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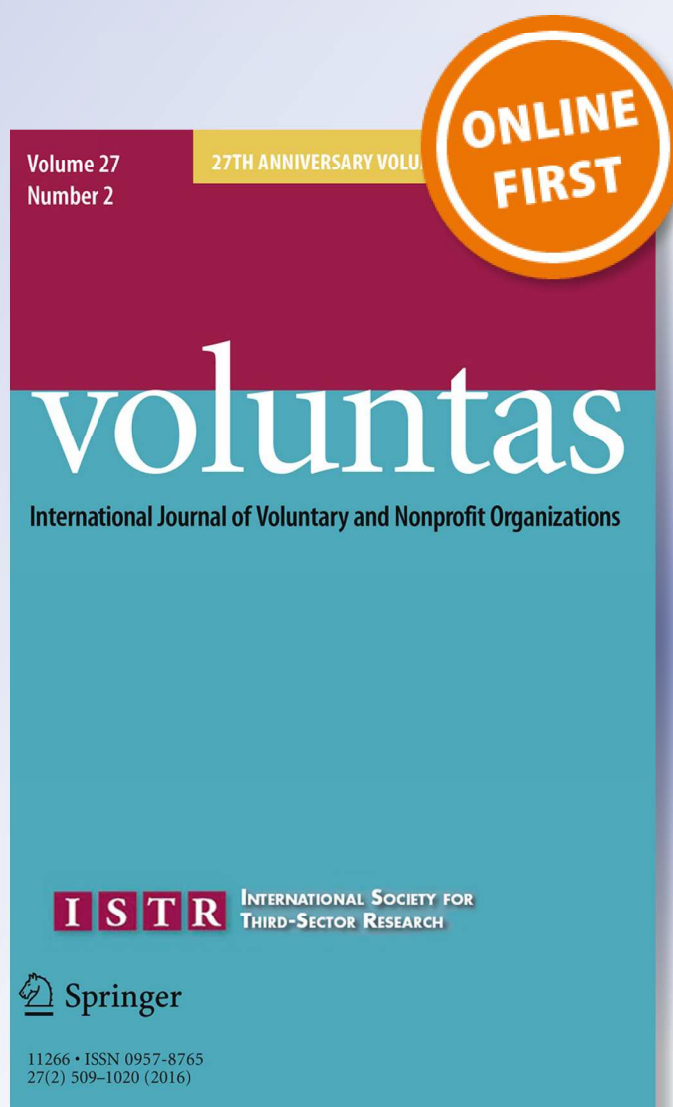
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## The Effect of Attitudinal and Behavioral Commitment on the Internal Assessment of Organizational Effectiveness: A Multilevel Analysis

Patrick Valeau<sup>1</sup> · Jurgen Willems<sup>2</sup> · Hassen Parak<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract** Using a multilevel analysis including 207 volunteers and paid workers nested within 51 nonprofit organizations (NPOs), this study examines the effect of individual and group attitudinal and behavioral commitment on their assessment of organizational effectiveness. Drawing on classical attitude theories, our results indicate that individuals with higher affective organizational commitment tend to assess their NPO's effectiveness higher, while individuals staying because of the lack of alternatives assess it lower. However, in line with behavioral commitment theories, both relationships are mediated by the effect of teamwork behavioral commitment. We also found a negative effect of normative attitudinal commitment partially nested at the group level. Overall, our results suggest that encouraging volunteers and paid workers to participate in concrete teamwork behaviors on a daily basis constitutes a twofold benefit: it adds to the effect of affective attitudinal commitment at the individual level, while counter balancing the negative effects related to normative individual and collective resistances.

