different needs and there may be reserved and introverted ones, shy or simply quiet people who do not like her extrovert approach.

She had never considered her personality could be a problem in establishing social relationships. However, she admits that despite her busy career as a volunteer for the community, she had never really succeeded in integrating in it until she addressed her own personality and worked on herself. She had endured with her feelings of exclusion because she thought it was the price to pay for being a 'newcomer' in Yokohama, despite the fact that she had been a resident for decades. F-san considered 'community' a space for people to come together and discuss problems, and search for solutions according to the feelings of mutuality and help. However, she realized that it was not enough to grant someone with the sense of belonging that she was looking for. She tried to use community groups as a marker of inclusion and drew upon her several memberships to the local volunteer groups and clubs as a form of identification. Although she invested so much in the community, she often had the feeling that it was not socially rewarding: she tended to have only some loose social ties. In summary, while she strived to build a broad social map, she really failed to make it develop.

By practicing the religious teachings, F-san learned the importance of thinking over her own actions and controlling her sometimes overwhelming personality. She has trained herself and has learned how to think about the consequences of her actions by reflecting on her personality. From F-san's narration, it becomes clear that religious belief played an important role in her self-transformative process, an achievement that helped her to understand the social meaning of her volunteer role, along with the meaning of her identity as a community resident and volunteer. Above all, it helped to redefine her social self: she acquired the measure of herself and how she could interact with others in a constructive way.

Founding the NPO: struggling with the community

F-san admits that the period between 1995 and 1999 was a very busy one. Her new religious commitment called for time and energy to spend for the required practices. Meanwhile the number of recipients of her elderly caring group was increasing, thus requiring members to improve their volunteer work by organizing it into different tasks and acquiring basic equipment to facilitate it.

F-san knew from being a member of the Life Club that getting some sort of legal status would increase the group's potentialities. She consulted some senior members of the Yokohama branch of Life Club and asked them for legal advice and support.

In 1999, she finally founded a non-profit organization called *Gurūpu ōkina ki* [The Big Tree Group]. She says that the idea of a big tree with long branches developing into smaller ones, which in turn will grow longer and stronger, is the best image of their goal: becoming a broad and reliable network rooted in the community, living and growing because they offer substantial services while developing new ones.

In its mission, the organization put forward the two main projects they had been working on up to that point: environmental protection by promoting recycling activities in the community and elderly care services. After establishing their NPO, they could use the logo and organize structured caring services, such as sending volunteers to do housework, and providing meal delivery services.

However, as soon as their activity started formally under the name of The Big Tree Group, they faced their first unexpected problem: building trust in the community. In the eyes of the local residents, the change from an informal gathering of housewives to a non-profit organization with legal status signalled a shift in the image of those women.

This is a problem with Japanese people.²³⁸ It is not a matter of money. Even when they are really in need, Japanese are not able to accept someone they consider a stranger, such as a 'helper'. For them [recipients] it was different to say 'let's call the lady from XX family to help us'. After becoming a non-profit organization, they had to say 'let's call the lady from The Big Tree Group'. We were the same people, but we had a different, unfamiliar name. We became strangers in our own community, although we did it to provide a better care service to families. We suffered because of that for at least 4 or 5 years.

While acting in the same local community they used to target before, their new identity as volunteers of a non-profit organization, and not as neighbourhood women devoting their energy and time for the community, created a gap between them and the residents. The group's new identity lacked the component of intimacy that residents envisaged in women as housewives.

The strategy chosen by F-san and her colleagues was to favour other activities, while offering caring services whenever the opportunity arose. After 4 or 5 years the organization finally established roots in the community and benefitted from its trust by being offered a place to rent at a reasonable rate. They established their office there and opened a small shop selling second-hand goods.

Minna shachō desu [everyone is a boss]

Within the NPO the relationships among the volunteers are grounded in the motto '*minna shachō desu*' [everyone is a boss]. Although the majority of the members are women, some

men have also joined the organization in recent years. F-san says that within the volunteer group it is natural to do things together with no distinction based on gender because people are viewed primarily in terms of their skills, rather than as men and women. She also knows quite a few men who are working as elderly carers, both in the elderly care homes and as volunteers for the home-caring service. She comments that although it has been quite uncommon for men to work as a carer or helper, things are finally changing.

If you are dealing with caring, why should women be more appropriate than men? It is a matter of respecting the person you are caring for. There should be one way to see individuals. There shouldn't be that sort of feeling that you feel out of place [*iwakan*].

The phase of transition: the introduction of *kaigo hoken*

In 2000, with the introduction of the *kaigo hoken* [Long-term Care Insurance System], the organization was assigned to Kanagawa prefecture.²³⁹ Accordingly, senior citizens of Kanagawa prefecture could ask the organization to provide services within the fixed amount of the long-term insurance they are granted. Since then, new members have joined the organization, which started arranging home-care plans, home-helper services, supplying special home-care equipment for rental or purchase, along with the usual meal delivery services, housework and shopping service, cleaning and ironing. When they go out for home visiting and home-helper services, they charge the client [*riyōsha*] 300 yen per hour. F-san adds that charging a small amount of money has a twofold purpose: attracting new volunteers to join the NPO and help to operate reliable services.

Working and keeping the expenses within the limited amount of the long-term care insurance is difficult. We want to provide good services and healthy food to our clients. It is expensive, we are always in the red, but we do that all the same, as we supplement the costs with the money we get from recycling. We can now give ourselves 400 yen as salary when we work in the NPO. It is a great achievement.

The organization also runs a kiosk in a local medical care centre for patients with mental disorders. Several patients are members of the NPO and cover 70% of the work in the kiosk.

F-san admits that running the organization is hard work, especially in matching the clients' demand with the availability of volunteers. There are usually around ten women regularly volunteering for the organization. However, everyone devotes the time they have available once they have completed their main working and family tasks.

Despite the achievements and the increased number of clients, F-san says that at that time she kept feeling some resistance in the community where they were located.

Volunteering for Univers Foundation

In 2000 F-san started volunteering at Unvers Foundation and she is now a regular *uniberu borantia* [Unvers volunteer] participating as *keichō borantia* [the caring listener] and for the *yūai homon* [home visit] group. She recalls that when she first offered her help to Unvers Foundation a few years after joining Shinnyoen in 1996, she was turned down.

I came here [at Unvers Foundation office in Tachikawa] and said: 'Can I help you at all?' I was sure there must have been something I could do. Of course! I was already volunteering for elderly people [with her group in Yokohama]. I knew the work of helper, I had been doing that for almost 10 years. But they turned me down, and said I needed to attend a training course first. A training course?! I was really upset. But I started thinking about it and eventually I understood their point. I was lacking in the sympathetic understanding that makes eldercare volunteers good volunteers.

She comments that overall, her belief helped her to grow up socially because it taught her how to interact, communicate and socialize with people. However, she does not relate it to her motivation toward social engagement: helping others was her primary commitment. When she was invited to join Shinnyoen by an acquaintance living in the neighbourhood, she accepted mainly due to curiosity about the social activities supported by the religious organization, rather than through a sincere interest in the doctrine. She was given a booklet describing the varieties of activities contributing to society that the religious organization sponsored. She thought she could get engaged in some of the internationally oriented ones, but when she asked about this after joining Shinnyoen, she was advised to start with something she might have been more familiar with. Therefore, she went to Unvers Foundation: she admits that when she was turned down, she recognized for the first time that she needed to reflect about herself and her role in volunteering: 'you can't give if you don't recognize the "other" with their individuality [*tanin no kojinesei*] and ask yourself what the recipient really needs'.

The encounter with Shinnyoen and Unvers Foundation brought F-san to reconsider her social identity and, above all, what society meant for her: not only a space where people get into contact with others, interact and devote their free time for the wellbeing of all, but also the base for self-development through which one can make the community change for the better. This understanding was essential to enable her performativity and start forging the connections with the community she had longed for. The process she went through influenced her actions and reshaped the identity of the NPO she founded, which resulted in a growing business and increased number of volunteer members.

Retrospectively, F-san thinks that she initially engaged in volunteering as a way to satisfy her own communicative and outgoing personality, rather than due to a genuine social

commitment. Nonetheless, she has always been sincerely interested in caring for others and she was happy she eventually found a proper social role for it.

Remodelling the Big Tree Group

Volunteering at Univers Foundation trained F-san in how to listen to people and give them emotional care. When she realized that this component was lacking in the NPO she helped to establish, she felt mortified.

After joining Shinnyoen and attending the training course on emotional care, I started immediately to practice it in my NPO as well. My colleagues were happy about this new approach. The number of clients rose after we changed our style, because their families began passing the information of the change to other prospective recipients they knew. Our name became popular, even the local authority asked us to get involved in the local social welfare.

After the change in the volunteering style, the Big Tree Group reached successfully several groups in the community: the elderly and their families, the disabled and people suffering from mental disorders. Nevertheless, F-san thinks the NPO has not completely succeeded in its goal of helping the community's wellbeing.

Many fields are still not covered. I mean simple things in everyday life, like helping young mothers and working mothers with babysitting and housework. Or more complicated issues, such as the problems facing the new young generations, their tendency to isolate themselves, and the number of suicides.

Expanded self

According to F-san, 'The Big Tree Group' has nowadays reached a solid size with a number of regular volunteers. Therefore, it has room for developing new ideas concerning elderly caring services: giving ever better services to recipients and to the future generations of the aged is now one of the organization's main goals. The NPO connects with the social welfare agencies to find new solutions, but they weigh more the recipients' and their families' opinions. The 'Big Tree volunteers' are now a well-established community-support organization in Yokohama and Kanagawa City. Moreover, F-san's activities at Univers Foundation have brought the name (and services) of the organization as far as Tachikawa.

After so many years of volunteering, F-san has eventually succeeded in feeling constructively included in the community in which she lives and she is now broadly networked from Yokohama to Tachikawa. Her social map counts members of public facilities, local authorities, social welfare agencies, neighbourhood associations, grassroots volunteer groups,

and hundreds of volunteers and recipients: children, the elderly and their families, disabled and those with mental disorders.

When asked which identity among the many (the NPO volunteer, the Life Club member, the Shinnyoen adherent, the Univers volunteer and the housewife) she recognizes most in herself, F-san replied with no hesitation: *'josei no ichiin da'* [I am a woman]. After all, her gender identity is prevalent among the others and she is proud to complement it successfully resourcing other identities from alternative narratives to build her social self across different fields.

Analysis

The 58 year-old F-san narrated herself in accordance with the *senjyō shufu* model and has spent her life as a full-time housewife since she got married. However, her own account of her ontological narrative offers a different representation from Risshō kōseikai T-san's type: F-san depicts an image of a woman who recognizes herself more as a community volunteer than a family caregiver.

The encounter with Shinnyoen was the crucial episode in effectively building a bridge between her ontological narrative and her social (volunteer) role. For a long time her volunteer narrative was not as successful as she expected, although her social commitment brought fruitful results. She was a dynamic member of many different community-based associations where she volunteered actively. In her narration, F-san emphasizes her early role in the Life Club, which robustly formed the style of her future social engagement: her understanding of helping the community matched with the idea of acting cooperatively while evaluating the real needs and resources of participants. When she founded the NPO 'The Big Tree Group' with the others, their motto emphasized the essential responsibility of the current members and recipients in building effective services for prospect clients. In so doing, the recipients shared their resources in terms of experiences, while helping the NPO members to work out the provision of better services. The development of the organization proves the strategy was right, since they are now a well-established NPO growing and expanding in the market.

Her experience in the Life Club also informed F-san about the structural context, and the institutional and economic actors providing and managing the publicly available resources. F-san had a clear understanding of the role of the local authority: she located it closer to the community than the state because its policies could be influenced by residents' voices, as the Life Club often did. She also had an exact idea of what 'profit' means. Both her biographical experiences and her engagement in the Life Club taught her that the crude cost of living could

be manageable if it was shared with others. Moreover, it could be further reduced if an individual's skills and knowledge were shared with others. In so doing, individuals can increase their margins of profit and can, in turn, offer their 'surplus' to others. In F-san's understanding, the surplus was the time and energy that people could devote to others.

In general, she had a collective (socialist) view of how individual (time, skills, knowledge, social networks) and public resources should be managed. Such a perspective was likely to have been a legacy of her activism in the Life Club, which also informed her view of women's role. Taking her generation as an example, she believes that if women are called to take on a full-time housewife role, they should perform it in a way enabling them to contribute to reduce their burden and the costs to the family for the benefit of the community. In order to do so, women should share their resources in a cooperative effort to develop contacts with many others willing to manage and reduce family expenses. In case of working women, for example, she stresses the necessity of building a habit of sharing time among neighbourhood and friends for babysitting. F-san always found some time to spend in the community once she accomplished her main family role, a resource that increased over the years along with her reduced family duties.

F-san valued her role of housewife because it gave her the opportunity of exploring the ways of cooperation and solidarity that she used in the NPO. She did not feel the contribution to the local community as a duty for being a housewife, mother and resident, but as a form of support that would produce a payback at some point. She also went through a religious conversion that helped her to recalibrate her social behaviour and endowed her with a different personality that reinforced her volunteer narrative. Her story highlights how self-understanding and development, together with managerial skills and knowledge of the setting, are important components in establishing a narrative identity that goes beyond the customized housewife social role.

The stories of T-san and F-san demonstrate that, while both recognize themselves in the *senkyō shufu* model, the meanings they give to their narrative identity vary largely. Age is a crucial factor in the way they signify their role. T-san was the last generation before World War II, while F-san was the first one after it. The former went through a strong internalization of the pre-war family role and witnessed the restructuring of the family model in the aftermath of the post-war reconstruction; the latter formed a family during the economic boom of the 1980s, a period of prosperity favouring consumption activities at the expenses of broader social links and commitments to the community. Their stories illuminate clearly the contingency of identity formation, which helps to avoid the assumption that similar ontological

narratives (the *senjyō shufu* narrative) should inform individuals' identity in a similar way, fostering the same behaviours and interests. T-san and F-san's stories rather suggest that normative social influence involving conformity to a mothering role draws upon the relational setting, along with time and space that bring about different agency. Their accounts relate how the degree of agreement in terms of rules, morals and behaviours accepted or expected by the social group can change and they recreate themselves in a dynamic interplay between individual actions and structural conditions. While caring for the family may be the putative role framing the ontological narrative, T-san and F-san's stories indicate that how they signified it varied largely because of the diverse socio-economic context and biographical narratives where they experienced their expected role.

This analysis offers the opportunity to understand the idea of 'identity as a practice', and the plasticity of the *senjyō shufu* narrative as *habitus* which is constituted by individuals' lifestyle choices among a diversity of options, while at the same time contributing to innovations in those structures that once have shaped those choices. In summary, the comparison of these two life-stories exemplifies the concept of duality of structuration discussed in Chapter 2, which helps an understanding of how an ontological narrative should be accounted for as both a product of structural influences and a by-product of the individuals' transformative capacity.

5.5 Raising social awareness: volunteering for the homeless in Tokyo

Cases 5 and 6 St. Ignatius Church (Catholic) – Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama

D-san, 27 years old, doctoral student

M-san (D-san's mother), 52 years old, two children, housewife

Interview held on 12.12.2009

Introduction

St. Ignatius Church is located opposite Yotsuya station, just a few steps away from the busy Shinjuku Avenue. It stands on the corner of Sophia University campus and on weekdays students on their way to or from the university mainly represent the population around the church. From time to time nuns, in their light grey habit, head toward the church entrance. Many young women typically dressed in a monochrome blackish suit also use the lane in front of the church as a shortcut to their workplaces in the Akasaka district. They look different from female churchgoers who usually wear casual or smart clothes, depending on the occasion. At weekends, the population around Yotsuya station and the church is different, with fewer students and working people filling the pathways. Many churchgoers gather in the square in

front of the church and near the entrance, waiting for the mass to begin or just meeting and talking for a while thereafter.

The interviews with the volunteers of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama group were scheduled mainly during the weekends between November and December 2009. The church is quite busy at weekends due to the number of masses that are held: an evening mass at 6pm on Saturday, three masses on Sunday morning and one in the evening. The number of churchgoers is higher at weekends and non-Catholic people who contribute to the various volunteer activities run by the church enlarge the figure. They are mainly former students of Sophia University, friends or acquaintances of current churchgoers, members of other volunteer groups or just people who know, in one way or another, about the volunteer activities contributing to society sponsored by St. Ignatius Church.

The current section and the following one present two stories of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama volunteers, offering the perspective of two Catholic members and a non-religious one. Informants tell how social goals, rather than beliefs and the religious institution, brings participants together beyond ideological incongruity: they endeavour to acquire expanded networks and knowledge, and awareness of power relations in order to pursue their objective of integrating social minorities. For Catholic members the encounter with the church is not a decisive turning point enabling new subjective modes and broader horizons to see the social. Rather, the church's social thought is the gateway for a form of social engagement sometimes close to advocacy and political activism that brings participants to collective action. This type of commitment proves to be a source of opportunities for new trajectories of the self.

This section integrates two narrations: a mother and her daughter's stories. To help the reader, the daughter will be named D-san (D=daughter) and the mother M-san (M=mother). Although D-san and M-san were interviewed separately, their narrations were often intermingled, so their stories have been grouped together as one.

D-san and M-san's story

D-san: the daughter

I met D-san, a doctoral student of theology at Sophia University, in front of the entrance of the church offices. She is 27 years old and has been living in central Tokyo since birth. She grew up in a middle-class family, her father being a company employee and her mother a housewife. Her family has been traditionally related to both Nichiren and the Jōdō school, but she was never really interested in traditional Japanese religions. She wanted to explore other faiths, so she enrolled in Sophia University and began to study her subject. After a while, she

decided to convert to Catholicism: she was Christianized in 2005 when she was still an undergraduate student and started volunteering for the church soon after that.

The role of religiosity in promoting social commitment

D-san explains the relationship between her religious choice and her motivation toward voluntarism as follows:

In my view, studying theology is logically related to volunteering. It is the flip side of the coin. I wanted to practice Christian teachings. I think anybody approaching Christianity would become interested in volunteering.

D-san says she has always been interested in contributing to society for the community wellbeing, but her social engagement came only after she started studying theology and getting close to the significance of the Christian message and its practice.

You feel you need to practise the Christian message of altruism and solidarity. However, as far as I know, none of the students of theology I know are involved in any sort of volunteer activity.

D-san's doctoral thesis focuses on women's role in the church, comparing the Catholic and Anglican Church from an historical perspective covering the last century. She comments that her research topic is rather unusual, since theology tends to be a male-centred subject. Yet, her department counts a larger number of female than male students, so she does not feel pressure, neither in terms of human relationship, nor in her intellectual work. However, she thinks that compared with her peers, she holds different views on what the study of theology entails: that is, a daily practice of its religious teachings.

Degree of volunteer commitment

Volunteering takes most of D-san's time outside the university. In her view, volunteering requires a high level of commitment, time and energy to obtain outcomes. However, she thinks that for many people volunteering does not imply a regular commitment, since it is a matter of donating one's time and resources when they are available. D-san is critical towards the occasional attendance of many to Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama, because it is detrimental to the whole group.

It is difficult to say how many regulars there are [in Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama]. [...] I wish there were a number of regular volunteers to count on. But this is what volunteering is: people devoting their time to others when they have time to devote.

M-san: the mother

D-san's dedication to Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama stimulated the interest of her mother, M-san, a 52 year old. Before joining the church-based volunteer group, M-san used to contribute to the local neighbourhood association during the preparation for the local festivals and events, sometimes helped by her daughter. M-san was a regular member of the PTA group when her two children went to school. After marriage, M-san gave up her job as an elementary school teacher and spent her life rearing D-san and her younger brother. Although she participated in the local PTA and neighbourhood activities, M-san admits that it was rather a form of duty as a resident and as a mother, rather than a real commitment. In contrast, after her daughter introduced her to St. Ignatius Church, she converted to Christianity in 2007. Then, she started volunteering actively for various church-related groups, including Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama. She comments that after joining them, her social commitment had become a sincere pursuit of giving to others for the benefit of the whole community.

Mother and daughter cooperating for the homeless

Most of the time M-san attends volunteer activities together with her daughter. Even though they are both members of other St. Ignatius Church volunteer groups, they consider Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama as the most important. Their preference for the homeless as the volunteer domain reaches outside the church: they volunteer regularly at a government-managed homeless shelter where they clean up and arrange the rooms for the guests; they cooperate with antipoverty NPOs; and assist a group of solicitors and lawyers who provide legal advice for homeless. All these activities are performed in order to provide the recipients of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama with helpful services and reliable support.

In Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama group M-san usually joins the cooking group, while her daughter regularly goes out for the distribution. Sometimes both mother and daughter join the activities together or swap tasks. They do their best so that at least one of the two is present at each scheduled session.

Usually, before leaving St. Teresia Hall for the distribution, M-san and D-san arrange carefully the food and the newsletter to hand out, and discuss with the participants (usually 10 to 15 people) the situations in the targeted sites and the critical cases to look into. The discussion is an informal exchange of information concerning the health condition of some of the homeless they meet regularly and instructions in case volunteers meet the police while distributing food or helping the recipients. The local police tend to discourage activities for those living rough and they may force volunteers to leave that location. M-san and her

daughter recommend going around in groups of two or three people rather than walking individually and, above all, avoiding confrontations with the police.

The role of religion

Although originally relating her civic contribution to religious motivation, and despite being a student of theology, D-san never sources her narration from Christian doctrine nor invokes missionary purposes for her volunteer engagement. In her view, the Catholic Church is far from being a congregation of believers cultivating faith and values in their private life. Instead, the overarching social thought emphasizing solidarity and altruism that characterizes the Christian message is the gateway for churchgoers to engage in the social world beyond the religious milieu. Both D-san and her mother are critical-thinking churchgoers who share their concern for the underclass with other members and discuss with them any further actions needed within the limited resources at hand. In these terms, they make no distinction between the religious and civic (i.e. secular) spheres, since practicing religion implies social engagement. Their view of religion as a daily secular practice of helping others makes it a public affair where believers have an important role in redressing social inequalities.

When questioned about their motivations, D-san and her mother use a secular version of altruism and solidarity, saying that all individuals share equally the intrinsic rights of the dignity of humankind. As noted above, Risshō kōseikai members expressed their commitment in the same way emphasizing the values of egalitarianism and reconnection with the community as source for their actions. Beyond ideological differences, volunteers of both groups similarly affirmed their attempt to redress social inequalities and differences, by pursuing the common humanities of individuals.

Volunteering for the urban underclass enables self-reflexivity

Both mother and daughter affirm that volunteering for the homeless, rather than the message they learned in the church, was pivotal in activating their own self-exploration and self-critique. Volunteering requires them to set aside time to examine their mainstream cultural values and learn new stories, including their complicity in a discriminating society. The mother comments:

I must admit, before starting volunteering for the homeless I thought my way of living was 'the way'. I probably wanted to ignore them [homeless], or I did not want to acknowledge how differences among people affect the treatment they receive within society.

Similarly, her daughter also did not question her mainstream viewpoints until she approached the homeless and learned from their voices the causes that brought them to the streets. In so doing, she recognized herself as being in the mainstream culture in contrast to a marginalized culture. The daughter focuses on the difficulties those people have in setting up stable relationships because of their lack of a permanent address, family or permanent work.

Some have lost their jobs because of restructuring, some were forced to leave the company because they fell ill. Others were kept at arm's length by their family because they couldn't supply a regular income after being forced into part-time or contract jobs. They all have different conditions, but I understood it is important to listen closely to them and understand their reasons. In order to achieve this, you first need to establish a relationship with them, so you have to work hard to get their trust.

Literature on the urban underclass in Japan has explored the vicious cycle into which the homeless are forced: they find themselves in a situation where it is difficult to maintain relationships with the family, to obtain a permanent address and a regular income to rent accommodation.²⁴⁰ As a result, they are not just excluded, but forced into isolation. They are also criticized by some citizens who have a permanent address, family and a job, and are, therefore, protected by the system. D-san and her mother comment that without stepping out from one's dominant viewpoint and trying to see alternatives, one cannot understand the multiple facets of society and will not become really motivated to change it. On this matter, the mother is critical of many Christian believers: she insists that they cannot fully grasp the altruistic message taught by the Christian doctrine by simply attending the Sunday mass.

On an individual level, D-san admits that becoming aware of marginalized society and addressing problems that the homeless face on a day-to-day basis was the turning point of a spiral self-developing process. The daughter states the practice of self-reflexivity very clearly:

When you start engaging in this type of activity, an endless process of knowledge and skills acquisition comes along. It is not only a matter of giving out *onigiri* once a week. By being confronted with the homeless, you soon understand that you lack the knowledge of what they really need. You recognize what skills you need to acquire the knowledge, and what knowledge you can then transfer. In order to achieve this you go and ask experienced ones to help you, then you go back and test things out yourself. It is really a matter of confrontation, introspection, acquisition, and confrontation again.

Volunteering for the homeless: activities under scrutiny

D-san would like more people to join the volunteer group, not for religious or missionary reasons, but for increasing the number of participants in order to expand the activities. However, she is still struggling with the resistance towards the urban underclass from the

majority of her peers and friends. She explains that initially she tried to get them involved, but they opposed or ignored her invitation, so she desisted. Because of the general criticism of volunteer activities for the homeless she found outside the church, D-san has since then avoided discussing her activities with her friends at university.

Her mother, instead, seems comfortable about talking with her relatives and friends about what she does in her voluntary work, with no worries about their comments or criticism. When asked about people's reactions to her volunteer work for the homeless, she says:

Sanpi ryōron desu (both approving and disapproving opinions). There are people who say that as long as volunteers help them, there will always be an underclass in society. They say we help them to be feckless and unintelligent. Others say that helping them is a good thing, although they don't really understand what we are trying to do.

One interviewee (X-san, 32 years old) commented that when talking with her acquaintances about her own volunteer work for the homeless, she feels as if she is being judged for acting somehow beyond the law (interview held on 14.12.2009). She pointed out that in the eyes of the average Japanese, volunteering for marginalized groups is not counted as contributing to society to the same extent as volunteer activities for the elderly and the handicapped.

As discussed in the Introduction, post-war Japan long supported the *nihon-gata fukushi shakai* [Japanese-style welfare society] which implicitly called mainly on women to implement home care and volunteer or half-volunteer to care for the community's elderly. The legacy of such state discourses still emphasizes women's roles in those volunteer domains. Activities to support the underclass and the poor are not a recent phenomenon for Christian denominations in Japan (Shirahase 2009: 55), but they have long worked on the margins of the volunteer world because of the people they target (Stevens 1997).²⁴¹ Lay groups, instead, are rather new in terms of institutionalized volunteering for the underclass: most antipoverty citizens' groups and NPOs have been founded in the aftermath of the 1990s bubble economy and the restructuring that followed.²⁴² For these reasons, as X-san explains, volunteering for the homeless is still viewed as secondary in mainstream opinion.²⁴³

Working against discriminations

Several interviewees volunteering at St. Ignatius Church reported cases of discriminatory behaviours and actions towards the homeless happening in public offices, hospitals and other public facilities. One 40 year old respondent mentioned the episode of a 70 year old man she accompanied to the welfare office at Chiyoda city hall to submit the request for a temporary insurance for hospitalization (interview held on 19.12.2009). The man, who suffered serious

problems in his legs and found walking difficult, was referred to a clinic and then asked to return the next day to the local welfare centre with the result of the consultation. He was given a metro ticket, but because of his health condition, he was unable to reach the metro train, so the woman took him to the hospital using one of St. Ignatius Church's cars. When they arrived, the hospital refused to accept him with no explanation given and suggested calling the social welfare office to rearrange the hospitalization elsewhere. The welfare worker refused to revise the authorization and, since the insurance covered only for the date stated in the authorization, the woman had no other choice but to find by herself a hospital willing to accept him. After four phone calls, she eventually managed to take him to the Saiseikai Central Hospital in Mita ward.

This episode shows the difficulties volunteers (and recipients) have to face when dealing with the available support for the homeless offered by the government. Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama volunteers try to deal with the situation by relying mainly on their own institution's resources, while denouncing the malfunction and discrimination seen by other members, the church and fellow groups working in the field. They also make their voice heard in public by writing open letters to the local authorities and the newspapers denouncing the malfunction of the social welfare system.

The volunteer group: redefining social relationships

When asked what characterizes their volunteer group, all Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama informants replied that because of its social goal, which entails working with social minorities, members need to share a high level of trust, skills, knowledge and networks.

In their analysis of social relationships within the volunteer group, both mother and daughter agree that volunteers have an egalitarian approach with the others, beyond differences of social status and gender. However, M-san thinks that in society money matters in social relationships: the sense of social obligation that many Japanese feel is closely related to the level of income and their social status. Witnessing poverty had given her an enduring sense of distance from what she had taken for granted in social relationships before. "In contrast, money does no matter at all in volunteer groups" she comments.

Developing social awareness

The reflexive understanding of her experiences within and outside the church has changed M-san's views of society in terms of socio-economic structures. 'My point of view is different now because I saw people and things whose existence I didn't know' says the mother. She

has acquired a critical approach to relations within the wider social context, which now includes social welfare workers, NPO members, governmental agencies, doctors, legal advisors and members of other volunteer groups. These are actors she normally cooperates with and she interacts with them without feeling misplaced. When she meets people, she tends to value them for their qualities and abilities beyond the social role and the setting in which they are situated.

Her daughter similarly comments that she widened her perspective by participating in volunteer activities.

My horizons have broadened. The more you get engaged, the more you feel you can't keep on with just a superficial knowledge of things. There are many reasons why people are forced to live rough. To understand that, you must take into considerations the endless range of different circumstances, both personal and structural, that makes up the social context.

D-san argues that the mainstream view of society as relatively homogeneous, both socially and culturally, is a myopic, top-down way of looking at the social. She stresses the importance of focusing on what the social world is made of in its setting. D-san does not like the media, politics or academics who speak in clichés or generalizations like 'Japanese are hard workers', 'women are the pillar of the family' and similar expressions. She insists that paying attention to individual differences can help in understanding social issues.

Despite her genuine commitment to redress problems in society, D-san points out the necessity of being realistic when it comes to volunteer work whose goal is to redress social inequalities.

The activities covered by Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama target a limited number of issues, mainly at the superficial level. We often find ourselves in difficult positions: they [homeless] ask us for help, but we are not able to meet their demands. This is very painful, but it is as much we can do. I will keep on.

Both mother and daughter think that state discourses are too elusive when dealing with the urban underclass and criticize the limited intervention of the central government and local administrations. D-san comments that policies targeting the homeless imply spending money for a lower tier of society, which is not productive. Moreover, government intervention rarely reaches the core problem concerning the reorganization of the labour market, thus leaving the issue unsolved.

Developing a gender equal society

When questioned about the status of gender equality in Japanese society, both mother and daughter comment that much is still to come in order to realize it. D-san thinks that taking people for who they are, not caring about whether they are men or women [*hito wa hito dakara, jousei to dansei wa kankei naku*], within and beyond the volunteer group, would surely make things and people change. The routine of interacting with others would help in developing a habit of respect outside the small circle and the situated occasions of the volunteer group. Relationships built through civic participation would counterbalance the 'natural' inclination to the private and individualistic pursuits found in mainstream society.

Present society is still structured based upon gendered roles and expectations. The volunteer group is exempted by this division of roles because the goal overrules the social expectations of the participants. But when you go outside [the volunteer group], for example in the labour market, gender inequalities are still rooted.

The ties M-san has been building within and beyond the volunteer group are different from the dominant views on social status and freed from social expectations, especially discriminating between men and women. In the volunteer context, gendered roles are neglected, favouring individual skills and availability.

The situation for working women may be different, but many Japanese women still spend their entire life within the small network of the family and the local neighbourhood. Japanese society is still centred on men's roles, and the public arena is still largely filled by men. Men tend to distrust women despite the fact that an increasing numbers of women are getting into leadership positions. By volunteering, you acquire a wider social self. You meet people from different backgrounds. By doing so, you learn to value individuals for their qualities, and not for their position in society, or for their gender.

D-san advocates that society should become more egalitarian and more homogeneous in the roles and tasks men and women cover in the family and at work.

I think in some twenty years social expectations according to gender will be replaced by social expectations according to individual expertise. It will be a gender-free society where individuals will perform roles according to their skills.

Expanding social identity

Because of its social goal, the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama's social map stretches far beyond the church: it relates with several non-profit organizations and state agencies, and cooperates with social workers, members of NPOs and other volunteers supporting anti-poverty activities. While drawing upon the church, both spiritually and practically, D-san and her mother look

more socially aware and connected than religiously dependent. The encounter with the church was not decisive in starting off new modes and ways of seeing the social. However, through the church they met people and engaged in activities that have driven them to shift their trajectories toward newer understandings.

Analysis

We understand from M-san's story that she was socialized into the full-time housewife model and has spent her time after marriage taking care of the family. By following the mainstream expectations for women of her generation, she went through her life stages in a natural way, with not much concern about alternatives or expectations beyond her housewife role in a middle-class family. The turning point in her life occurred when she encountered people from different social strata, and dealt with social issues she had ignored before. The process of self-reflexivity that was generated by getting involved in volunteering to support the urban underclass changed the view of herself in society. It did not change radically her identity as mother and housewife, but she resized her role by relocating herself in a broader picture that included other narratives from a society consisting of different, intermingled social strata.

Similarly to F-san of Univers Foundation, M-san also got married and experienced motherhood in the 1980s. The economic growth of those years informed them both about the power of financial security in ensuring a sense of individual and family well-being. F-san expressed her awareness by devoting her time and energy to a cooperative that helped her to save money for her family and the community. M-san's understanding, instead, focused on the way money plays an influential role in favouring or hindering social relationships. In the interview she comments that Japanese people tend to privilege social relations with those with secure economic status and praises the volunteer environment for being spared such a materialistic habit 'because when you volunteer you are what you do, and not the money you have'. After meeting the homeless in central Tokyo she became fully aware of the social function of money and the privileged position she stands due to her financial security.

According to the World Values Survey, Japanese consider 'people living in poverty and need' the second most serious problem after environmental pollution.²⁴⁴ M-san, D-san and the volunteers surveyed were all well aware of the social conditions of the urban underclass and the socio-economic reasons behind the people in poverty. M-san and the others counted themselves among the 'winners' [*kachigumi*] because they could count on a family, a job or an income, and a house. However, their 'winner' narrative did not make them feel guilty, nor make them victimize the homeless, nor blame them for 'laziness and lack of will power' as the

majority of the World Values Survey claimed.²⁴⁵ They all tried to maintain a relational stance considering society as a compound of different strata and the causes of the social stratification as closely interrelated with one another beyond macro divisions. Their main role was to fill in the emptiness of social relations in order to reconnect the social divisions, while examining solutions for the poor within the available resources and within the state mandated programmes.

Sometimes volunteers shared opinion about injustice, corporate power and the oppressive weight of mass-mediated narratives. Sometimes members adopted a confrontational approach by sending letters of complaint on behalf of the local homeless and put their case to social workers in order to avoid discriminatory behaviours. In so doing, their volunteer narrative tended to get closer to the activist. However, they tried to maintain the scope of their confrontation within the limit of the lawful range of available means and the resources they had as citizens and members of a church-based volunteer group.

By volunteering for the homeless M-san became accustomed to the practice of social criticism. Practising her religious doctrine was the source of her social commitment and she maintains a loyal respect for the church that hosts the volunteer group to which she belongs. However, she is critical of those churchgoers who lack experience in the field. M-san discusses the role and the power of institutions and government in informing and shaping individuals' lives, and counts the religious institution as one of those offering narratives that can be used resourcefully or wasted completely. By thinking critically about her relational self, she has become aware of her own social role, as a housewife and as a volunteer. She identifies herself as a housewife because that is the primary role she was called upon to perform through her gender socialization. The volunteer role is a matter of her choice and she is growing in it consistently.

Her daughter, D-san, follows a similar self-reflexive path, although the religious component plays a larger role in her life: her academic interest brought D-san to convert to Catholicism and faith is the silent engine behind her social commitment. D-san identifies herself as a student and she is one out of the 32% adult female students enrolled in graduate school in 2009.²⁴⁶ Being enrolled in a theology department makes her student status closely related to her religious identity: although her narration emphasizes the influence of religiosity in the private domain of individuals' ethics, her behaviour shows that the belief cannot subsist without the public practice of it. While depicting herself as a 'student', it is hard to distinguish her agency from the religious identity that shadows her student status.

In view of the above, it comes as no surprise that most of D-san's life revolves around Christian-related entities and activities: a student of Sophia University, an adherent of St. Ignatius Church and a volunteer in a group that is also based in the church. She shows a level of identification with the religious community and the volunteer group higher than the university: she is rather critical towards her university compatriots because they neglect the practice of the religious message they study. Like her mother, she has become aware of her relational self and her social status, and learned to talk critically about conventional and mainstream customs and structural conditions. However, despite her close identification with the volunteer narrative, she links her identity on to the university rather than the church, because, after all, she spends the majority of her time there.

5.6 The blurred boundaries between volunteering and social activism

Case 7 St. Ignatius Catholic Church – Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama
E-san, 22 year- old, university student
Interview held on 19.12.2009

Introduction

As pointed out in the previous section, a common feature of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama is the presence of non-Christian volunteers. On December 19th, 2009 four of them (three women and one man) were approached for an informal conversation, while one agreed to be interviewed. When asked about how they perceived the group's relationship with the church, all replied that it was not significant because the group's social goal had, for them, no religious rationale beyond the altruistic purpose. 'Being altruistic is not exclusive of those with a religious belief' commented a 36-year-old woman. Moreover, they all agreed on the fact that, despite its relationship with the church, Catholic members of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama never made explicit their Christianity through conversation nor sent religious signals either within or outside the church grounds. It was an environment made of lay people sharing a social goal.

On the day of the interview, St. Teresia Hall was quite crowded: the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama members and other church volunteers arranging the schedule for Christmas Festivities were gathered there. The tables inside the hall were covered with hundreds of socks. Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama group had collected some money to buy new socks to give out to the homeless as a Christmas present. In one corner of the hall a few large bags with freshly made *onigiri* waited to be divided up according to the prospective number of homeless in each

location. M-san, the mother we met in the previous section, explains that they had made a larger quantity of *onigiri* than usual because around the year-end the number of homeless tends to increase. The regular male doctoral student from Sophia University was in charge of dividing up socks and food. He walked around quietly informing those present which subgroup they could join, asking them to get ready with a certain quantity of food and socks, and reminding them not to forget to take the newsletter. Around thirty volunteers had gathered for the distribution, among whom was E-san, a non-Catholic member whose story is presented below.

E-san's story

E-san (22 years old) has been a regular member of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama distribution group since 2007. She also regularly volunteers for the St. Ignatius Life Counselling group on Monday. She is not Catholic and has no relationship with Sophia University, but was educated at a Protestant school. Two years earlier a friend told her about a group volunteering for the homeless in Yotsuya. She searched the web and found Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama. Since then she has been a dynamic member of what she calls the '*onigiri* group'.

Choosing a volunteer group supporting the homeless

Among the locations targeted by the *onigiri* group, Hibiya Park is the place E-san knows best because she likes walking past the Imperial Palace when heading there. She knows some regulars living rough in the park, some of them in poor health, whose condition sometimes may have worsened over the week.

When asked why she chose to volunteer for Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama among the others she might have found in Tokyo, she focuses on the emotional care that the group emphasizes.

There are several volunteer associations and groups helping the homeless, many of them are well established organizations that sometimes rescue their life. Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama group is a small group. We only give out one *onigiri* once a week, so it surely won't fill them up. But we go where they [homeless] are instead of making them to come to the soup kitchen. It is important to meet them, talk to them, and spend some time with them. By visiting them every week you get acquainted, and little by little you gain their trust, and they tell you the hardship of their life and their problems. Most of them are people who had a house, a family, or a comfortable life until quite recently. Bankruptcy, company restructuring, divorce are the main causes of their fall.

Biographical notes: experiences generating social commitment

E-san was raised in a middle-class family with her father employed in a newspaper company and her mother working as a part-time nurse. She has lived in a flat in Shinjuku

since she was born, together with her younger sister. When E-san was in the fourth grade at elementary school, she started helping a schoolmate who suffered from a muscle-weakening disease. She used to push her wheel-chair to and from school, and helped her to do simple tasks. E-san says that this experience, together with her later education from the Protestant school, influenced her perspective on society where the majority of people tend to ignore or misjudge the problems that the disabled and their families face in their day-to-day life. The paradox of people's negligence or excessive attention towards the handicapped was something that E-san had been facing since she started helping her schoolmate. She had long thought people's attitude toward the handicapped was something that needed to be addressed. This concern drove her to choose social welfare studies at university to find a way to support those in need: at the time of the interview, she was a committed student and appreciated her educational choice.

Joining Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama

E-san used to devote her free time volunteering for the handicapped in a local centre and for the elderly in an old people's house near the place where she lives. Over the past two years, however, she developed an interest in homeless people 'whose poverty problem is often not exposed or avoided'.

People normally think that the homeless have no relationship with them. However, in these times I think that anybody runs the risk of becoming homeless. When I realized this, I started seeing no difference between me, the people around me, and them. Feeling this closeness, I got even more motivated and joined regularly the activity of the *onigiri* group, to meet them.

Joining the *onigiri* group gave her an even broader perspective on Japan's social structure and its relationship to issues of the disabled, the elderly and poverty.

Since I started volunteering in the *onigiri* group, my worldview has changed a lot. For example, I was convinced that for those who live rough moving to an apartment would mean the end of their sufferings. By joining the *onigiri* group and talking with them I have learned that you cannot generalize. Actually, if you think about it, even for me and you a roof over our heads is not equal to happiness. Many other components summed up together make your life enjoyable.

According to Ōsawa (2011b), the government had long refused to acknowledge the existence of poverty in Japan despite the regular discussion of the growing income disparities and poverty in TV documentaries, scholarly publications and OECD reports.²⁴⁷ She observed that the issue was first mentioned by the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy after the Lehman shock, and the growth of the *haken-mura* [tent village] at New Year in 2008.

Building the *haken-mura* in 2008

E-san was one of the volunteers helping to build the tent village in Hibiya Park in December 2008.²⁴⁸ She explains that in the years before 2008, Chiyoda City Hall had repeatedly removed the homeless' tents from Hibiya Park. However, the local authority never worked out a satisfactory solution to the provision of substitute accommodation.²⁴⁹ At that time members of the *onigiri* group helped the evicted to get welfare benefits, although the number of those who were eventually granted support was far lower than those who were forced onto the streets again. Such treatment by the local government was strongly criticized by Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama group along with other antipoverty organizations. In response to the local authority's actions, in December 2008 volunteers from different associations grouped together to build a tent village in Hibiya Park to host more than three hundred homeless over the year-end. For more than two weeks volunteers regularly distributed free food, gave medical consultations and offered job advice in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other associations. E-san was one of the volunteers helping to make fresh food and supplying life-counselling service.

The government couldn't ignore what happened last year [2008], the *haken-mura* and the number of homeless who increasingly gathered there. There was an incredible number of volunteers who were around helping the homeless to get public assistance and to register for job hunting programs. This year [2009] the government decided to take the initiative and provide similar support, opening up 500 rooms in Shibuya ward, at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center converted to a shelter over the New Year holiday.

The case of a holiday-season shelter opened in Shibuya during the yearend of 2009 was documented by the media and applauded by the various volunteer and antipoverty groups.²⁵⁰ However, E-san is sceptical of such government interventions, as they tackle the homeless' problems only temporarily, leaving the long-term situation unsolved.

Temporary accommodation at the end of the year, shelters, or welfare benefits are not a solution for jobless people living rough. The current economic policies should match the social policies to reverse the spiral of poverty.

A church-based volunteer group: the non-religious factor

During the fieldwork some of the homeless called the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama volunteers *kyōkai no hito* [church people]. When asked for their opinion on St. Ignatius church volunteers, the majority of homeless people replied that they felt comfortable with them because they looked honest: they did not force them to 'do something' to change their life and were not

related to the local authorities and public welfare service.²⁵¹ Some of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama women were also engaged in volunteering for the local dormitories and shelters, doing the cleaning and washing in cooperation with the regular paid staff. For this reason most homeless knew Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama activities and often preferred the support and counselling service held by the group, rather than the one run by the local authority.

As noted in Chapter 4, one of the four ethical rules of the *onigiri* group states that volunteers cannot use their social engagement for any sort of religious or political activities. When interviewed, none of respondents viewed their volunteering as a form of missionary work and they never talked religiously about their activities. Moreover, religion was never mentioned when members met the recipients, a fact that was largely appreciated by both recipients and non-Catholic volunteer members. E-san thinks that the adoption of such an attitude by religious participants is one of the group's strengths and the reason why many non-religious people volunteer for it.

The other strong point is the undivided critical stance of the group toward the government of any persuasion in our quest to redress social divisions and poverty.

The political connotation of a church-based volunteer group

Significantly, E-san says that despite professing a neutral position in terms of political preference, members of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama group are in fact advocating changes in government policies and putting pressure on local welfare agencies and public facilities. Their close cooperation with antipoverty NPOs and their life-counselling service, implying face-to-face confrontation with social welfare agencies, public officers, police, lawyers and medical staff, set the *onigiri* volunteers in the front line against any sort of misuse, act of abuse, incompetence, violation of rights or discrimination against the urban underclass.

We have sent many letters of dissatisfaction concerning the inadequate level of service at Chiyoda Ward Welfare Agency, or when homeless people are refused a place at a job centre, or at a hospital. We send the letters to the city hall, the head of the ward [*kuchō*], the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Office, and communicate with the media, so our voice can't be ignored.

E-san does not think that her volunteering may have a political connotation or that her engagement with a church-related group could lead her to a religious conversion. She feels she is struggling over social issues that involve the government and people like her for developing a just community: the church-based volunteer group provides the gateway towards such an endeavour.

Future plans

When asked about what E-san expects to be in five to ten years, she admits that her social engagement with the *onigiri* group, more than her studies at university, has enriched her knowledge of social welfare issues. She is indebted to other experienced group members and members of other NPOs who teach her how to deal with problems. She is now considering becoming an active member of an antipoverty NPO, rather than putting herself on the government's side by getting employed in the social welfare agency. She comments:

If I am lucky, I will get a job in a social welfare office, or in a NPO. If not, I know quite a few people who will be happy to host me in their tents [laugh].

Analysis

The choice of including a non-religious respondent in a study of faith-based volunteer groups may seem inappropriate. However, E-san's story is a different voice helping to understand what dimensions denote a church-based volunteer group and the role of religiosity, if any, among the components that may generate reflexivity.

E-san is a 22 year-old woman towards the end of her university course. She depicts herself as a student of social welfare studies, a choice that she relates to her biographical experience. She is one of the 13.487 female students enrolled in Social Welfare Studies in 2009,²⁵² a number that had tripled compared with 2008.²⁵³ This trend shows that the younger generations are getting more aware of social issues and tend to channel their awareness into educational choices bringing with them occupational opportunities that tackle those problems.

By the time she joined the survey, however, E-san's narrative identity of a student in social welfare studies had been already undermined by her engagement in volunteering for the homeless: encountering the urban underclass shifted her concern from the values of caring for others, to the values of social equality and justice. The experience with Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama generated an interest in changing social structures and collective action, rather than the person-to-person work that caring for the elderly and handicapped entails. Her narration tells that in the process of her self-reflectivity, she increasingly tended to identify herself with the volunteer narrative than the student or the social worker. She sometimes gives her narration political connotations, although she does not express it explicitly. However, E-san is aware that bringing food to the homeless and building temporary shelters for them is not innocent of a political message.

E-san articulates the tension between the path of the student in social welfare studies and the activist challenging the ideological justification for economic gain, calculation of profits,

self-interest and material rewards causing social divisions and injustices. In the course of her volunteering with the *onigiri* group, E-san experienced the potentialities of changing the situation by forcing the government to face collective action. One can expect to see her engaged in an antipoverty NPO after her graduation, but she needs to negotiate with her educational choice and her biographical experience that informed it. It would be interesting to meet E-san in a few years and see what primary narrative she has developed for her identity.

Religiosity is the cultural component that is lacking in E-san's narration. According to her and the other non-religious members, in Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama the religious social identity was hardly perceived in the *onigiri* group: the Catholic members refrained from articulating their religious identity in the volunteer context, while they may have expressed their religiosity in private or in more church-related contexts.

From E-san's narration, it becomes clear that members of the *onigiri* group did not share a social identity because of their relationship with the church, but because of their social goal and strong commitment of building a just community. Although Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama presents itself as a church-related group, its social identity was closer to advocacy and activism than to religious compassion. The group had silently reached a significant awareness of public discourses about joblessness and homelessness, and members took actions against discriminatory behaviour. Volunteers never challenged mandated professionals. However, they did not mirror the welfare agents' way of doing things, and did make their critical voices heard. They were critical of public institutions when they seemed to be more interested in controlling their clients than cultivating their strengths. Because of that, they kept challenging social workers' routines and government policies, constructing themselves as a civic group beyond the greater power of state agencies, although working in partnership with them.

Over the years, the group had successfully built connections with several institutions and government agencies. Volunteers meet directly with local public officials and leaders to advocate for the rights of marginalised groups, conduct evidence-based research for advocacy campaigns in cooperation with antipoverty NPOs, and speak out through letter writing, and building tent villages for the homeless in central Tokyo. In this way they advocate changes in relationships between people from different parts of society and become influential in political processes, such as agenda-setting and policy-making, as the case of the *hakenmura* showed. They do not deliberately attempt to alter the status quo. However, their actions are purposefully change-oriented.

In summary what results from E-san's clear account is that religiosity is not an essential component for a church-based group to reach out the society and work for change.

Summary

This chapter presented six stories of seven women volunteering in faith-based groups: a retired lady, a young mother, a young working woman, a middle-age housewife, a mother and her PhD candidate daughter, and a non-religious student. Selected from the available interviewees, the varieties of their socio-demographic characteristics bring up an interesting picture of contemporary Japanese women engaged in faith-based volunteer work.

Several components were pointed out in their narrations as influential in the process of becoming a volunteer for a faith-based group:

- the role of gender socialization in channelling women into caring work;
- the structural influences and social expectations toward caring roles;
- the socio-economic variations, and the increased participation in the labour market tempering those expectations and obligations;
- the religious identity functioning as a gateway for social engagement;
- the availability of socio-economic resources in facilitating volunteer commitment.

Many others elements appeared even more significant when examining women's transformative capacities and to the emergence of new directions from their volunteer roles:

- personal development;
- social awareness;
- expanded social resources;
- improved social integration;
- the capacity of dealing with collective goals.

All these components were performatively constituted in a manifold of discourses across time and settings that proved to be determinant for the women we met in this chapter. Their exploratory shifts were largely drawn upon the dialectic interplay between self-understanding and self-identification they experienced by acting as volunteers in a faith-based group.

The stories tell us about the directions in which those women headed. Some of them ventured outside the faith-based volunteer group and favoured a social identity loosely connected with the religious group to which they belonged. Some others were tempted to take new ways after savouring the delights of taking on a social role, but stepped back to their religious identity waiting to acquire more expertise.

In summary, the stories narrated in this chapter inform us that, despite structural, ideological and socio-economic components channelling women into social roles providing volunteer attitudes and practices, women are 'knowledgeable agents' (Giddens 1984:281) who create

new orientations and new customs. The intensity of their social participation and engagement is consistent with the generative capacity of forming a self-identity.

The following chapter discusses the lessons learned from women engaged in faith-based volunteer groups. By changing the focus from individuals to the groups and their religious organizations, the last chapter offers a bird's eye view of what kind of customs in religious volunteering may enable women adherents to broaden their social identity.

CHAPTER 6

Exploring women's trajectories of self in faith-based volunteer groups

Introduction

Although it is difficult to generalize on prominent trends within the specific forms of an individual's agency, the stories presented in the previous chapter show a number of commonalities in terms of what may enable a woman's performativity. In order to provide a comprehensive picture of both women's sources and trajectories, and the settings where they can venture into newer narratives, this chapter explores the findings by taking into consideration two complementary dimensions: the individual's social identity and its symbolic boundaries; and the group's dimension, with its customs and *habitus* that may enable or constrain its members to develop the self and social reflexivity.

The above two dimensions are heuristic devices for understanding how women produce a situated knowledge (Haraway 1991: 183), one that can redefine newer narratives and promote social change. Moreover, they help in exploring how women as members of a faith-based volunteer group relate with or distance themselves from other groups, communities and institutions beyond the religious organization.

This analytical approach follows the theoretical stance discussed in Chapter 2, one that emphasizes women's standpoint, along with the observation of women's performativity in everyday practice within discourses informing the context and the content of the surveyed groups. Accordingly, the findings discussed in this chapter are grouped into two thematic categories:

1. findings taking women's standpoint, focusing on their narrated and performative selves in relationship with the religious component and civic involvement;
2. findings indicating signals of self-reflexivity and transformation in women's interactions with religion in local civic life (practices as the group's customs, with particular attention to the religious and volunteering discourse).

The above thematic categories with their sub-themes are discussed in the following sections.

6.1 Findings taking women's standpoint

Introduction

The previous chapter offered a close-up view of what narratives from the larger cultural repertoire women use to signify themselves, and what factors inside and outside the faith-based volunteer group might matter for generating or restraining a self-reflexive project of the self.

One central finding emerged from the analysis: members, who could establish meaningful relationships within and outside the group with people from different backgrounds they would not meet otherwise, tended to be more reflexive both at the individual and group level. For the informants, establishing broader ties through the faith-based group implied a careful evaluation of their social setting, which brought about an extended awareness of what society is made of: the structural relations, mainstream discourses informing individuals' lives, and the extant social conditions of the community life. In order to gain such expanded horizons they needed to undergo several micro changes that fostered personal development: they had to acquire social skills and expand their social map, which enabled them to relate to and negotiate with differences and alternatives coming from different contexts. As discussed in Chapter 1, this practice is defined by Gutierrez and her colleagues as consciousness-raising, through which women learn to locate their situated self in a larger picture. This process tended to foster newer meanings for the self and the social through which women cultivated alternative identity trajectories.

In general women who could count on a broader and consistent social map tended to talk critically about:

1. their personal resources and the benefits from volunteering bringing about changes at the micro level;
2. the effect of religiosity on self-reflexivity;
3. the group and members' social map (the partners and the community) fostering members' social reflexivity;

The following six sub-sections discuss the findings related to the above arguments.

6.1.1 Doing things for others: developing self

Interviewees reported that volunteering prompted personal transformation in terms of both worldview and day-to-day behaviours. They claimed a number of changes: mastery of practical and social skills; a broader perspective of the social context of which they are a part;

increased understanding of how well or poorly their efforts contribute to the community; and a sense of greater self-responsibility as well as a tendency to become less individualistic. In the meantime they increased their self esteem and felt more optimistic that their voluntary actions could bring about positive outcomes.

S-san, the 34-year-old woman working with the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division, said she valued her volunteer experience because it gave her the basis for self-evaluation and self-awareness. Because of that, she planned to get engaged in volunteer work outside the religious organization. However, she felt misplaced when considering the options: the level of dependence on her religious organization was still high and the unknown of what volunteering entailed without the support of religious organization made her hesitant. As the idea of Giddens' self-reflexive project entails (1991b: 75), S-san's story shows that learning and developing a sense of identity go hand-in-hand: she feels she can establish a new trajectory of self, but she acknowledges she has to acquire mastery as a person of the community and the volunteer group to which she belongs before stepping forward.

T-san (Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church), and F-san (Univers Foundation) instead, look self-confident individuals, with mature pro-social attitudes toward their communities. However, while T-san's story seems rather successful (linking the Women's Association with alternative fields of civic engagement did not create clashes), F-san tells us about the contradiction of a very self-confident woman with high social expectations and the conflicts in which she was involved because of that. F-san's case illustrates vividly that the perspective of self one carries may not fulfil one's personal social endeavour if identity remains static: F-san learned that it must be mutually constituted with the social world she meets. In order to succeed in socializing she had to work on her own personality through interaction with the people around. This interpretation is consistent with Somers' (1994) theorizing stating that identities are relational and part of collective action that is set in time and space (Somers 1994: 606). Moreover, F-san's behaviour can be analyzed in the light of Goffman's (1959) idea that a successful interaction with people depends on the individual's ability to discern the setting and the audience, and to behave accordingly. As discussed in Chapter 2, such ability should be understood as a subjective capacity to recognize the representational self and the social construction thereof, and not simply as an ability to interact with the people one meets. When F-san worked out a self-conscious pattern of behaviour by experiencing the dynamic interplay of her 'virtual' (Goffman 1963: 2) and 'actual' social identity (1963: 3), as discussed in the Introduction, she could express herself successfully and perform a non-contradictory narrative identity.

The mother and daughter's stories, along with the non-religious member of St. Ignatius Church volunteer group, demonstrate how participation in a faith-based volunteer group dealing with the urban underclass may be strategic for gaining a wider view of social structures involving relations of power. Their participation is somehow peripheral as compared with established antipoverty NPOs, a feature that allows participants to enact a reflective process about their own condition, their potentiality and social-awareness. The more D-san (the daughter) and M-san (the mother) recognized the level of unrelatedness and disconnection that the homeless experience, the more that their involvement grew. And both gained knowledge about power resources and the ways of gaining control over them. While they were working peripherally, they were acquiring a broader sense of their selves, learning trajectories and developing knowledge of alternatives to mainstream narratives: the increasing level of social awareness allowed them to change volunteer locations (e.g. the social service agency, the government-sponsored shelter) and shift into different forms of participation (the antipoverty NPOs, the group of solicitors and lawyers) with no clashes.

In summary, the informants' stories indicate that self-reflexivity and personal development are dynamic interrelated processes that entail gaining access to resources and encounters for further understanding of the self and social. Sometimes religious belief is an important source, as F-san, emphasized: it helped her to gain awareness of her personality traits, thus allowing her to change her social behaviour. Other women, such as S-san, used their religiosity as a source of strength to overcome the crisis and difficulties they encountered in their volunteer work. The next section discusses the role of religiosity in enabling self-reflexivity, social integration and networking, and its potentiality in generating a custom of social reflexivity.

6.1.2 Volunteering in a faith-based group: the elusive role of religiosity

All the groups investigated understood themselves as religiously based groups, with the exception of Univers Foundation, which counted itself as a NPO financially, and not strictly doctrinally, dependent on the religious organization. Because of their close relationship with the religious organization, it was expected that volunteers would talk about their civic duties in religious terms, at least occasionally. In these terms, participant observation was somehow initially biased by the assumption that by facing everyday emotional and physical difficulties, some of the respondents would invoke religious symbolism at some point, if for no other reason than to boost their own commitment in what sometimes is a difficult task. Overall, the results largely invalidated this assumption.

The following subsections present the findings and discuss to what extent members

expressed their religiosity, how the weight of this cultural component varied according to the group's customs and the different effects entailed in such variation.

a . Expressing membership: volunteer vs. religious identity

The way individuals source their belonging to a group in order to express their social identity may matter because of the meaning that the definition entails: it may articulate a close relationship with the religious organization, a loose one or no relationship at all. Examining how members express their membership, both as affiliates of the volunteer group and adherents of the religious organization, helps us to understand how individuals draw upon available narratives to signify themselves in relationships with the community and whether the definition facilitates innovative modes of identity.

The table below summarizes the way each group defined volunteer and religious identity.

Table 6: Volunteer identity vs. religious identity

GROUP	Volunteer identity	Religious identity
Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division	<i>shisei borantia</i> [devout volunteer]	<i>en no shinto</i> [Shinnyoen believer]
Univers Foundation	<i>uniberu borantia</i> [Univers volunteer]. Also <i>pia borantia</i> [peer volunteer], <i>keichō borantia</i> [caring listener]	None
Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association	<i>kōsei borantia</i> [kōsei volunteer], or just <i>borantia</i> [volunteer]	<i>kaiin</i> (member)
Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteer Group	<i>kōsei borantia</i> [kōsei volunteer], or just <i>borantia</i> [volunteer]	<i>kaiin</i> (member)
Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama	<i>onigiri borantia</i> [onigiri volunteer]	Known as <i>kyōkai no hito</i> [church people] but not defining themselves as such

Source: author

Shinnyoen adherents call themselves *en no shinto* [Shinnyoen believer] or simply *shinto* [believer]. Members of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division called themselves *shisei borantia*, the ‘devout volunteer.’ Both expressions suggest a relationship with religiosity. As explained in Chapter 3, Shinnyoen members understand volunteering not just as a matter of devoting energy and time to needy people, but also as an offer of service toward Buddha, therefore as a form of spiritual self-training. This explains the use of *shisei* in expressing their volunteer role (*shisei borantia*): the word ‘*shisei*’ means ‘devotion’ and carries religious connotation. The fact that before becoming a volunteer for the Social Contribution Department adherents needed to train themselves, both on a practical and spiritual level by attending the organization’s religious activities and the Chiryū Gakuin school, makes both

volunteer and religious narrative identities deeply entrenched with religious ideology. The religious identity prescribes volunteering for the community, as much as the volunteer identity entails a religious practice. Accordingly, Shinnyoen volunteers' identity was highly denoted with religious components and so their volunteering should be thought of as informed by religious ideology. Discussing this matter in terms of 'recognition' (Calhoun 1994: 20), as discussed in Chapter 2, the case of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division shows an overall coincidence between the way respondents defined themselves and the way others were required to recognize them. Therefore it is expected that the recipients and the external facilities recognize the religious component in Youth Division members' volunteering.

Univers Foundation calls its members *uniberu borantia* [Univers volunteer], which does not imply any religious connotation, and members do not signify themselves as faith-based volunteers. As discussed in Chapter 3, those aged 60 or older call themselves *pia borantia* [peer volunteer] because they help people who are of the same age or older. *Pia borantia* are trained by the NPO to perform the role of *keichō borantia* [the caring listener]. All these expressions define the volunteer role and are not related with religiosity.

Risshō kōseikai members use the general term *kaiin* [member] to express their religious identity, which does not convey any connotation of religious belonging in itself. Volunteers, instead, are called *kōsei borantia* [kōsei volunteer], an expression that relates to their sponsoring religious organization. However, the women surveyed during this fieldwork never used such an expression, rather opting for the simple *borantia*, 'volunteer'. As discussed in Chapter 4, members of the volunteer groups surveyed for this study tended to use the popular 'volunteer activities' [*borantia katsudō*] rather than *hōshi katsudō* [service activities] because of their regular interaction with non-members outside the religious organization. For this reason, Risshō kōseikai volunteers used the term *borantia* to define themselves. This expression may also suggest that members viewed their religiosity as a form of secular activism, therefore emphasizing the social role of the religious institution they belonged. In summary, members expressed a volunteer identity that was denoted like the community volunteer and did not convey religious connotations. Moreover, while religious identity was prevalent in church-related activities, the volunteer identity was customary in most contexts outside the church; members were mainly known in the community as 'volunteers' and not as Risshō kōseikai members, thereby consolidating a social identity with no religious connotation.

The volunteers of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama identify themselves as *onigiri borantia*, an expression unrelated to the church. However, during the fieldwork some homeless called the

volunteers *kyōkai no hito* [church people] and some of the partner organizations knew they were based at St. Ignatius Church. Non-religious members were not concerned about being somehow identified as 'church people' because they emphasized the shared social goals and the common understanding of them. The Catholic members of the *onigiri* group articulated their religious identity as 'Christian' only when asked to. Otherwise the religious component of their identity lay dormant in their interviews and in their activities. In general, religious members did not expound their religious identity. Nothing from the interviews and participant observation gave the idea that it was a form of self-censorship. Rather, it was evident that it was irrelevant to the members' sense of what volunteering was and what it entailed. Although some members could understand the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama as a group with a religious identity, it was in fact the commitment to social activism promoted by Christian social thought, rather than the Christian theology itself, that made it more compatible with self-development, reflexivity and social awareness. This component was essential for the group's members to explore options for self trajectories in the wider social milieu.

The above discussion leads to an important finding of this study. Overall, the way interviewees talked of their religious identity suggests that they were more concerned about the practical goals of their projects: they sustained their participant role in the wider community through and beyond their religious organization, and not simply because of it.

b. Expressing volunteer goals: the religious discourse

One relevant finding recorded during the fieldwork was that none of the respondents used volunteering as a means to articulate publicly their religiosity. It is common sense to think that groups with religious identity may use religious language to express their goals and interact with the beneficiaries of their activity. However, informants never used religious rationales during their meetings and volunteer activities. Simply, nothing in their actions or in the language they used in the volunteer group suggested their individual religiosity. During participant observation, I often had to remind myself that my respondents were religious adherents, or had some sort of religious grounding, otherwise they would appear as any other member of a secular organization or citizen's group.

Only in one case study, Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division, did the informants occasionally bring in a religious discourse and associated their volunteering with self-development, which they understood as spiritual achievement. They expressed a close relationship between the group's religious discourse and the goal of helping the needy,

because the action of volunteering equates with the spiritual practice of *gohōshi*. However, when working with the beneficiaries, they never used religious language although they dwelled upon the compassionate caring thought promoted by the religious organization.

Univers Foundation exhibits similarities with Risshō kōseikai: the members did not articulate their commitment towards the community in religious terms, although religious discourse was a personal source of inspiration in trying to achieve the goal of compassionate caring, reconnecting the neighbourhood and interpersonal relationships. In the meetings women never used religious terms to talk about their valued relationships beyond the group or the feasibility of their projects. When volunteers met with other people (non-religious volunteers, staff, government agents, beneficiaries) they used the ‘volunteer language’, one that includes terms of caring, work and setting-specific vocabulary, and everyday life conversation.

When interviewees at St. Ignatius Church were asked whether they sourced from religious precepts for their volunteer work, many replied that they drew upon the church’s social thought of ‘redressing social inequalities’ rather than the doctrine itself. In fact, in the course of the fieldwork they never used expressions such as ‘Christ-like compassion’ or the Christian notion of ‘servant’ that one would expect from Catholic volunteers.²⁵⁴ They also avoided words such as ‘social justice’ that may imply advocacy, political organizing and struggling over issues with government and corporations. Despite criticizing publicly the government’s policies about welfare and labour during the *haken-mura*, and with open letters to government agencies, neither justice nor advocacy fitted properly with the *onigiri* group’s social actions. Their main purpose was to establish valuable customary networks with the urban underclass so that they could reintegrate them into the wider society. In so doing, the interviewees articulated phrases and symbols that could *de facto* imply advocacy or political organizing, while religious discourse was completely absent.

In general, surveyed groups never used religious terms to imagine their actions and being in the community. They sometimes used the religious language of compassion when they talked privately about reaching out to the needy, but never employed it when they had, for example, to deal with government agencies or professionals enforcing procedures with which they did not agree. In these cases, they used the volunteer’s language or one that conveyed advocacy. They were all attentive to the socio-structural relationships beyond the group and most of them used field-specific vocabulary to relate with them, with the confidence of veteran volunteers and experienced actors contributing to the social contract. Only Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division showed less familiarity in describing their interaction with external actors because of their limited opportunities to reach out. Still, they never

communicate their potential relationships in religious terms.

c. What women do with religion

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Ammerman (2003) says that sociology of religion tend to understand religiosity as giving individuals a stable, core identity that signifies the person in all social settings (2003: 209). In this parlance, belief is taken as an ever-present cultural component. Such theorizing focuses on what religion makes individuals do and be, and examines the effects of religiosity on individuals. Rather this study explored how women use religiosity to do what they do to achieve their aims. In a nutshell, this work asked what women *do with* religion, instead of what religion makes women do or be.

As discussed above, only a small number of informants talked about religiosity as the main reason for their social commitment. The results from the questionnaire data indicate that many respondents were already interested or already involved in volunteering before willingly and consciously engaging in religiosity. This finding was further confirmed during the interviews. Interviewees regularly said they took advantage of the extant volunteer activities organized by the religious organization in order to become socially engaged without the stress of searching for opportunities by themselves. They also drew upon the shared symbolism to signify their commitment according to the worldview offered by their religion, because it was a ready-to-hand philanthropic image they could use when explaining their volunteer endeavour to their families, friends and acquaintances. From this point of view, religion offered a better organized environment as compared with other secular ones and believers used it to express their pro-social endeavour. In relating religiosity with her volunteer commitment Y-san, one Univers Foundation respondent, said '*tama tama Shinnyoen datta*' [it just happened to be Shinnyoen] (interview 21.12.2009): this statement implies that religiosity did not function as the rationale for her social engagement, but just the gateway to express it.

The majority of interviewees claimed they *used* belief as a source of spiritual strength and support. Members of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division drew upon a well defined and highly self-integrating group identity anchored in the religious organization, and could earn confidence by reproducing patterns of peer-to-peer and top-down interactions borrowed from the religious group's customs. Risshō kōseikai members emphasized the interpersonal relationships customized within the religious organization to make them feel part of a community of individuals who shared a worldview and wanted to improve it. Yotsuya

Onigiri Nakama volunteers used the social thought promoted by the church to generate a critical understanding of social-structural conditions obfuscating social divides.

On a micro level, a first significant finding emerged when comparing individual stories: for the majority of respondents religiosity complemented the critical questioning in the course of their self-reflexive process. In Actor Network Theory parlance, this is what 'controversy' entails: a source of hesitation in terms of action that, along with other components, drives the actor to explore alternative directions (Latour 2005: 47). The key concept, in these terms, is that religion is not a source of certainty as the sociology of religion has long claimed, but rather represents a resource for individuals to explore the contradictory ways for actors to gain identity (Latour 2005: 22). T-san used her religious identity to build a counter-narrative against the custom of primogeniture and used the concepts of equality and egalitarianism to build a civic environment for herself, her family and the community. After adhering to Shinnyoen, F-san went through a personal reflection that adjusted her personality traits in a way to help her to gain the social skills for which she had been looking. O-san seized the ideas of children's education she learned at the Risshō kōseikai parenting classes, but moved away from the community and religious organization's activities for children, and took up a leading role independently. All these stories illustrate how religiosity provided a vehicle to think critically about their roles, their relationships with the social and their own purposes. In this parlance, religion has provided these actors with a greater variety of ways 'to barge in and displace the original goals' (Latour 2005: 22). This reveals the nature of religiosity in this context: for the surveyed women, belief was but one of the components in the course of a self-exploratory journey, generating further reflection while testing the social setting.

The second broad finding was that thinking critically about themselves made them ponder critically their social settings, including their own religious organization. In so doing they related self-critically to others, becoming increasingly aware of the social, while picturing themselves in a larger social context. O-san, for example, was grateful for being taught how to educate her children, but did not passively accept the religious environment as the best one for her family. She similarly applied a critical stance vis-à-vis the PTA and other community groups. Eventually, she found a group outside her neighbourhood community and worked to expand it at the local level.

ANT can help to conceptualize the nature of this action. Whenever actors question their routinized way of defining themselves, they slightly or dramatically modify how they participate in the interaction (Latour 2005: 30-1). In so doing, actors 'engage in criticizing other agencies' (Latour 2005: 56), while carrying over agencies that the 'actors deem more reasonable'

among the alternatives explored (Latour 2005: 57). This networked enquiry eventually delineates a frame of reference for the existence of 'momentary associations' (Latour 2005: 65), which are characterized by the way they gather together in new shapes. Groups, in ANT parlance, are subject to performative processes (Latour 2005: 34-5) to the same extent as subjectivities in Butler's theorizing. The complex and sometimes clashing dynamic between an actor's performativity and a group's performativity is well illustrated in O-san's narrative, as she makes determined efforts to achieve an accommodation between her own controversies (Latour 2005: 47) and the groups' incongruities as she experienced them.

One main consequence of the surveyed women's critical thinking of 'other agencies' was that members of the volunteer group did not spend time in intellectualizing about their altruistic endeavour or in glorifying their relationships with the religious organization for offering such opportunities. They rather stayed focused and reasoned about the relationships and resources they needed or enjoyed, so that they could take responsibilities in the social that they deemed as the overriding goal. In order to do so, they often challenged customs and took risky personal initiatives that could undermine their social role. O-san's case illustrates the dynamics of this challenging process.

d. The effects of women's actions on religious narratives

Focusing on what women *do with* religion allows for a further important point of analysis: the effects of women's actions on the religious institution. Taking a bottom-up stance helps us to understand how grassroots, everyday activities and interactions may reshape religious prescriptions and narratives, as well as the role of religious institutions in society, which differs according to social-structural changes, economic pressures and political resources.

Religion offers its adherents worldviews and formal belief systems to identify with, while the adherents' participation in religion in concrete, everyday life projects gives the religious institution more civic responsibility than it had before. By discussing reflexively cultural customs and social responsibilities, volunteers enable themselves and their groups to interact with multiple actors and agencies. As discussed in Chapter 1, Japanese religious organizations are not endorsed with legitimacy to carry out roles such as cooperating with the government in discussing solutions for social issues. From this point of view, by exercising their role of citizens in faith-based volunteer groups, women become the gateway for the religious organization to participate in the social contract, thus reinforcing indirectly the role of religious organizations in society at large.

At the same time, women act vicariously for the religious organization, thereby achieving a role of negotiator among power structures and institutions on behalf of the religious organization. The more women recognize themselves in this role, the more they acquire awareness of secular discourses and resources. In Bourdieu's terms, mastering the 'symbolic capital' ([1980] 1990: 112-21) of the public discourses and resources helps them to organize disparate experiences into relatively coherent structures that allow styles and roles belonging to fields of 'collective practice' (Bourdieu [1980] 1990: 141) beyond the one they are sourcing. T-san's story tells that this dynamic process reshapes women's religious narratives within the religious organization, while fostering social roles outside it.

Many interviewees expressed the idea that volunteering for a faith-based group meant, to some degree at least, working in society on behalf of their religious organization. For this reason they felt responsible for performing their services in the best way possible, by matching efficiently resources (human or financial) to needs. From the point of view of the religious organization, members who succeeded are valued as success demonstrates their ability to integrate their religious organization with the community. Although respondents mainly used the volunteer narrative when acting in the community, rather than the religious narrative, the process of 'recognition' (Calhoun 1994: 20), through which they gain understanding of their social role and agencies, may facilitate the understanding of the social role of the religious institution they belong. Such a process may play an important function in giving religious institutions broader recognition in the community. This is a piece of evidence that sociologists of religion need to bear in mind, given their tendency to overlook women's faith-based volunteering as discussed in Chapter 1.

When exploring the specific dynamics of the targeted groups, they reveal how the degree of recognition may, or may not, develop. For members of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division, becoming a volunteer was itself an improvement in their spiritual career. They acted in agreement with a communal will encouraged by the organization and identified themselves in the group because of it. For this reason, they were not asked to act vicariously, and the level of relatedness with the community was rather low despite the commitments of the group's members.

Univers Foundation members did not have religious terms to denote their group and they were known in the community as an NPO offering particular services for the elderly. Moreover, the majority of its members were not residents of Tachikawa, a fact that helped the NPO to succeed in establishing friendly relationships with the recipients. Those two factors facilitated Univers volunteers in carrying out their task and granted the NPO an expanding field of action.

Although the NPO was not well known for its relationship with Shinnyoen, it nonetheless exerted an indirect, positive effect on the religious organization.

Risshō kōseikai volunteer groups developed valuable links between the organization and the community, and promoted robustly the idea of reconnecting through the caring that the institution encouraged. In general, both Itabashi and Kawagoe Church groups identified more with the needy community than the religious institution and interviewees counted themselves the same as the *chiiki borantia* [local volunteers]. In fact, the group was often identified in connection with the institutions volunteers operated, rather than with the religious organization. The public servant and the social worker I met in an Itabashi facility used expressions like ‘the regular women volunteering at the hospital’ [*byōin no itsumo no josei borantia*], or ‘those who always come on Tuesday and Thursday’ [*itsumo ka moku ni kite iru borantia*]. The strong secular characterization of the group and the customary community-style volunteering of its women, largely favoured the religious organization’s social role and its integration into the community.