**Résumé** Utilisant une analyse multiniveau comprenant 207 bénévoles et travailleurs rémunérés intégrés dans 51 organisations à but non lucratif (OBNL), cette étude examine l'effet de l'engagement comportemental individuel et collectif sur

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✉ Patrick Valeau  
patrick@valeau.com

Jurgen Willems  
jurgen.willems@wiso.uni-hamburg.de

Hassen Parak  
hparak@msn.com

<sup>1</sup> University of Reunion, Avenue de Paris, 97400 Saint Denis, France

<sup>2</sup> University of Hamburg, Von-Melle-Park 5, 20146 Hamburg, Germany

l'évaluation de leur efficacité organisationnelle. S'appuyant sur les théories de l'attitude classique, nos résultats indiquent que les individus avec un engagement organisationnel affectif plus élevé ont tendance à évaluer l'efficacité de leur OBNL plus élevée, tandis que les personnes qui restent en raison de l'absence d'alternatives l'évaluent plus faible. Cependant, conformément aux théories d'engagement du comportement, les deux relations sont facilitées par l'effet de l'engagement comportemental du travail d'équipe. Nous avons également constaté un effet négatif de l'engagement comportemental normatif partiellement imbriqué au niveau du groupe. Dans l'ensemble, nos résultats suggèrent qu'encourager les bénévoles et les travailleurs rémunérés à participer à des comportements de travail d'équipe concrets quotidiennement constitue un double avantage : cela accroît l'effet de l'engagement comportemental affectif au niveau individuel tout en contrebalançant les effets négatifs liés aux résistances normatives individuelles et collectives.

**Zusammenfassung** Anhand einer mehrstufigen Analyse von 207 ehrenamtlichen und bezahlten Mitarbeitern in 51 gemeinnützigen Organisationen untersucht diese Studie die Auswirkungen des einstellungsbezogenen und verhaltensbezogenen Commitments von Personen und Gruppen auf ihre Einschätzung der organisationalen Effektivität. Unter Bezugnahme auf klassische Einstellungstheorien zeigen unsere Ergebnisse, dass Personen mit einem höheren affektiven organisationalen Commitment dazu neigen, die Effektivität ihrer gemeinnützigen Organisation höher einzuschätzen, während Personen, die bei der Organisation aufgrund mangelnder Alternativen bleiben, die Effektivität geringer einschätzen. In Übereinstimmung mit verhaltensbezogenen Commitmenttherapien werden beide Beziehungen von dem Effekt des verhaltensbezogenen Commitments im Zusammenhang mit der Teamarbeit beeinflusst. Wir sahen auch einen negativen Effekt des normativen einstellungsbezogenen Commitments, das teilweise auf der Gruppenebene vorhanden war. Insgesamt weisen unsere Ergebnisse darauf hin, dass die Förderung täglicher konkreter Verhaltensweisen im Rahmen einer Teamarbeit bei Ehrenamtlichen und bezahlten Mitarbeitern einen zweifachen Vorteil mit sich bringt: der Effekt des affektiven einstellungsbezogenen Commitments auf der individuellen Ebene wird verstärkt, während die negativen Effekte hinsichtlich der normativen individuellen und kollektiven Resistenzen ausgeglichen werden.

**Resumen** Utilizando un análisis multinivel que incluía a 207 voluntarios y trabajadores pagados incorporados a 51 organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro (NPO, por sus siglas en inglés), el presente estudio examina el efecto del compromiso actitudinal y comportamental individual y grupal sobre su evaluación de la eficacia organizacional. Basándonos en teorías clásicas sobre la actitud, nuestros resultados indican que los individuos con un compromiso organizacional afectivo más elevado tienden a una evaluación superior de la eficacia de su NPO, mientras que los individuos que se quedan debido a la falta de alternativas la evalúan de manera inferior. Sin embargo, en línea con las teorías sobre el compromiso comportamental, ambas relaciones se ven condicionadas por el efecto del compromiso comportamental del trabajo en grupo. También encontramos un efecto negativo del compromiso actitudinal normativo parcialmente anidado a nivel de grupo. En general,

nuestros resultados sugieren que alentar a los voluntarios y a los trabajadores pagados a participar en comportamientos de trabajo en equipo concretos de manera diaria constituye un doble beneficio: aumenta el efecto del compromiso actitudinal afectivo a nivel individual, mientras que contrarresta los efectos negativos relacionados con resistencias normativas individuales y colectivas.