The group identity of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama was particularly secular: for its Catholic members it made no difference whether or not volunteers happened to come representing the church, from other religious organizations or simply from the neighbourhood. All members were closely identified with the group’s goal rather than the religious ideology and the group identity developed around the diverse membership. This dimension enabled members to expand in the community, although they tended to work on its margins because of mainstream opinion casting the homeless and urban underclass in the category of unproductive. Nevertheless, both members individually and the church itself tended to increase their sense of social integration and civic participation.

Overall, the customs of Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church volunteer groups were the most potentially successful in favouring the integration of the religious organization in the community and its cooperation with local state agencies, thus favouring an expanded social role. However, women were not primarily interested in expanding a positive image of their religious institution. Therefore, if any integration happened, it occurred as an indirect consequence of women’s actions.

e. Where women express their religious identity

The analysis so far has demonstrated how the members surveyed hardly used their religiosity in the faith-based group *outside* the religious organization. Members’ stories suggest that they sourced their religious identity for getting the moral and emotional strength

they needed to face the ambiguities and difficulties of their everyday volunteering. However, being religious did not mean they could carry out volunteer work better than people who were not religious. In contrast, interviewees' narrations clarify how non-religious people are just as committed, and share the social goals and the moral certainty of a faith-based group to the extent of working for a religious organization in which they have no part. In these terms, religious identity appears not as the exclusive domain of religious people nor, indeed, do non-religious people acquire a religious identity through volunteering in a faith-based group.

The analysis suggests that the sort of reflexivity members practiced with their belief in the volunteer settings was not the type of confessional and spiritual soul-searching that one would imagine for individuals who identify themselves as religious. This finding is consistent with 'everyday religion' theory (Ammerman 2007) discussed in Chapter 2, which suggests exploring how religious people engage in the construction of a social world by making use of practices of everyday life that may convey little or no religious meaning. A form of 'unconscious religiosity' (Shimazono 2003; Inaba 2011) may also validate the pro-social behaviour of those engaged in faith-based volunteering. According to Shimazono, although individuals perceive themselves as mostly unrelated to religious matters, in their daily life activities, such as volunteering, they cultivate a relatedness that 'goes beyond the self' and conveys the sort of care for the other that religiosity entails (Shimazono 2003: 182).

Following Calhoun (1994) and Ammerman's (2003) theorizing discussed in Chapter 2, religious volunteering could be counted as a religious practice if there is an expectation on the part of the 'doer' of spiritual achievement related to her/his philanthropic action, which in turn should be validated by the recognition of it by those interacting with the doer. Although what counts as religious is hardly measurable, results of this work demonstrate that in the case of people belonging to a religious organization a spiritual betterment through active participation is not always deemed as the primary goal: most respondents claimed they were more committed to their positive role in society before and beyond their religious commitment. Likewise, external actors (beneficiaries and partners) did not understand women's volunteer actions as conveying a religious character. While religiosity may have worked in the privacy of women's reflexive projects of self, it can hardly be found in the discourses of volunteer practice.

This does not mean that women in a volunteer setting invalidated their religious narrative. Rather, they proved to be able to enact it strategically according to the people they interacted with, the situation, the time and the location of their everyday actions. In this parlance, religiosity should be understood as the enactment of the pro-social value that the cultural

component conveys. It helped women to articulate women's place and role in the wider social world, cultivate social stewardship and a sense of responsible embeddedness in society. In the surveyed cases both the religious and the non-religious narratives contributed to generate a volunteer narrative denoted by mainly a secular symbolism of collective pro-social action.

6.1.3 *Doing things together: building a social map*

As Durkheim ([1912] 1976) theorized, when individuals recognize themselves as belonging to a group, they tend to distinguish between insiders and outsiders, and tend to maintain stable ties among members of the group with whom they favour some kind of communication over the outsiders because of their shared group identity.

The results of this study show clearly that the type of Durkheimian shared group identity, rather than belief, dominated as the mechanism leading to volunteering and further engagement. However, the way the women networked within their own group as well as external groups outside the religious organization, differed from the kind of stable ties he envisaged. The style of networking the women developed was rather instrumental in order to meet their volunteer goals.

Three dimensions of social networking became evident during the fieldwork: members' social ties with others in the same group; members' networks outside their own group, with state agencies, NPOs, other volunteer groups and citizens; and members' ties with the community at large. The findings concerning these three levels of relationships are presented in the following subsections.

a. Relating with the group

Following Putnam's theorizing, developing regular connections is one important component helping to increase the level of social capital in a volunteer group and favouring civic commitment (Putnam, 2000: 116-7). Therefore, at the beginning of the fieldwork, it was expected that regular connections among members of the groups, and a few loose and occasional ones, would be found.

Quite the contrary, the observations collected demonstrated that the groups' connections were made through mainly loose networks of fellow members, acquaintances, staff, members of other organizations and social welfare workers. Volunteering in a loosely connected network allowed participants to create brief interpersonal relationships, while sharing resources and experiences. It did not decrease the level of interpersonal or generalized trust, nor did they dismiss the norm of *otagai-sama*, reciprocity and interdependency. Most

relationships were regular connections over time, but still they were loose in nature. While 'social capital' regards as crucial those regular relationships in which people are doing things *with* others, most connections witnessed in this study represent weak ties (Granovetter 1973) occurring while doing things *for* others. In summary, counter to Putnam's theorizing, this study found volunteering was something people would do 'for the others' in loosely connected relationships 'with the others'.

Despite this discrepancy with the idea of social capital, the majority of the interviewees stated that they benefitted largely by the volunteer group's social environment. The number of acquaintances and friends had normally increased by the time they joined. They also enjoyed the feeling of belonging, they shared the group identity and the spirit of mutual assistance and teamwork. This finding illuminates how regular connections are not a necessary ingredient for a faith-based volunteer group to build a group identity, as loose ties may provide the strength that it needs.

The religious component that is inherent in belonging to the same religious institutions cannot be ignored when discussing sources of social networking: religious belief can surely serve as the lubricant necessary to sustain interpersonal trust and norms, thus favouring stable ties.²⁵⁵ From this point of view, participants of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division and Risshō kōseikai volunteers may undoubtedly have benefitted from belonging to a volunteer group formed by religious adherents only, and for being physically based within the organization. Members of the Youth Division were happy with the volunteering opportunity through which they could meet other Shinnyoen members they would not have met otherwise. In this case, the religious component helped to cultivate social ties by doing new things within an acknowledged and shared field, which made members feel more confident in their socializing. Similarly, Risshō kōseikai groups counted only adherents as members. However they were less organization-oriented since both the Itabashi and Kawagoe church groups were mostly self-managed, despite being under the church's supervision. In the case of Risshō kōseikai, however, the doctrinal precept of caring for people [*hitosama no tameni*], and interacting with others with humility and respect [*omou kokoro*] was surely an important source of norms for socializing. In Univers Foundation and Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama, instead, the proximity to the church did not exert any influence on the group's activity. Therefore, the way members related was customized by the group itself according to its social goals.

In view of the above, the findings demonstrate how the outcome of religious belonging in terms of social networking varies largely from group to group in relationship with the level of

dependence on the religious organization. The cases of Risshō kōseikai and Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama show that networking can be successful if the religious organization allows for customized secular ways for members to explore how to relate with society, rather than assuming that volunteers will spiral out naturally, provided they are offered a framework for compassionate work. In summary, religious belonging by itself is a poor measure when discussing the density of social networking in faith-based volunteer groups.

b. Relating with government agencies and other groups

In describing her role as *unei-iin* [member of the steering committee] of Univers Foundation, Y-san, a 66 year-old, specifies that in the monthly meeting they usually screen both the demands they receive from the local social welfare agencies and the requests from the field that their members put forward (interview held on 21.12.2009). The decision-making mechanism within the NPO makes public institutions that organize community service part of Univers Foundation's volunteering social map. Although volunteering is deemed as a selfless act of compassion, when I listened to informants such as Y-san, I realized that much of this compassion was organized in relation to institutional structures and in conjunction with state agencies and professional service organizations. It showed the sort of dynamic and crucial interplay between independent volunteer groups and public institutions facilitating them discussed by Avenell (2010).

Residential homes, day-centres and state-mandated programmes provide opportunities for faith-based volunteer groups to contribute to their residents' well-being. As observed in T-san's story, state discourses also tend to elicit citizens' potentialities and duties in such social engagement and set boundaries for what the volunteer should be and do. By cooperating with service agencies, volunteers tend to reproduce through their actions the sort of professional-volunteer relationships that the state discourses envisage for the community's well-being.

To different degrees, all members of the volunteer groups investigated tended to interact with the institutions with which they worked and the other actors they met through their activities. It was not unusual to meet public servants and social workers cooperating with the volunteers. On several occasions Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church volunteers were observed working together with public servants for the *omutsu hōshi* in a local hospital in Itabashi; Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church volunteers were seen engaged in neighbourhood activities where they worked with members of residents' association and employees of the local authority; Univers Foundation members regularly discussed with the local social workers and professionals how to meet the demands for services, and their feasibility; and St. Ignatius

Church volunteers habitually cooperated with members of NPOs, doctors, nurses, lawyers, and social welfare workers, among others.

Generally, the interviewees assessed their relationships with state agencies and professionals positively, mainly because they felt rewarded by the increased knowledge they gained. Most women claimed that entering into face-to-face contacts with representative of public institutions and working with them, granted them an insider's expertise about the social welfare system and state-mandated programmes they would not receive otherwise.

The cases presented in Chapter 5 show that women demonstrated the ability of reinventing community service by using their acquired knowledge and responding with alternatives to opportunities shaped by state discourses. The way women related to staff and social workers was not always as accommodating as one would necessarily expect from a volunteer. The volunteers at the elderly care centres sometimes expressed their disapproval of the actions of the professionals and public servants. They especially criticized the social services because of their lack of a 'human face': they usually advised social workers, in person-to-person communication, that professionals should treat their clients in a more caring and emotionally supportive way, thus avoiding the tendency to place them in a subordinate, sometimes demeaning position. In many instances these criticisms brought about positive effects that improved both the recipient's conditions and the relationships between the social workers and the volunteers. Usually these small changes tended to become customary ways that enhanced the caring work in favour of its recipients. Here lies the generative process suggested by this dissertation, in that narrated and performative identities entail not only subjective formations (Butler 1993), but also the multiple modifications of a variety of actors and groups that individuals combine in their own individual agency (Latour 2005: 64-70).

In case of the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama the criticism the group mounted resulted in organized actions: members sent letters to the government and media denouncing discriminatory behaviour and cooperated actively with antipoverty NPOs and other professionals in support of the urban underclass. Still, the group's activities were largely shaped within the boundaries of state policies and mandated programmes. Moreover, as reported in Chapter 3, the volunteers' social map was dotted with state agencies and other public institutions with whom they tried to accommodate solutions. Nevertheless, their actions were constantly challenging taken-for-granted assumptions of what the group was or should be, and the service they wanted to supply, thus contributing in a constructive way to shaping the identity of the group itself and the type of social contribution made by the group.

In general, all interviewees were aware that dealing with state and other institutions could both enable and constrain their volunteer work. They were all aware that skilfully handling the knowledge they acquired concerning social welfare and stated-mandated programmes was the way to gain leeway and limit institutions' influence. From this point of view, they were skilful strategists whose perspective went far beyond the recipients of their actions.²⁵⁶ Generating different habits of caring by influencing social services from the inside was a slow but effective way to challenge institutional contexts and achieve bigger goals. The stories narrated in the previous chapter elucidate how in so doing the women tended to become more and more able to enlist new resources or opportunities that brought about both individual and social changes.

c. Relating with community

In their narrations, women used the word *chiiki borantia* [community volunteer] to describe their work. But what did 'community' mean to them? Where was it located? How did their idea of community change by volunteering in it?

Firstly, despite its literal meaning ('local area'), *chiiki* was in fact a vaguely circumscribed place that could stretch from the local neighbourhood to the nearby city and prefecture. F-san, who travelled all the way from Yokohama to Tachikawa to volunteer for Univers Foundation, called her eldercare activities sponsored by the Shinnyoen-related group '*chiiki borantia*.' When T-san, the woman volunteering for the elderly in Itabashi, said she was helping her old friend to obtain volunteer support from the local Risshō kōseikai church in Nagano, she called her help *chiiki katsudō*.

According to the respondents of this study, *chiiki* was any arena where the volunteers could perform their volunteer actions regardless the location. It would be wherever facilities are located and their recipients are assisted, be it down the street or miles away. Their idea of community was precisely the type identified by the Kokumin Seikatsu Shingikai [Quality of Life Policy Council] in 2005: it was a 'New Community' based on an arena of people who shared awareness of problems and were pro-active with issues and needs.²⁵⁷ Their volunteer style was more *tēma-gata* [theme-based] than *eria-gata* [area-based] (ibid.), and involved a large network of people and institutions that would contribute to the good performance of their volunteer work.

From this perspective, community is a framing concept conveying a manifold of meanings that women used to emphasize their social identity and shared purposes. Being a *chiiki borantia* through their faith-based groups expressed their sense of identity, which entailed

performing theme-based roles and activities whose projects and goals enabled them to interact with people locally and virtually with all others doing the same things across Japan, as reported in O-san and T-san's narrations.

Although this volunteering style enables participants to act wherever they are called upon, there were boundaries in respondents' actions as they normally volunteered within their local area. In this way, theme-based volunteering helped women to interact regularly with recipients and establish routine activities. They become familiar and acquire a closer view of the needy they are called upon to help. The young women of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Young Division suggested that getting engaged in community volunteering enabled them to interact with people they had always categorized by the group to which they belonged: 'the elderly', 'the handicapped'. The proximity to those recipients raised awareness about differences and individualities, so they learned to see individuals by valuing each person rather than drawing upon stereotyped ideas or commonplace views of different needy groups of people.

Overall, all interviewees agreed that volunteering in the community helped in developing a new perspective of the social by paying more attention to the individuality of people embedded in social groups. They have developed a better knowledge of the population residing in the community and have acquired a broader understanding of society. In so doing, the volunteers were able to explore their own identity and gain a better understanding of their social role in different social situations.

As discussed above, the religious community may also build bridges with the local community when their members share with the residents the customs and ideas developed in the faith-based groups. Previous narrations offer examples of how customs cultivated in the faith-based volunteer group could be effectively initiated in a different field. The rules of the game of certain fields (the family, the Women's Association, the PTA group, the old people's home) were confronted and sometime integrated with habits acquired in other social fields, such as the religious organization or the faith-based volunteer group.

In general, the community appears as both the source of the volunteers' social identity and a by-product of women's endeavour to build a community with which they can identify. They engage socially in order to establish a sense of community, or to legitimate and defend their commitment. They grant recognition and rehabilitation to groups of people, while calling for collective effort to find solutions for everyday problems in society. They bring into the community new customs and ideas which they have cultivated in different settings and work

from the inside to change unfavourable ones. Those women seem well aware of what sort of community they want to identify with and work hard to build it.

6.2 Findings regarding self-reflexivity and transformation

The previous section offered an analysis of the findings from the participant's standpoint. Hereafter, the examination extends outward to identify the aspects of the group's customs that may enable or hinder women in a self and socially reflexive process.

The following subsections present the findings concerning the conditions necessary for the empowerment of women through civic engagement. In order to gain a more detailed view, the discussion below takes into account how the customary meaning of group life may lead to different levels and kinds of engagement, and what agency may, or may not, empower women. The analysis covers four themes:

1. the volunteer group's social map as a resource of reflexivity;
2. the relationship between gender and the volunteer domain;
3. the effects of volunteering on gendered relationships;
4. the potentiality of building a gender equal society through faith-based volunteering.

The analysis of those dimensions helps us to evaluate whether the meaning of being from a faith-based civic group matters for women in signifying themselves in a broader social role.

6.2.1 The faith-based volunteer group: the dominant map

The faith-based group's social map acts as a starting point for members who want to expand their networks. As suggested by ANT, it may help to consolidate existing ties and relationships, or facilitate individuals in reaching out further thus providing occasions and circumstances for self and social reflexivity. It is especially this second characteristic that becomes a 'source of uncertainty' (Latour 2005: 58-64), a sense of 'dislocation inherent in *making someone do something*' (Latour 2005: 58, emphasis in original). Each group surveyed in this study was denoted by a characteristic way of interrelating, forging partnerships and interacting with the community. The differences are discussed below.

The analysis of S-san and the accounts of other interviewees illustrate the extent to which the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division's map was rather organization-oriented and group-centred. Members were all adherents and the monthly general meeting held inside the religious organization headquarters was supervised by permanent staff of the Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department. The group related with the

community only through the religious organization, and the staff of Social Contribution Department proposed the prospective beneficiaries to the volunteers in a top-down manner. The Youth Division had no relationship with the *fukushi han*, the other Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department whose members are aged over thirty-five. In her interview F-san also explained that even within the religious organization itself communication about other Shinnyoen-sponsored volunteer groups was lacking. This demonstrates how each volunteer group's social map was bounded within itself. In general, the group's networking custom does not seem to favour a social map beyond the religious organization and does not give its members enough opportunities to make new encounters and establish relationships outside the religious organization.

Univers Foundation members tended to be Shinnyoen adherents, although the NPO is open to anyone, both religious and non-religious individuals. All members (128 people) are asked to participate in the monthly general meeting, including those who are not actually engaged in volunteering. Local government representatives and local institutions are met on a monthly basis by the *unei-iin*, the members of steering group who screen the demands for services. Since Univers Foundation specializes in emotional care, the members tend to deal only with a certain type of facility and offer their services to selected institutions. Thus, the group tends to be selectively connected with both the institutions shaping the volunteers' roles and the community. The selectivity of their actions serves to consolidate a strong group identity that enables its members to establish specific relationships in the community while hindering others.

Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church group proved flexible. Although members were all Risshō kōseikai adherents, activities were attended regularly by non-related people (including public servants) who joined on the spot. The Itabashi Church volunteer group tended to make use of the participants' social map whenever possible, especially sourcing from those who volunteered regularly in institutions sponsored by the local government. By making customary use of members' networks, the volunteer group showed a tendency toward expansion. The group used to relate directly with local government and institutions with no mediation by the church and members often had the opportunities to interact with representatives of public institutions. The group's customary endeavour to expand the number of targeted facilities required its volunteers to deal frequently with new relationships they had to establish in order to perform their task. In summary, Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church group stretched the boundaries of its social map, which enabled its members to make meaningful encounters and experiences they could source for their identity formation.

Similarly, members of the Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church group were all Risshō kōseikai adherents and tended to cooperate with local volunteers during the activities on the spot. A number of members volunteered regularly in public institutions. However, the group did not make customary use of its members' social networks, unless it was openly offered by the external institution itself to the church. Moreover, they tended to keep a regular agenda with institutions with which they had consolidated relationships. For this reason the group's social map could not expand as much as the Itabashi Church group, although it gave its members regular opportunities to relate with, and source from, external institutions. To some extent, all members benefitted from the group's social map and its customary way of relating because they could learn how to interact with different actors. O-san's account illustrates how she could draw upon her experience gained by volunteering for Risshō kōseikai to reach further into her personal exploratory trajectory of the self.

Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama group had the most varied membership. Regular members were both church-based and non-religious people, including antipoverty NPOs, professionals (doctors, nurses, lawyers) and social workers. The group worked independently and rarely used the church's social map, although priests were always ready to offer their assistance, both in practical and spiritual terms. The group interacted regularly with the local government and public institutions, and the majority of the volunteers were engaged in communicating with them. Overall, Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama had a complex and expanding social map that trained its members to consider major and secondary relationships and resources, and acquire an in-depth view of socio-economic structures. Members often confronted mainstream narratives by enacting alternative modes of the self.

In summary, Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama was the group whose customary way of relating and interacting with others compelled its members to encounter actors and gain meaningful experiences that could empower individuals in terms of resources and knowledge. Both Risshō kōseikai and Unifers Foundation's social map and their way of networking could also be a meaningful gateway for those who were looking for newer trajectories, but the customary style lacked the efficacy of the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama's. In contrast, because of its group-centred style, Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division offered the least opportunities to make resourceful encounters that would drive individuals to explore alternative modes of self.

6.2.2 *The volunteer domain: gender does not always matter*

A member of the Univers Foundation stated that there is no such idea as 'volunteering for pure altruism', suggesting that volunteers are all driven by some kind of self-interest (W-san, interviewed on 19.12.2009). She later explained that she started volunteering a few years earlier with no other purpose than learning how to care for her old mother once she needed it. By doing so, she had established a net of reliable people she could count on in case of need. W-san was emphasizing that women engaging in volunteering for the elderly and children would benefit from such activity because in so doing they simulate the home situation in public settings: in her opinion volunteering was first and foremost a way to match women's needs by practicing forms of self-interested preventive measures outside the family.

Her point is germane to the aim of this dissertation: do women really volunteer for genuine altruism after all? As discussed in Chapter 1, in contrast to the idea of volunteering as reproducing traditional gendered ideologies of women's nurturing and caring roles, Rossi (2001) marshals the argument of women's self-interest generating a form of 'compulsory altruism' (2001: 303). O-san's story and her engagement in the Nature Game group to improve her children's community life and F-san's Big Tree Group working with the elderly for its members' future prospects seem to fit Rossi's theorizing.

From this perspective, the respondents of this study seem to have an honest understanding of what volunteering entails and their roles in it. While dealing with activities that are conventionally associated with an ethic of caring and a tradition of maternalism, respondents tended to rationalize their involvement instrumentally: they were motivated to volunteer if the prospects of their volunteer work could improve their lives. This argument is consistent with the idea that Ueno (2007) suggests in her book: women should be taking ever more active roles in care work in order to build a framework of support networks and services they can rely upon in their old age.

However, respondents of this study explained that they are not doing something for the community simply because of personal advantages derived from their work. They also oppose the feminine mystique of volunteering as a means to fill their time in a ladylike way or because they are expanding their domestic role. Quite the contrary, they emphasize that volunteering is difficult as they have to fit in the 'double shift' of working women, mothers or daughters. What motivated them to volunteer is mainly the pressure arising from a changing society, a society that 'won't get any better if we just sit and watch' (C-san, 27 years old, Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division; interview held on 19.12.2009).

Counter to the well-known argument of women's deep-seated traits of caring, moral and social responsibility cultivated by gender socialization and despite sourcing their motivations from conservative religious beliefs, the respondents of this study expressed social awareness and rational thinking. They showed a capacity to take on many roles instrumentally so that they could work from the inside of the community domains. O-san's volunteering for the PTA was nurtured certainly by the expectations of a mother. But this is not all: she also did it purposely in order to monitor the educational institution dealing with her children and to promote new activities to improve children's educational environment in general.

What results from this study is now much clearer: although patterns of gendered volunteer activities by domain may be present, as the case studies in Chapter 5 demonstrate, simply taking them as the only measure for discussing women's own perception of their volunteer roles can produce a misleading picture. All respondents suggested a point worth re-emphasizing: they volunteered in order to build a community with better services and favoured some domains rather than others because of their relevance vis-à-vis society in general. The respondents of this study show that women may favour instrumentally family-oriented volunteer roles by invoking family responsibilities as an expedient to legitimate their advocacy. Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church and Univers Foundation women volunteering in the elderly care centres are illuminating examples of the way this works in practice. Many of those care centres, while nominally private, are funded in various ways by public agencies and must conform to state mandates. To this degree, all are public organizations. While women who volunteer in those centres claim they are primarily concerned about the quality of care the centres supply to the citizens, they also monitor how public money is spent and whether state mandates rationally match the recipients' needs.

This finding may be consistent with the logic of maternalism behind women's social engagement as discussed in Chapter 1. However, the results reveal that women are not consigned to family-oriented volunteer roles because of gender ideology. Generally the informants acted instrumentally within their primary roles because, in so doing, they felt able to play a part in the social contract. Of course, sometimes women acted instrumentally within the volunteer role: D-san and her mother volunteering for the homeless were aware of their position in monitoring the quality of service and care that public institutions supply. But they also used their volunteer narrative to scrutinize the way they could access new resources and compare them with the available ones. Their evaluation brought about a commitment to build a just community that called for a collective effort, as it does in many forms of advocacy

volunteering. In their case, and in others reported in this study, the line between volunteering and advocacy was transgressed.

This finding supports the idea that faith-based volunteer groups may count as 'community-based movements' (Etō 2008b: 44) where women play an important role in employing local resources, exploring alternatives and transforming private concerns into collective issues. They are a form of associational life working across multiple sectors in order to build the sort of 'inclusive society' that is all the more demanded in times of economic crisis (Ōsawa 2011a). Their activities are also consistent with Walzer's (2003) theorizing that religious congregations may serve as sources of ideas for some future forms of politics, even if participants regard themselves as apolitical and take no part in everyday political debate. In this respect, this finding supports the idea discussed in Chapter 1 of faith-based volunteer groups as sites facilitating participatory democracy and as potential sources of political awareness.

6.2.3 Women's role: regaining the meaning of motherhood

In terms of women's roles, most interviewees claimed the centrality of women's family role because of motherhood. They were also of the opinion that equality between the sexes cannot be reached unless women regain a level of self-awareness of their maternal role. O-san of Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church, explicitly highlights how the problem nowadays with young mothers and some working women ('those who keep their job just to fulfil their materialistic goals') is that they are in a sense 'misplaced': that is, they are mothers performing different role models. The informants blamed the socio-economic changes of the past two decades for shaping the elusive ideal of women's role, which has blurred the value of motherhood.

In contrast, Risshō kōseikai, Shinnyoen and the Catholic Church were quite explicit about what narrative should be primary for women: a lifestyle balanced between work and family. Religious organizations also acknowledge that economic circumstances may often bring women into the labour market in order to support their families. The head pastor of St. Ignatius Church helps to clarify how many women believers confess to wishing to live like the older generations of women who could devote their time to the family, and they lament the stress of their double role as family-carers and workers.²⁵⁸ All interviewees agreed they expect the government to make more effort in order to create an environment that is conducive to a work-life balance, so that women can continue to supplement the family income without disrupting their childcare role.

However, interviewees do not see the elusiveness of women's maternal role as the only reason for family's sense of uncertainty currently. They all include their partner in their description of the scenario and set the context by pointing out the country's economic shifts as the main reason for families' difficulties. From their understanding, men's role in the family needs to be recalibrated according to the different economic structure that has emerged. O-san criticism of the double-income families is centred on the negative emotional and psychological component stemming from the lack of parents' awareness of the double role society calls on them to perform, as both family carers and breadwinners. Respondents acknowledge that society and social demands are inevitably changing. Their hope is that, in the changing situation, a family model will become embedded where the burdens between mother and father are shared, with the father's role providing care for their children and creating a positive emotional and psychological environment within the family. This is the family model they envisage for Japanese families as a whole, an ideal that is shared by the majority of Japanese women as discussed in Chapter 4.

6.2.4 Building a gender-equal society

When discussing the current situation of Japanese families, all interviewees pointed out the role that financial security plays in choosing to have a family or not, and emphasized the need of adjusting family relationships according to the changing economic conditions. A parallel with Ōsawa's (2002a) discussion can be made here in terms of her evaluation of the structural reform put forward by the Hashimoto Ryūtarō government (January 1996 – July 1998), where she emphasized the need for alternatives to the 'breadwinner man/caregiver woman' family model as a means to meet the flexible economic conditions envisaged by such reforms.²⁵⁹ Similarly, my informants suggest that under the current circumstances developing narratives of sharing breadwinning and caring roles would be the best alternative to respond to the economic fluctuations experienced and the sense of risk that is thereby conveyed.

All interviewees agreed with the idea that the recent socio-economic changes leave little room for gendered differences and segregated tasks. Working women need government policies encouraging men to play consistently a family role: one respondent comments that parental leave should be equal for both the mother and father, and single parents should be supported by social and educational systems that do not channel children into the mainstream idea of two-parent families.

In general, interviewees think that gender socialization channelling men and women into different kinds of social roles will weaken: in a decade or two 'men and women will cover roles

in families and public interchangeably because otherwise society won't keep up with the level of ageing in society and the low birth rate it is already facing' (I-san, 29 years old, Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division, interview held on 19.12.2009).

As mentioned in F-san's story, many other interviewees expressed the same opinion. They claimed that individuals, both men and women, should actively engage and participate in society by sharing the family burden and breadwinning role. However, most of them still feel constrained by the gendered division of labour; acquiescing in this division would mean nothing other than giving up the opportunities for their own self-realization. If the younger generations of women, such as Shinnyoen's S-san, were not to abandon their maternal role, they would become enmeshed in a series of highly demanding commitments, preventing them from pursue their working career in an enjoyable working environment.

Because of her participation in a housewives' grassroots movement, F-san more than the other interviewees, showed a strong awareness of the gendered division of labour and envisaged a future gender-equal society as soon as possible. She insisted on the need for proper government intervention in terms of family and labour policy in order to tackle the issues of the national decline in the birth rate. However, she also stresses the importance of becoming an example to younger generations, so that they can be educated with equal views about gender. Her story emphasizes the importance of gender awareness: this can only be achieved by promoting collaboration and cooperation at grassroots level where gender roles tend to remain deep-rooted. That is why she stresses the crucial significance of establishing networks in the community, which is the nearest place at hand for most women.

F-san's idea resonates with what is suggested by the 2009 White Paper on Gender Equality. The Paper emphasized that in order to make progress in building a gender-equal society Japan needs to provide 'practical activities to solve a variety of immediate problems' (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 20) along with the enforcement of laws and policies. When a faith-based group, or its members individually, engage in local activities to improve social life in which they are situated, they generate the sort of environment that the White Paper envisages. In fact, the volunteers investigated in this study were able to meet people they would not meet otherwise, face situations they would ignore normally and take on responsibilities which would otherwise be taken on by state agencies and market forces, or be left ignored. Most of the informants critically linked government, market and civic relationships, and expressed their willingness to redraw the boundaries of the institutions with which they dealt. In order to do so, they exercised the power of talking with state actors, professionals, members of NPOs, volunteers and beneficiaries, men and women alike, and confronted a

range of situations in their expected roles in unexpected settings. They engaged in solving issues, such as childcare, ageing society and poverty, through collaboration and cooperation based on a perspective of gender equality, although it was rarely openly expressed. To a different extent, the raised social consciousness empowered them in the social contract, thus proving their everyday actions were able to exert an important influence in promoting gender equal attitudes among actors and collaborators.

Certainly, not all situations can be infused with alternative options and not everyone volunteering is primarily in search of gender equal relationships. But it would miss an important dimension of these volunteers if one ignores the potential for women to develop a broader social dimension and generate a gender equal *habitus* by volunteering in a faith-based group.

6.2.5 Empowerment and disempowerment of women engaged in faith-based volunteering

The analysis of findings presented in this chapter returns to elements of Gutierrez and her colleagues' work on empowerment in social work (Gutierrez et al. 1998). This final section builds a bridge between the above arguments and the conceptual framework these researchers offered. The aim is to elucidate further those topics in relation to the idea of empowerment in faith-based volunteering.

As presented in Chapter 1, empowerment in social work should be approached in terms of the process and the outcomes (Gutierrez et al. 1998), thus examining interpersonal (knowledge, skills, assertiveness, problem-solving, access to resources) and intrapersonal (self-awareness, critical thinking) components. Moreover, investigations of empowerment should verify the relational dimension of women's agency in order to assess whether their practices have effects on the community where the action is enacted. That is why this chapter explored the four dimensions denoting empowerment: self and social reflexivity, which enables individuals to assess individual resources in relation to the socio-economic and political environments; the ability to transmute personal concerns into collective issues; the increased knowledge and social skills; and the agency taken to change the personal and collective condition.

The first part of this chapter discussed the dissertation's findings on the personal level of women engaged in faith-based volunteering. The results illustrated how, to different degrees, all respondents claimed personal development and an ability to assess critically the personal and social resources generated through their engagement in faith-based volunteering. In terms of interpersonal empowerment, Risshō kōseikai and St. Ignatius Church volunteers

showed the highest level of this type in the form of mutual sharing and support, which enabled them to learn to think critically about the internal and external aspects of their volunteer group and of a problem. However, St. Ignatius Church members were the most critical toward macro-level structures and their impact, and carefully explored how they acquired their values, beliefs and attitudes, and how these affected the problems with which they were dealing. Compared with the other groups, because of its group-centred style, Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division offered the fewest opportunities to make resourceful encounters and experiences that would empower individuals both at the intrapersonal and interpersonal level.

In general, the respondents showed an ability to develop skills in communication, knowledge, friendship, institutional and non-institutional relationships enabling a flow of information and a reliable support network for pursuing their goals. They were also able to draw upon the resources provided by the religious organization, in terms of funds, locations and administrative work, as well as in terms of networks and institutional status. This effective use of interpersonal and intrapersonal resources can be understood as an enactment of agency. Moreover, the achieved social skill, knowledge and social status they would not have acquired otherwise show the capability of individuals to enact their knowledgeable potentiality (Giddens 1984). Therefore, the results of this study tell us that a personal level of agency generating empowerment (Gutierrez et al. 1998: 4) was evident in the majority of the women surveyed. Yet, members of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - Youth Division had fewer opportunities to enact the process envisaged by Gutierrez and her colleagues, thus uncovering a form of disempowerment in that they largely lacked the feeling of individual control that helps in assessing personal resources for further social engagement. The analysis in this chapter explained that this difference was closely related to the form of spiritual development that the group customarily understood as inherent in volunteering.

For individual agency to be effective and empowering, the capacities to influence other actors and social relations are essentials (Rawlands 1997). The second part of this chapter went into detail on how the surveyed groups exhibited diverse customized ways to interrelate beyond the volunteer group. Those practices largely shaped the way members communicated and interacted with external actors, thus informing their capacity to expand their relationships. Because of its customary way of relating and interacting beyond the group, Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama can be clearly identified as the group most likely to empower the women volunteers, as demonstrated by its creating an environment for the members to make new encounters and gain meaningful experiences that could empower them as individuals in terms of

resources and knowledge. Risshō kōseikai and Univers Foundation had a similar, although less dynamic, customary style that fostered the willingness of members to look at alternatives, thus enabling them to explore meaningful ways for those who were hesitant and looking for newer trajectories.

Gutierrez and her colleagues deem this last component as essential in a consciousness-raising process (Gutierrez et al., 1998: 5) through which participants learn to place problems in a socio-political context and see the roots of social issues. From this perspective, the participants of the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama and Risshō kōseikai members were the respondents evincing the most self and social awareness, and were among those who practiced habitually their critical approach in their everyday life. They were also among those practicing the third level of empowerment discussed by Gutierrez et al. (1998: 8), the one which occurs on the environmental level, focusing on societal institutions that can facilitate or thwart ameliorative efforts.

In summary, the twin dimensions of the findings discussed in this chapter spell out how the faith-based volunteer group can offer its members opportunities for empowerment, although this varies significantly according to the group's customs and its level of dependence on the sponsoring religious organization, rather than on individual resources. Therefore, the result of this analysis suggests the need to pay heed to the relational aspect of women's agency as a crucial element in a process of empowerment in the context of faith-based volunteering. For members of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division the customized practices of the group required a low level of commitment to the group, which in turn tended to favour mainly personal growth denoted by spiritual connotations that, in Gutierrez et al.'s terms, simply cannot be counted as a form of empowerment. In contrast, to different degrees, the faith-based volunteer group acted as an "opportunity structure" for intrapersonal and interpersonal empowerment for Risshō kōseikai, St. Ignatius Church and Univers Foundation volunteers: members combined their faith-informed philanthropic endeavour with a critical review of potentialities in relation to the context (the religious organization, the community, and the extant structural dimensions), which became conducive to an effective social commitment.

In these terms, women's capacity to make use of their faith in order to achieve their philanthropic goals may be counted as a form of control over normative and ideological aspects that expresses empowerment rather than uncritical indoctrination. This observation is crucial for our deeper understanding: it highlights how, while religion may be counted as one resource in terms of doctrinal precepts, social networks and shared knowledge, it is rather the

individuals' critical thinking in the form of self and social reflexivity that appears as a key process in enabling women to exercise agency and broaden the meaning of their social selves. As the findings of this study demonstrate, the two dimensions are closely interrelated and cannot develop unilaterally: empowerment occurs when the outcomes of both processes gain recognition by the community in terms of ameliorating (empowering) the conditions of the supplier of the volunteer service, as well as their recipients.

Summary

Many researchers have focused on civic groups in order to shed a more penetrating light on how becoming actively engaged in community life tends to develop an individual's sense of citizenship and develop his or her understanding of the multifaceted socio-structural in the surrounding environment.²⁶⁰ Human capital, social networks and the social capital members generate in volunteering together may contribute to fostering their public-oriented behaviour. However, those components are not enough to identify the conditions for empowerment. A reflexive project (Giddens 1991a: 5) informing a critical approach to an individual's and others' agencies is an essential component in emancipating individuals and groups.

Bourdieu (1977) suggested that reflexivity itself may become customary and come to depend on individuals who routinize critical exploration. The first part of this chapter discussed how biographical events, encounters with people one did not expect to meet and new experiences in different settings could enable individuals to think critically about their actions. However, reflexivity also depends on the individual's setting and the findings offered in the second part of this chapter show that the *habitus* of the volunteer group matters for its members to cultivate further trajectories of their selves.

If establishing relationships with actors in the community is a customized practice of the faith-based volunteer group, then members will benefit from it and likely go on to perform it in their daily life outside the religious organization. Such a practice may be fostered by the organization itself (Risshō kōseikai) or be brought about by the group's members (Univers Foundation, Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama) who customize it.