**Keywords** Effectiveness assessment · Attitudinal commitment · Behavioral commitment · Multilevel modeling

## Introduction

NPO effectiveness has been among the most important topics of theory and practice over the past three decades (see Ebrahim and Rangan 2010; Jun and Shiau 2012; Lecy et al. 2012; Willems et al. 2014). There is now a large consensus in the literature as to the multi-dimensional nature of NPO effectiveness which includes technical, financial, social as well as institutional aspects (e.g., Herman and Renz 2004, 2008; Kanter and Summers 1987; Lecy et al. 2012; Sowa et al. 2004). Most scholars also agree that different stakeholders often give different levels of importance to these different dimensions, and, as a result, often make different judgements about the effectiveness of the same NPO (Ebrahim and Rangan 2010; Lecy et al. 2012; Herman and Renz 1997, 2004, 2008; Jun and Shiau 2012; Kanter and Summers 1987; Whitman 2008).

While at first these judgments were viewed as forms of bias that did not reflect objective effectiveness, drawing on Herman and Renz's (1997, 2004, 2008) seminal work, the stakeholders approach to NPO effectiveness considers that the judgements of stakeholders constitute a measure of effectiveness in its own right (Jun and Shiau 2012; Lecy et al. 2012). These judgements reflect stakeholders' satisfaction and approbation (Herman and Renz 2004). They are part of building a reputation (Herman and Renz 1997; Lecy et al. 2012; Willems et al. 2016). The stakeholder approach to NPO effectiveness moves from notions of perception to assessment, where the NPO's primary aim, or at least necessary condition, consists in serving its stakeholders. Although NPOs are trying to bring their stakeholders together around the same vision, they often have to deal with their different points of view. Herman and Renz (1997, 2004, 2008) call for more research to understand how to obtain stakeholders' approbation on their NPOs' effectiveness.

While a lot of attention has been given to how external stakeholders, in particular financiers, form their judgements (Pache and Santos 2010; Verbruggen et al. 2011), little research has been done on volunteers and paid workers' assessment of their NPO's effectiveness. Understanding how volunteers and paid workers individually and collectively form their assessment of their NPO's effectiveness and why their effectiveness ratings for the same NPO may vary is a crucial issue for multiple reasons (Willems 2015). First, an NPO is a specific context, its action is based on a mission and volunteers and paid workers need to believe in this mission and in the value of what they do (Clary et al. 1998; Grube and Piliavin 2000; Laville et al. 2015; Mintzberg 1983). Second, these internal stakeholders have to work together and, therefore, need to achieve a minimum level of cohesion to move forward

together, otherwise there is a risk of tension and conflict (Cumming 2008; Mintzberg 1983; Reid and Karambayya's 2009). Third, volunteers and paid workers are often in contact with external stakeholders, and any negative feedback from them may compromise the NPO's reputation (Herman and Renz 1997, 2004, 2008; Lacey et al. 2012; Pache and Santos 2010).

The theoretical framework used in this study is a twofold attitude and behavioral commitment model. Attitude is perhaps the most commonly referred to cause when trying to explain individuals' judgements and behaviors. To summarize, attitude constitutes a general subjective framework of thought regarding a given situation or object which serves to further interpret further events and exchange related to the latter (Eagly and Chaiken 2005). One of the most common attitudinal concepts used when it comes to the relationship with an organization is organizational commitment. The most cited model of organizational commitment is, unquestionably, Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-component model. This model, which has recently been applied to volunteers and paid workers (Dawley et al. 2005; Valeau et al. 2013), defines commitment as an attitude that can be based on three different mind-sets: affective, normative, and continuous, all associated with positive appraisal and a will to serve the organization's goals. Thus, our hypothesis about the relationship between commitment and assessment of effectiveness draws on two complementary theoretical logics that we develop in the next section. First, at a cognitive level, positive attitude, in particular attitudinal organizational commitment, usually leads to sharing the goals and interests of the targeted object (Allen and Meyer 1990; Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). Volunteers and paid workers will therefore be more likely to understand and approve what their NPO is aiming to achieve (Herman and Renz 2004; Jun and Shiao 2012). Second, as described by classical attitude theories (Albarracín et al. 2005; Eagly and Chaiken 2005), overall psychological attachment to their NPO can lead volunteers and paid workers to a positive assessment of its actions and outcomes.