Talking critically about the resources and conditions necessary to sustain community empowerment is also crucial to develop a view of the larger picture and the social-structural condition enabling new trajectories of the self. The women of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama, Risshō kōseikai and Univers Foundation drew upon such a component more than members of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division. Those women focused more on

their volunteer role vis-à-vis the recipients, internal actors (the religious organization, fellow members), external actors (local authorities, professionals, staff, and other volunteers), and society at large. They tended to be less reliant on customary assumptions, critical toward mainstream narratives and the discourses informing them, and careful about the resources and goals of the volunteer group in which they participated.

Overall, then, the findings discussed in this chapter show that while volunteers of faith-based groups may complement mainstream discourses about the sort of volunteer work citizens should provide, they tend to play institutionalized roles instrumentally to promote better services, thus exploring and playing new civic functions in the social contract. From this point of view, belonging to a religious organization becomes a resource for broader meaningful images of the self, which is crucial for women's larger engagement in society, empowerment and democratization.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examined the extent to which women's everyday interactions and agency in faith-based volunteering helps in cultivating social stewardship and articulating newer trajectories of self in Japanese society at large. It explored the resources and opportunities in the context of faith-based volunteering that women source in their process of identity formation. It went beyond this, though, as it also investigated what knowledge and skills women acquire in their everyday practice of volunteering, and what strategies they use to source from them beyond the given setting so that they can put forward alternatives for their identity. These arguments were discussed throughout the dissertation in order to understand what opportunities for agency the cultural context of faith-based volunteering creates for women and how women employ those opportunities to exercise agency beyond that setting. This was the most pressing question driving this study and has been the puzzle that the preceding chapters have tried to solve.

It began by looking for signals of transformation and change in the small, largely unexplored area of the intersection between the religious setting and community volunteering where women count as the majority of participants. Specifically, this study is a micro-sociological analysis of the inherent dynamics of the ways in which Japanese women negotiate gender, social and religious roles across the public and private in their activities as religious volunteers. The analysis looked at the negotiation between socially embedded patterns and priorities in personal values, and the ways discursive rearrangements are related to social actions. In doing so, a methodological approach employing narrative analysis was applied as a lens through which to explore women's stories, predispositions, motivations and relationships as embedded in the socio-cultural economy where their stories unfolded. A number of concepts drawn from Actor Network Theory allowed the exploration of women as autonomous actors within their social relationships and the potential positive effects of social capital inherent in women's networks of ties within and beyond the faith-based group.

Although a range of arguments have been discussed throughout the dissertation, they can be distilled into one large empirical claim, two theoretical claims and one methodological claim, as elaborated below.

The main empirical claim is that religiosity enabled women to think critically about their roles and relationships in the larger society, as well as in terms of their individual trajectories. Such a reflexive project of self (Giddens 1991a) stemmed from biographical events, encounters with

people they met through the volunteer groups they did not expect to meet and new experiences in different settings that their volunteer practice in a faith-based group entailed. The interaction of all of those elements opened up opportunities for newer identity modes; modes that would have not emerged otherwise.

However, one important finding of this study needs to be introduced: belief was but one of the occurrences in the course of a self-exploratory journey that generated further reflection while testing the social setting. The respondents of this study were much more aware of the socio-structural conditions behind everyday community problems and much more concerned about the practical goals of their volunteer projects than the faith-based moral certainty leading to a compassionate service that is often counted in the extant literature as synonymous of religious volunteering. The analysis highlighted how women participating in faith-based volunteering tended to use their religious identity strategically by sourcing purposely from the organization's spiritual and practical resources as and when needed. However, they tended to loosen their religiosity in their everyday practices favouring a process of self and social reflexivity that fostered further social engagement.

The faith-based volunteer group exerted three main functions in women's everyday life. Firstly, it gave them the opportunity of transforming private concerns into public issues, as S-san's story exemplified. She was initially influenced by the message she received in the religious organization and developed an individual concern about her own children's health and social life in the community. Her effort to address her private concern led to the emergence of a civic group, which took on the task of organizing local recreational activities that have successfully developed into a well-established organization.

Secondly, the faith-based volunteer group allowed its members to transfer the knowledge they had gained to others, including public institutions with which they interacted. The solutions and alternatives to various issues in the community were developed from the knowledge participants had acquired in their daily lives. In this way, when participating in the faith-based volunteer group they prioritized certain types of activities and suggested alternatives to extant modalities according to their own needs and those of the recipients of the local community. T-san's story exemplifies how her idea of a community eldercare network, which she had developed over the years in order to care for her own grandmother, drew the interest of the local social welfare agency, which began working to adopt it as a local policy.

Thirdly, women acquired social awareness through developing an understanding of the multifaceted socio-structural conditions in the surrounding environment, which fostered them

to think critically about their actions, and the resources and conditions of the community. By volunteering for the homeless, M-san became accustomed to the practice of social criticism of the mainstream, middle-class narrative, and discussed critically the role and the power of institutions, including the religious institution, and the government's role in informing individuals' lives.

Embedding these functions in the conceptual framework offered by Gutierrez and her colleagues, it is found that they all belong to the dynamics of the process of empowerment in social work that their work theorizes. However, the respondents in this study did not engage in volunteering to empower themselves. Rather, an amelioration of their status, as claimed by most of respondents, came as a by-product of their everyday volunteer practice where they engaged in interpersonal relationships, problem-solving discourses interfacing with institutions, and by building individual confidence and capacity that they could contribute to their community's well-being. In these terms, from the respondents' perspective, religion offered an environment that provided well organized resources and opportunities that they favoured as compared with other secular ones and believers used it to cultivate their citizenship and to become empowered and trace new trajectories.

This important finding has at least two main theoretical implications, both of them diverging from what has been written on women in religion and in civil society heretofore. The first theoretical implication should be discussed vis-à-vis the extant literature on the sociology of religion and studies on civil society from a gender perspective. Chapter 1 has revealed that scholarship has tended to be dominated by one main argument: an exclusionary logic addressing gender and religious socialization, on the one hand, and socio-economic structural pressures, on the other, as deeply-rooted constraining conditions hindering women from becoming active agents of change in the field of faith-based volunteering. These arguments go hand in hand with the sceptical idea of voluntarism as exerting little or no effect on society due to a view of Japanese citizens as possessing no more than a superficial understanding of their political identity: as seen in the work of two recent publications, Japanese civil society is made up of 'members without advocates' (Pekkanen 2006), whose volunteering is a form of state-informed spontaneity (Avenell 2010). While these arguments cannot be underestimated, they tell us very little of the generative role that women's *inclusion* in certain areas of practice are able to engender. What emerges from this study is that while focusing on women as subjects of their investigations, the extant scholarship have tended to place women engaged in faith-based volunteering on the margins of the larger picture, with little or no significant role

as social actors beyond the mainstream, socially expected ones. In summary, such an exclusionary logic may leave unexplored how individuals become endowed with certain capabilities for action, how they come to act in spite of social constraints and structured practices. This, in essence, downplays the role of women as independent actors.

The empirical findings of this study make this point tellingly: women's engagement in community-based activities from the non-institutional channel of a faith-based volunteer group has important implications for how we understand or study the way citizens transmit their ideas and needs to the wider society. The way women communicate and interact with others is closely related to the way they instrumentally represent themselves in the social group. For example, while dealing with activities such as eldercare and childcare, that are conventionally associated with an ethic of caring and a tradition of maternalism, the respondents articulated their own decision based on perspectives derived from their volunteer work, in that it could improve their lives. Therefore, although the respondents often favoured family-oriented volunteer roles, this should not be misunderstood: the point is that they did so instrumentally by invoking family responsibilities as an expedient to legitimate their advocacy. They were concerned about the quality of services supplied to them as citizens. They monitored how public money was spent and whether state mandates rationally matched the recipients' needs. In these terms, while working through predictable and regularized channels of communication, they were nevertheless still able to prioritize and press the institutions to respond to their concerns enforcing changes and innovations that would not have occurred otherwise.

In such a process their religious identity functioned as a resource for when they needed strength and support, both spiritual and practical, and expressed it as an at-hand philanthropic image when explaining their volunteer endeavour to their close-tie relationships (families, peer members and acquaintances). However, religiosity was never claimed as the main source of these respondents' volunteer endeavour and was never articulated when dealing with the institutions enabling voluntary provision of services. This raises quite potent questions about the field's basic assumptions on religious identity and civic participation from a gender perspective, and suggests a number of directions for fruitful future research.

Arguing that belief and gender socialization are not enough to explain women's civic engagement through the gateway of the religious organization leads to a second theoretical implication. The findings of this research suggest that studies of women's faith-based volunteering should place less emphasis on trying to quantify how gender and religious socialization inform individual behaviour and turn greater attention to this question: what do

individuals *do with* gender and religion? Much of the extant literature on religious volunteering focuses on what religion makes individuals do and be, and examines the effects of religiosity on individuals (Wuthnow 1991, 1999 and 2004; Wilson and Janoski 1995; Janoski et al. 1998; Wilson 2000; Becker and Dhingra 2001; Chaves 2004). Similarly, in the Japanese context a tradition of maternalism informed by state discourses is deemed to facilitate a propensity towards activities that are conventionally associated with an ethic of caring (Etō 2008a). On the other hand, the literature on volunteering puts great emphasis on the human (Iannaccone 1990) and social (Putnam 1993) capital that religious organizations enhance, which in turn helps in building a propensity to social engagement. However, social capital theorizes that regular connections of people that deal with others is one important component increasing the level of social capital in a volunteer group (Putnam 2000). Counter to such theorizing, though, this study uncovered a different milieu: most connections were weak ties (Granovetter 1973) occurring while doing *for* others. Still, the groups showed a high level of cohesion and consistency, which suggests that exploring volunteer groups entails looking beyond how participants relate within or outside the group, and examine instead how they create responses or respond to the practices they encounter in their volunteering.

Centrally, it is argued here that taking belief, gender and structural normative influences as measures for discussing women's own perception of their volunteer roles and their opportunities for alternative narratives to mainstream ones, can produce a misleading picture. The findings of this study have highlighted that rather than asking questions of how and why religiosity and gender socialization motivates adherents toward volunteer activities, exploring how women *use* their gender roles and religiosity to do what they do and achieve their goals may better explain their large presence in faith-based volunteering. The research presented here has demonstrated that it is not the presence (or absence) of religion that makes a critical difference, but how women use their institutional (such as the religious organization, the local authorities) and non-institutional (the faith-based group) channels to generate or inhibit everyday practices that can serve to ameliorate their lives. Herein lies the answer to one of the puzzles: that is, why women favour a faith-based volunteer group rather than a secular one, why they prioritize certain types of relationships and activities over others, and how certain volunteer habits are created, nurtured, changed and re-established. In short, focusing on practices (Bourdieu 1977), rather than on the presence or absence of certain components, helps us to more clearly understand where the priorities of these women volunteers come from and illustrate the changing needs of the community where the practices are performed.

This last argument brings us now to a methodological claim, suggesting how women's opportunities for agency deriving from participating in faith-based volunteering should be studied at a group level rather than at an individual level of analysis. This level of analysis allows understanding what group's practices and customs enable or constrain women's exploration of newer identity modes. Bourdieu (1977) suggests that reflexivity itself may become customary and come to depend on individuals who routinize critical exploration. However, reflexivity depends, too, on the individual's setting and the findings of this study show conclusively that the *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977) of the volunteer group matters for its members to expand further their social identity. The results have shown that the way women used the resources and opportunities of the faith-based volunteer group and how they related with institutional and non-institutional actors beyond it varied enormously according to the group's dimension with its customs and *habitus*, which informed the level of women's engagement and agency.

Methodologically, this suggests that studies focusing on the women's opportunities for larger social participation coming from engaging in faith-based volunteering should examine individual identity as part of the collective action (Somers 1994) performed in the unit where the individual is located. This implies that exploring the consequences of civic engagement on individual identities should in fact pay greater attention to the group's customs that inform an individual's everyday practices, while bearing in mind that such customs are a by-product of the participants' everyday actions. This research demonstrated that this level of analysis explained how customary meanings of group life led to different levels and kinds of engagement and what agency did, or did not, empower in its members, enabling at least some of them to pursue alternative trajectories of self. The members of Rishō kōseikai and the Catholic St. Ignatius church were accustomed to the practice of establishing relationships and interacting with actors in the community, a habit that participants acquired and performed in their daily life outside the religious organization. To a different extent, talking critically about participants' volunteer role vis-à-vis the recipients, internal actors (the religious organization, fellow members), external actors (local authorities, professionals, staff, and other volunteers) and society at large was a customized practice of all of the targeted faith-based volunteer groups. This practice tended to characterize groups' members as less reliant on customary assumptions, critical toward mainstream narratives and discourses informing them, and careful about the resources and goals of the volunteer group in which they participate. From this point of view, belonging to a religious organization becomes a resource for newer

trajectories of self, which is crucial for women's larger engagement in society, empowerment and democratization.

The above arguments bring us to an interpretation of women's faith-based volunteering as a form of polysemic social practice taking place in the community, beyond the specific ideological drive of a religious belief or the opportunities informed by institutional channels. It represents the form of actor-driven associational life (Ueno 2011) located in the cultural context of faith-based volunteering where women, as autonomous agents, purposely bridge multiple sectors for the benefit of a welfare society. They may as well contribute to the creation of an 'inclusive society' encouraging social coordination of social protection and inclusion practices, thus advocating measures against what scholarship of social economy calls the new social risks (Ōsawa 2011a: 5-6). While claiming to be apolitical, faith-based volunteer groups may in fact exert significant influence on the practices of societal and governmental institutions. It is difficult to define the boundaries between what counts as political, religious or civil. However, those women are clearly relying on the adaptability and mobility of symbols and meanings across the boundaries of these three domains in their efforts to achieve their goals. Their everyday volunteer practices are elusively inspired by religious commitment, albeit often lacking in salience, while their awareness of the multi-faceted socio-structural surrounding environment and a willingness to redress social problems emerges as their primary rationale. They stand between four large arenas: the religious institutions, which provide a sort of ethical orientation and social capital encouraging women's social participation; the government, which institutionalizes voluntary provision of services, as well as the roles that citizens should take in it; civil society, which conveys the norms of civic responsibility that the community shares and reshapes by promoting newer priorities and types of volunteer participation; and the market, that supplies the alternatives to state-funded provision of services. These women work in a compensational position towards those actors, moving across the multi-layered discourses they convey in search of alternatives to mainstream narratives in order to pursue their commitment of amelioration and change in the institutional and structural status quo. This perspective poses a pressing question about the effect of the interaction between women's volunteering and governmental institutions, as to what extent their alternatives and solutions to needs that they prioritize may redesign the directions that local government takes in the provision of services.

This makes religious voluntarism overlap with other aspects of social life, which may imply a form of politicized action. If a religious community is a vehicle for establishing a basis for

social participation, believers' expanding grassroots activities in everyday life projects may give their actions a political nuance. By exercising their role as citizens in faith-based volunteer groups, women become the gateway for the religious organization to participate in the social contract. At the same time, women learn how to negotiate among power structures and institutions. The more women recognize themselves in this role, the more they acquire awareness of discourses and resources. This dynamic process reshapes women's religious narratives within the religious organization, while fostering social roles outside it. In this parlance, engaging in religious social work may adjust how they view their religious commitment and shape how they view their identity options in society, no less than it may shape how they view their political options.

As discussed throughout this work, previous studies of women engaged in faith-based volunteering have tended to overlook their engagement for cultural, structural and socio-economic reasons. This study acknowledges that all those components matter, but suggests that they explain only the type and rate of participation, and not whether and to what extent participation affects women's lives. Analyzing women's religious voluntarism, therefore, may be controversial and it may not immediately show a quantifiable social change. However, since volunteering marks a new civic phase in which women take the initiative in projects of public interest, this dissertation stresses how understanding women's changing roles in contemporary Japan must surely require taking into account the polysemic and complicated ways in which religious belief, volunteer experiences and social expectations intersect in women's identities and overlap with other domains of daily life beyond the faith-based volunteer group.

Limitations

The findings of this dissertation offer important empirical and theoretical evidence for the effect of faith-based volunteering on women's identity. However, there are two sets of limitations that should be addressed: data limitations and theoretical limitations.

Firstly, there are important data restrictions affecting this study. The samples for each religious organization come from a limited number of members belonging to a small volunteer group sponsored by the religious organization. Therefore, the socio-demographic results cannot be counted as representative of the overall population of the religious organization in a statistically relevant sense, although they can be considered adequately representative of the volunteer group. Moreover, these findings are drawn from a survey conducted in highly urbanized areas within or near Tokyo. Therefore, they may not be applicable to other

geographical areas of Japan, since there may be differences concerning views of gender roles and perceptions of social engagement between residents of Tokyo and Saitama prefecture and other less populated areas of Japan. The data could be enhanced by using larger samples and surveying respondents in several locations in Japan. An analysis of larger, well-established volunteer groups, rather than community-based activities, could also reveal different *habitus*, customized ways of group and inter-group interaction. However, despite these limitations, this dissertation can still be said to offer the first qualitative examination of the associations between women and faith-based volunteering, and its impact in terms of identity formation and social change to have been carried out. This is the original contribution of this dissertation.

The second limitation concerns the theoretical framework utilized for this dissertation. The findings of this study may appear as highly optimistic in that they argue for a positive effect of religious belonging on women's social activity, thus challenging the well-established assumption of the normative ideological role of belief and the effect of gender socialization. Drawing upon Giddens and Bourdieu's "everyday practice theories", this study may have favoured an examination of women's practices by over-privileging individual agency without adequately discussing structural interventions and downplaying the constraining forces individuals experience in the interstice between structure and agency. It is argued here that while those arguments cannot be underestimated, the empirical micro-sociological analysis conducted in this study has sought to give a description of the potentialities and limits, the opportunities and constraints, of the impact of the agency enjoyed by situated actors. Therefore, while this study emphasizes the potential empowering effect that the inclusion of women in certain areas of faith-based volunteer practice can bring about, it does not dismiss uncritically the latent ideological and structural determinism that may sometimes inform women's agency.

Academic contribution and future research

The purpose of this study is to fill gaps in the extant English literature by offering an in-depth insight into the internal dynamics of faith-based groups, the strategies that women employ to reach their aims, their position vis-à-vis society and institutions, and what social identity they develop from that. The review of the extant literature on the sociology of religion and studies of civil society have revealed a lack of investigations about the large presence of women involved in faith-based volunteering at the grassroots level and the social significance of their active participation.

Firstly, this research has provided the first empirical evidence for the argument that faith-based volunteering may provide a gateway for women to expand their role into a larger engagement in society in terms of empowerment and democratization. The cultural context of the faith-based volunteer group has been carefully explored through interviews, questionnaires and participant observation. The results of this study can hopefully become a useful resource for researchers in three different academic areas: religion, gender and civil society.

In the area of the sociology of religion, this research has contributed to two main arguments.

Firstly, it explored the assumption that religion should be counted as a core identity defining a person in all settings. The findings have largely demonstrated that in contrast to such an established, consolidated idea, religiosity did not always play the role of the main driving force in women's everyday volunteering religiosity. Rather, it expressed a collective action (Somers 1994: 607) where ideology and religious practices served to denote the sameness of practices shared among members of a group working beyond the religious organization. In her study about the Life Club Cooperative Society, LeBlanc (1999) found that women sometimes adopt strategically the 'housewife model' in order to be entitled to act locally to achieve their purposes (1999: 28). This study has demonstrated that it is not only the housewife narrative which is used instrumentally, but other dimensions of women's identity (e.g. the religious and volunteer dimensions) which are also enacted in order to gain a wider knowledge of the environment where women are located. This study has demonstrated how women work within the privacy of their religious identity, along with the collective of their volunteer identity to convey their advocacy. This leads to the second contribution to the field of sociology of religion. While religiosity helped participants to validate their social action through a shared symbolic and practical language, religiosity was never expressed outside the boundaries of the religious organization and individuals' private life. This validates the idea that what counts as religion in contemporary Japan pertains to the private sphere of the individuals as a form of religious culture shaped into everyday strategies of actions (Shimazono 2007).

In the field of gender studies, this work contributes to understanding the distance between cultural ideals and structural influences on women's lives and their lived experiences. The findings presented throughout this work have demonstrated that although individual women's experiences may illustrate certain values and expectations shaped by mainstream narratives, these do not always match women's aspirations and motivations, and do not imply a universal truth about something we might call the 'Japanese woman'. As Long (1996) suggests, abstracted ideals of femininity may be translated into different practices according to such

factors as class, geography and opportunity (1996: 156). Similarly, socio-demographic factors may channel women to embody bounded models (such as the housewife model) that they feel inappropriate or inadequate. When looking at women's condition in contemporary Japan, scholarship needs to pay attention to the increasing discrepancy and distance between given and expected symbolic models and the lived experience of women in their everyday life.

In the area of civil society, this work has demonstrated that locating faith-based volunteer groups within the larger scale of civil society enables us to shed light on an area of women's life under-explored in the literature. The language, the typical proposal style in relating, working with and influencing local politics make faith-based volunteer groups as equally important for participatory democracy as 'community-based movements' (Etō 2008b: 44). In these terms, faith-based volunteer groups act as sites facilitating democracy and as potential sources of citizenship and political awareness. Scholarship on civil society needs to pay more attention to the impact of those groups as sources of ideas and sometimes of activities (and activists) that may exert influence on local politics, even if they count themselves as apolitical and take no part in everyday political debate. This poses a crucial question of our understanding of power and the role of gender in its definition.

Secondly, in order to understand how the cultural context of faith-based volunteering could open women up to opportunities for newer identity modes, this study elaborated a theoretical framework focusing on the day-to-day actions and practices of women, and the potentiality of women's agency therein. By making an eclectic use of theories on social construction of identity, practice and performativity, the analytical framework suggested here offers a useful framework for further study in this area and a well-suited toolkit for researchers who want to conceptualize individual agency and its integrative view of the role of action and structure in the establishment of an institution.

Finally, this research asked the initial question concerning the interplaying influence among faith, gender and volunteering. The findings of this study raise a number of important questions for future work. Do faith-based volunteer groups provide different conditions for women to explore trajectories of social identity as compared to secular volunteer groups? Do women engaged in faith-based volunteer groups use more (or less) overtly advocacy methods as compared with secular groups? Are their activities more effective in establishing relationships with institutions? What is the impact in the long run in terms of amelioration and change at the local level? What is the influence of women's volunteering on the religious organization to which they belong?

It is hoped that the conceptual framework and the empirical findings of this work will contribute to those wishing to do future research in this area. By suggesting the above questions, which are but a few of those raised in the course of this study, this dissertation will hopefully stimulate research on the largely unexplored interdisciplinary intersection between the fields of gender studies, sociology of religion and scholarship on civic society in Japan.

NOTES

¹ This issue is approached by Goffman in *Stigma* (1963), where he discussed how stigmata, usually thought to be a physical blemish, threaten presentations of self, and, therefore, they should be understood against the background of rules about appropriate behaviour. According to Goffman, individuals are constantly aware that their identities are discreditable and may be discredited in the future (1963: 4). This is an observation that prompted his distinction between a virtual and actual social identity.

² This work makes use of the expression 'religious ideology' to mean the set of ideas and the worldview drawn upon belief influencing believers' expectations and actions. Following Geertz's theorizing, this study understands ideology as a 'template or blueprint for the organization of social and psychological processes' (Geertz 1973: 216).

³ The word *shūkyō* is imbued with multiple meanings and historical accretions that evoke different interpretations. It was coined by the government to refer to Christian denominations that were re-entering Japan in the mid-1800s and it was also first used to indicate teachings from different Buddhist schools (Reader and Tanabe 1998: 5). During the post-war period the aggressive and coercive methods of proselytizing [*shakubuku*], a tactic used especially by Nichiren-related groups such as Sōka gakkai, raised criticism and strong opposition in public opinion and mass media toward Japanese New Religions, which generated rather derogatory implications to the term *shūkyō* (Mullins, Shimazono and Swanson 1993: 233). Today, especially after the sarin gas accident provoked by Aum shinrikyō in 1995 (see notes 6 and 8), Japanese public opinion tends to be sceptical about those religious organizations collected under the category of *shūkyō* (Hardacre 2003a), with the exception of well-established traditional Buddhist schools.

⁴ Takayama (1993) also provides an analysis of the passage from pre-war to post-war Japanese situation of religious legislations and institutions (1993: 105-20).

⁵ The terms *shinkō shūkyō* [newly arising religion] and *shinshūkyō* [new religion] began to be used by Japanese journalists sometime after the end of the Second World War to mean *minshū shūkyō*, 'popular religions'. The terms were first used in academia by Murakami Shigeyoshi in his *Kindai minshū shūkyōshi no kenkyū* [Research on contemporary history of folk religions] (1958) where he examines religious movements developed between the end of Tokugawa period (1603-1868) and mid-Taishō era (1912-1926). The term *shinkō shūkyō* was generally used in the beginning, but it held negative connotations related to religious political accidents and the strong proselytism of those newly founded organizations. *Shinshūkyō* became the preferred term from the 1960s, especially among scholars, and that trend has continued to the present. See Inoue et. al. 1994: 2-5; Ashley 2006: 93-5. For a list of religious organizations belonging to the category of *shinshūkyō* see Inoue et al. 1994: 15-21.

⁶ For an overview of the scholarship produced by sociologists of religion after the 'Aum Affair', see Kisala and Mullins 2001: 10-14.

⁷ Ronald and Alexy (2011) give a detailed account of *ie* (literally 'house') as a patrilinear and patriarchal family system functioning as the idealized administrative system of Imperial Japan (2011: 3-5). The post-war Constitution abolished this system, and the term *ie* with its patriarchal connotations was dismissed in favour of *katei* [household] to refer to the modern family (Nishikawa 1996: 224-5). For an analysis of *ie* in relationship with the structure of Japanese society see Nakane (1970); and Sugimoto 2003: 146-82.

⁸ The *aum jiken* [Aum Affair] in 1995 raised the dilemma of how to protect society from potentially dangerous religious groups while, at the same time, protecting the free practice of religion. The legal and political effect of the 'Aum affair' was the revision of the Religious Corporation Law (known as the "New Aum Law") in 1998, which introduced annual financial assets reporting, including records of financial transactions, a balance sheet, a description of properties and buildings, and documents related to business enterprises under the corporation (Mullins 2001: 79). Under such tax law, *shūkyō hōjin*, religious corporations, receive a favourable treatment because of their contribution to *kōei*, 'public good'. Donations are non-taxable, income from business enterprises are taxed at a lower rate than in profit-making corporations and religious organizations can donate part of their business income to their religious work and, therefore, be able to consistently reduce the actual tax paid (Mullins 2001: 83).

⁹ For an outline of Japanese educational credentialism and the commercialization of education see Sugimoto 2003: 108-24.

¹⁰ Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Public Management (2009). Summary Tables, Table 2: 'Population of 15 years old or more by sex and labor force status'.

¹¹ Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Public Management (2009). Summary Tables, Table 1: 'Population of 15 years old or more by labour force status, employed person by industry, and unemployed'.

¹² The M-shaped curve of female labour-force participation began to emerge in Japan with the consolidation of the fast economic growth in the 1960s. It shows a characteristic ascension when women are in their mid twenties, descending in the early thirties and swinging steadily upward to the late forties when finally it begins to decline. The valley between the two peaks represents the phase when women leave the labour force for child-rearing.

From a life-cycle perspective, women must generally face life-strategy decisions at three different times: at marriage, following child-birth and when the child-rearing phase is over. See the analyses available online at the Gender Equality Bureau website: http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/women2004/statistics/s02.html (last accessed on 30.9.2011)

¹³ However, legislators maintained dependants' eligibility for coverage under the health insurance plan of the insured employee if the dependant's annual salary is equal to or less than 1.300.000 yen, or less than half of the insured employee. For detailed reference on 2003 tax reforms related to child and elderly support, see Naikakufu, *sangikai zeisei chōsakai* (2003).

¹⁴ Ōsawa (2005b) gives a detailed analysis of the consequences of government policies in the 1990s on the Japanese welfare employment regime from a gender perspective.

¹⁵ The structural reform of the family presented by the Koizumi government in early 2000s placed a strong emphasis on employment and labour deregulation while encouraging individuals to be more autonomous and independent throughout their life course (Ōsawa 2005b and 2011b: 23-31). In 2001 the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare published a White Paper emphasizing the role of the public administration in 'supporting life-long self-independency' (Kōsei rōdōshō 2001b). According to the White Paper on the Quality of Life published in 2002, old people should be incentivized so that they keep contributing to the labour market (Naikakufu 2002: 6). The Paper puts great emphasis on creating a working environment that old people can easily access (Naikakufu 2002: 8). Takeda (2011a) offers an analysis of the implications that the structural reform of the family as reported in government papers. A similar trend is reported in more recent government papers. See the *Annual Health, Labour and Welfare Report 2008-2009*, Part 1, Chapter 1, 'Supports for Independence in Order to Stabilize Living and Society', <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/wp/wp-hw3/honbun.html>. See also Part 2, Chapter 5, Section 4: 'Creating a Welfare Society Where Elderly can be Active and Comfortable', <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/wp/wp-hw3/dl/Part02-05.pdf> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁶ Avenell (2010) explains how the idea of *komiunity kea* [community care] supplementing the public welfare services for the elderly and other needy groups was given a strong impetus in the 1970s when the National Social Welfare Association exposed the shortage of welfare provision by state-run facilities (Avenell 2010: 75-6). The idea that the government should facilitate participation of healthy elderly people (as well as the youth and women, especially housewives) in volunteer activities in contributing to the eldercare and the community appeared in the 1984 White Paper published by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, which discussed volunteerism in the context of 'dealing with escalating welfare demands' (Avenell 2009: 265). Official programmes were developed thereafter in order to create a robust infrastructure for spontaneous, independent volunteering especially in the domain of welfare and education (Avenell 2010: 80). Such spontaneity [*jihatsusei*] conveyed the ideas of self-formation [*jiko keisei*], self-development [*jiko no seichō*] and self-realization [*jiko jitsugen*] which often appeared in the Ministry of Education policy statements on volunteering at that time, usually linking them to community, group or nation (Avenell 2010: 80). Such efforts continued in the 1990s with the purpose of constructing a Participatory Welfare Society [*sanka gata fukushi shakai*] in which the 'majority of people' could 'spontaneously participate in welfare activities' [*jihatsuteki ni fukushi katsudō ni sankā dekiru*] (Zenkoku Shakai Fukushi Kyōgikai—Zenkoku Borantia Katsudō Shinkō Sentā, 1997: 71, quoted in Avenell 2010: 83). State funding coupled with effective incorporation of the self-realization paradigm has led to the institutionalization of independent volunteer groups as they have appeared by the 2000s (Avenell 2010: 90).

¹⁷ The above-mentioned 2002 Report on National Life gives great importance to maintaining the elderly in the labour force as long as possible by incentivising opportunities of work that would fit their abilities in late age. See Naikakufu 2002: 6.

¹⁸ In 2000, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare promoted the *Kenkō Nihon 21* [Healthy Japan in the 21st Century] focusing on health development and disease prevention, along with a reform of the system for providing medical care (see <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/org/policy/p10-11.html>, last accessed on 10.2.2011). A Long-Term Care Insurance System was introduced and implemented from April 1st, 2000 aiming at establishing a system by which service users can receive comprehensive services from a variety of institutions of their choice. Benefits were divided into in-home benefits and facility benefits, according to the mental and physical condition of the recipient. As for February 2011, the lowest care level of home-visit commuting service entitles the recipient to 16.580 yen a month. See <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/elderly/care/2.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011). An English version of the law is available at the Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare (2002) website, as <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/elderly/care/index.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011). For an analysis of the impact of the Long-term Care Insurance System see Etō (2000 and 2002).

¹⁹ The Report on National Life published by the Cabinet Office in 2002 highlights that the structural changes in the family envisaged by the government, emphasizing the economic participation of women, would have a positive impact on job creation especially in the service sector of eldercare and childcare. See Naikakufu (2002: 22-3).

²⁰ About the socio-economic functions of women in framing the 'Japanese social welfare model' see Ōsawa (1993 and 1994) and Kono (2000). Itō (1993) analyzes the traditional idea that elderly caring was primarily a *yome's* [daughter-in-law] assignment defining roles and obligations toward the husband's family. Ueno (2011) offers a sociological and historical examination of caring work as a gendered institutionalization (2011: 112-19).

²¹ *Kōsei rōdōshō* (2001a).

²² The idea of an elusive religiosity deeply entrenched in the lives of the Japanese was originally conceptualized by Shimazono (2003).

²³ In Woodhead's analysis, religion can be integral to the existing gender order, thus serving to reproduce and legitimate gender inequality; or it may assume tactical forms, accepting prevailing patterns of meaning and power-distribution, but maximizing their advantage for those who are disadvantaged by them (Woodhead 2007: 569). Women 'bargain with patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988) by accepting prevailing patterns of meaning and power distribution, but maximizing their advantage despite the system disadvantaging them. A new approach has been recently suggested in order to go beyond the generalizations about 'powerful men and powerless women' (King, 2002: 61). It aims at recognizing that while men may hold formal dominance, in that everyone agrees that they should be in control, in fact women have considerable power, both formally and informally, to influence decisions (ibid.). King claims that examining power relationships within religions as a product of male-female complementarity may be a useful descriptive tool allowing more subtle and accurate results (King 2002: 61).

²⁴ Quoted in King (2002: 373). The concept of 'hermeneutics of suspicion' comes originally from the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1903-2005). He suggested a new hermeneutics of religious texts to see how they participate in structures of domination and ideology, an approach adopted by feminist scholars of religions. See Ricoeur (1980).

²⁵ Organizations like the *Kokusai josei gakkai* [International Women's Studies Association], the *Nihon josei gakkai* [Women's Studies Association of Japan] and the *Nihon joseigaku kenkyūkai* [Women's Studies Society of Japan] were founded at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. Several journals, such as *Joseigaku nenpō* [Annual Report of the Women's Studies Society] came into print at that time (T. Inoue 2002). The *Kokuritsu josei kyōiku kaikan* [National Women's Education Centre], founded in 1977 as part of the programme of the United Nations Decade for Women, initiated a series of women's studies lectures [*Kōza joseigaku*], which were published between 1983 and 1987 (T. Inoue 2002: 212). For a detailed historical outline of the institutionalization of women's studies in Japanese academia since the 1970s and the change of the discipline into gender studies, see T. Inoue (2002).

²⁶ Professor Nakamura Kyōko (1932-2001) was one of the directors of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies and is famous for her Japanese translation of Mircea Eliade's work. She also made great contributions to the theme of 'Gender and Religion' in its very early stages. She was guest editor of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* issue on 'Women and Religion in Japan' in 1983, a publication that is still considered a pioneering work showing Nakamura's valuable effort (Kawahashi and Kuroki 2003: 207).

²⁷ In the 1990s the Japanese government began adopting the idea of gender equality and started working for the realization of legal measures in order to pursue it (Ōsawa 2002b, 2005a and 2005b). As a consequence, in 1994 the Japanese Cabinet set up the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality (Dales 2009: 28). In academia, in 1995 the sociologist Ueno Chizuko and others edited a volume entitled *Jendā no shakai gaku* [Sociology of gender] published by Iwanami Shoten within the collection of Contemporary Sociology. The following year Ochanomizu University founded the Institute of Gender Studies, becoming the first Japanese university establishing an institute under the name of 'gender studies'. In 1997 Ochanomizu University renamed the Department of Women's Studies as the Department of Gender and Development Studies, and started offering Master's Programmes. For an account of the development of the idea of gender and gender studies see Sechiyama (1995).

²⁸ The notion of *nyōnin kinsei*, which forbids Japanese women to access whatever is considered holy and sacred because of their pollution based on biological grounds, is present in both Buddhism (Ushiyama 1996) and in Shintō (Yusa 1994). See also Kanda (2000) and Suzuki (2002).

²⁹ For a detailed account on the history of modern Japanese feminist thought and feminist movements from 1870 to the present see Dales (2009).

³⁰ The idea that women may be more productive religious participants than men because of their relative specialization in religious tasks has found its theoretical expression in Iannaccone's (1990) religious human capital theory. According to this theory, religious participation builds individuals' stock of religious capital, in the form of knowledge and familiarity with doctrines, rituals and the like. This, in turn, is used to produce religious value in future religious collective actions, as routinely religious settings foster the effective use of religious capital and enhance religious production (Iannaccone 1990: 298).

³¹ Shinnyoen, for example, teaches a doctrine directed at women and a certain view of gender roles. A dualistic view of gender applies to both founders, in that male is related to heaven, dharma and intelligence, and female is related to earth, practice and training (Nagai 1995: 308). However, the couple is venerated as 'both parents'

(*sōya sama*), embodying the ideal world view of male-female harmony (ibid.). The female founder, Itō Tomoji (called Shōjuin by Shinnyoen members), held it important to serve one's husband and often taught others to do so. The doctrine is summarized in 'The kitchen homilies' [*okatte seppō*] which collects the teaching given by Shōjuin, the wife, to women in the kitchen and the 'Seventeen Regulation for Women' [*josei no tameno jūnana kun*] (Nagai 1995: 307-8).

³² Shimazono also maintains that founders of the Buddhist-related 'intellectual thought type', although focusing on their peculiar learned doctrine on a first stage, they later included magic-spiritual notions in their teachings, responding to followers demands for a more popular, practical religious thought (1992b: 68).

³³ A significant contribution to the sociology of religion has come from deprivation-compensation theories. Glock and Stark (1965) develop five types of deprivation (economic, social, physical, moral, psychological) suggesting that people who are suffering in some mental, physical or social manner look to religion for various forms of compensation. Various kinds of deprivation have been postulated as particularly relevant for women: material (sickness, death; social deprivation because of the systematic exclusion of women from the public arena; and a feeling of guilt, deriving from gender socialization and guilt-inducing religious teachings (Walter and Davie 1998: 643-53). Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (1975) suggest social vulnerability of women and their attempt to find in religion a response to various kinds of deprivation, including gender inequality, as a reason for affiliation (1975: 78). In this perspective, women participate in religion in order to obtain some compensation for the authority that eludes them in their social system. Ozorak (1996) highlights the compensation women find in the alternative social status they realize by being part of a structure through religious participation. Manville (1997) elicits the emotional relief of women that feel reinforced in their constrained status imposed by the normative control of the religious organization.