However, the field of cognitive psychology has progressively developed more complex models regarding how individuals form their judgements taking into account behaviors that they have already engaged in. We aim to apply these models to the assessment of NPO effectiveness. Drawing on Festinger's (1957) seminal work on cognitive dissonance and cognitive theories also indicate that these appraisals and perceptions can be influenced by previous behaviors (Kline and Peters 1991; Olson and Stone 2005; Salancick 1977). This theory considers the mediating effect of behaviors on the relationship between attitudes and judgements. In this study, we make the assumption that volunteers and paid workers' assessment of their NPO's effectiveness could become stronger as they engage in teamwork behaviors i.e., actively collaborate with others on tasks contributing to the achievement of these goals. Therefore, this research also examines the direct and mediation effects of teamwork behavioral commitment on the assessment of organizational effectiveness.

Illustrations of the relationship between attitudinal organizational commitment, teamwork behavioral commitment, and the assessment of organizational effectiveness assessment can actually be found in the in-depth case studies from the past

decade accounting for NPOs' development. Cumming's (2008) description of French nongovernmental organizations; Kelley et al. (2005) story of a Chicago Syringe exchange NPO going from illegal to legal; Kreutzer and Jager's (2011) presentation of professionalizing self-help groups; Reid and Karambayya's (2009) analysis of Canadian Opera Houses, all depict a first group of very committed volunteers and paid workers making very positive judgements of their NPO's effectiveness, despite the lack of formal organization. Later, as the NPO professionalizes, a new generation, as committed as the previous one, considers formal organization as an effective approach to NPO development. Volunteers and paid workers from the first generation first tend to withdraw, yet their active participation in daily action seems to help them to progressively integrate these changes, and eventually recommit and assess their NPO more positively.

The multilevel analysis herein is complementary to this mainly qualitative research discussion, as we quantitatively verify and elaborate the relationship between volunteers and paid workers' attitudinal organizational commitment and teamwork behavioral commitment and their assessment of organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, the use of a multilevel analysis allows us to distinguish individual variations occurring within the same organization from group variation occurring between the different organizations studied. This allows us to study the impact of the individual and shared commitments of volunteers and paid workers. In the next section, we introduce our hypotheses. We then present our multilevel research designs and our results. The implications of our findings for the measurement and management of internal stakeholders' assessment of effectiveness are discussed.

## **Literature Review**

In this section, we develop what can be seen as two complementary ways of explaining volunteers and paid workers' assessments of their NPOs' effectiveness. Although the nonprofit sector has often been described as a world of conviction where ideas, values and sense of mission, or in other words, attitudes inspire judgements and actions (Laville et al. 2015; Rothschild and Stephenson 2009; Valeau 2015), we argue that concrete action also matters and triggers further major cognitive processes. We first look at attitudinal commitment as the most prevalent approach, followed by behavioral commitment as an alternative and complementary approach. The third part examines the collective level of these two approaches.

### **The Effect of Attitudinal Organizational Commitment on Organizational Effectiveness Assessment**

Attitudinal commitment is a psychological attachment based on different mind-sets that can play a role in shaping behaviors (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). In other words, attitudinal organizational commitment consists in endorsing and serving the goals of the organization (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001), for different reasons and with different motives (Meyer et al. 2004). The most commonly used definition of

organizational commitment over the past 30 years has been Allen and Meyer's (1990) distinguishing between affective, normative, and continuance commitment (see Meyer et al. meta-analysis 2002). The three-component model has shown its ability to predict a large range of behavioral intentions and actual behaviors such as intentions to leave and organizational citizenship behavior. Attitudinal organizational commitment is also related to other attitudes such as overall satisfaction (see Meyer et al. 2002). Among application contexts, a few studies have included volunteers (Dawley et al. 2005; Valeau et al. 2013) and paid workers from NPOs (Van Vuuren et al. 2008), measuring the effect of these three different components on intention to quit (Valeau et al. 2013) and role performance (Dawley et al. 2005).