³⁴ Scholars have also suggested that religious communities may serve as 'free social space' (Sherkat and Ellison 1999: 374) providing members with 'social capital' (ibid.) that can contribute to positive outcomes. Religion may provide social settings encouraging women's participation, while opening opportunities for significant leadership (Bartkowski 1997; Stark and Bainbridge 1985). Researchers have also found that religion as free space may serve as vital sources for collective self-help and community development, moral reform, social service, community leadership and political mobilization (Sherkat and Ellison 1999: 375). In his study of Japanese New Religions, Shimazono observes that by emphasizing the importance of membership, those movements play a positive role in helping people to fill important social needs such as friendship and social acceptance in order to adapt to modern moral values and social relationships (Shimazono 2004: 164).

³⁵ According to socialization theory, women are said to emphasise conflict resolution, submission, gentleness, nurturance and other expressive values that are congruent with religious emphases (see Francis 1997: 87-9). This stance is much grounded in the work of Nancy Chodorow (1978) and Carol Gilligan (1982), who suggested that the process of gender identification in early childhood produces a self that is autonomous for boys, but is experienced as relational and nurturing for girls. Gilligan (1982) claims that females' relational self develops out of the sense of connection with others, rooted in their identifications with their mother. Women tend to develop a pragmatic ethic of care concerned with the well-being of individuals, while men tend to develop an ethic of justice concerned with abstract principles (Gilligan 1982). Chodorow (1978) also maintains that girls are better at identifying with others because of their tendency of identifying with their mother, while boys are better in autonomy because they have to break away from them and find their own identity. For an analysis of the gendered idea of caring drawn upon Gilligan's theorizing see Ueno 2011: 44-54.

³⁶ *Shinshin shūkyō* [new new religions] was first employed by Nishiyama Shigeru in 1979 to describe groups that emerged after 1970s. Nishiyama's terminological classification related to a chronological setting allowing for a typological differentiation compared to groups founded or emerged before the 1970s, therefore called *kyū shin shūkyō*, 'old new religions' (Shimazono 1992a: 4-8).

³⁷ Among the forerunners of this Japanese New Spiritualism, Shimazono identifies Tanaka Mitsu (1943 -), the radical feminist leader of the Japanese *ūman ribu* [women's liberation] movement in the early 1970s (2007: 11). Shimazono sees a shift in Tanaka's personal narrative from a time in the early 1970s, when personal sufferings, discrimination by sex and constraints motivated a demand for the emancipation and liberation of women as spirits; to a time, upon her return to Japan in 1979, when soul and body are considered as a unity and as a way to relief and spiritual liberation and to achieve happiness (2007: 26). That shift, the scholar comments, shows Tanaka's interest in women's spirituality and it is closely related to the attitude toward spiritual matters embedded in New Spirituality Culture movements (Shimazono 2007: 26). Tanaka Mitsu became popular after the publication of her autobiography, *Inochi no Onnatachi e* [For my spiritual sisters] in 1972 (Ehara 2002: 40). It was the manifesto of the group Tatakau Onna [Fighting women], a feminist movement grounded on Tanaka's deep disappointment with male radical politics, a view shared by several other women of her generation (Mackie 2003: 144-5). In her writings Tanaka stressed the idea of women as individuals with spirit, *inochi*, rather than wives and self-sacrificing mothers (Mackie 2003: 145). She encouraged a movement of self-expression, self-determination

and self-emancipation, 'where men and women would see sex as a means of communication, free of domination and subordination' (ibid.).

³⁸ Among the others, Shimazono also cites as examples of this 'secular humanism' the Self-Help Groups, Adult children, Feminist Counselling, networks and associations dealing with women supporting women (Shimazono 2007: 26). Furusawa (2007) analyzes the relationship between religion and medical treatment developed in the form of 'spiritual care'.

³⁹ Musick and Wilson (2008) offer a detailed analysis of extant studies on religion and gender as individual resources facilitating philanthropic behaviours (Musick and Wilson 2008: 89-96 and 171-96). The authors also examine membership of religious organizations as a social resource (Musick and Wilson 2008: 278-84).

⁴⁰ Most of the activities listed here are those promoted by the religious organizations approached for this study. Chapter 3 outlines those pertaining to the targeted groups. Inoue et al. (1994) offer a review of the social activities sponsored by new religious movements (1994: 560-606).

⁴¹ Research on social capital has increased rapidly over the last decade and the concept has been defined differently according to the scholars' own perspectives. Nishide (2009) offers a review of extant literature and summarizes the various definitions and their characteristics (2009: 1-19). The idea of social capital has spread worldwide mainly through the research of the American political scientist, Robert Putnam published in 1993: *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy*. According to his definition, social capital is categorized into three major components: trust, norm and network. Putnam (1993 and 2000) also makes a significant distinction between three types of social capital: bonding (closed connection in a homogeneous group); bridging (horizontal and cross cutting connections among different people and groups); and linking (vertical connection beyond power and hierarchies across individuals and groups of different levels of power, wealth and social position) (Nishide 2009: 7-8). Although the purpose of this study does not include a specific examination of social capital, because of his emphasis on the relational component the discussion will make occasional use of Putnam's conceptualization and his definitions.

⁴² However, according to her results from surveys in the United Kingdom, Hakim finds that there was virtually no difference in the number of men and women volunteering and in the time men and women donate to volunteer work. Therefore, she concludes that volunteer work should not be considered as gendered as other forms of unpaid work, such as childcare, eldercare or household maintenance (Hakim 1996: 46).

⁴³ Several seminal moments have been identified in the development of the institution of volunteering in post-war Japan. A trend of volunteerism arose in 1979 in response to the intensifying crisis in Indo-China with the boat people from Vietnam and the mass of Cambodian refugees (Avenell 2009: 258). Japanese Buddhist NGOs, like the Buddhist Aid Center, emerged at that time, also partly 'in response to criticism in the mainstream media that Buddhism had become irrelevant to modern society and that Buddhist priests had no concern for the general well-being of people' (Watts 2004: 417). The second crucial moment was the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, when the paralysis of governmental bodies in responding to the crisis led to a huge and spontaneous outpouring of volunteers, including many religious organizations (Hardacre 2004: 396). In 1997 the oil spill from a sinking Russian tanker off the Japan Sea coast stirred a strong awareness about environmental problems among the Japanese population, with thousands of civilians engaging in cleaning up the polluted area, collecting money for practical and effective interventions (Nakano 2000: 94). This prompted again popular questioning of the legitimacy of the government's monopoly over public service and public media started promoting the idea of common people's volunteerism as a 'rediscovered national characteristic', thus bringing attention to the fact that Japan was experiencing 'a rebirth of civil values' (Nakano 2000: 94). The events of 9/11 and the war in Iraq also provided another watershed of religious NGOs getting even more involved in peace activities both within and outside Japan (Watts 2004: 419; Ōtani 2009).

⁴⁴ According to a 1993 governmental White Paper on National Lifestyle, volunteering allows people to express themselves as individuals away from the institutions and family: '*Jiko to wa ishitsu mono o jūyō, jiko jitsugen ni mo tsunagari*' [giving something unselfishly leads to self realization]. See Keizai kikakuchō 1993: 155.

⁴⁵ In her analysis on volunteers, Nakano (2000) finds that the rates of volunteering peak among women in their thirties and men in their sixties, ages when workforce participation rates for men and women are at their lowest (Nakano 2000: 3). In this way, volunteering is partly a product of institutional structures that channel the participation of young women and middle-aged men in the work force, and leave the lowest-paying and least socially rewarding jobs to middle-aged, and older women and men (ibid.).

⁴⁶ In analyzing the emergence of social movements, researchers have concentrated in three intermingled factors: political opportunities, mobilizing structures and the framing process (McAdam et al. 2006: 14-15). Political opportunity seeks to establish the social and political circumstances that favour the emergence of different movements; mobilizing structures examines the collective responses of a movement through organizational mobilization; and framing focuses on the movements' cognitive responses in terms of ideology. In terms of organizational mobilization in relation to gender, studies elicit that women are usually locally based and tend to rely on the community, self-help and church groups that allow them greater influence and freedom to act

(Kuumba 2001). Cognitive response in relation to gender focuses on the way women rely on their gender roles as a justification for action (Naples 1998).

⁴⁷ Feminists have suggested that women's interests can be divided into two categories: practical gender interests and strategic gender interests (Molyneux 1985). Moser (1993) defines practical gender needs as those that are formulated from the concrete conditions of women's experience and are inherent in women's socially accepted roles. They concern immediate necessities, such as health care, employment, food safety and environmental protection (Moser 1993: 40). Strategic gender needs are those related with women's subordinate position and concern gender division of labour, equal wages, legal rights, domestic violence and women's control of their bodies (Moser 1993: 77).

⁴⁸ In the mid-1960s, when food containing artificial additives was becoming the norm, a group of women initially guided by a few male socialist activists, set up a cooperative society called the Life Club Cooperative Society [*seikatsu kurabu seikyō*]. The society has developed into a national consumer movement whose membership counts a majority of women, mainly middle-class housewives. They soon began to engage in campaigning for river purification, and embarked on a non-profit welfare enterprise that provides elderly people with nursing homes and day-care services. They currently also deal with childcare, and care for the disabled (Etō 2008a: 133). Since 1977, when they won their first local assembly seats, the group has sent several members as their own representatives to local assemblies (ibid.). LeBlanc (1999), Bouissou (2000) and Etō (2001b) have examined this movement from a political perspective, exploring the possibilities and limitations of the housewives' political world (LeBlanc 1999), as well as their forms of action breaking the routinized style of Japanese politics (Bouissou 2000) and influencing the policy-making process (Etō 2001b; see also Yoritomo 1998). Noguchi (1992) analyzes the Life Club as a movement of housewife activists.

⁴⁹ Information collected from personal conversations with the mothers' group based in Kashiwa city, Chiba Prefecture.

⁵⁰ The 'Tokutei hieiri katsudō sokushin hō' (Law to Promote Specified Non-profit Activities, or "NPO Law"), incorporates non-profit organizations as *tokutei hieiri katsudō hōjin* [specified non-profit activities corporations]. For an analysis of the law and the implication in the state-society power balance see Pekkanen (2000).

⁵¹ Della Porta and Diani (2006) indicate three main traits of social movements: conflictual relations with opponents, a web of intense informal networks, and a distinct collective identity (2006: 20-1). Snow et al. (2005) suggest other five characteristics: collective or joint action; change-oriented goals or claims; some extra non-institutional collective action; some degree of organization; and some degree of temporal continuity (Snow et al. 2005: 6). Hasegawa (1993) helps recalibrating the idea of social movements as attached to the Japanese circumstances by defining them as 'collective actions oriented toward changing the status quo with which their participants are discontent' (1993: 147). This last definition is the closest to the idea of 'community-based movements developed in this dissertation.

⁵² In order to get tangible data results, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has produced a cross-national comparisons of women's empowerment based on objective indicators, such as the number of seats in parliaments held by women, and the estimated ratio of female and male income. However, the UNDP has been criticized for downplaying the specificity of the social context. For example, access to higher level of education may have no influence on women's empowerment unless social and cultural norms support gender equality (Kabeer 1999). The question of the relevance of quantitative data in political and economic related research, against the prevalence of qualitative methods in social sciences is still debated both by feminist and social scientists in general. See Ramazanoğlu and Holland 2002: 41-59.

⁵³ Social work is generally understood as the professional activities of those helping individuals, families, organizations and communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and create the societal conditions favouring their goals (Zastrow 2010: 61). The professional social worker helps people to obtain needed resources, to increase their capacity for problem solving and coping and to facilitate the interaction between people and their environments (Zastrow 2010: 61). The social work practice, therefore, entails the interaction and interrelationship between the individuals (recipients, social workers and other actors) and the system where they are situated (ibid.). Although this study deals with volunteers and not with professional social workers, the activities respondents were engaged in and the modalities through which they performed them largely overlap the characteristics in the domain of social work practice as explained above. Therefore, an approach to empowerment in social work practice has been suggested here to understand the extent of empowerment of surveyed volunteers.

⁵⁴ In her study of the community activism of American women, Naples (1998) explains how women with no initial political goals develop social networks and knowledge useful as a political resource that helps them to take part in political activities through their gendered roles. Connell (2002) maintains that such types of women's activities may generate gender politics 'without a gender-or-sexuality-based movement' (2002: 140).

⁵⁵ A note on the terminology used in this dissertation as regard to "identity" and "subjectivity" is needed here. In her article reviewing the state of research concerning studies on identity, Cerulo (1997) explains the shift from

the constructionist approach, where the concept of identity dominated, and the postmodernist one that introduced the idea of subjectivity (Cerulo 1997: 387-93). In this parlance, the concept of identity is largely rooted in the discourse of late modernity (Giddens 1991b), which is used to define the relational aspects that qualify subjects in terms of categories such as race, gender, class, nation, sexuality, work and occupation (Cerulo 1997: 387-91). On the other hand, subjectivity draws upon a poststructuralist discourse and focuses on the making of the subject, including the taking of subject positions, emphasizing the reflexive dimension (Cerulo 1997: 391-93).

⁵⁶ "Discourse" is a concept largely used by Judith Butler in her works where she refers to it in terms of Foucault's formulation as groups of statements governing the way individuals speak about and perceive a specific historical moment or moments (Salih 2002: 47-8).

⁵⁷ Giddens (1984) suggests that social construction consists of a dual structuration made of both rules and resources, which are mutually generative. In his reformulation of Giddens' definition, Sewell suggests calling rules as 'schemas' (1992: 8) or procedures that can be generalized to new situations or opportunities. Resources, on the other hand, are 'the media whereby transformative capacity is employed as power in the routine course of social action' (Giddens 1979: 92). Sewell (1992) uses the terms of human (such as physical strength, knowledge and emotional commitment) and non-human resources (such as objects, animate or inanimate) (1992: 9). Religion, as is in the case of this study, may be considered a form of non-human resource, although it involves individual's human resources to maintain it and for believers to benefit from it. Both human and nonhuman resources are media of power and are or may be unequally distributed, but some of both human and nonhuman resources are controlled by all members of society 'no matter how destitute or oppressed. Indeed, part of what it means to conceive of human beings as *agents* is to conceive of them as *empowered* by access to resources of one kind or another' (Sewell 1992: 9, emphasis in original). In this regards, it may be reasonable to claim that women adherents willing to initiate volunteer activities are empowered by their religiosity as they have access to exclusive resources that are not accessible to non-believers: religious institutions may supply spiritual support, as well as financial aid and are ready to use the logistic base for organizing volunteer activities.

⁵⁸ Briefly, conceptual narratives are those constructed by scientists for the sake of explanations, such as 'society', 'actors', 'agency', 'culture' and 'institution', used to reconstruct and plot over time and place, and relate the different dimensions of narratives (Somers 1994: 620). Metanarratives refers to the overarching cultural paradigms for how stories go, in which actors are embedded: for example 'secularism', 'Western', 'modernization' (Somers 1994: 619). For a detailed analysis refer to Somers (1994) and Somers and Gibson's (1994) works.

⁵⁹ In Calhoun's (1994) theorizing, recognition is not always immediately dependent on socially derived or sanctioned identities, since 'patterned networks of heterogeneous materials' (Law 1992: 381) make social relations unstable and the multiplicity of discourses challenge the social basis for recognition (Calhoun 1994: 20). If, on the one hand, socially sustained discourses about who is possible or appropriate or valuable to be, shape the way individuals look at and constitute themselves, the complexity of recognizable identities and competing identity schemes make self-recognition and recognition by others problematic, leaving room for manipulation or change 'at least for successful presentation or performance' (Calhoun 1994: 20).

⁶⁰ Bourdieu has approached the issue of 'symbolic violence' in relation to gender in his work *La domination masculine* (1998). In his ethnographic analysis of Kabyle society (Algeria) he discusses the symbolic structures of androcentric unconscious permeating across the researched society, which may be transposed into societies in general. Bourdieu sees masculine domination as a form of pervasive symbolic violence grounding the 'dominated habitus' (1998: 60), in that those who are dominated apply the categories made by those who dominate (1998: 55). An analysis focusing on the dominating effects of the inertial force of *doxa* and its constants, and the factors of transformation over time would lead to the political question of whether and how the neutralization of the mechanisms through which history is continuously turned into nature may be possible (1998: 168-9).

⁶¹ The concept of genealogy belongs to Foucault whose works Butler has used as a foundation of her theorizing. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983) give a useful explanation of Foucault's theorizing and explore his idea of the genealogical analysis as a tool to show the historical contingency of social issues, their formation as well as their potential significance.

⁶² Central to this idea is an emphasis on the historicization (Bourdieu 1998: 114) of temporally durable structures. Temporality is not a series of punctuated moments but, rather, a process of materialization in which the constraints of social structures are reproduced and partially transcend the practices of agents (Bourdieu 1977: 86). According to Bourdieu and Wacquant, practice has a 'double historicity', that of socially constituted mental structures and that of social structures that shape them (1992: 10). Hence Butler's theorizing of performative through the ideas of temporality and reiteration looks very similar to Bourdieu's understanding of the historicization and interiorization of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1998: 53) through the concepts of *habitus* and practice. It is a sort sedimented effect of reiterative or ritualized practices where identity is simultaneously constitutive of agency, in that the processes through which norms are materialized enable the formation of a subject who is able to resist those norms.

⁶³ The literature on social network analysis is copious. For the purpose of this study, the followings works have been approached: M.S. Granovetter (1973). 'The strength of weak ties', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6): 1360-380; M.S. Granovetter (1985). 'Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3): 481-510; J. Boissevain and J.C. Mitchell (eds.) (1973). *Network Analysis: Studies in Human interaction*, The Hague, Paris: Mouton; E. Bott (1957). *Family and social network: Roles, norms, and external relationships in ordinary urban families*, London: Tavistock; C.S. Fischer (1982). *To Dwell Among Friends: Personal Networks in Town and City*, Chicago: Chicago University Press. For a comprehensive view of network analysis this study has drawn upon the work edited by Piselli (1995) which collects the theoretical contributions made by the most representative researchers in the field.

⁶⁴ This note will briefly introduce these orienting concepts. The concept of embeddedness overlaps with that of social relations and refers to the actors' attitude in calculating decisions as influenced by the web of relations and connections in which they are embedded (Granovetter 1985). Actors 'do not have to open up the world because they contain the world' (Callon 1999: 185). According to this stance, the network is not a mere web connecting entities, but is a framework configuring ontologies: the agents, the dimensions and what they do depend on the morphology of relations in which they are involved (Callon 1999: 186). The density of a network is a measure of how many connections there are: the higher the proportion, the more dense the network. Centrality refers to the degree to which networks is centralized around one or few actors. Organizations with highly centralized networks may tend to be more mechanistic in their functioning, whereas organizations with multiple centres throughout the network may be more organic and flexible (Etzioni 1961). For an analysis of social network approach see Kilduff and Tsai (2003); and Boissevain and Mitchell (eds.) (1973).

⁶⁵ The concepts of strong and weak ties adopted in this study are related to the notion of tie-level, which is the degree of strength or weakness of the social tie theorized by Granovetter (1973). Tie-level refers to 'the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy, the mutual confiding and reciprocal services which characterizes the tie' (Granovetter 1973: 1361). A weak tie is characterized by relationships that are infrequent or distant; strong ties are frequent, long-lasting and affected-laden. According to Granovetter (1973), more diverse information is likely to derive from weak-ties rather than strong ones. Conversely, strong and close ties tend to constrain actions and behaviours (Bott).

⁶⁶ The idea of "actor" in ANT has been largely drawn on the semiotic definition of 'actant', that is, something that acts or whose activity is granted by others (Latour 2005: 54-5).

⁶⁷ For an analysis of Christian social thought see Sorge (2006), and Pontificio Consiglio della Giustizia e della Pace (2004).

⁶⁸ New Religions tend to assert that human beings are by nature good and it is their efforts to purify their hearts that draws them nearer to a happy life (Shimazono 2004: 11). In Christianity, in contrast, individuals are fundamentally sinful beings and the evil they produce can be only removed with the power of God (2004: 13). Moreover, humanity can only be cleansed from sin in the next world, after death (ibid.).

⁶⁹ Data available online at S. Ignatius Church website. See http://www.ignatius.gr.jp/info/hou_10/10_02.html#census_report_2009 (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

⁷⁰ The estimate of the male to female proportion was offered in July 2007 by Mngr. Léon B. Kalenga, who served as secretary of Vatican nunciature in Japan between 2003 and 2008.

⁷¹ Most of the Buddhist traditions and Buddhist-related new religious movements are procrastinating over reforms due to notions of female impurity and the doctrine of the five impediments preventing women from attaining Nirvana (Nakamura 1997: 88-9; Martinez 1994: 171). According to Mori Ichiu, the Vice Chief Priest at Kujō Temple - Prefecture of Akita, even the *Lotus sūtra*, renowned for preaching salvation for women, maintains notions of male superiority through its teaching that women must be reborn as men before they can attain Nirvana (Mori 2003). In her study of Nichiren-shū, Mori examines the teaching and interpretation of the *Lotus sūtra* made by Nichiren, the founder. She notices that in the Kamakura period (1185-1333), Nichiren refuted the doctrine of women as deeply sinful, therefore unable to attain Buddhahood unless they are reborn as men (Mori 2003: 280-3). However, male priests have soon enforced discriminatory views and thoughts about women, which are still preached within the contemporary Nichiren-shū priesthood (Mori 2003: 286-7).

⁷² Niwano Kōshō, the daughter of the current Rissshō kōseikai president, Niwano Nichiko, has already been designated as successor in the leadership of the organization. This shift from a male to a female leadership is expected to have an effect on the organizational structure and gendered practices within the group. Since presidency is lifelong (Guthrie 1988: 22), the passage is expected to take place after Niwano Nichiko's death. However, the current president has expressed the wish to leave the role earlier (information collected during fieldwork).

⁷³ Christianity traditionally does not allow its women adherents to become priests. During the second wave of feminism starting in the late 1960s several religious feminists worked for change to allow the ordination of women in the various Christian denominations (see for example the work of philosopher Mary Daly, 1973; and theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether, 1983). The Church of England voted to ordain women as priests in 1992

and bishops in 2008. However Roman Catholicism is still anchored to its traditional precepts and no access to hierarchical positions has been granted to women so far. For an analysis of the debate concerning the ordination of women in the Catholic Church see Raab (2000). For an examination of women in Christianity see Drury (1994).

⁷⁴ Extant qualitative studies show a male orientation in large NPOs and NGOs sponsored by Japanese New Religions (Kisala 1992; Watts 2004; Mukhopadhyaya 2005). In her examination of social activities sponsored by Rishshō kōseikai, Mukhopadhyaya (2005) finds that the majority of participants to *Akarui shakai zukuri undō* [The Movement for Creating a Brighter Society], which is incorporated as a non-profit organization (NPO), are men belonging to *danseikai* [men's association] (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 270). On the other hand, the majority of participants to *hōza* meetings (faith-based group discussions) are women members (ibid.), who engage in group discussions (the *hōza*) about daily-life problems whose solutions or concluding statement, called *musubi*, are derived from psychological and practical advice rationalized upon the teachings of the *Lotus sūtra* (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 270 and 444). This argument might suggest that there may be a relationship between Mukhopadhyaya's finding concerning women's participation to *hōza* meetings and the fact that women members tend to favour volunteer activities: it may suggest that they respond to everyday problems by initiating informal groups of volunteers to redress the social issues discussed in *hōza* meetings.

⁷⁵ The Introduction has given some information concerning the reasons for the problematic relationship between Japanese New Religions and the public opinion (see note 5). Because of such rooted scepticism on new religious movements, most New Religions include in their organizational structure teams and sections specifically tasked with providing an institutional interface with the public and for dealing with the media and academic researchers.

⁷⁶ The Global COE Program (2008-2012) is a continuation of the 21st Century CEO Program on Gender Law and Policy (2003-2008) based at the Tohoku University, the School of Law. The purpose of the Global COE Program is to clarify theory and policy issues related to gender-equal society. It aims at establishing a new field of research and education regarding 'Gender Equality and Multicultural Conviviality' in the era of globalization by deepening and developing research achievements of the 21st COE (Gender Law and Policy Centre) from the standpoint of integrating social science. The research topic of the present dissertation has been selected for the newly establish Cross-national Doctoral Course developed within the Global COE Program, which allows participants to attain double-degrees based on international tuitions. For further information see <http://www.law.tohoku.ac.jp/gcoe/en/> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

⁷⁷ Bunkachō (2009), p.74, p.67, p.76 respectively.

⁷⁸ Bunkachō 2009: 77.

⁷⁹ For a non-feminist theoretical discussion of the situated character of human understanding and communication see Lave and Wenger (1991).

⁸⁰ The vocabulary used in the analysis of questionnaire data to describe attributes of individuals, social context and consequences of volunteering is borrowed from Musick and Wilson's (2008). For a definition of concepts used in the methodological note see the above-mentioned work.

⁸¹ For a detailed analysis of resources influencing the propensity of volunteering see Musick and Wilson 2008: 119-47.

⁸² Information on Rishshō kōseikai draws mainly on the following sources: Inoue et al. 1994: 42-5, 120-1, 148-50, 185, 250-51, 320-1, 330, 370, 421-3, 442-3, 538-9, 584-5, 649-50; Mukhopadhyaya (2005); Inoue 2009: 211-13; Kisala (1992 and 1999); Watanabe (1968).

⁸³ Hardacre (1984) gives a detailed account of Reiyūkai kyōdan whose doctrine is based on the *Lotus sūtra*. The group was founded in 1920s and grew rapidly in Tokyo during the 1930s at a time of growing fear of the war in China. Members, who belonged mainly to middle and lower-middle classes, approached Reiyūkai kyōdan for its promises of practical benefits of pleasing the ancestors mainly by reciting the sutra and by self-cultivation. Niwano Nikkyō became a member of Reiyūkai at the age of 32. He later converted Naganuma Myōkō aged 47. Both left the movement when Reiyūkai kyōdan's national leadership criticized the *Lotus sūtra* (Guthrie 1988: 1). They were followed by some 30 of Niwano's converts and founded their own movement, Rishshō kōseikai (ibid.).

⁸⁴ Many New Religions founded in the nineteenth century were underpinned by folk religion and syncretistic cults conducive of women's extraordinary psychic powers (Shimazono 2005: 3). However, even religious groups founded or co-founded by women with extraordinary spiritual powers, once established tended to rely less on the shamanic character of founders (ibid.). Similarly, after the death of Naganuma Myōkō, when the leadership of Rishshō kōseikai was taken by co-founder Niwano Nikkyō, the doctrinal emphasis shifted from the shamanic component to a rationalistic exegesis (Guthrie 1988: 20).

⁸⁵ The prolonged attack on Rishshō kōseikai doctrine and finance in 1956 is known as the *Yomiuri jiken* [Yomiuri Affair]. For an account of it see Inoue et al. 1994: 538-9 and Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 191-4.

⁸⁶ Presidency of the group is lifelong and hereditary (Guthrie 1988: 22).

⁸⁷ President Niwano Nichiko's oldest daughter, Niwano Kōshō was born in Tokyo (1968-). After graduating with a degree in Law from Gakushuin University, she studied at Gakurin Seminary, the training institution for Rishshō

kōseikai leaders. Presently she acts as President-designate, making speeches for participants in the main ceremonies of Risshō kōseikai and handling activities for interfaith cooperation at home and abroad. She is married to Rev. Niwano Munehiro and she is mother of three daughters and one son. The information about Niwano Kōshō presented here was collected during the fieldwork and integrated with information available on the Risshō kōseikai official website. See <http://www.kosei-kai.or.jp/010gaiyo/0104/> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

⁸⁸ The Focolare movement is a lay organization founded in Italy in 1943. It was established by Chiara Lubich (1920-2008), who started off working with her companions to help people in bomb shelters in her neighbourhoods of the city of Trento, northern Italy. Though mainly Roman Catholic, the movement is involved in interreligious activities and has strong links to other Christian denominations as well as other religions and non-religious movements. The Focolare movement is recognized by the Vatican and is now present in 182 countries including Japan. The contacts with Risshō kōseikai started in 1979 when Chiara Lubich met Niwano Nikkyō in Japan. Information drawn upon the movement's official website <http://www.focolare.org/en> (last accessed on 30.9.2011). For a sociological analysis of the group see Callebaut (2010).

⁸⁹ The six-volume collection of Niwano Nikkyō's sermons and writings (Risshō kōseikai 1978) forms the basis of Risshō kōseikai's doctrine. The third volume contains a summary of the core teachings and it is used as the text for leadership training courses within the group. Mukhopadhyaya (2005) offers a detailed analysis of Risshō kōseikai doctrinal contents (2005: 228-59).

⁹⁰ Briefly, the One Vehicle idea of the *Lotus sūtra* aims to bring all sentient beings to the same state of enlightenment of the Buddha. It also considers the various teachings provided in other sutras as secondary or instrumental [*hōben*], although it acknowledges them as the Buddha's endeavour to communicate the truth of enlightenment in different ways. Therefore, the basic idea is that sutras are all equally important despite the differences (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 248-50). On the other hand, *konpon bukkyō* [fundamental Buddhism] is held to be the original form of Buddhism as it would have existed at the time of Gautama Buddha (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 244). Risshō kōseikai follows the teachings of the Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, Law of Twelve Causes and related doctrinal precepts considering them as part of *konpon bukkyō* (Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 245-8). These teachings are emphasized as means to practice the "truth" as manifested in the *Lotus sūtra* (*ibid.*). Although Risshō kōseikai is an offspring of Reiyūkai kyōdan (see note 82) which belongs to the Nichiren tradition of the *Lotus sūtra*, the main object of worship [*honzon*] at Risshō kōseikai headquarters is the statue of the Original Buddha Shakyamuni [*honbutsu shakuson*], rather than the *mandala* as it is in the Nichiren school. This fact reveals the prominence of *konpon bukkyō* in Risshō kōseikai doctrinal foundations.

⁹¹ Despite different doctrinal foundations, this view of social ethics taking a "universalistic approach" seems to be a common feature among many of the Japanese new religious movements. (Fujii 1994).

⁹² Niwano Nikkyō's interpretation of the *Lotus sūtra* teaches that people can change for the better and that all beings are equal (Niwano 1981: 10). This teaching implies the practice of striving to attain enlightenment not only for oneself, but for all sentient beings. The important implication of these concepts is that members are called to practice an ethic of daily life [*seikatsu rinri*] stressing the moral importance of everyday activities and the relationships within the family, workplace and neighbourhood (Kisala 1992: 84). Stone also analyzes the relationship between the *Lotus sūtra* and social ethic highlighting the effect on members' everyday life. See Stone 2003: 63-7.

⁹³ During the fieldwork some Risshō kōseikai informants talked about the *hōza* meetings in non-recorded conversations. They commented that in the meetings they find an informal atmosphere that makes them feel comfortable to talk about a wide range of problems, from family troubles to marriage arrangements, friendship, community issues, local and national election, international issues, science and many others. When asked how the problems raised were tackled, interviewees accounted that the *shunin*, the *hōza* leader, and other members give their personal opinion and discuss openly about it. Then the *hōza* leader ends the discussion reminding the teachings and practices of the *Lotus sūtra*, often addressing to the traditional norms and values of *senzo* [ancestors] or *onna no michi* [womanhood], including filial piety and other virtues determining ethical and moral codes in interpersonal relationships. Information from fieldwork notes collected on days 17 and 18.11.2009. Mukhopadhyaya gives detailed information about *hōza* (2005: 250-3).

⁹⁴ Mukhopadhyaya summarizes the development of the group's social engagement in a chart showing the type of activities initiated over the time (2005: 255).

⁹⁵ In 1978 Niwano Nikkyō founded the Niwano Peace Foundation to contribute to the realization of world peace and the enhancement of culture by promoting research and other activities. The profile of the organization available online states that the foundation is 'based on religious spirit'. See http://www.npf.or.jp/english/about_us.html (last accessed on 30.9.2011). For an analysis of Niwano Peace Foundation see Kisala 1992: 105-6. On Risshō kōseikai concept of peace see Kisala 1999: 107-11 and 124-37.

⁹⁶ 'Donate a Meal Campaign' asks Risshō kōseikai members who participate in the campaign to forgo one meal per day on particular days every month and donate the money saved to the Risshō kōseikai Peace Fund. See Risshō kōseikai Seinenbu Gaimūbu (2007). See also Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 198-9.

- ⁹⁷ For a detailed account of the Brighter Society Movement and its activities see Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 202-23.
- ⁹⁸ Information on facilities, social welfare activities and community-based volunteer activities was drawn upon works by Guthrie (1988), Kisala (1992), Stone (2003) and Mukhopadhyaya (2005). Information from these works was integrated with the following sources available online: the database of the Religious Information Research Center (RIRC) <http://www.rirc.or.jp/xoops/modules/xwords/entry.php?entryID=233&categoryID=5> (last accessed on 30.9.11); Rishshō kōseikai website (<http://www.kosei-kai.or.jp/030katsudo/>, last accessed on 30.9.2001). Materials published by Rishshō kōseikai collected during the fieldwork were also used to integrate the above works: Rishshō kōseikai overseas (ed.) (2004); Rishshō kōseikai Seinenbu Gaimūbu (2007); Rishshō kōseikai (ed.) (1998).
- ⁹⁹ Information on Fumon Kaikan is drawn upon fieldwork notes. See also Rishshō kōseikai website <http://www.kosei-kai.or.jp/050kyoten/0501/> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).
- ¹⁰⁰ Information on organizational structure was collected during introductory meetings with the head of Chūo Academic Research Institute and the vice-chief of Donate a Meal Movement, Rishshō kōseikai Social Welfare group. Further information was sourced from Rishshō kōseikai website available at <http://www.kosei-kai.or.jp/030katsudo/0308/> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).
- ¹⁰¹ For a layout of the structure of the religious organization see Inoue et al. 1994: 149.
- ¹⁰² Information of the structural organization of members described here was collected during the fieldwork. Similarly, information about the modes of interrelations between members of volunteer groups and the head organization was also collected during the fieldwork. Concerning the organizational structure, Watanabe (1968) also gives a detailed sociological account. Although it is not an up-to-date work, several characteristics of the organizational structure and the activities described in Watanabe's work have remained unchanged.
- ¹⁰³ The 2009 Religions Yearbook reports 19,864 male teachers and 63,190 female teachers (Bunkachō 2009: 75).
- ¹⁰⁴ Information on Shinnyoen is drawn mainly upon the following sources: Inoue et al 1994: 117-8, 167-8, 174-5, 187, 284-5, 315-6, 342-3, 355, 399-400, 436, 509, 636-7; Usui (2003); Nagai (1995); Hirota (1990); Honta (2003); Inose 2009: 196-8; the Religion Information Research Center <http://www.rirc.or.jp/xoops/modules/xwords/entry.php?entryID=305&categoryID=5> (last accessed on 30.9.2011). A previous unpublished research report on Shinnyoen based upon a fieldwork conducted in Tachikawa between 2002 and 2004 as a research student sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has also been sourced for the purpose of this section. The research work conducted in 2002-2004 focused on Shinnyoen female leadership and its influence on the organization, and was performed under the guidance of Shimazono Susumu, professor of Religious Studies, University of Tokyo.
- ¹⁰⁵ It is the *sesshin* that has been a crucial feature in the expansion of the movement, especially since the 1960s when the Japanese new religious movements seemed to play a role in giving individuals the emotional support that the family system used to play before the war (Shiramizu 1979: 424-5). About the function of the *sesshin* see also Inoue et al. 1994: 355.
- ¹⁰⁶ Information on activities of *reinōsha* collected during the 2002-2004 fieldwork. See also Nagai 1995: 304-5.
- ¹⁰⁷ According to the information collected during the fieldwork in 2002-2004, the two elder daughters Itō Eiko (born in 1933) and Itō Atsuko (born in 1940) left the family controversially. However, further accurate information on this matter was not available.
- ¹⁰⁸ The *Nirvāna sūtra*, is said to contain the last teachings of Gautama Buddha (Shiramizu 1979: 416).
- ¹⁰⁹ These characteristics of *Nirvāna sūtra* are seen in contrast to the impermanence, suffering, lack of selfhood and impurity of this world. See <http://www.shinnyo-en.or.jp/teachings/page01.html> (last accessed on 30/9/2010).
- ¹¹⁰ On Shinnyoen doctrine see Hirota (1990) and Honta (2003). See also Shinnyoen website at <http://www.shinnyo-en.or.jp/teachings/page01.html> (last accessed on 30/9/2011).
- ¹¹¹ The translation is given in Shinnyoen website at <http://www.shinnyoen.org/sesshin-training.html> (last accessed 30.9.2011).
- ¹¹² On Itō Tomoji's life and the "Seventeen regulations for Women" see Sakurai (1989).
- ¹¹³ Shinnyoen kyōgakubu 1998.
- ¹¹⁴ The image of a woman leader of a religious group drew the interest of the Italian media on the occasion of an exhibition organized by Shinnyoen in Milan in 2008. The weekly magazine 'D - La Repubblica delle Donne' published by *Repubblica*, the second largest circulation Italian daily newspaper, dedicated a long editorial to Itō Shinsō stressing her position as a married woman, spiritual leader at the top of a large religious organization and priest. See 'D - La Repubblica delle Donne', *Repubblica*, November 8th, 2008: 100-3. Similarly, the Italian edition of the monthly magazine *Marie Claire* also dedicated an article to her with a similar content. See *Marie Claire*, November, 2008: 158-64.
- ¹¹⁵ Information is drawn upon 2002-2004 fieldwork notes.
- ¹¹⁶ New adherents receive the rank of beginners called *shōjō* (literally 'small vehicle'). After recruiting a number of new members, donating a certain amount of money to the organization, graduating from Shinnyoen's courses

and volunteering, the new member can be promoted to the level of *daijō* [great vehicle]. Keeping a steady level of religious commitment measured in terms of monetary donation, proselytism, volunteering and religious education meet the requirements to access to the level of *kangi* [happiness]. The highest level an average adherent can reach is *daikangi* [great happiness], after which she or he can approach the lower rank of *reinōsha*. Information is drawn upon 2002-2004 fieldwork report. See also Inoue et al 1994: 167-8.