Allen and Meyer's (1990) concept of organizational commitment has emerged as a central construct in the study of work attitudes. Thus, our hypotheses on the relationship between commitment to the NPO and organizational effectiveness assessment draw on general classical theories of attitudes, and on more specific theories of organizational commitment literature. Eagly and Chaiken (2005, p. 743) define attitudes as a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor. Individuals' positive attitude toward a given object will tend to influence their judgements and beliefs toward related issues and will develop forms of benevolence toward its interests (Albarracín et al. 2005; Eagly and Chaiken 2005). In other words, positive attitudes introduce positive judgements (Marsh and Wallace 2005). Thus, we expect that volunteers and paid workers who have developed a positive attitude toward their NPO will rate its effectiveness higher. Our second argument supporting our hypotheses concerns the fact that organizations explicitly define their interests in terms of goals and that organizational commitment refers to forms of appropriation of the latter (Mowday et al. 1979; Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). From a strictly cognitive point of view, these goals constitute a common framework of thought (Watzlawick et al. 1974) helping volunteers and paid workers to understand what their NPO is striving toward. Thus, completing Lecy et al.'s (2012) proposal, we argue that individuals sharing the goals of their NPO will develop a similar approach to effectiveness and will therefore more likely rate it higher than those funding their judgements on other criteria. We examine the combination of these appraisal and cognitive effects of commitment on effectiveness assessment for each of Allen and Meyer's (1990) three components.

The affective component of attitudinal organizational commitment refers to employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization (Allen and Meyer 1990). This identification and sense of belonging mean that affectively committed individuals feel their NPO's problem as their own (Allen and Meyer 1990). This dimension was drawn from Mowday et al.'s (1979) early unidimensional approach based on the degree of goal and value congruency with the organization, and desire to maintain membership. Even if not explicitly referring to the three components model, forms of affective commitment can be found in qualitative case studies of NPOs showing how volunteers and paid workers identify with and are emotionally attached to their NPO (Cumming 2008; Kelley et al. 2005; Kreuzer and Jäger 2011; Reid and Karambayya 2009). Even during the early informal stage, these volunteers and paid workers have a positive view on their



NPO's effectiveness. The following quotation reported by Kreutzer and Jäger (2011, p. 646) illustrates this mind-set: "when talking about her work for the association, it became obvious how she enjoyed the 'creative chaos'." Research on commitment shows that the affective component always has the strongest relationship with most behaviors of interest to the organization, such as intention to stay and organizational citizenship behaviors and attitude such as satisfaction (Meyer et al. 2002). We make the hypothesis that it also has an effect on effectiveness assessment.

**Hypothesis 1** Affective attitudinal organizational commitment is positively related to organizational effectiveness assessment.

According to Wiener (1982), normative commitment corresponds to the totality of internalized normative pressures to act in a way which meets organizational goals and interests. This component is rooted in values such as loyalty and sense of duty, leading individuals to think and act in accordance with what they consider as right (Allen and Meyer 1990; Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). Forms of normative commitment can be found in qualitative case studies (e.g., Kelley et al. 2005; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011). For instance, the "old guard and unreconstructed cold warriors": the expression used by Cumming (2008, p.390) to designate the first generation of NGOs' volunteers and paid workers illustrates the idea of individuals normatively fighting for their NPO, acting for its 'mission' (Mintzberg 1983). Quantitative research has shown the same positive results for normative commitment as for affective commitment although the effects are not as strong (Meyer et al. 2002). Given the profile identified in NPO qualitative literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2** Normative attitudinal organizational commitment is positively related to organizational effectiveness assessment.

Individuals make side-bets when they take an action that increases the costs associated with discontinuing another, related, action (Allen and Meyer 1990, Becker 1960). High sacrifice is the first of the two sub-dimensions of Allen and Meyer's continuous commitment (1990). Drawing on Becker's (1960) work, it refers to the attention given to costs involved in an eventual resignation. This subcomponent has also proved to influence behaviors and related attitudes (Meyer et al. 2002). Cumming's (2008, p. 390) description of "a new breed of managers and career-minded recruits" investing in their professional development matches Allen and Meyer's (1990) initial approach of high sacrifice, as leaving the organization would mean losing all or part of the advantages associated with their position. Yet, according to Valeau et al. (2013), this component also applies to volunteers' non-financial benefits. From a broader perspective, high sacrifice commitment means that individuals have invested time and effort in their NPO. A positive judgement as to its effectiveness allows them to believe that these sacrifices were worthwhile. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis

**Hypothesis 3** High sacrifice attitudinal commitment is positively related to organizational effectiveness assessment.

The fewer viable alternatives employees believe are available, the stronger will be their continuance commitment to their current employer (Allen and Meyer 1990). Lack of alternative is the second aspect of continuous commitment. A debate is still going on about whether or not this subscale should be treated separately (McGee and Ford 1987). Bentein et al. (2005, p. 469) summarize this debate as follows: “*the high sacrifice and lack of alternative subcomponents have been found to be consistently related to one another, but differentially related to other constructs.*” In this study, we contend that lack of alternative and high sacrifice will have different effects on effectiveness assessment. Lack of alternative can be seen as the “*alienative*” side of continuous commitment (Etzioni 1961; Penley and Gould 1988): a form of negative commitment leading individuals to carry on with a given relationship because they feel they do not have the choice. They would like to quit but they cannot. Volunteers and paid workers, who are committed because of lack of alternatives, will rate their NPO as non-efficient as part of a negative perspective adopted toward their NPO in general. Such situations can be found in qualitative cases (e.g., Cumming 2008; Kelley et al. 2005; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011), when the first generation loses faith in their NPO as it adopts new goals with which they do not agree. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 4** Lack of alternative attitudinal commitment is negatively related to organizational effectiveness assessment.

#### **The Mediation Effect of Teamwork Behavioral Commitment on Organizational Effectiveness Assessment**

Since the work of Festinger (1957), and later on Kiesler (1971) and Salancik (1977), it has been well established that behaviors can have a strong effect on judgements: when adopting new behaviors, the latter can be adjusted in order to reduce *cognitive dissonance*. However, this retroactive effect depends on the extent to which individuals feel psychologically bound to their behavior (Salancik 1977). Different perceived characteristics of behaviors contribute to this bond: they have to be voluntarily chosen among other alternatives, they have to be irrevocable and they have to be public (O'Reilly and Caldwell 1981; Kline and Peters 1991; Salancik 1977). The repetition of certain behaviors can be seen as an escalation process progressively introducing a bias within an individual's logic (Staw 1976).

Here again, qualitative nonprofit literature provides illustrations of this process, in particular when NPOs are changing. Kelley et al.'s (2005) and Kreutzer and Jäger's (2011) cases suggest that volunteers and paid workers' disagreement with their NPOs' new goals tends to diminish as they start applying the new routines. For instance, the members of Kelley et al.'s (2005) syringe exchange organization hesitated for a long time before becoming legal and public. Once the decision had been made, “*many of the obstacles were thereby removed. In response, the group gradually reorganized, shifting its structures and procedures (...) toward the more familiar norms of a social service agency with public funding*” (p. 382). In other words, after a period of transition, they became committed again and regained a positive view on its effectiveness.

Drawing on Kelley et al (2005), we needed a measure based on participation in work routines. Thus, we consider teamwork behavior (Rousseau et al. (2006a, b). Rousseau et al. (2006a, p. 558) defined it as, “*a conceptual structure of team members’ overt actions that facilitate collective task accomplishment, taking into account the functional perspective.*” Integrating different theories, Rousseau et al. (2006a, b) refer to different activities such as the preparation of task accomplishment (team mission analysis, goal specification, and planning), task-collaborative behaviors (coordination, cooperation, and information exchange), work assessment behaviors (performance monitoring and systems monitoring), and team adjustment behaviors (backing-up behaviors, intra-team coaching, collaborative problem solving, and team practice innovation). Rousseau et al’s (2006a, b) definition emphasizes the participation of members in a dynamic and cooperative process. Thus, individuals’ engagement in practical behaviors related to teamwork will have a positive effect on their organizational effectiveness assessment. Our hypothesis is the following:

**Hypothesis 5a** Teamwork behavioral commitment is positively related to organizational effectiveness assessment.

Furthermore, still drawing on the behavioral approach to cognition and judgement formation (Kline and Peters 1991; O’Reilly and Caldwell 1981; Olson and Stone 2005; Salancik 1977), we argue that teamwork behavioral commitment will mediate the effects of attitudinal organizational commitment on effectiveness assessment. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the examination of a mediation involves three relationships: (1) the relationship between the independent variable (attitudinal commitment) and the dependent variable (assessment); (2) the relationship between the mediator (behavioral commitment) and the dependent variable (assessment); and (3) the relationship between the independent variable (attitudinal commitment) and the mediator (behavioral commitment). Hypotheses 1 to 4 have already established the relationship between attitudinal commitment and effectiveness assessment, while the theory supporting hypothesis 5 suggests a positive relationship between behavioral commitment and assessment. In order to complete the demonstration of our mediation hypothesis, we now need to examine the relationship between attitudinal commitment and behavioral commitment. This causal relationship is already well established, being at the heart of the massive literature based on the three-component model (Allen and Meyer 1990; Meyer and Herscovich 2001; Meyer et al. 2002). This literature was synthesized by Meyer et al. (2002): their meta-analysis showed the recurrent links not only between attitudinal organizational commitment and a wide range of behaviors such as intention to stay, but also organizational citizenship behavior which is very similar to teamwork behavior. This relationship has also been replicated in the context of NPOs (Dawley et al. 2005; Valeau et al. 2013).

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a mediation effect can be identified when the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable becomes weaker when introducing the mediator. This means that the mediator somehow transforms the effect of the independent level (Baron and Kenny 1986). This hypothesis is at the heart of the behavioral commitment theory (Festinger 1957;

Kline and Peters 1991; Olson and Stone 2005; Salancik 1977): this theory considers that behaviors engage individuals in a new process taking over the initial attitudinal effect: in order to justify their previous behavior and to remain a posteriori rational, individuals tend to modify their judgements (Festinger 1957). In the present study, teamwork behavioral commitment constitutes a form of enactment of the attitudinal organizational commitment disposition, reinforcing the effect of the latter on effectiveness assessment. Our hypothesis is the following:

**Hypothesis 5b** Teamwork behavioral commitment mediates the effect of organizational commitment on organizational effectiveness assessment.

### Individual and Group Effects

The above hypotheses were derived from a psychological approach to attitudinal and behavioral commitment and effectiveness assessment, yet we argue that, beyond individual considerations, attitudinal and behavioral commitments and the effectiveness assessment of NPOs also have a group dimension. This group dimension was briefly introduced as a possibility by Herman and Renz (2004), when mentioning that the social processes resulting in judgments of nonprofit organizational effectiveness may lead different stakeholders to develop the same criteria and to evaluate the information relevant to those criteria in the same way. This hypothesis of a group dimension is rooted in a sociological and social psychological approach to groups and societies. Drawing on Durkheim's work (1897), this approach is centered on the concept of culture defined as a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors shared by the members of a given group or community. Culture emerges in any human community (Becker 1963), but appears to be particularly strong in NPOs. Compared with other organizations, NPOs have a strong community essence generating a strong culture leading to a strong sense of belonging (e.g., Batliwala 2002; Graddy and Wang 2009). Qualitative case studies (Cumming 2008; Kelley et al. 2005; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011) report strong group phenomena. At their early stage, NPOs are formed by a majority of very committed activists sharing the same sense of mission (Mintzberg 1983) and same taste for nonhierarchical relationships (Rothschild and Stephenson 2009). After a stage of transition, a new generation often takes over, still committed to their NPO's goals, they are convinced that a formal organizational structure is more effective. Therefore, we argue that the NPOs studied will have a '*shared*' level of attitudinal and behavioral commitment and effectiveness assessment.

**Hypothesis 6** There is a group dimension for attitudinal organizational commitment, teamwork behavioral commitment, and organizational effectiveness assessment.