¹¹⁷ Information on *shūkai* [home meetings] was collected during the fieldwork in 2002-2004.

¹¹⁸ Information on the procedure of registration and related issues was collected during the fieldwork in 2002-2004.

¹¹⁹ Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka 2006: 1.

¹²⁰ Information is drawn upon the fieldwork conducted in Tachikawa and Tokyo in 2002-2004.

¹²¹ Information is drawn upon the fieldwork conducted in Tachikawa and Tokyo in 2002-2004.

¹²² According to the information collected in 2003 from an interview with a senior staff member at Tachikawa headquarters, at that time there were 1400 *reinōsha* active in all Japan (interview held on 22.10.2003). A slightly larger figure ranging between 1450 and 1500 *reinōsha* was suggested by the current manager of the Center for Information during an introductory meeting and a visit of Shinnyoen headquarters in November 2009. He also confirmed an average balance between male and female *reinōsha* (interview held on 6.11.2009).

¹²³ A survey on the number of spirit mediums indicates that 71% of them were introduced to the faith by women (Kawabata 1995: 153). As mentioned above, a high percentage of women claiming the role of lineage parent were also assessed during the survey conducted in 2002-2004. The information was confirmed by organizational staff of the Center for Information on Religion during the meeting at Shinnyoen headquarters on 6.11.2009.

¹²⁴ This information was collected during an interview with an informant held on 20.12.2009 and confirmed by a senior coordinator of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department –Youth Division on the same day.

¹²⁵ Accounts concerning the male/female ratio in performing rituals and ceremonies were collected through participant observation during the fieldwork in 2002-2004.

¹²⁶ Information collected during introductory meetings at Shinnyoen headquarters in October and November 2009. In general, all introductory meetings held at Shinnyoen headquarters in Tachikawa both in 2002-2004 and in 2009-2010 were always presented by solely male staff, confirming men's predominance in organizational positions.

¹²⁷ Information on activities contributing to the social is drawn upon interview data with the manager of the Center for Information on Religion; Shinnyoen official website <http://www.shinnyo-en.or.jp/activities/page01.html> (last accessed 30/9/2011); and materials collected during the fieldwork: Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka (2006); and Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka (2009). For a list of Shinnyoen-sponsored activities see also the Religious Information Research Center at <http://www.rirc.or.jp/xoops/modules/xwords/entry.php?entryID=305&categoryID=5> (last accessed 30.9.2011).

¹²⁸ SeRV is a volunteer relief network originally established in response to the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that struck Japan in 1995. In the quake's aftermath, 11,330 SeRV volunteers worked for seven months to bring relief to the area (<http://www.shinnyo-en.or.jp/closeup/release311.html> last accessed on 30.9.2011). According to the data available on Shinnyoen website, the intervention of SeRV volunteers in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake has not reached the same number of participants because of the governmental control measures against the nuclear leak from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (<http://www.shinnyo-en.or.jp/closeup/release311.html> last accessed on 30.9.2011). However the organization has provided a large quantity of food and materials to victims. Information on SeRV relief activities in response to the Great East Japan earthquake were verified between March 11th and September 30th, 2011. See <http://www.shinnyo-en.or.jp/closeup/release311.html> and <http://relief-volunteers.jp/blog/> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹²⁹ For example: The Ito Foundation for International Education Exchange (www.itofound.or.jp, last accessed 28.9.2011); Shinnyo-en Foundation (www.sef.org last accessed 28.9.2011) supporting educational programs with the aim of nurturing and inspiring young people to volunteering; Izumi Foundation (www.izumi.org last accessed on 28.9.2011) assisting the world's poorest people by supporting programs that improve health in developing countries; The Nā Lei Aloha Foundation (www.naleialoha.org last accessed on 30.9.2011) promoting intergenerational relationships, encouraging leadership development in underprivileged communities in Hawaii.

¹³⁰ Information on the history and doctrine of Catholicism is drawn upon the following works: Filoramo (1998); Khoury (ed.) (2002); Yoshida 2003: 199-204; Pace (2007); Inose 2009: 205-7. Information on the Roman Catholic Church in Japan is mainly drawn from the following sources: Mullins (1998); Mullins (ed.) (2003); Spae (1968); Yamaguchi (2003); Drury (1994). General information was also sourced from the official website of the Roman Catholic Church: <http://www.cbcj.catholic.jp> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹³¹ Christianity was banned in 1614 because it was seen by the Tokugawa shogunate (1615-1867) as a threat to national security, who feared foreign traders and missionaries would destabilize the country (Miyazaki 2003: 12). It remained proscribed until 1873 when Meiji restoration removed the boards proscribing the *Kirishitan* [Christianity] and abolished the *danka* family registration system by which every resident of a certain area had to

be registered to a designated Buddhist temple (Miyazaki 2003: 14-7). Moreover, in 1884 the Japanese government abolished Shintō and Buddhist privileges and the new Constitution of February 11, 1889 granted religious freedom (Spae 1963: 10). As Shimazono (2004) demonstrates, it was only after the mid-nineteen century that Christianity regained its role as a living religion in Japanese society (Shimazono 2004: 16). Ballhatchet (2003) comments that the resistance of a hidden Christianity for more than two centuries should be linked to the philanthropic emphasis of Catholicism (2003: 41). The author also notes that converts were likely to be attracted more by 'Catholic compassion of the poor, by its concern for the dead and liturgical and decorative similarities with Buddhism, than by its links with the new world view introduced as a result of the opening treaty ports' (ibid.).

¹³² For a detailed account of development of Christianity in this period see Mullins 1998: 1-30.

¹³³ The Roman Catholic Church has an estimated worldwide number of adherents of about 884 million, which corresponds to the 57% of the entire Christian population (Filoramo 1998: 220). Data released by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan in 2010 give a figure of 448,440 believers (data are available online at <http://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/jpn/data/st10/statistics2010.pdf>, last accessed on 30.9.2011), which corresponds to the 0.353% of the entire Japanese population (ibid).

¹³⁴ The head pastor of St. Ignatius Church was of this opinion when asked during a conversation in his office on 4.11.2009.

¹³⁵ The information concerning the structure of Roman Catholic Church in Japan is drawn upon the *Statistics of the Catholic Church of Japan 2010* released by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan. See <http://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/jpn/data/st10/statistics2010.pdf> (last accessed on 30.9.2011). For the number of dioceses and churches see pp.1-2.

¹³⁶ Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan 2010: 5.

¹³⁷ Information on the changes that the Roman Catholic Church in Japan underwent upon the renewal brought about by the Second Vatican Council is drawn from the official account released by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan. See <http://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/eng/ehistory/jphis.htm> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹³⁸ On November 9th, 2009 the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan published the *Guidelines on Interreligious Dialogue for Catholics in Japan*. The book addresses the fact that Catholics are a minority in Japan, and, therefore, both Japanese and foreign Catholics based in Japan may find it difficult to deal with native cultural and social customs. The book intends to give Japanese Catholics and foreign Catholics a set of guidelines to follow on how to make contacts with followers of various Japanese religions and attend other religions' events. The publication of this book shows an attempt from the Roman Catholic Church of Japan to foster a process of indigenization of the religion. Historically, although several attempts have been made by Japanese Christians to indigenize Christianity and make it an attractive option for the Japanese, exclusive devotion to one divinity, as required to Christians, is the more likely reason behind the little growth of this faith in Japan (Davis 1992: 67). Christian faith based on exclusive belief in one transcendent god may be seen as one major difference between mainstream syncretistic religiosity of Japan and Christianity, with the exception of certain Japanese native new religious movements (Mullins 1998: 198-9). Especially after the Aum shinrikyō affair, a negative opinion on religions requiring exclusivist faith has been spreading (Shimazono 1995b: 440-1). Although most New Religions with large membership, such as Shinnyoen and Risshō kōseikai, encourage their adherents toward an extensive active participation, they allow them to maintain their family religion for worshipping their ancestors and cultural continuity (information collected during the fieldwork).

¹³⁹ Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan 2010: 1.

¹⁴⁰ Information concerning lay women's roles in the church and elsewhere in Japan was collected during a meeting held with Mngr. Léon B. Kalenga, general secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature, on July 8th, 2007. Similar information was also given by the head pastor of St. Ignatius Church on November 4th, 2009.

¹⁴¹ Inoue (2011) asserts that the 80% of educational facilities in Japan sponsored by religious organizations belong to Christian denominations (2011: 113). The statistics released in 2010 by Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan count a total of 853 educational facilities. The majority are kindergartens (534), followed by high schools (113) and middle schools (102). There are a total of 21 universities. See Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan 2010: 4. The Religious Information Research Centre gives a full list of Christian-related educational facilities as well as facilities sponsored by other religions. See <http://www.rirc.or.jp/xoops/modules/xlinks/> (last accessed on 30.8.2011).

¹⁴² The outline of the social contribution of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan described in this section is drawn upon information available on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan in the section 'The Catholic Church in Japan Today: Social action of the Church in Japan', <http://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/eng/ehistory/jphis.htm#5> (last accessed on 30.9.2011). Information is integrated with the works of Spae (1963), who gives a detailed account charities and welfare institutions established in during modern Japan (Spae 1963: 25-30); Endō (2003); and Inose (2009).

¹⁴³ Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan 2010: 3.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Information on grassroots volunteer activities was provided by Mngr. Léon B. Kalenga, general secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature, on July 8th, 2007. Participant observation during the fieldwork further confirmed the large engagement of lay Catholics in community-based volunteer activities.

¹⁴⁶ Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan 2010: 8.

¹⁴⁷ As commented by the head pastor of St. Ignatius Church during a conversation held on November 4th, 2009. This male-orientation in leading positions was also observed during the fieldwork at St. Ignatius Church.

¹⁴⁸ Information on organizational structure, membership and gender ratio of Itabashi Church was provided by Itabashi Church staff and collected during the survey in 2009-2010. Additional information is drawn upon a special issue on Itabashi Church published by Risshō kōseikai in 1992: *Risshō kōseikai Itabashi kyōkai nyūbutsu rakkei kinen – towa* [Special Issue for the Installation of the new Buddha statue in Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church] (1992), Kōsei Publisher.

¹⁴⁹ Risshō kōseikai 1992: 18.

¹⁵⁰ Information provided by Itabashi Church staff during the survey in 2009-2010.

¹⁵¹ Risshō kōseikai 1992: 22.

¹⁵² Activity attended on December 22nd, 2010 at a local hospital hosting a geriatric ward in Itabashi.

¹⁵³ Information drawn upon participant observation.

¹⁵⁴ Volunteer counselling service has a long established history among the social activities for the local community provided by Risshō kōseikai. According to the Risshō kōseikai website (<http://www.kosei-kai.or.jp/030katsudo> last accessed on 30.9.2011), a Counselling Research Centre was founded in 1975. It currently offers training courses free of charge for everyone (including non-Risshō kōseikai members) wishing to become a counsellor. By 2010 more than 800 people had obtained the qualification of counsellors, working thereafter as local counsellor in local Risshō kōseikai church or in their areas. Every Risshō kōseikai church usually counts the presence of one trained counsellor (information collected at Itabashi church on 19.11.2009). Counsellors deal mainly with problems related to family and children issues, difficulties in interrelating with others, psychological distress, health problems and legal problems. See <http://www.kosei-kai.or.jp/030katsudo> (last accessed on 9.9.2011).

¹⁵⁵ Information on organizational structure, membership and gender ratio of Kawagoe Church was provided by church staff and collected during the survey in 2009-2010.

¹⁵⁶ The outline of parenting classes displayed in the organization's website (<http://www.kosei-kai.or.jp/030katsudo/0308/030809/>) gives information on the rationale for these courses, mainly the deteriorating social environment where several factors including a trend toward low birth rate and an increased number of divorces are to the detriment of children. The educational goal of this course is, therefore, to emphasize families' responsibility of redressing the problems by promoting women's childrearing and educational role. The goal of those classes is supporting mothers by teaching them how to rear and educate their children, and face daily life's problems drawing upon the group's doctrine. See <http://www.kosei-kai.or.jp/030katsudo/0308/030809/> (last accessed 30.9.2011).

¹⁵⁷ Information about the activities and the membership of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department – Youth Division was collected during the fieldwork. Observation was further integrated by information provided by a member of permanent staff of the Shinnyoen-sponsored Center for Information on Religions at Shinnyoen headquarters in Tachikawa city on 11.3.2010.

¹⁵⁸ Information on Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department is drawn from information and materials collected during the fieldwork: Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka (2006); Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka (2009).

¹⁵⁹ According to the 2009 *Shinnyoen shakai kōken katsudō repōto* [Shinnyoen Social Contribution Activities Report], the Social Contribution Activities Managing Unit [*shakai kōken tantō busho*] was established in response to two events that happened in 1995 (Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka 2009: 20). The first was the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in January, to which Shinnyoen volunteers gave an important contribution which raised the interest of public opinion on the role of religious organization in civil society. On the other hand, the sarin gas attack to the Tokyo underground by Aum shinrikyō members in March of the same year reduced the effect of this trend. In order to redress this tendency, Shinnyoen established the Social Contribution Activities Managing Unit, which has the role of examining the potentiality of the social role of the religious organization in terms of social contribution while carefully evaluating the interrelations and cooperation with public facilities and recipients. See Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka 2009: 20.

¹⁶⁰ Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka 2009: 19.

¹⁶¹ An NPO sponsored by Shinnyoen is in charge of the management of Ome no mori forest. The NPO runs projects for environment protection and reforestation, and holds several activities for the public to develop awareness about forest preservation. Shinnyoen Social Welfare – Youth Division members are required to assist the activities sponsored by the NPO as guides or by helping during the phases of reforestation. For an outline of

the Ome forest and the NPO in charge of it see <http://www.jeef.or.jp/oume/index.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁶² Information on activities and the membership of Univers Foundation Tokyo were collected during the survey in Tachikawa. Staff of Univers Foundation Tokyo office also supplied a written outline (unpublished document) concerning the history of the group, membership, and activities.

¹⁶³ Univers Foundation 2007: 2.

¹⁶⁴ Univers Foundation 2007: 1.

¹⁶⁵ See Univers Foundation 2007: 6-9.

¹⁶⁶ The information is available online at the Univers Foundation website: <http://www.univers.or.jp/volunteer%20michigan-Sendai%20outline.pdf> (last accessed 10.10.11).

¹⁶⁷ Eight men and 153 women volunteers are registered at Univers Volunteers Kobe while Univers Volunteers Niigata has to 4 men and 50 women volunteers. Information supplied by permanent staff of Univers Foundation Tokyo (January 2010).

¹⁶⁸ Two women are employed at Univers Volunteers Kobe; and Univers Volunteers Niigata is managed by one woman.

¹⁶⁹ Information St. Ignatius Church activities and the targeted group Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama was collected during the fieldwork. Additional information was supplied by the head pastor of St. Ignatius Church during three meetings held on 4.11.2009, 12.12.2009 and 19.12.2009, and some other informal discussions during the fieldwork. Surveyed respondents provided details on membership, frequency rate of activities, outcomes and problems of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama. Information on the relationship with local authorities, social welfare agencies, antipoverty NPOs and other volunteer groups was provided by Mr. Iwata Tetsuo, a professional social worker cooperating regularly with Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama, and by respondents during the interviews. Further information on available public services and opportunities for homeless is drawn from the 2009 publication *Rojō dasshutsu gaido: Tokyo 23 kuhen* [How to get away from the street: Tokyo 23 wards] published by Rojō dasshutsu gaido sakusei iinkai ["How to get away from the street" Committee], which is based on two anti-poverty NPOs located in Tokyo: The Big Issue Foundation and the "Moyai" Support Centre for Independent Life. Two regular publications by Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama, the weekly newsletter *Onigiri tūshin*, and the quarterly publication *Onigiri dayori* published between November 2009 and March 2010 were also sourced for information on services and modalities of support. Copies of the publications are available online at <http://onigiri-nakama.sakura.ne.jp/> (last accessed on 30.9.2011). Information on the code of behaviour and ethical rules that Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama members are required to observe were detailed by respondents during the interviews and integrated by the list available on the group official website at <http://onigiri-nakama.sakura.ne.jp/>.

¹⁷⁰ Masses at St. Ignatius Church are given in Japanese with sign language, as well as Vietnamese, English, Spanish, Indonesian and Polish. See <http://www.ignatius.gr.jp/eng/about/mass.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011). Events are scheduled once or twice a week and cover a wide range of themes from recreational happenings to religious-related conferences, seminars and meetings. See <http://www.ignatius.gr.jp/eng/events/calendar.html> (last accessed on 10.9.2011). A list of volunteer groups and social activities is available at <http://www.ignatius.gr.jp/kaku-group/group-new.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011), dealing mainly with religious-related activities, social contribution and management of parish activities. Details of these groups are given in this section.

¹⁷¹ Information collected on November 4th, 2009 during a conversation with the head pastor of St. Ignatius Church.

¹⁷² Data concerning St. Ignatius Church membership was provided by the head pastor of the church and it is also available online: http://www.ignatius.gr.jp/info/hou_10/10_02.html (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁷³ Information provided by the head pastor of the church on December 20th, 2010.

¹⁷⁴ Information on activities concerning interreligious dialogue was further confirmed by the head pastor of St. Ignatius Church during a meeting on November 4th, 2009.

¹⁷⁵ Information on the history of the church was provided by the head pastor on December 20th, 2010. Further information was drawn from the official website of the archdiocese of Tokyo at <http://www.tokyo.catholic.jp/text/eng/churches/kojimachi.htm> (last accessed 30.9.2011).

¹⁷⁶ Information on the history of the social activities is drawn from the official website of the archdiocese of Tokyo at <http://www.tokyo.catholic.jp/text/eng/churches/kojimachi.htm> (last accessed 10.9.2011).

¹⁷⁷ See <http://www.ignatius.gr.jp/kaku-group/group-new.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2010).

¹⁷⁸ Information provided by head pastor of St. Ignatius Church on November 4th, 2009.

¹⁷⁹ Information on the foundation and development of the group was provided by the head pastor of St. Ignatius Church and integrated with information available on the group's website at <http://onigiri-nakama.sakura.ne.jp/> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁸⁰ Confirmed by respondents in several occasions and observed during the fieldwork.

¹⁸¹ Information collected on November 4th, 2009 during a meeting with the head pastor of St. Ignatius Church. Participant observation also confirmed such frequency rate.

¹⁸² Information provided by the head of the church on November 4th, 2009.

¹⁸³ This expression, recorded during participant observation, was used by some of the homeless waiting in Yotsuya Park.

¹⁸⁴ The other three rules require paying emotional as well as practical attention to the recipient; speaking in a friendly way by giving the recipient all the time they need; and avoiding discrimination and treating all the homeless with the same respect. The four ethical rules and the thirteen codes of behaviour are listed in the Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama website <http://onigiri-nakama.sakura.ne.jp/> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁸⁵ Information provided by the head of the church on 4.11.2009

¹⁸⁶ Data and information reported by the head pastor of the church on December 20th, 2010.

¹⁸⁷ A bulletin published online by Univers Foundation Tokyo on 19.9.2005 explains in detail the relationship between the foundation and Tachikawa City Council vis-à-vis other institutions in Tachikawa city. See Univers Foundation Tokyo Yuai netto (2005). *Tachikawa de keicho borantia (yuai homon) o kaishi*, [Starting the caring listener volunteer (home visit) service in Tachikawa], p.3. Available online at <http://www.univers.or.jp/volunteer/ui%20ivns.pdf> (last accessed 10.10.11).

¹⁸⁸ For a discussion of the relationship between life course stages and volunteering see Musick and Wilson 2008: 221-66.

¹⁸⁹ Most available statistics are related to Risshō kōseikai. See Mukhopadhyaya 2005: 392-400; and Kisala 1999: 191-210. There is also a survey conducted in 2008 by Risshō kōseikai-sponsored Niwano Peace Foundation on 1,233 members across Japan. See www.npf.or.jp/news/attitude_survey_for_religion.pdf (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁹⁰ Chiyoda ward, where St. Ignatius Church is located, is a rather small area of 11.62 km², with a relatively low population density of 3,589 people per km². It hosts several administrative offices, embassies, agencies, companies and divisions of foreign companies. See *Chiyoda ku, Gyōsei kiso shiryōshū* [Government basic data on Chiyoda City], published by Chiyoda City Hall, August 2010. Available online at <http://www.city.chiyoda.tokyo.jp/service/00121/d0012171.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2010).

¹⁹¹ There are 78 churches in Tokyo 23 wards, Chiba and Tama (http://www.tokyo.catholic.jp/eng_frame.html), last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁹² Risshō kōseikai counts 33 branch churches in the Tokyo metropolitan area and 15 in Saitama prefecture (<http://www.kosei-kai.or.jp/050kyoten/0501/>), last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁹³ Shinnyoen comprises 4 centres in the Tokyo metropolitan area and holds 2 main buildings in Tachikawa: the main Ogen-in temple and training centre opened in 2006, also site of Shinnyoen headquarters and the former headquarter building. See http://map.shinnyo-en.or.jp/ja/jp_kanto.html (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁹⁴ See Chapter 3: 'Measures to be implemented comprehensively and systematically for the next five years - Basic Direction 2: Developing people's basic strengths to live the lives of independent citizens and members of society, through ability-building on the basis of respect for individuality, Section 2: Fostering social awareness'.

¹⁹⁵ Data published by National Institute of Population and Social Security Research show the time-series changes of women's rate of advancement to senior high school, junior college and university (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2008: 127). Women aged 20-24 graduating from university increased from 10.9% in 1970 to 36.4% in 2000. The difference widens with those aged 25-29 increasing from 9.8% in 1970 to 49.2% in 2000; and those aged 30-34 increasing from 6.8% in 1970 to 43.8% in 2000. See <http://www.ipss.go.jp/p-info/e/psj2008/PSJ2008-11.pdf> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁹⁶ Data available online at World Value Survey in the section Japan: 'V31 Active/Inactive membership of a charitable/humanitarian organization, crossed with education and sex variables'. See <http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSanalyzeQuestion.jsp> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁹⁷ Information on the typology of residence areas in Kawagoe city is drawn upon a report published by Yomiuri newspaper in 2008 in the online magazine 'Perigee'. It offers a description of urbanized areas along the Tōbu Tōjō train line connecting Ikebukuro ward (Tokyo) and Kawagoe city (Saitama Prefecture). The map shows typical resident character in terms of age and household composition. See <http://www.yomiuri-is.co.jp/perigee/report08.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁹⁸ Data on population and density of Tachikawa city are available online at http://www.city.tachikawa.lg.jp/cms-sypher/open_imgs/service/0000000030_0000015055.pdf (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

¹⁹⁹ Several interviewees referred to Naganuma Myōko, the co-founder of Risshō kōseikai, when discussing the image of women promoted by this organization. Myōko-sensei, as interviewees called her, emphasized the role of women as family carers and mothers. She supported the value of *onna rashisa* (women-like) stressing the importance of women in the management of the family and in the education of children. Myōko's teachings on women's roles are the main source of the Parenting Classes, which are very popular among married women looking for advice and directions on how to rear their children and deal with family issues.

²⁰⁰ According to the White Paper on Gender Equality 2009, women's expectations for working style varies according to their marriage or child-rearing age (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 29). For example 90% of those who have junior high school children or older wish to work (*ibid.*). What women consider to be helpful is a labour system offering flexible working styles, as well an external support system for balancing work and household activities including housekeeping, childcare and family care (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 13).

²⁰¹ Several factors may have influence on individuals' preferences and choices through socialization and past experiences, and religious involvement also falls under the rubric of socialization. According to Sherkat (2003), education and family are important agents of influence in religious socialization (2003: 155-62). Family affiliation to a Buddhist temple where family gravesites are located, or family members registered at a Buddhist temple (*danka*) or Shintō shrine, is a contextual reason for individuals to conform to value orientations and religious responsibilities or roles that are generated by that. Pre-existing family affiliation to a Buddhist temple or Shintō shrine may, for example, have an effect in channelling children's religious preferences (Sherkat 2003: 156). In adulthood, individuals may choose a religious attitude based on example-setting motivations (Sherkat 1997: 74). People may assume a certain religious attitude to show others a particular image of themselves or to provide an example to those who are close to them (*ibid.*). Sherkat stresses the importance of focusing on family processes, pre-existing ties with religious organizations, friendship and kinship networks and education in explaining how an ideologically structured action may be maintained or remodelled (*ibid.*).

²⁰² An overview of membership distribution among Buddhist organizations in Japan shows groups related to Jōdō (Pure Land) school accounting for the majority of adherents with over 19 million people. The second largest group is represented by Nichiren-related religious organizations with almost 15 million adherents; groups related to Shingon school account for approximately 10 million members; Tendai-related organizations have more than 3 million adherents; and Zen-related schools account for less than 2 million members (Bunkachō 2009: 46-7). The above figures include memberships in new religious movements as they are accounted for within the lineage of the traditional schools.

²⁰³ For a discussion on Risshō kōseikai's beliefs on ancestors see Kisala 1994: 73-91.

²⁰⁴ See Nagai 1995.

²⁰⁵ Swyngedouw (1993) suggests the idea of Japanese religiousness as *musubi*-faith, which has the connotation of strengthening the solidarity, *wa* (harmony) of the community (1993: 62-3).

²⁰⁶ The discussion was held during three preliminary meetings that took place in October 2009 with the representatives and coordinators of volunteer groups of the three targeted religious organizations.

²⁰⁷ Shimazono (2009) commented that after World War II, large-scale welfare or environmental improvement activities and peace movements were begun by many religious organizations. The most notable in terms of scale is the peace movement by Risshō kōseikai, to which many members contribute with activities at a local level. See Shimazono (2009). For a history of Risshō kōseikai Fund for Peace established in 1974 see Risshō kōseikai (1998).

²⁰⁸ According to Musick and Wilson (2008), the younger generations tend to be less interested in routine forms of volunteering, while favouring a kind of 'high risk activism' (Musick and Wilson 2008: 223). Although the authors associate this kind of attitude mainly with protest movements, it is argued here that a non-contentious form of "risk activism" can denote international volunteering as well. Organizations operating in developing countries and international anti-poverty movements tend to deal with people in precarious conditions. This may be conveyed to the volunteers as well, who can in this way account for their volunteering in international organizations as routine-challenging, thus somehow as a risk-taking activity. This is all the more true when volunteers travel to the recipients' locations to perform their volunteer activities, a goal to which the majority of the respondents in this study aspired during the interviews.

²⁰⁹ Data reported in Table 80 of the survey concern the frequency rate to volunteer activities with breakdown of age and sex.

²¹⁰ During a meeting at Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church on November 20th, 2009, the responsible of volunteer activities explained that their elderly care service was first organized in 1999, initially as a service for old Risshō kōseikai member living in Itabashi ward. In doing so, Risshō kōseikai volunteers started cooperating with employees of public service, developing a full service for all elderly living in the area. However, Risshō kōseikai volunteers stress the fact that their service is not a substitute for the public one, although Risshō kōseikai volunteers now work autonomously, provided that they submit regular reports to the local public office.

²¹¹ A generalized expectation that in case of future need somebody else will return the kindness ('generalized reciprocity', Musick and Wilson 2008: 97), or that they might need the same kind of help from that person tomorrow ('particularized reciprocity', Musick and Wilson 2008: 99) may also motivate kindness and altruistic actions, thus generating forms of interpersonal trust.

²¹² For an overview of prewar and postwar legal framework of religions in Japan see Hardacre (2003a).

²¹³ For an account of Shinnyoen international social contribution activities see Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka 2009. For Risshō kōseikai international activities see Risshō kōseikai (1998). For the Roman Catholic Church in Japan see Episcopal Commission for Social Activities <http://www.jade.dti.ne.jp/~jpi/index.html> and the Caritas Japan <http://www.caritas.jp/english/index.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

²¹⁴ About the Long-Term Care Insurance System see note 18.

²¹⁵ The New Civil Code of 1947 gave all members of the family, in principle, equal rights and primogeniture was abandoned. However, household practices continued to reflect the *ie* customs giving the male head of the family authority over the others in the post-war years. See Ronald and Alexy 2011: 3-5.

²¹⁶ Japanese bureaucrats have long suffered a decline in trust from the general public because of their recurrent involvements in unfair actions, such as favourable treatments for their clients, concealment of medical information and bribery (Etō 2005: 320). In order to restore public confidence in the bureaucracy, since the late 1990s the government have started attempting to communicate with ordinary citizens and integrate popular opinion into the local policy-making process (Etō 2005: 320). However, as a legacy of such discourses, a common view of bureaucrats as people working for the state [*okuni no tame*] is still denoted by somewhat derogatory connotations.

²¹⁷ The first special program by NHK (Japanese Broadcast Television) titled *Muen Shakai* was aired on January 31st, 2010. The NHK website translates *muen* as 'disconnected', although a literal translation would render it as 'non-connected'. The expression 'disconnected' may imply a process from a connected into a disconnected condition, while 'non-connected' would deny such pre-connected situation. Since the programme focused mainly on old people detached from their families, living and dying alone in highly urbanized areas, editors probably aimed at emphasizing the process of increasing social disconnection rather than a complete lack of relatedness. The programme earned a large number of positive feedbacks, which brought NHK to air two new specials in February 2011 exploring the increasing lack of social ties and relatedness caused by being single, divorced or unemployed. See the <http://www.nhk.or.jp/special/onair/100131.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

²¹⁸ See Kōsei rōdōsho (2009). Specifically, Chapter 4: 'Jinkō genshō shakai no tōrai fumaeta shōshika taisaku no suishin' [Promotion of Comprehensive Measures to Reverse the Birth Rate Decline in a Society with a Decreasing Population].

²¹⁹ Avenell (2009) explains how the state promoted an idea of women volunteers as mainly contributing to the domains of eldercare (Avenell 2009: 270) and childcare (Avenell 2010: 78). The 2008 White Paper on Gender Equality reports that the majority of volunteers in charge of childcare activities are women (Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2008: 15).

²²⁰ Although this is mainly O-san's impression expressed during the interview, other respondents also engaged in community activities reported about O-san's style, which sometimes disoriented the others. The information was collected during an occasional conversation held on November 5th, 2009 with two mothers participating in an activity organized by the local PTA group.

²²¹ In 1979 the American naturalist Joseph Cornell published the book *Sharing Nature with Children* including a series of activities created to experience nature using the five senses. Japan Nature Game Association was founded in Japan as a NPO in 1997 following the spirit of the American association 'Sharing the Nature'. The Japanese NPO counts hundreds of locally self-managed groups around Japan. For the Japan Nature Game Association see <http://www.naturegame.or.jp/index.html>. For the American site see <http://www.sharingnature.com/index.php> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

²²² Naikakufu, Danjo kyōdō sankaku kyoku 2009: 27.

²²³ World Values Survey, Online Data Analysis, Japan: "V60-Being a housewife just fulfilling", <http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSanalyzeQuestion.jsp> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

²²⁴ Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka 2006: 20. The head-manager of the Shinnyoen-related Center for Information on Religion also confirmed a trend towards increased targeted locations during a conversation held on November 6th, 2009.

²²⁵ Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka 2006: 20.

²²⁶ Shinnyoen sōgo kikakubu shakai kōryūka 2009: 20.

²²⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 3, an NPO sponsored by Shinnyoen is in charge of the management of the forest. The NPO runs projects for environment protection and reforestation, and holds several activities for the public to develop awareness about forest preservation. Members of Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department can assist any of the activities sponsored by the NPO. For an outline of the Ome forest and the NPO in charge of it see <http://www.jeef.or.jp/oume/index.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).

²²⁸ For an analysis of this argument see Musick and Wilson 2008: 459-85.

²²⁹ The role and the position of the researcher in this survey have been discussed in Chapter 2.

²³⁰ Hook and Takeda (2007) explain that English readers may not be familiar with the expression 'self-responsibility' since it is the translation of the Japanese *jiko sekinin* where the prefix "self" identifies the locus of responsibility in the individual in contrast to group responsibility [*rentai sekinin*]. See Hook and Takeda 2007: 93.

²³¹ Sōmushō (2010). See table 1-B-14 'Shokugyō jōtai haigū kankei, nenrei kaikyūbetsu josei no 15 ijō jinkō' [Table 1-B-14 Females of 15 years old or more by labour force status, marital status, age].

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Nihon Keizai Shinbun (evening issue), 4.4.2010, p.9.

²³⁴ See the group homepage at <http://group-ookinaki.com/kaigohoken/index.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011)

²³⁵ The Seikatsu [Life] Consumers' Club Cooperative Union [Life Club in short] is an organisation established in 1965 by Kunio Iwane and other sympathizers of the Socialist Party. Initially Iwane envisaged creating a mixed gender movement in Tokyo. However, the Co-op that has developed since then draws upon housewives mainly. The association places emphasis on direct producer/consumer and pursues goals of moderating and humanising the market, along with sustainability and environmental campaigns like the 3Rs: Reduce/Reuse/Recycle. It operates on two basic principles: the democratic autonomous management encouraging all members to participate and to maintain a close cooperative relation between Life Club members and producers. The club is organised in *han* (a local unit of about eight people). Each *han* elects a representative to its branch consisting of between 50 and 100 *han*, which in turn develops its own agenda and sends representatives to the General Assembly to set policy and elect the Life Club's Board of Directors. The homepage of the Life Consumers' Club Cooperative Union (SC) offers extended information about the cooperative and data. See <http://www.seikatsuclub.coop> (last accessed on 30.9.2011). For an analysis of the movement see Sato (1994). See also E. Lam (1999), *Green politics in Japan*, London and New York: Routledge.

²³⁶ Yoritomo (1998) analyzes the contribution of the Life Club to discussion of the environmentally friendly policy, focusing on the participation of bureaucrats to meetings and gatherings sponsored by the group to hear women's opinion about the matter. Etō (2001a and 2001b) offers an analysis of the role Life Club in communicating with bureaucrats responsible for drafting bills concerning welfare services for the elderly and environmentally friendly policy.

²³⁷ Etō (2002) explains that in the 1980s the idea that social welfare services could be managed through market incentives became important in social policy debates, but Life Club was the first organization to succeed in putting it into practice.

²³⁸ The presence of a foreign researcher interviewing her may have incurred the generalization of 'Japanese people' in F-san's narration.

²³⁹ About the Long-term Care Insurance System see note 18.

²⁴⁰ See for example Nishizawa (2011); Gill (2005); and Kennet and Iwata (2003).

²⁴¹ Stevens (1997) gives a detailed account on the role of Christian adherents in volunteering for the urban underclass in Yokohama and offers an analysis of Christian-based groups in this volunteer domain. Inoue et al. (1999) also mention the role of Christian denominations in activities against social discrimination. See Inoue et al. 1999: 587.

²⁴² For example, social activist Yuasa Makoto, who organized the *toshikoshi haken mura* [tent village] for jobless people in Tokyo's Hibiya Park at the year-end of 2008, started volunteering for the homeless in 1995 and then founded the 'Independent Life Support Center Moyai' in 2001. Yuasa Makoto is a regular advisor of Yotsuya Onigiri Nakama and many members of the volunteer group have joined his NPO in the project of the tent village and other activities. In his analysis of urban underclass Yuasa (2008) notes that neo-liberal reforms of the employment system and the subsequent increase in job loss and insecure employment have generated a growing number of individuals who are unable to access welfare networks due to low income. He calls this the 'sliding society'.

²⁴³ This finding suggests a parallel with the analysis of the social security system in the United States suggested by Fraser and Gordon (1994). They discuss that there are two different types of social security provision, with first-track recipients, such as elderly and unemployed, being offered aid as an entitlement, in terms of having back what they have given before. The second-track public assistance programmes, e.g. targeting children and minorities, are funded from general tax revenues rather than wage deductions, therefore creating an appearance of getting something for nothing (Fraser and Gordon 1994: 322). This last system created a 'welfare dependency' in that in order to get aid recipients have to go through close checks by the social security officers, which in turn creates a sort of stigma on recipients of second-track programmes (Fraser and Gordon 1994: 323). In summary, the economic dependency developed by the social security system fosters a moral/psychological dependency that enforced a negative connotation (ibid.). In these terms, the Japanese unemployed who become economically dependent on the Japanese security system are denoted negatively because state discourses have not recognized poverty until recent times (Ōsawa 2011b: 29-30). This late recognition has meanwhile generated the opinion the unemployed have not given enough to the economy at large to be entitled to aid. In contrast, the Japanese favour eldercare as they represent first-track recipients according to state discourses, having concluded their working career, which entitles them to have back (both economically and morally) what they have already given. Therefore, the unemployed, as second-track recipients, tend to become the most vulnerable to cuts and blame, as Yuasa (2008) suggests in his works.

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- ²⁴⁴ World Values Survey, Online Data Analysis, Japan: 'V168 - Most serious problem for own country: 1st choice', <http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSanalyzeQuestion.jsp> (last accessed on 14.4.2011)
- ²⁴⁵ World Values Survey, Online Data Analysis, Japan: 'E131 - Why are people in need', <http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSanalyzeQuestion.jsp> (last accessed on 14.4.2011)
- ²⁴⁶ See Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2011b. The proportion was based on the number of student enrolled in faculty of humanities. When comparing the number of students pursuing postgraduate degree in humanities, enrolled in 2009, there is an inverted trend, with a majority of female students (259.211) against 130.387 male students. See data on p.713.
- ²⁴⁷ Professor Ōsawa discussed the consequences of Koizumi's structural reforms and the impact on the level of poverty in Japan during the White Rose Research Centre Distinguished Lecture held on March 4th, 2011 at the University of Sheffield. The argument is discussed in her edited book, see Ōsawa (2011b).
- ²⁴⁸ For an account of the project from the point of view of the organizer, see Yuasa (2009). For an analysis of the *haken-mura* in Tokyo see Assmann and Maslow (2010).
- ²⁴⁹ Information about the *tento tekkyo jiken* [the tent removal affair] was provided on 21 November, 2009 by Mr Iwata Tetsuo who was mentioned in Chapter 3.
- ²⁵⁰ See for example Nikkei Sangyō Shinbun, 5.1.2009, 'Seizōgyō chūshin juyō gekigen' [The request for workers has dropped sharply]; Nihon Keizai Shinbun, 12.2.2009, 'Koyō no anzenmō kakujū kyūmu' [The urgency of increasing conditions for stable employment]; The Japan Times, 6.1.2009, 'Hibiya Park tent city closes down', available online at <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20090106a3.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011) and 29.12.2009, 'Tokyo homeless shelter opens - Holiday substitute for "08 Hibiya Park tent city"', <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20091229a2.html> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).
- ²⁵¹ The majority of homeless people met in Hibiya Park and around Tokyo station during the fieldwork were men aged between forty and fifty. There were only two women in their forties and a small number of young men. Their comments were that people working in public welfare service and at local authorities usually insist on doing something to change their lifestyle, while volunteers offer their support and talk with them with no second purpose.
- ²⁵² Male students were 11.020, thus making a proportion rate of 45%. Source: Monbu kagakushō (2009), 'Gakububetsu gakusū' [Number of students enrolled by subject], <http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/List.do?bid=000001024271&cycode=0> (last accessed on 30.9.2011).
- ²⁵³ There were 4.184 female students and 3.245 male students enrolled in Social Welfare Studies in 2008. See Monbu kagakushō (2009).
- ²⁵⁴ Khoury (2002) suggests these expressions when describing the roles of Christians in meeting people's physical needs through their charitable activities (2002: 115-7).
- ²⁵⁵ In discussing the decline of civic engagement in the United States, Putnam (2000) indicates religious organizations as reservoirs of norms and shared meanings that still favour volunteering among adherents.
- ²⁵⁶ Similarly, in her work on the relationship between politics and volunteering in Japan, Haddad (2007) argues that practice, that is the way citizens use institutions rather than citizens' response to institutional constraints, is the key element directing ordinary citizens to volunteer for certain types of organizations (Haddad 2007: 169). The author also maintains that 'these priorities come from (changing) community norms of civic responsibility, and these norms have their roots in the political culture of a particular community' (Haddad 2007: 169).
- ²⁵⁷ Kokumin seikatsu shingikai 2005: 5-6. For an analysis of the 'New Community' see Avenell (2010).
- ²⁵⁸ From a conversation held on November 4th, 2009.
- ²⁵⁹ Ōsawa pointed out that the 'breadwinner man/caregiver woman' family model would suit the Fordist mass-production economy where men can contribute to the economic growth because they are backed by full-time housewives and mothers who play unpaid family roles (Ōsawa 2002a: 9-11).
- ²⁶⁰ As presented in Chapter 2, Musick and Wilson's (2008) work offers an extensive view of the effects volunteering on volunteers. They also give detailed references of theorists and researchers examining civic groups.

APPENDIX 1

List of interviewees

SHINNYOEN

Shinnyoen Social Contribution Group- Youth Division

Informant	Age	Education	Occupation	Date of interview
A-san	34	College	Unemployed	19.12.2009
B-san	31	Upper secondary school	Employee	19.12.2009
C-san	27	College	Employee	19.12.2009
I-san	29	College	Part-time/fix-term employee	19.12.2009
S-san	34	College	Employee	20.12.2009
G-san	28	Upper secondary school	Employee	20.12.2009
J-san	35	Upper secondary school	Part-time/fix-term employee	20.12.2009
K-san	32	University	Part-time/fix-term employee	20.12.2009
L-san	29	University	Employee	20.12.2009

Univers Foundation

Informant	Age	Education	Occupation	Date of interview
N-san	67	Upper secondary school	Housewife	19.11.2009
P-san	49	Upper secondary school	Part-time/fix-term employee	19.11.2009
W-san	50	Upper secondary school	Part-time/fix-term employee	19.11.2009
F-san	58	College	Housewife	21.12.2009
Y-san	66	College	Housewife	21.12.2009
R-san	67	Upper secondary school	Housewife	21.12.2009

RISSHŌ KŌSEIKAI

Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church Social Welfare Association

Informant	Age	Education	Occupation	Date of interview
T-san	70	Upper secondary school	Housewife	17.11.2009
U-san	50	Upper secondary school	Housewife	17.11.2009
Za-san	38	College	Part-time/fix-term employee	18.11.2009
Zb-san	68	Upper secondary school	Housewife	18.11.2009
Zc-san	62	Upper secondary school	Housewife	18.11.2009
Zd-san	57	Upper secondary school	Housewife	18.11.2009
H-san	55	Upper secondary school	Housewife	20.11.2009
V-san	42	Upper secondary school	Unemployed	22.11.2009
X-san	29	University	Employee	22.11.2009
Xa-san	41	Upper secondary school	Housewife	23.12.2009
Xb-san	33	Upper secondary school	Employee	23.12.2009

Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church Volunteer Group

Informant	Age	Education	Occupation	Date of interview
Bg-san	42	Upper secondary school	Self-employed	16.12.2009
Bh-san	47	Upper secondary school	Housewife	16.12.2009
O-san	29	Upper secondary school	Housewife	17.12.2009
Ba-san	48	Upper secondary school	Part-time/fix-term employee	17.12.2009
Bb-san	54	Upper secondary school	Part-time/fix-term employee	17.12.2009
Bc-san	45	College	Housewife	18.12.2009
Bd-san	41	University	Housewife	18.12.2009
Be-san	59	Upper secondary school	Housewife	18.12.2009
Bf-san	51	Upper secondary school	Part-time/fix-term employee	18.12.2009

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH in JAPAN – St. IGNATIUS CHURCH

Informant	Age	Education	Occupation	Date of interview
D-san	27	Doctoral student	Student	12.12.2009
M-san	52	College	Housewife	12.12.2009
Ca-san	50	College	Housewife	12.12.2009
Cb-san	23	University	Student	13.12.2009
Cc-san	24	University	Employee	13.12.2009
Cf-san	61	Upper secondary school	Housewife	14.12.2009
Cg-san	21	College	Student	14.12.2009
X-san	32	University	Employee	14.12.2009
Ci-san	49	College	Housewife	14.12.2009
E-san	22	University level	Student	19.12.2009
Ce-san	40	University	Housewife	19.12.2009

APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire survey results List of Tables

The following abbreviations are used in the tables:

S-YD = Shinnyoen Social Contribution Group –Youth Division

S-UF = Shinnyoen-sponsored Unvers Foundation

R-IC = Risshō kōseikai Itabashi Church

R-KC = Risshō kōseikai Kawagoe Church

CIC= St. Ignatius Church (Roman Catholic Church)

Table 1: Age makeup of respondents

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
0-19					
20-29	8		1	1	7
30-39	8		6		
40-49		2	3	9	2
50-59		7		3	1
60-69		4	9	1	1
70-79				1	

Table 2: Length of dwelling

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
since birth	8	1	9	7	8
3 years	1	1	1		
3 to 5 years		1	1		1
5 to 10 years	4	3		1	
10 to 20 years	3	2	1	4	2
20 to 30 years		5	2	2	
more than 30 years			5		

Table 3: Place of birth

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Tokyo	6	2	11	7	8
Aichi Prefecture	1				
Kanagawa Prefecture	2	1			
Chiba Prefecture	1		2		2
Saitama Prefecture	2	1	1	5	
Osaka	1				1
Hokkaido	1				
Miyagi Prefecture	1				
Kagoshima Prefecture	1			1	
Ishikawa Prefecture		1			
Shimane Prefecture		1			
Nagano Prefecture		1	1		
Shizuoka Prefecture		2	2		
Hyogo Prefecture		1			
Gumma Prefecture		1			
Gifu Prefecture		1			
Fukui Prefecture		1			

Hiroshima Prefecture			1	1	
Yamagata Prefecture			1		

Table 4: Educational background

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Lower secondary school			2	1	
Upper secondary school (including vocational school)	1	7	9	8	2
Specialized training colleges	4	1	5	2	3
Junior college	6	4	1	2	2
University	5	1	2	1	3
Graduate school					1

Table 5: Number of people living with the respondent

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
living alone	1	1	3		
2 people	4	5	4	1	2
3 people	2	4	5	1	2
4 to 6 people	9	2	7	11	7
7 to 9 people		1		1	
more than 10 people					

Table 6: Household composition

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Living alone	1	1	3		
Couple	4	2	3	1	2
Parents with children	9	9	12	7	7
Parents with children and grandchildren			1		
Parents with children and grandparents or parents-in-law	2	1		5	1

Table 7: Marital status

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Married	4	7	11	15	4
Not married	12	2	5		7
Widow		3	3		
Divorced		1			

Table 8: Respondents with children

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
1 child		3	6	1	
2 children		6	4	7	2
3 to 5 children		1	4	6	1
more than 6 children				1	
No children	16	3	5		8

Table 9: Age of respondent's youngest child living together

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
1 year old					
1 to 3 years old					
3 to 5 years old			2	1	
elementary school age			2	4	
Lower secondary school age		2		1	1

Upper secondary school age				1	
College, university, graduate school age		3		1	1
Employed (not married)		4	5	6	1
Employed (married)		1	5	1	

Table 10: Respondent's occupation

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Self-employed (agriculture and company business)			1		
Self-employed (literary and artistic profession)					
Full time employee (executive, administrative, professional, technical, commercial, service, worker)	8		2		1
Educational staff					
Public employee					
Free-lance professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher, other)			1		
Fixed-term, temporary, part-time employee	6	6	5		
Home worker					
Housewife		6	6		3
Student					5
Unemployed	1				1
Retired					
Other (staff of the organization)	1	1			

Table 11: Respondent's partner's occupation

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Self-employed (agriculture and company business)	1			5	4
Self-employed (literary and artistic profession)					1
Full time employee (executive, administrative, professional, technical, commercial, service, worker)	9	5	5	6	1
Educational staff	1		1	1	
Public employee				2	
Free-lance professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher, other)			1		
Fixed-term, temporary, part-time employee			2		
Home worker					
House-husband					
Student					
Unemployed					1
Retired		2	1	1	
Other (staff of the organization)			1	1	

Table 12: Reasons for working fix-term/part-time

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Work time is flexible	2	1	3	1	
Easier to balance with childrearing and housework	2			2	
Easier to get husband/partner and family's understanding		1	1		
Little responsibility	1	1			
Easier to quit					
No choice (only part-time/fixed-term job was available)		1	2		
To supplement family income	2	2	1	4	
Other	2	4	2	1	
No particular reason					

Table 13: Respondents' opinion on women working after marriage

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Women should keep working after marriage and having children, and they should get the support of those around them	6	2	3	2	2
Women should stop working temporarily for childrearing, but they should go back to work full time after that	3	2	2		1
Women should stop working temporarily for childrearing, but they should go back to work part-time after that	3	5	5	7	3
Women should quit their job soon after getting married	2		3	2	
Women should quit their job just before having children		1	2	3	1
I don't think women should work			1	1	
I think women can get married and can choose to keep working without having children	1	1			
I think women can keep working without getting married			1		3
Other	1	1	1		
Don't know			1		

Table 14: Respondents' opinion on the 'men/breadwinners - women/family-carers' model

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I think so			1	2	
If I had to choose, I think I agree	5	2	8	7	2
If I had to choose, I don't think I agree	3	5	3	2	3
I don't think so	6	5	7	2	5
I don't know	2	1		2	1

Table 15: Respondents' opinion on the reasons for the men/breadwinners - women/family-carers model

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Men are meant for work, women for housework and childrearing	4	1	2	2	2
There is no particular reason, it is has always been like this (this is what I heard when I was a child)	2	2	2	2	
By clearly separating husband and wife's tasks, both work and housework are better done	2	3	3	4	
Because of childrearing, women are better at home	1	3	11	6	2
Under the current working conditions, it is difficult for working women to balance work and family	4	1		1	6
Other	3	3	1		1

Table 16: Respondents' opinion on men and women's roles in the family

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Men should work and women should care for housework and childrearing	1	1	3	4	
Men and women can both work and do housework, although childrearing is mainly a women's task	2	1	5	10	
It may safely be said that women should better focus on the home and men on their jobs	2	4	3		
Both men and women should share tasks in housework and childrearing	9	4	7	1	8
Women might as well work and men care for housework and childrearing	1	3	1		2
Other	1				
Don't know					1

Table 17: Who is mainly in charge of housework in the family

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Respondent	3	13	16	13	3
Respondent's partner	2				1
Respondent's mother	11		2	1	7
Respondent's father			1		
Respondent's partner's mother					
Respondent's partner's father					
Respondent's son					
Respondent's daughter-in-law					
Respondent's daughter					
Respondent's daughter's husband					
Respondent's sisters					
Respondent's brothers					
Other				1	

Table 18: Who is helping in housework

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Nobody (the person stated above is the only one doing housework)	1	9	7	7	4

Respondent (is helping the person stated above, who is the main doer)	11		2	1	1
Respondent's partner	2		4	4	1
Respondent's mother			1	1	
Respondent's father	1	1	1		1
Partner's mother				2	
Respondent's partner's father		2	2		
Respondent's son					
Respondent's daughter-in-law		1	2		1
Respondent's daughter					
Respondent's daughter's husband					2
Respondent's sisters					1
Respondent's brothers	2				
Other	1				

Table 19: Family religion

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Shintō				1	
Buddhist		1	1	1	
Tendai					
Shingon	5	1	2	3	
Jōdo		1	1		1
Jōdo shinshū	2	7	1	1	1
Soto zen	1		1	3	
Rinzai zen		1	1		
Nichiren	2		3		3
Jishū					
Other Buddhist					
Christian					
Catholic					6
Protestant					
Other Christian denominations					
New Religions					
Reiyūkai					
Sōka gakkai	1				
Tenrikyō					1
Konkokyō				1	
Risshō kōseikai				2	
Shinnyoen	2	2			
Other organizations					
Other					

Table 20: Year of joining the religious organization

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
2 years ago					1
5 years ago	1	1		2	2
10 years ago	3	4		1	2
15 years ago	3	2			1
20 years ago	3	5	2	4	1
30 years ago	2	1	7	2	

More than 40 years ago			3	3	
Born in the religion	4		7	3	2

Table 21: How many generations in the religion

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
1st generation	4	11	4	1	6
2nd generation	9	2	10	8	2
3rd generation	3		3	6	
4th generation			1		1
Over 4th generation					

Table 22: Respondent's place of affiliation

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Tokyo	12	7	16		11
Saitama Prefecture	3			15	
Hokkaido	1				
Mie Prefecture			1		
Ishikawa Prefecture			1		
Kanagawa Prefecture			2		
Shizuoka Prefecture			1		

Table 23: Respondent's religious role in the organization

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Yes					
No	16	12	16	15	11

Table 23-a: Shinnyoen Social Contribution Group - Youth Division's respondents' roles

Disaster prevention volunteer group	1
Postcards recycle volunteer group	3
Responsible of communication with young members of the same lineage (<i>suji</i>)	1
Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department - General Affair Section Employee	1
Environment protection group	1
Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department Staff	6
Shinnyoen Social Contribution Department regular volunteer member	3

Table 23-b Shinnyoen-sponsored Univers Foundation respondents' roles

Social Welfare Group - Health Training Support group (including collaborations with elderly centres)	4
Univers Home Visits Group	6
Univers Hearing Impaired volunteer group	6

Table 23-c Rissshō Kōseikai Itabashi Church respondents' roles in the organization

Itabashi Church Social Welfare Group Committee Member	1
Itabashi Church Accountant Leader	1
Member of <i>omutsu hōshi</i> (cloth nappies folding service)	2
Women Division – Itabashi Church Leader	2
Itabashi Church - Home Visits group	8
Itabashi Church - Young Women Division member	5

Table 23-d Rissshō Kōseikai Kawagoe Church respondents' roles in the organization

General Affairs Section – Kawagoe Church Senior Staff	9
Youth Division – Kawagoe Church leader	1
Social Welfare Activities – Kawagoe Church Coordinator	1

Family Education Group Member	1
Women Division –Kawagoe Church General Affairs Staff	2

Table 23-e St. Ignatius Church respondents' volunteer roles

Homeless Support - Onigiri nakama group	1
Homeless Support - Counselling Service	1
Various volunteer activities including those contributing to church life	5
Saturday and Sunday Church School	4

Table 24: Who introduced the respondent to the organization

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I have known it since birth/since I was a child	9		12	6	5
Partner or partner's family			5	5	
Relatives	2		2		1
Acquaintance from work		1			
Neighbourhood		2	1		
Friend (from workplace)	1	3			
Friend (from neighbourhood)		1		1	
Friend (from school)	1	2			2
I searched myself					1
Other	1	4		2	1

Table 25 Reasons for joining the religious group

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I was impressed by the leader's charisma	3	1		1	1
I was influenced by the personality of my group's guiding-parent/church's priest				1	1
I was attracted by the doctrine	3	1	3	1	4
The other adherents were wonderful people with a nice attitude toward life		1	3	1	
I was attracted by the nice atmosphere of group meetings	1		1		1
In order to train myself			1		
I wanted to be useful and I was interested in the volunteer activities run by the religious organization, so I joined it					
Because I wanted to solve my problems	7	7	3	3	1
Because I was born in a family where member/members was/were already affiliated in the organization	1		8	4	2
Other	1	3		4	

Table 26: Reasons for personal belief

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I pray for the health and peace of my family	1		2	5	
I believe it gives me the strength I need in my life	5	4	8	5	5
Because it provides me the ethical guidance I need in everyday life				1	
I pray for a better world	2	2			
My belief provides me a sense of belonging and security		3			
It helps me to have self-confidence, and	3	1	3	2	

respect among each other					
After I joined the religious group, I understood the sense of purpose and the value of myself in the society	2	1	1	1	3
I have been an adherent since birth, so it is part of my life	2		3	1	2
Other	1	1	2		

Table 27 Year of starting volunteering for the religious organization

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
1965-1980			2	2	
1980-85			5	3	
1985-90	2		2		
1990-95	1	1		1	
1995-2000	5	4	3	1	1
2000-2005	2	5	4	3	2
2006-Nov-Dec 2009	6	3	2	2	7

Table 28 Volunteer rate

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Every time	4	9	9	3	8
Every two or three times	8	4	5	8	3
Once every six months	4		2	1	
Once a year			2		

Table 29 Volunteer rate in case none of friends or acquaintances is participating

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Every time	2	7	2	3	3
Every two or three times	6	4	8	3	7
Once every six months	4	2	4	5	1
Once a year	4		5	2	

Table 30 Participation in volunteer activities before joining the religious volunteer group

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Yes	9	8	12	14	6
No	7	5	7	1	5

Table 31 Participation to volunteer activities other than those sponsored by the religious volunteer group

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Yes	6	6	7	10	4
No	10	7	12	5	6

Table 32 Reasons for volunteering in the volunteer group sponsored by the religious organization

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I felt it was my duty as believer	1	1	3	1	2
I was asked by the church head/church pastor/leader	1	1	8	1	
Volunteered was part of my religious practice, but I soon felt a sense of satisfaction, so I got more engaged	2	6	10	2	5

Volunteering was part of my religious practice, but I soon felt it gave me a sense of purpose in my life, so I got more engaged	9	5	3	4	4
Volunteering was part of my religious practice, but it also granted me some time for myself outside the family and work, so I got more engaged		2	1	4	2
To contribute to others	15	13	14	11	6
To build networks with other people	7	3	4	7	4
To strengthen local community ties	4	4	4	2	
I was impressed by the improvement in my area/ward/city that volunteer work has brought in					1
Personal growth	6	3	5	6	3
In volunteer groups people make no differences according to gender, it helps to build very equal relationships		1		1	1
It is an influent activity because people like politicians and important people are participating					
Other	1		1	1	2

Table 33 Activities participants were contributing at the time of survey

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Not-paid voluntary service	14	11	12	10	11
Paid voluntary service		3	1	1	
<i>Hōshi</i> (social service)	16	13	9	9	1
Activities contributing to local community such as neighbourhood association	7	4	3	4	
Activities sponsored by Women's Association or Senior Citizens' Association				2	
Activities related to childcare and courses on family education			4	5	
Activities related to learning such as study groups, research groups, reading groups, conferences, and symposiums	1		2	3	
Activities related to environmental preservation, or consumer's movements	2	1	1		
Activities contributing to community wellbeing such as charity movements, bazaar, movement promoting greeting exchange, movement against litter drop	6	1	3	5	2
Activities related to NGO and NPO sponsored by the religious organization	2	1		1	
Peace activities: conferences, activities to help refugees, UNICEF fundraising	5		13	9	1
Activities promoting religious cooperation: movement to promote religious awareness, memorial services for war dead, martyrs, dead by accident	3		5	2	
Activities appealing to public service and government policies					
Activities related to international exchange and cooperation	4		1		

Activities related to social welfare such as visiting elderly and hospitals	2	5	6	5	1
Other					
I am not participating to any volunteer activities					

Table 34 Frequency of attendance to above selected activities

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Not-paid voluntary service	14	10	14	7	11
Paid voluntary service		4	2		
<i>Hōshi</i> (social service)	16	12	10	7	1
Activities contributing to local community such as neighbourhood association	6	3	3	5	
Activities sponsored by Women's Association or Senior Citizens' Association			1	1	
Activities related to childcare and courses on family education			5	4	
Activities related to learning such as study groups, research groups, reading groups, conferences, and symposiums	1	2	4	3	
Activities related to environmental protection, and consumer's movements	1	1	2		
Activities contributing to community wellbeing such as charity movements, bazaar, movement promoting greeting exchange, movement against litter drop	4	1	3	3	2
Activities related to NGO and NPO sponsored by the religious organization	1	1	1	1	
Peace activities: conferences, activities to help refugees, UNICEF fundraising	6		14	8	1
Activities promoting religious cooperation: movement to promote religious awareness, memorial services for war dead, martyrs, dead by accident	3		6	1	1
Activities appealing to public service and government policies			1		
Activities related to international exchange and cooperation	4		1		1
Activities related to social welfare such as visiting elderly and hospitals	4	6	6	4	1
Other					
I am not participating to any volunteer activities					

Table 35 Activities respondents aspire

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Not-paid voluntary service	11	3	9	5	4
Paid voluntary service		1	1	1	1
<i>Hōshi</i> (social service)	10	3	4	9	1
Activities contributing to local community such as neighbourhood association	9	4	2	7	1
Activities sponsored by Women's Association or Senior Citizens' Association	3	3	3	3	
Activities related to childcare and	4	3	5	5	

courses on family education					
Activities related to learning such as study groups, research groups, reading groups, conferences, and symposiums	2	2	3	2	1
Activities related to environmental protection, or consumer's movements	7	2	3	3	1
Activities contributing to community wellbeing such as charity movements, bazaar, movement promoting greeting exchange, movement against litter drop	7	1	4	4	1
Activities related to NGO and NPO sponsored by the religious organization	3				2
Peace activities: conferences, activities to help refugees, UNICEF fundraising	3	1	8	2	1
Activities promoting religious cooperation: movement to promote religious awareness, memorial services for war dead, martyrs, dead by accident	3		4	2	
Activities appealing to public service and government policies			1		
Activities related to international exchange and cooperation	8	3	3		3
Activities related to social welfare such as visiting elderly and hospitals	6	9	4	3	1
Other					1
No interest in any volunteer activity					

Table 36 Reasons for volunteering

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Because friends and acquaintances also volunteer	6	1	1	4	2
Because I want to contribute to others	15	12	17	13	7
For pleasure and because it gives a purpose in life	4	5	8	7	5
To gain knowledge and understanding of various issues	5	2	7	5	4
To improve my health	1	1	2	1	
Because I sympathized with the content and purpose of the activities	7	8	4	4	5
Because I wanted to make good use of my time		3	5	3	5
To improve my work	1	1		2	
Other	3	1	1		1
No reason		1			

Table 37 Reasons for a low frequency of participation in volunteer activities

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Nobody else I know are involved in volunteer activities	3	1			
Personal relationships are difficult	2	1			
Unable to find suitable volunteer activities	2				
I am busy at work	7	4	2	1	1
I am busy with childcare and housework	2	1	1		
Because I am taking care of an old or sick person	1	3	1		
No understanding from my family		1			1

I cannot afford it economically	1	3			1
I am worried for my health	1	3			
I am not interested in it					
Other	3		1		
No particular reason					

Table 38 Opinion on women's life course and volunteering

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Women should continue volunteering after marriage and having children	11	2	10	6	3
Women should stop while childrearing, and start again volunteer after that	3	1	2	2	
Women should volunteer until they have children, and stop thereafter	1				1
Women should start/restart volunteering after children have grown up		9	5	6	3
Women should volunteer after their husbands will retire			1		
Other	1	1			2

Table 39 Respondents' social propensity vs. individuality

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I think that people should live in a harmonious community rather than individually.	3	2	3	3	3
I usually tend to act according to my own will rather than following people's suggestions (personal choice, and self-realization are important)	3	2	3	2	3
I think contributing to society is very important	4	7	6	5	3
I think that living a full, stable life is my priority	5		5	1	1
If I don't get my family's understanding, then I will sacrifice my plans		2	1	3	
To me, it is important to value my purposes and aspirations	1		1	1	

Table 40 Level of importance of above statements

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I think that people should live in a harmonious community rather than individually.	important	very important	important	important	important
I usually tend to act according to my own will rather than following people's suggestions (personal choice, and self-realization are important)	important	least important	important	Least important	important
I think contributing to society is very important	most important	most important	most important	Most important	most important
I think that living a full, stable life is my priority	important	important	very important	Very important	very important
If I don't get my family's understanding, then I will sacrifice my plans	least important	least important	least important	important	important
To me, it is important to value my	least important	important	important	Least important	least important

purposes and aspirations					
--------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

Table 41 Perceived outcomes in society

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
Volunteering helps to generate the necessary ethics for social conviviality	11	6	12	4	6
With the purpose of building a peaceful world starting from the family, it helps to make an ideal world	15	9	17	10	9
It meets the necessary needs of people in their day-life	10	12	15	11	10
It increases local safety (crime prevention)	2	1	3	2	
It trains for disaster relief	2	2	1	1	1
It provides support and healthcare to elderly and disabled	1	4	5	2	3
It contributes to environmental preservation	9	3		2	2
It helps to build a community	5	6	2	3	
It promotes children's education	2		7	11	3
It helps to preserve cultural values and symbols	3	2	2	2	2
It helps to generate trust and mutual support among people	4	4	2	5	
It helps to improve women's social role and promote the formation of a gender-equal society		1			
other					1

Table 42 Perceived atmosphere in the volunteer group

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I feel free to join with ease, there is an informal atmosphere	16	10	16	11	10
There are strong interests, people look quite self-centred				1	2
People don't care about the others, it is cold and distant				1	1
People interfere each other, it is rather annoying			1		2
People can ask for advice and help each other.	16	12	17	11	9
Other		2	1		

Table 43 Respondents' social connectivity (M=male; F=female; B=both)

	S-YD			S-UF			R-IC			R-KC			CIC		
	M	F	B	M	F	B	M	F	B	M	F	B	M	F	B
Neighbourhood		4	7		3	9		9	5		3	11		2	6
Co-workers		3	13		2	7		5	7		2	5		3	4
Friends sharing hobbies, schoolmates, sport mates, clubs		4	4		6	2		5	2		9	1		2	7
People from the religious organization or the volunteer		3	13		4	9		8	9		7	8			11
School-age friends		8	8		10	1		9	4		8	4		6	3
Acquaintances known					8	1		6			8	6		2	

in children's environment															
Relatives		2	13		1	11		4	13			13		1	7

Table 44 Level of acquaintance with other members of volunteer group

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
1. I can ask for advice, lend and borrow things, and ask and give help in case of need					
I can count on some people	12	9	15	10	9
None	4	4	4	5	
2. I can have a chat with					
There are some people	11	11	16	14	9
None	1	1		1	
3. We greet each other					
There are some people	13	11	15	13	9
None		2		1	

Table 45 Perceived benefits from volunteering

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I have become happy because I can be of help for people or society	15	11	16	13	9
My relationships with people and my living environment has improved	7	4	8	4	4
I have met other people and groups, so my social life has expanded	11	9	11	10	7
By practicing my faith outside the religious organization, I have become convinced about the rightness of my belief	11	6	8	9	1
I can now be myself also outside the religious organization	5	5	2	8	5
I have become able to show my skills	3	2	3	5	5
My life has become worthwhile (<i>ikigai</i>)	3	3	3	5	3
I have reached a full and balanced life	9	3	3	3	6
Other	1	2	1		1
I have had no benefit					

Table 46 Perceived changes in close tie relationships

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
I have become closer to other members' family	5	1	7	3	4
We have become able to do things together as a family	6	4	3	6	4
I have built relationships of mutual understanding (with family, friends, volunteers) so that if we have a problem we can find a good solution together	9	8	11	10	6
In general, I have made very close friends	3	2	9	5	5
I am now able to act with friends or other volunteer members, rather than family		2	7		5

Conversation in my family has increased significantly	7	4	2	5	4
I have learned about other families' lifestyle, and many things about other people	3	5	9	7	4
Time for my family has decreased			3	1	7
Not applicable	3	3	1	1	1
Other	1				1

Table 47 Gender-related perceived benefits from volunteering

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
My life has enriched, I have a sense of fulfillment	14	7	14	9	8
I have learned how to value the time I devote for things I would like to do	7	7	9	8	6
I have received my family understanding and cooperation toward things I would like to do	6	3	8	11	4
I have become aware that gender equal relationships are important within the family too	1	1	1	2	1
I have become aware of problems about gender roles in our society		2	3	3	2
When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other. At least within the volunteer group social inequalities between men and women are redressed	1	4	6	3	4
When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other. I think that it helps to redress social inequalities between men and women among people around me	1	2	3	3	2
When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other. I think that it helps to redress social inequalities between men and women in society at large.		2	1	1	2
Other	4	2	1		2

Table 48 Level of importance of perceived benefits

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
My life has enriched, I have a sense of fulfillment	most important	most important	most important	Most important	most important
I have learned how to value the time I devote for things I would like to do	very important	not so important	very important	Very important	very important
I have received my family understanding and cooperation toward things I would like to do	important	rather important	very important	Very important	important
I have become aware that gender equal relationships are important within the family, which is important	not so important	not so important	least important	Rather important	least important
I have become aware of problems about gender inequality in our society in daily life, which is important	least important	important	least important	not so important	not so important

When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other, and have reached an egalitarian relationship	rather important	rather important	not so important	not so important	not so important
When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other. I think that it helps to redress social inequalities between men and women among people around me	least important	least important	not so important	Least important	rather important
Other					

Table 49 Relationship between religious organizations and government in the field of social contribution

	S-YD	S-UF	R-IC	R-KC	CIC
The organization should remit social issues to the state and political bodies				1	1
The organization should cooperate with the state and the political bodies	9	9	16	10	6
The organization should act independently from the state and political bodies	5	3	3	1	3
Other	2	1		1	

Table 50 Opinion on the relationship between religious organizations and the state

	S-YD		S-UF		R-IC		R-KC		CIC	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
I think separation of religious organizations and politics should be strongly observed	9	6	6	6	15	2	9	1	7	2
Religious organizations can cooperate with state and political bodies, although they should keep their realms separated	15		13		17		14		9	
Religious organizations should not participate in politics, but supporting a political party or politicians is acceptable.	10	5	11	2	13	4	9	1	9	
I think politics should work more in order to defend the religious freedom	4	11	3	8	7		3	5	4	5

Appendix 3 Questionnaire survey (Japanese)

「宗教団体によるボランティア活動に参加する女性の意識」 についてのアンケート調査

調査票

A あなた自身についてお答えください。

1. あなたの年齢をお答えください

.....歳

2. あなたは、東京（ないし東京周辺）にお住まいになって何年になりますか（○は一つ）

1	3年未満
2	3年以上5年未満
3	5年以上10年未満
4	10年以上20年未満
5	20年以上30年未満
6	30年以上
7	生まれてからずっと

3. どちらの出身ですか

(.....)	都 ・ 府 ・ 県 ・
---------	-------------------

4. あなたの最終学歴は（○は一つ）

1	中学校
2	高等学校（実業・商業・農業高校等を含む）
3	各種専門学校
4	短期大学（高等専門学校を含む）
5	大学
6	大学院
7	その他（.....）

5. 同居しているご家族は、あなたを含めて何人ですか

合計（.....）人

6. あなたの「今現在」の家族構成は（○は一つ）

(例：一人暮らし／夫婦のみ／夫婦＋子ども2人、というような形でお答えください)
.....

7. あなたご自身は次のどれに当てはまりますか（○は一つ）

1	既婚
2	未婚
3	（配偶者とは）死別
4	（配偶者とは）離別
5	その他（.....）

8. あなたには、子どもがいますか

1	いる（.....人）
2	いない

9. 子どものいる方にお聞きします。一番下の子どもは、現在、次のどれに該当しますか（○は一つ）
【同居していない場合も含めてください】

1	1歳未満
---	------

2	1歳以上～3歳未満
3	3歳以上～小学校入学前
4	小学生
5	中学生
6	高校生
7	短大・各種学校・大学生・大学院生・浪人生
8	社会人（未婚）
9	社会人（既婚）

10. あなたの職業は（○は一つ）

1	自営業（農業・会社経営など）
2	自由業（著述・芸術家業など）
3	会社員（正社員・正職員） a. 管理職 b. 事務職 c. 専門職 d. 技術職 e. 商売職 f. サービス職 g. 労務職
4	教職員
5	個人・自由業 a. 医師 b. 弁護士 c. 先生 d. その他（ ）
6	臨時・派遣・パート・アルバイト等
7	内職
8	専業主婦
9	学生
1 1	無職（求職中を含む）
1 2	定年退職者
1 3	その他（具体的に ）

11. 問8で「1既婚」と答えた方にお聞きします。あなたの配偶者の職業は（○は一つ）

1	自営業（農業・会社経営など）
2	自由業（著述・芸術家業など）
3	会社員（正社員・正職員） a. 管理職 b. 事務職 c. 専門職 d. 技術職 e. 商売職 f. サービス職 g. 労務職
4	教職員
5	個人・自由業 a. 医師 b. 弁護士 c. 先生 d. その他（ ）
6	臨時・派遣・パート・アルバイト等
7	内職
8	専業主婦
9	学生
1 1	無職（求職中を含む）
1 2	定年退職者
1 3	その他（具体的に ）

12. 問10で「臨時・派遣・パート・アルバイト等」を選んだ方にお聞きします。あなたが、その仕事を選んだ主な理由は何ですか（○は二つまで。回答番号の左側に、一番重要な理由には（1）、二番目の理由には（2）とお書きください）

	1	好きな時間に働ける
	2	家事・育児との両立ができる
	3	夫など家族の同意が得やすい
	4	仕事の責任が重くない
	5	やめるのが簡単
	6	臨時・派遣・パート・アルバイトの仕事しかなかった
	7	家計を助けるため
	8	その他（ ）
	9	特に理由はない

13. 「女性が働くこと」について、あなたの考え方にもっとも近いものを1～10の中から一つ選んでください（○は一つ）

1	結婚して子どもができて仕事も続けたい、また周りもそれをサポートして欲しい
2	子育ての時期だけ一時やめて、その後は「フルタイム」で仕事を続ける
3	子育ての時期だけ一時やめて、その後は「パートタイム」で仕事を続ける
4	結婚するまでは仕事を続け、その後は仕事に就かない

5	子どもができるまでは仕事を続け、その後は仕事に就かない
6	女性はあまり仕事に就くべきではないと思う
7	結婚しても、子どもを持たないで仕事を続ける、というのも一つの生き方だと思う
8	結婚しないで仕事を続ける、というのも一つの生き方だと思う
9	その他 ()
10	わからない

B 家庭生活について

14. あなたは「男性は仕事、女性は家庭」という考え方についてどう思いますか (○は一つ)

1	そのとおりだと思う
2	どちらかといえばそう思う
3	どちらかといえばそう思わない
4	そう思わない
5	わからない

15. 一般によく「男性は仕事、女性は家事」と言われてきましたが、その理由は何だと思われますか (○は一つ)

1	男性は仕事、女性は家事・育児に向いているから
2	夫婦の役割をはっきり分ける方が、仕事も家庭もうまくいくから
3	特に理由はないが、それが普通のことだから (子どもの頃かそう聞いてきた)
4	子どもを育てるには、女性は家庭にいた方がよいから
5	女性は仕事を持っても、勤労条件に恵まれず、仕事と家庭との両立が難しいから
6	その他 ()

16. 家庭における男女の役割について、あなたの考え方にもっとも近いものを一つ選んでください (○は一つ)

1	男性は仕事、女性は家事・育児をする
2	男性は仕事、女性は家事・育児に差し支えない範囲で仕事をする
3	男女とも仕事、家事をするが、育児は主に女性がする
4	男女とも仕事、家事・育児をする
5	女性は仕事、男性は家事・育児という役割でもかまわない
6	その他 ()
7	わからない

17. あなたの家庭では、主に誰が中心になって家事を行っていますか。もっとも中心になって行っている人を一人選んでください (1~13の中から○は一つ)

1	自分
2	自分の配偶者
3	自分の母親
4	自分の父親
5	配偶者の母親
6	配偶者の父親
7	息子
8	息子の妻 (嫁)
9	娘
10	娘の夫 (むこ)
11	自分の妹や姉
12	自分の弟や兄
13	その他 ()

18. また、家事を手伝ったり、分担する方はいますか。習慣的に手伝っている人を選んでください。 (○は一つ)

1	いない (上の質問で答えた人が中心に行っている)
2	自分 (上の質問で答えた人を私が手伝っている)
3	自分の配偶者
4	自分の母親
5	自分の父親

6	配偶者の母親
7	配偶者の父親
8	息子
9	息子の妻（嫁）
10	娘
11	娘の夫（むこ）
12	自分の妹や姉
13	自分の弟や兄
14	その他（ ）

C 宗教意識（認識）について

19. あなたの「家の宗教」あるいは 真如苑／立正佼成会／日本カトリック教会 以外の信仰・宗旨がありましたら、次のリストから宗教名や宗派名を選んで、○をしてください。二つ以上ある場合は、すべて○をしてください。

1	神道
2	仏教 a. 天台宗 b. 真言宗 c. 浄土宗 d. 浄土真宗 e. 曹洞宗 f. 臨済宗 g. その他の仏教派（具体的に ）
3	キリスト教 a. カトリック b. プロテスタント c. その他のキリスト教派（具体的に ）
4	他の新宗教 a. 霊友会 b. 創価学会 c. 天理教 d. 金光教 e. その他の教団（具体的に ）
5	その他宗教・宗派（具体的に ）
6	宗教・宗派の名称がわからない

20. あなたは真如苑／立正佼成会／日本カトリック教会に入会なさったのはいつですか。もっとも近いものをお選びください（○は一つ）

1	2年前
2	5年前
3	10年前
4	15年前
5	20年前
6	30年前
7	40年以上前
8	生まれたときから

21. ご家族の中であなた何世代目の真如苑／立正佼成会／日本カトリック教会の会員／信者ですか。

1	初代
2	二代
3	三代
4	四代
5	これ以下

22. あなたの所属（名称を書いてください）

教会	支部	地区
	組	班

23. 現在、教団の中でどのような役職／役目／役割を果たしていらっしゃいますか

1	教会・支部での役職がある 役職名（具体的に ）
2	教会・支部での役職がない

24. あなたは 真如苑／立正佼成会／日本カトリック教会 をどのようにして知りましたか。次の中から一つお答えください

1	生まれたときから／子供のころから知っていた
2	配偶者や配偶者の家族から知った
3	親戚から知った
4	職場の知り合いから知った
5	近所の人から知った
6	友人（職場を通じた）
7	友人（近所付き合いを通じた）
8	友人（上以外：具体的に_____）
9	自分で調べた（具体的に_____）
10	その他（具体的に_____）

25. あなたが 真如苑／立正佼成会／日本カトリック教会 の教えを信仰するようになった動機はどのようなものでしたか。次の中から一番強く同意するものを一つ答えてください

1	教団の指導者の魅力にひかれたため
2	所属する教区の導き親／神父様の人柄に影響を受けたため
3	教えに共感したため
4	信者の中に人柄や生活態度の素晴らしい方がおり、その人の影響を受けたため
5	集会全体の雰囲気の良さにひかれたため
6	人生勉強がしたいと思ったため
7	世の中の役に立ちたいと思い、教団のボランティア活動に興味があったので、信者になろうと思った
8	悩みや問題を解決したかったため
9	生まれたときから、家族が信者だったため
10	その他（具体的に_____）

26. あなたにとって 真如苑／立正佼成会／日本カトリック教会 の教えを信仰するのは、どのような理由からでしょうか。次の中から一番大きな理由をお答えください（〇は一つ）

1	家族の健康、家庭の平和と幸せなどを願って
2	人間が生きていくうえで必要な心を支えを与えてくれるから
3	毎日の生活に必要な道徳を教えてくれるから
4	よりよい世界が形成されることを願って
5	信仰する宗教に帰属意識を持っており、また安心感が得られるから
6	自分自身を信頼できるようになり、また、人間的にお互いを尊敬できるようになるため
7	教団に所属するようになってから、社会における自己の存在の意味、価値が分かるようになったため
8	生まれたときから信者なので、既に生活の一部となっているから
9	その他（具体的に_____）

D 宗教団体によるボランティア活動について

現在、教団のボランティア活動はどのように関与なさっていますか。以下の項目に沿ってお答えください。

27. あなたはいつから宗教団体によるボランティア活動に参加していますか

昭和	_____年頃
平成	_____年頃

28. あなたは通常、ボランティア活動にどのぐらいの頻度で参加しますか

1	毎回出ている
2	二・三回に一度出ている
3	半年に一度出ている
4	年に一度出ている

29. 活動内容が同じでも、知り合いが全くいないボランティア活動に参加するとしたら、どのような形で関わっていくと思いますか

1	毎回出る
2	二・三回に一度程度に出る
3	半年に一度程度に出る

4	年に一度程度に出る
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30. 以前、教団「以外」のボランティア活動に参加していたことはありますか

1	はい
2	いいえ

31. あなたは現在、教団「以外」のボランティア活動に参加していますか。

1	はい
2	いいえ

32. 教団のボランティア活動に参加するようになった動機は何ですか。次の中から3つお答えください（回答番号の左側に、一番重要な理由には（1）、二番目の理由には（2）、三番目の理由には（3）とお書きください）

1	会員・信者だから義務です
2	教会長や幹部の人に勧められたから
3	ボランティア活動は信仰の一部であり、また活動に参加することが自分に合っているため、積極的に参加するようになった
4	宗教上の教えの一つであるなしに関わらず、ボランティア活動は自分の生活を有意義にしてくれるので、積極的に参加するようになった
5	宗教上の教えの一つであるなしに関わらず、家庭、仕事以外の自由な時間を持ちたくて、ボランティア活動に参加しようと思った
6	何か社会や人に役に立ちたいと思ったので、参加することにした
7	人との交流を深めるため
8	地域社会の絆を深めることになると思うので
9	ボランティア活動のおかげで自分の地域（村・市）の改善をみて感動しましたから
10	人格を磨くことができるので
11	ボランティア活動内では男女の別を問わず、非常に平等な関係が築かれているから
12	政治家など有力な人が教団やボランティア活動に参加しているのでこの運動が強いと考えているから
13	その他（具体的に）

33. あなたは現在、教団によるボランティア活動では、どのようなものに参加していますか。次の1～17の中からあてはまる番号を選んでください（○はいくつでも可）。

現在参加している活動

1	無償のボランティア活動
2	有償のボランティア活動
3	奉仕・余暇活動・清掃奉仕など
4	町内会などの地域の団体活動
5	婦人会や老人会などの活動
6	子育てサークル・家庭教育講座など
7	グループで行う研究会、勉強会、読書会、大会、シンポジウムなど
8	消費生活や環境保護にかかわる活動
9	コミュニティー活動、チャリティー運動、バザー、ノーポイ運動、あいさつ運動
10	教団のN G O と N P O への参加（具体的に）
11	平和運動：平和のための講演会、難民救援活動、ユニセフ募金など
12	宗教協力活動：宗教情操向上運動、戦没・犠牲者・交通事故慰霊など
13	行政へのアピール活動（具体的に）
14	国際交流・国際協力など（具体的に）
15	病院訪問などを含む、高齢者支援活動
16	その他（）
17	何も参加していない

34. また上記の中からどの活動に参加していますか。参加の頻度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に番号をお書きください

1	無償のボランティア活動
---	-------------

	2	有償のボランティア活動
	3	奉仕・余暇活動・清掃奉仕など
	4	町内会などの地域の団体活動
	5	婦人会や老人会などの活動
	6	子育てサークル・家庭教育講座など
	7	グループで行う研究会、勉強会、読書会、大会、シンポジウムなど
	8	消費生活や環境保護にかかわる活動
	9	コミュニティー活動、チャリティー運動、バザー、ノーポイ運動、あいさつ運動
	10	教団のNGOとNPOへの参加 (具体的に)
	11	平和運動：平和のための講演会、難民救援活動、ユニセフ募金など
	12	宗教協力活動：宗教情操向上運動、戦没・犠牲者・交通事故慰霊など
	13	行政へのアピール活動 (具体的に)
	14	国際交流・国際協力などの
	15	病院訪問などを含む、高齢者支援活動
	16	その他 ()
	17	何も参加していない

35. 今後、もし参加したい活動があるとすれば、あてはまる番号を全て選んでください (○はいくつでも可。重要度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に番号をお書きください)

	1	無償のボランティア活動
	2	有償のボランティア活動
	3	奉仕・余暇活動・清掃奉仕など
	4	町内会などの地域の団体活動
	5	婦人会や老人会などの活動
	6	子育てサークル・家庭教育講座など
	7	グループで行う研究会、勉強会、読書会、大会、シンポジウムなど
	8	消費生活や環境保護にかかわる活動
	9	コミュニティー活動、チャリティー運動、バザー、ノーポイ運動、あいさつ運動
	10	教団のNGOとNPOへの参加 (具体的に)
	11	平和運動：平和のための講演会、難民救援活動、ユニセフ募金など
	12	宗教協力活動：宗教情操向上運動、戦没・犠牲者・交通事故慰霊など
	13	行政へのアピール活動 (具体的に)
	14	国際交流・国際協力などの
	15	病院訪問などを含む、高齢者支援活動
	16	その他 ()

36. 現在、「ボランティア活動に参加している方」、「これから参加してみたい活動がある方」にお聞きします。その理由は何ですか (○は三つまで。重要度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に (1) (2) (3) と番号をお書きください)

	1	親睦のため
	2	人の役に立ちたいから
	3	楽しみや生きがいのため
	4	知識や教養を身につけるため
	5	健康のため
	6	活動の趣旨、目的に共感したため
	7	自分の自由時間を有効利用するため
	8	職業に生かすため
	9	その他 ()
	10	特に理由はない

37. ボランティア活動にあまり参加できない方にお聞きします。その理由は何ですか (○は三つまで。重要度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に (1) (2) (3) と番号をお書きください) (該当しない方は次の質問へ)

	1	一緒に参加する人がいない
	2	人間関係がわずらわしい
	2	参加したい活動がない

	3	仕事が忙しい
	4	家事・育児が忙しい
	5	高齢者や病人の世話がある
	6	家族の協力が得られない
	7	経済的な余裕がない
	8	健康に自信がない
	9	関心や興味がない
	10	その他 ()
	11	特に理由はない

38. 女性として、ボランティア活動にどう携わっていますか。もっとも近いものを一つ選んでください (○は一つ)

1	結婚しても子どもができてボランティア活動を続ける／続けていた
2	子育ての時期だけ一時やめて、その後はボランティア活動にもどる／もどった
3	子どもができるまでボランティア活動を続け、その後はやめる／やめた
4	子供が大きくなってボランティア活動をはじめる／はじめた／再開した
5	夫が定年してからボランティア活動をはじめる／はじめた／再開した
6	その他 (具体的に:)

39. 次の考えのうち、あなたがもっとも近いと思うものはどれですか (○は1つ)

1	社会生活においては個人個人がばらばらに生活することより、コミュニティとしての調和が重要
2	何かをするにしても人から言われるのではなく、自分の自由意志に基づいて行動したいと思う (個人の自由、自己実現こそが重要)
3	社会のために役立つことが重要だと思う
4	自分の生活の充実・安定がまず重要だと思う
5	家族のためなら自分のやりたいこと、都合が犠牲になっても仕方ないと思う
6	自分の目的、希望を大切にしたい

40. 前問についてお聞きしますが、重要度の高い順に並べるとしたら、どう選びますか。回答番号左側に、1 (一番重要) から 6 (まったく重要ではない) まで記入してください

	1	社会生活においては個人個人がばらばらに生活することより、コミュニティとしての調和が重要
	2	何かをするにしても人から言われるのではなく、自分の自由意志に基づいて行動したいと思う (個人の自由、自己実現こそが重要)
	3	社会のために役立つことが重要だと思う
	4	自分の生活の充実・安定がまず重要だと思う
	5	家族のためなら自分のやりたいこと、都合が犠牲になっても仕方ないと思う
	6	自分の目的、希望を大切にしたい

41. あなたが所属している教団において、地域社会に最も貢献していると考えられる活動は何ですか。次の1～10の中から4つをお答えください。重要度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に (1) (2) (3) (4) と番号をお書きください

	1	社会に必要な道徳基盤の形成
	2	家族をはじめ世界の平和を目的に理想的な世界を築いていくため
	3	人間が生きていくうえで必要な心を支えの提供
	4	地域の治安の向上 (犯罪の予防)
	5	災害時の対応 (防災・防火の呼びかけ)
	6	高齢者・障害者の健康維持や生活支援
	7	環境保全・美化
	8	地域コミュニティの形成
	9	子どものしつけや教育・育成
	10	伝統・祭といった文化の継承
	11	住民間の信頼醸成、相互扶助
	12	女性の社会的地位の向上 (男女平等な社会の実現)
	13	その他 ()

42. あなたが属される教団ボランティアについて、どのように感じていますか。次の1～6の中から

2つをお答えください。重要度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に（1）（2）と番号をお書きください

	1	気軽に参加でき、うちとけやすい感じ
	2	利害関係が強く、自分本位な感じがする
	3	お互いが無関心で、よそよそしい
	4	お互いが干渉しあい、ややうるさい
	5	なにかと相談しあい、お互い助け合っている
	6	その他（具体的に： _____）

43. あなたは現在、次にあげる人たちとどのくらい交流がありますか（それぞれは一つ。重要度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に番号をお書きください）。その方は「主に」男性、女性、またはその両方であるかを選んでください

	1	隣近所の人	男性	女性	両方	該当しない
	2	職場、仕事関係の人（学生の方はクラスの友人）	男性	女性	両方	該当しない
	3	趣味、学習、スポーツなどを通じた友人（学生の方は部活・サークルの友人）	男性	女性	両方	該当しない
	4	宗教団体・ボランティア活動の友人	男性	女性	両方	該当しない
	5	学生時代の友人や幼なじみ	男性	女性	両方	該当しない
	6	子供を通じて知人	男性	女性	両方	該当しない
	7	親戚	男性	女性	両方	該当しない

44. ボランティア活動内での人付き合いについてお聞きします。（ ）にあてはまる人数をお答えください。その方は「主に」男性、女性、またはその両方であるかを選んでください。あてはまらない場合は、「いない」を選択。

1	互いに相談したり、物品の貸し借りをするなど、生活面で協力しあっている人 a. () 人位 男性 女性 両方 b. いない
2	世間話をする程度のつきあいの人 a. () 人位 男性 女性 両方 b. いない
3	あいさつ程度のつきあいの人 a. () 人位 男性 女性 両方 b. いない

45. ボランティア活動に参加したことで、あなたが何か得られましたか。次のリストからいくつでも○をつけてください。また重要度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に番号をお書きください

	1	人々または社会のために役に立ってうれしくなった
	2	身の回りの人間関係や生活環境がよくなった
	3	さまざまな団体や人々と交流ができて、自分の世界（仲間）が広がった
	4	教団以外の場でも、教団の実践することができ、改めて自分の信仰の正しさをわかった
	5	教団以外の場でも本来の自分を生きるようになった
	6	ボランティア活動を通して自分の能力を発揮できるようになった
	7	いきがいを持つようになった
	8	自分の生活の充実・安定ができた
	9	その他（具体的に _____）
	10	なにもなかった

46. あなたは宗教団体のボランティア活動に参加することによって、家族やボランティア活動での友人との関係が変化したことがあると思いますか。あてはまるものすべてに○をつけてください。重要度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に番号をお書きください

	1	他の参加者の家族との親睦が深まった
	2	家族で協力してものごとを行うようになった
	3	問題が生じてもうまく解決でき、互いを理解できる関係が（家族、友人、ボランティアの仲間との間で）築けるようになった
	4	全般において、自分の友人と密に連絡を取るようになった
	5	家族よりも、ボランティアの仲間や友人中心に行動するようになった

	6	家族の会話が以前より増えた
	7	他の家族がどのように生活しているか（例えば家族構成など）、相手のことをよく知るようになった
	8	家族の団らんの時間が減った
	9	該当なし
	10	その他（具体的に）

47. 宗教団体のボランティア活動に参加するによって、どのような変化がありましたか。次ぎの1～10の中からあてはまるものすべてに○をつけてください。重要度の高い順に、回答番号の左側に番号をお書きください

	1	生活が充実していると感じるようになった
	2	自分のやりたいことをする時間を大切にするようになった
	3	家族も自分のやりたいことをするのを協力・理解してくれるようになった
	4	ボランティア活動を通じて、家庭内でも男女平等な関係を意識するようになった
	5	ボランティア活動を通じて、日常生活においても男女平等という問題を意識するようになった
	6	ボランティア活動で実際に男性、女性が共同（共働）作業を行っていくことにより、少なくともボランティア活動の中では一般に言われるような男女別の社会的な格差、不平等が是正されていると感じる
	7	ボランティア活動で実際に男性、女性が共同（共働）作業を行っていくことにより、一般に言われるような男女別の社会的な格差、不平等が日常生活（身の回り）で是正されていると感じる
	8	ボランティア活動で実際に男性、女性が共同（共働）作業を行っていくことにより、一般に言われるような男女別の社会的な格差、不平等が広く社会全般において是正されたと感じる
	9	その他（具体的に）

48. 前問についてお聞きしますが、ボランティア活動を通じて得られた変化のうち、重要度の高い順に並べるとしたら、どう選びますか。回答番号左側に、1（一番重要）から7（まったく重要ではない）まで記入してください

	1	生活が充実していると感じるようになった
	2	自分のやりたいことをする時間を大切にするようになった
	3	家族も自分のやりたいことをするのを協力・理解してくれるようになった
	4	ボランティア活動を通じて、家庭内においても男女平等な関係を意識するようになり、それがいい方向に作用していると思う
	5	ボランティア活動を通じて、日常生活においても男女平等な関係を意識するようになり、それがいい方向に作用していると思う
	6	ボランティア活動によって男女が共に活動しながら、通常の男女別にみた役割が調和できたと思う
	7	ボランティア活動を通して、性別による格差がなくなり、平等な関係が形成されるようになったと感じる
	8	その他（具体的に）

49. あなたは宗教教団の社会運動についてなにを考えていますか（○は1つ）

	1	国や自治体に任せたい
	2	国や自治体と協力すべき
	3	宗教団体が独自に社会運動を行うべき
	4	その他のご意見（具体的に）

50. あなたは現代日本における政治と宗教団体の関係についてどう考えていますか。次から「はい」か「いいえ」のどちらかに○をしてください。

1	政治分離を厳しく守るべきです	はい	いいえ
2	政治分離を守りながらお互いに協力するのはいいことです	はい	いいえ
3	教団は政治に積極的に参加しなくても、政治や政治家を支持するのはそんなに悪いことではない	はい	いいえ
4	進行の自由を守るために、もっと世辞にはたらけかけべきです	はい	いいえ

Appendix 3

Questionnaire survey (English) 'Women participating in faith-based volunteering'

Section A: About yourself

1. How old are you?

--

2. How long have you been living in Tokyo (or Tokyo are, or Saitama)?

1	3 years
2	3 to 5 years
3	5 to 10 years
4	10 to 20 years
5	20 to 30 years
6	More than 30 years
7	Since birth

3. Place of birth

--

4. What is your level of education?

1	Lower secondary school
2	Upper secondary school (including vocational school)
3	Specialized training colleges
4	Junior college
5	University
6	Graduate school
7	Junior high school

5. How many people are living together in your family?

Total:	
--------	--

6. Please describe your current household composition

(e.g. living alone; couple; couple with children)	
.....	

7. Please state your marital status

1	Married
2	Not married
3	Widow
4	Divorced
5	Married

8. Do you have children?

1	Yes (specify) children
2	No

9. Respondent who has children: how old is your youngest child (including those not living in the household)?

1	1 year old
2	1 to 3 years old
3	3 to 5 years old
4	elementary school age
5	Lower secondary school age
6	Upper secondary school age

7	College, university, graduate school age
8	Employed (not married)
9	Employed (married)

10. What is your occupation?

1	Self-employed (agriculture and company business)
2	Self-employed (literary and artistic profession)
3	Full time employee (executive, administrative, professional, technical, commercial, service, worker)
4	Educational staff
5	Public employee
6	Free-lance professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher, other)
7	Fixed-term, temporary, part-time employee
8	Home worker
9	Housewife
10	Student
11	Unemployed
12	Retired
13	Other

11. If you are married, what is your partner's occupation?

1	Self-employed (agriculture and company business)
2	Self-employed (literary and artistic profession)
3	Full time employee (executive, administrative, professional, technical, commercial, service, worker)
4	Educational staff
5	Public employee
6	Free-lance professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher, other)
7	Fixed-term, temporary, part-time employee
8	Home worker
9	Housewife
10	Student
11	Unemployed
12	Retired
13	Other

12. Respondents who selected 'temporary, fix-term, part-time job' in question 10, what is the reason for choosing that type of work? You can select up to 2 reasons. Please state on the column on the left the level of importance of chosen reasons by writing 1 for the most important and 2 for the second most important.

	1	Work time is flexible
	2	Easier to balance with childrearing and housework
	3	Easier to get husband/partner and family's understanding
	4	Little responsibility
	5	Easier to quit
	6	No choice (only part-time/fixed-term job was available)
	7	To supplement family income
	8	Other
	9	No particular reason

13. What is your opinion on women working?

1	Women should keep working after marriage and having children, and they should get the support of those around them
2	Women should stop working temporarily for childrearing, but they should go back to work full time after that
3	Women should stop working temporarily for childrearing, but they should go back to work part-time after that
4	Women should quit their job soon after getting married
5	Women should quit their job just before having children
6	I don't think women should work
7	I think women can get married and can choose to keep working without having children
8	I think women can keep working without getting married
9	Other
10	Don't know

Section B: About your family life

14. What is your opinion about the 'man/breadwinner - woman/family-carer' model?

1	I think so
2	If I had to choose, I think I agree
3	If I had to choose, I don't think I agree
4	I don't think so
5	I don't know

15. What is the reason for the 'man/breadwinner - woman/family-carer' model' do you think?

1	Men are meant for work, women for housework and childrearing
2	There is no particular reason, it is has always been like this (this is what I heard when I was a child)
3	By clearly separating husband and wife's tasks, both work and housework are better done
4	Because of childrearing, women are better at home
5	Under the current working conditions, it is difficult for working women to balance work and family
6	Other

16. Please state your opinion on men and women's roles in the family

1	Men should work and women should care for housework and childrearing
2	Men and women can both work and do housework, although childrearing is mainly a women's task
3	It may safely be said that <i>women</i> should better focus on the home and <i>men</i> on their jobs
4	Both men and women should share tasks in housework and childrearing
5	Women might as well work and men care for housework and childrearing
6	Other
7	Don't know

17. Who is mainly in charge of housework in the family?

1	Respondent
2	Respondent's partner
3	Respondent' mother
4	Respondent's father
5	Respondent's partner's mother
6	Respondent's partner's father
7	Respondent's son
8	Respondent's son's wife (daughter-in-law)
9	Respondent's daughter
10	Respondent's daughter's husband
11	Respondent's sisters
12	Respondent's brothers
13	Other

18. Who is usually helping the person stated above in housework?

1	Nobody (the person stated above is the only one doing housework)
2	Respondent (is helping the person stated above, who is the main doer)
3	Respondent's partner
4	Respondent' mother
5	Respondent's father
6	Partner's mother
7	Respondent's partner's father
8	Respondent's son
9	Respondent's son's wife (daughter-in-law)
10	Respondent's daughter
11	Respondent's daughter's husband
12	Respondent's sisters
13	Respondent's brothers
14	Other

Section C: Religious awareness

19. What is your family religion or other belief other than Shinnyoen / Risshō Kōseikai / Roman Catholic Church? Please select from the list below.

1	Shintō
2	Buddhist
3	Tendai

4	Shingon
5	Jōdo
6	Jōdo shinshū
7	Soto zen
8	Rinzai zen
9	Nichiren
10	Jishū
11	Other Buddhist
12	Christian
13	Catholic
14	Protestant
15	Other Christian denominations
16	New Religions
17	Reiyūkai
18	Sōkagakkai
19	Tenrikyō
20	Konkokyō
21	Risshō kōseikai
22	Shinnyoen
23	Other organizations
24	Other

20. When did you join Shinnyoen / Risshō Kōseikai / Roman Catholic Church?

1	2 years ago
2	5 years ago
3	10 years ago
4	15 years ago
5	20 years ago
6	30 years ago
7	More than 40 years ago
8	Born in the religion

21. How many generations in your family have been adherent of Shinnyoen / Risshō Kōseikai / Roman Catholic Church?

1	1st generation
2	2nd generation
3	3rd generation
4	4th generation
5	Over 4th generation

22. Where are you affiliated? Please indicate the name of temple/ church.

Temple/Church	Sub-brunch	Area group
	Group	Unit

23. Do you have any role within the religious organization?

1	Yes (specify)
2	No

24. How did you about Shinnyoen / Risshō Kōseikai / Roman Catholic Church? Please select one of the following.

1	I have known it since birth/since I was a child
2	Partner or partner's family
3	Relatives
4	Acquaintance from work
5	Neighbourhood
6	Friend (from workplace)
7	Friend (from neighbourhood)
8	Friend (from school)
9	I searched myself
10	Other

25. What was the motivation for joining Shinnyoen / Risshō Kōseikai / Roman Catholic Church? Please select the answer you most agree.

1	I was impressed by the leader's charisma
2	I was influenced by the personality of my group's guiding-parent/church's priest
3	I was attracted by the doctrine
4	The other adherents were wonderful people with a nice attitude toward life
5	I was attracted by the nice atmosphere of group meetings
6	In order to train myself
7	I wanted to be useful and I was interested in the volunteer activities run by the religious organization, so I joined it
8	Because I wanted to solve my problems
9	Because I was born in a family where member/members was/were already affiliated in the organization
10	Other

26. Why do you believe in the doctrine of Shinnyoen / Risshō Kōseikai / Roman Catholic Church? Please select the one you think is most important reason from the list below.

1	My belief contributes to the health and harmony of my family
2	My belief gives me the strength I need in my life
3	Because it provides me the ethical guidance I need in everyday life
4	I believe it contributes building a better world
5	My belief provides me a sense of belonging and security
6	It helps me to have self-confidence, and interpersonal respect
7	After I joined the religious group, I understood the sense of purpose and the value of myself in the society
8	I have been an adherent since birth, so it is part of my life
9	Other

Section D: About your faith-based volunteer activities

27. When did you start participating to the volunteering group/s sponsored by your religious organization?

Year

28. Usually, how many times do you participate in volunteer activities sponsored by your religious organization?

1	Every time
2	Every two or three times
3	Once every six months
4	Once a year

29. In case none of their friends or acquaintance is joining the activity, how many times are participating?

1	Every time
2	Every two or three times
3	Once every six months
4	Once a year

30. Did you volunteer before joining the faith-based volunteer group?

1	Yes
2	No

31. Are you currently volunteering in groups other than those sponsored by the religious organization?

1	Yes
2	No

32. What motivated you to join the faith-based volunteer group? Please select 3 of the following options and rate them from 1 (the most important) to 3 (the least important).

	1	I felt it was my duty as believer
	2	I was asked by the church head/church pastor/leader
	3	Volunteering was part of my religious practice, but I soon felt a sense of satisfaction, so I got more engaged
	4	Volunteering was part of my religious practice, but I soon felt it gave me a sense of purpose in my life, so I got more engaged
	5	Volunteering was part of my religious practice, but it also granted me some time for myself outside the family and work, so I got more engaged
	6	To contribute to others

	7	To build networks with other people
	8	To strengthen local community ties
	9	I was impressed by the improvement in my area/ward/city that volunteer work has brought in
	10	Personal growth
	11	In volunteer groups people make no differences according to gender, it helps to build very equal relationships
	12	It is an influent activity because people like politicians and important people are participating
	13	Other

33. What volunteer activities sponsored by your religious organization are you currently participating? Please select for the following options.

	1	Not-paid voluntary service
	2	Paid voluntary service
	3	<i>Hōshi</i> (social service)
	4	Activities contributing to local community such as neighbourhood association
	5	Activities sponsored by Women's Association or Senior Citizens' Association
	6	Activities related to childcare and courses on family education
	7	Activities related to learning such as study groups, research groups, reading groups, conferences, and symposiums
	8	Activities related to environmental preservation, or consumer's movements
	9	Activities contributing to community wellbeing such as charity movements, bazaar, movement promoting greeting exchange, movement against litter drop
	10	Activities related to NGO and NPO sponsored by the religious organization
	11	Peace activities: conferences, activities to help refugees, UNICEF fundraising
	12	Activities promoting religious cooperation: movement to promote religious awareness, memorial services for war dead, martyrs, dead by accident
	13	Activities appealing to public service and government policies
	14	Activities related to international exchange and cooperation
	15	Activities related to social welfare such as visiting elderly and hospitals
	16	Other
	17	I am not participating to any volunteer activities

34. What activities from the ones selected above are you attending most? Please indicate by numbering the options from the most to the least attended.

	1	Not-paid voluntary service
	2	Paid voluntary service
	3	<i>Hōshi</i> (social service)
	4	Activities contributing to local community such as neighbourhood association
	5	Activities sponsored by Women's Association or Senior Citizens' Association
	6	Activities related to childcare and courses on family education
	7	Activities related to learning such as study groups, research groups, reading groups, conferences, and symposiums
	8	Activities related to environmental protection, and consumer's movements
	9	Activities contributing to community wellbeing such as charity movements, bazaar, movement promoting greeting exchange, movement against litter drop
	10	Activities related to NGO and NPO sponsored by the religious organization
	11	Peace activities: conferences, activities to help refugees, UNICEF fundraising
	12	Activities promoting religious cooperation: movement to promote religious awareness, memorial services for war dead, martyrs, dead by accident
	13	Activities appealing to public service and government policies
	14	Activities related to international exchange and cooperation
	15	Activities related to social welfare such as visiting elderly and hospitals
	16	Other
	17	I am not participating to any volunteer activities

35. What activities would you like to join in the future? Please select from the following options. Please rate your level of preference by numbering your choices starting from 1 (the most aspired).

	1	Not-paid voluntary service
	2	Paid voluntary service
	3	<i>Hōshi</i> (social service)
	4	Activities contributing to local community such as neighbourhood association
	5	Activities sponsored by Women's Association or Senior Citizens' Association
	6	Activities related to childcare and courses on family education
	7	Activities related to learning such as study groups, research groups, reading groups, conferences, and symposiums

	8	Activities related to environmental protection, or consumer's movements
	9	Activities contributing to community wellbeing such as charity movements, bazaar, movement promoting greeting exchange, movement against litter drop
	10	Activities related to NGO and NPO sponsored by the religious organization
	11	Peace activities: conferences, activities to help refugees, UNICEF fundraising
	12	Activities promoting religious cooperation: movement to promote religious awareness, memorial services for war dead, martyrs, dead by accident
	13	Activities appealing to public service and government policies
	14	Activities related to international exchange and cooperation
	15	Activities related to social welfare such as visiting elderly and hospitals
	16	Other

36. What is the main reason for volunteering? This question is for respondents who have stated they are currently participating to volunteer activities, and those who aspire to other volunteer activities. Please select three of the following options and rate your reasons numbering from 1 (the most important) to 3.

	1	Because friends and acquaintances also volunteer
	2	Because I want to contribute to others
	3	For pleasure and because it gives a purpose in life
	4	To gain knowledge and understanding of various issues
	5	To improve my health
	6	Because I sympathized with the content and purpose of the activities
	7	Because I wanted to make good use of my time
	8	To improve my work
	9	Other
	10	No reason

37. Respondents who stated they do not participate much in volunteer activities: what is the reason for your low frequency of participation? Please select 3 of the following options and rate your reasons numbering from 1 (the most important) to 3.

	1	Nobody else I know are involved in volunteer activities
	2	Personal relationships are difficult
	3	Unable to find suitable volunteer activities
	4	I am busy at work
	5	I am busy with childcare and housework
	6	Because I am taking care of an old or sick person
	7	No understanding from my family
	8	I cannot afford it economically
	9	I am worried for my health
	10	I am not interested in it
	11	Other
	12	No particular reason

38. What is your opinion concerning women volunteering? Please select one of the following options you most agree.

	1	Women should continue volunteering after marriage and having children
	2	Women should stop while childrearing, and start again volunteer after that
	3	Women should volunteer until they have children, and stop thereafter
	4	Women should start/restart volunteering after children have grown up
	5	Women should volunteer after their husbands will retire
	6	Other

39. Please select one of the following options you most agree.

	1	I think that people should live in a harmonious community rather than individualistically
	2	I tend to act according to my own will rather than following people's suggestions (personal choice, and self-realization are important)
	3	I think contributing to society is very important
	4	I think that living a full, stable life is my priority
	5	If I don't get my family's understanding, then I will sacrifice myself and change my plans
	6	To me, it is important to value my purposes and wishes

40. Please rate the level of importance of the above statements, from 1 (the most important) to 6 (the least important).

	1	I think that people should live in a harmonious community rather than individually.
	2	I usually tend to act according to my own will rather than following people's suggestions (personal choice, and self-realization are important)
	3	I think contributing to society is very important
	4	I think that living a full, stable life is my priority

5	If I don't get my family's understanding, then I will sacrifice my plans
6	To me, it is important to value my purposes and aspirations

41. What are the outcomes in terms of social contribution to the community of the faith-based volunteer activities you participate in, do you think? Please select 4 of the following options and rate your options numbering from 1 (the most important) to 4.

1	Volunteering helps to generate the necessary ethics for social conviviality
2	With the purpose of building a peaceful world starting from the family, it helps to make an ideal world
3	It meets the necessary needs of people in their day-life
4	It increases local safety (crime prevention)
5	It trains for disaster relief
6	It provides support and healthcare to elderly and disabled
7	It contributes to environmental preservation
8	It helps to build a community
9	It promotes children's education
10	It helps to preserve cultural values and symbols
11	It helps to generate trust and mutual support among people
12	It helps to improve women's social role and promote the formation of a gender-equal society
13	other

42. What atmosphere characterizes your faith-based volunteer group? Please select 2 of the following options and rate them from 1 (the most important) to 2 (less important).

1	I feel free to join with ease, there is a informal atmosphere
2	There are strong interests, people look quite self-centred
3	People don't care about the others, it is cold and distant
4	People interfere each other, it is rather annoying
5	People can ask for advice and help each other.
6	Other

43. How much do you usually interact with the people listed below? Please indicate if you interact mainly with men, women or both.

1	Neighbourhood	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
2	Co-workers	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
3	Friends sharing hobbies, schoolmates, sport mates, clubs	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
4	People from the religious organization or the volunteer	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
5	School-age friends	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
6	Acquaintances known in children's environment	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
7	Relatives	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable

44. How many people within the volunteering group do you usually have the following interactions? Please indicate if you interact mainly with men, women or both.

1	I can ask for advice, lend and borrow things, and ask and give help in case of need	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
	I can count on some people	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
	None				
2	I can have a chat with	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
	There are some people	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
	None				
3	We greet each other	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
	There are some people	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
	None				

45. Has nay changed occurred in your life by volunteering? Select from the following options and rate the selections numbering from 1 (the highest) to the lower level of preference.

1	I have become happy because I can be of help for people or society
2	My relationships with people and my living environment has improved
3	I have met other people and groups, so my social life has expanded
4	By practicing my faith outside the religious organization, I got convinced about the rightness of my belief
5	I can now be myself also outside the religious organization
6	I have become able to show my skills
7	My life has become worthwhile (<i>ikigai</i>)
8	I have reached a full and balanced life

	9	Other
	10	I have not benefitted

46. In your opinion, what changes has the participation in faith-based volunteering brought about in the relationships with your family, friends and fellow members? Select from the following options and rate the selections numbering from 1 (the highest) to the lower level of preference.

	1	I have become closer to other members' family
	2	We have become able to do things together as a family
	3	I have built relationships of mutual understanding (with family, friends, volunteers) so that if we have a problem we can find a good solution together
	4	In general, I have made very close friends
	5	I am now able to act with friends or other volunteer members, rather than family
	6	Conversation in my family has increased significantly
	7	I have learned about other families' lifestyle, and many things about other people
	8	Time for my family has decreased
	9	Not applicable
	10	Other

47. What benefits have you achieved by participating to faith-based volunteering? Select from the following options and rate the selections from 1 (the highest) to the lower level of preference.

	1	My life has enriched, I have a sense of fulfilment
	2	I have learned how to value the time I devote for things I would like to do
	3	I have received my family understanding and cooperation toward things I would like to do
	4	I have become aware that gender equal relationships are important within the family too
	5	I have become aware of problems about gender roles in our society
	6	When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other. At least within the volunteer group social inequalities between men and women are redressed
	7	When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other. I think that it helps to redress social inequalities between men and women among people around me
	8	When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other. I think that it helps to redress social inequalities between men and women in society at large.
	9	Other

48. Considering the level of importance of the perceived benefits selected in the previous question, how would you rate them? Please number selections starting from 1 (the most important).

	1	My life has enriched, I have a sense of fulfilment
	2	I have learned how to value the time I devote for things I would like to do
	3	I have received my family understanding and cooperation toward things I would like to do
	4	I have become aware that gender equal relationships are important within the family, which is important
	5	I have become aware of problems about gender inequality in our society in daily life, which is important
	6	When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other, and have reached an egalitarian relationship
	7	When volunteering men and women cooperate with each other. I think that it helps to redress social inequalities between men and women among people around me
	8	Other

49. What do you think about the social role of the volunteer activities you are engaged?

	1	The organization should remit social issues to the state and political bodies
	2	The organization should cooperate with the state and the political bodies
	3	The organization should act independently from the state and political bodies
	4	Other

50. What do you think about the current relationship between the state and the religious organization in Japan? Please answer 'yes' or 'no' to the following questions.

1	I think separation of religious organizations and politics should be strongly observed YES NO
2	Religious organizations can cooperate with state and political bodies, although they should keep their realms separated YES NO
3	Religious organizations should not participate in politics, but supporting a political party or politicians is acceptable YES NO
4	I think politics should work more in order to defend the religious freedom YES NO

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