Considering individual and group attitudinal and behavioral commitment and effectiveness assessment mean that we are dealing with two different realities. Concretely, this requires us to examine in turns variations among individuals of the same organization and variations among organizations. This distinction is fundamental as it would be somehow absurd and ineffective to compare levels of

commitment and assessment of effectiveness of individuals experiencing different organizational situations (Herman and Renz 1997; Lecy et al. 2012). The levels of group attitudinal and behavioral commitment and effectiveness assessment characterizing a given organization constitute control variables permitting the measurement of individual variations, and also a phenomenon in its own right. Group effectiveness assessment corresponds to NPO's reputation (Lecy et al. 2012), i.e., a "social construct" (Herman and Renz 1997), in other words a "social representation" (Durkheim 1897; Guba and Lincoln 1994; Moscovici and Duveen 2000). According to Durkheim (1897), only social facts can explain social facts. With this in mind, drawing on Hypotheses 1 to 5 and depending on whether or not hypothesis 6 is confirmed, we predict the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 7** Group attitudinal organizational commitment and teamwork behavioral commitment are related to group organizational effectiveness assessment, while individual attitudinal organizational commitment and teamwork behavioral commitment are related to individual organizational effectiveness assessment.

## Method

### Sample

We used a series of multilevel analyses to test the effects of individual and group organizational commitment and teamwork behaviors on individual and group effectiveness assessment. We composed a stratified sample i.e., a sample of organizations and, within each of the latter, a sample of volunteers and paid workers.

First, we contacted 140 organizations from a list provided by the Regional Chamber of Social Economy in <Region: Author identification>, out of which 51, i.e., 36.4 % of them, decided to participate in our study. Almost all sectors of activity identified by Salamon and Anheier (1992) were represented: education, health, culture, social services, international activities, advocacy, environment, and philanthropy. The average number of paid workers per NPO was 58.5, ranging from 1 to 800. The average number of volunteers per NPO was 310.6, ranging from 3 to 5000.

Ten questionnaires were sent out to each organization requesting the participation of, at least, one volunteer and one paid worker. On average 4.05 people per organization answered correctly. Among the 230 questionnaires received, 23 had to be removed because of the number of missing answers, and as a result of just resulting in a total sample of 207 respondents. Given the 510 questionnaires distributed, this represented a response rate of 40.4 %. Our sample included 108 paid workers and 99 volunteers. An average of 2.15 paid workers per NPO responded, the number of respondents ranging from 1 to 5. An average of 1.95 volunteers per NPO responded, ranging from 1 to 5. We introduced roles in the

organization (volunteer versus paid worker) as a control variable in our regression, but did not find any significant effect on effectiveness assessment (see Table 4).

Our decisions regarding sample sizes were based on the standards established by Scherbaum and Ferrerter (2009) and by Maas and Hox (2005) for multilevel analysis. Scherbaum and Ferrerter (2009) recommend at least three within-organization data points, while Maas and Hox (2005) recommend having a minimum of 50 higher-level data points, in this case 50 organizations. Our sample meets both criteria, allowing us to perform our multilevel analysis.

For all the organizations that composed our sample, we obtained at least three within-organization respondents: either 1 volunteer and 2 paid workers or 2 volunteers and 1 paid worker. We thus meet Scherbaum and Ferrerter's (2009) three within-organization data points requirement for multilevel analysis. It is also important to mention that the size of the NPOs that composed our sample ranged from 1 to 800 paid workers. The number of within-organization responses collected also varied depending on this parameter.

The number of NPOs that made up our sample reached 51. Maas and Hox (2005), along with other studies building on their work, indicate the underestimated importance of sufficient second-level data points (i.e., organizations). When collecting the data, reaching this milestone of 50 organizations has been set as a priority, especially given the fact that our main variable of interest (organizational effectiveness) is an organization-level concept. Hence, we sought to avoid eliminating too many organizations due to excessive within-organization sample requirements. We accepted organizations with at least one volunteer and at least one paid staff respondent as long as we could reach a total number of respondents equal or superior to three.

## Measures

We measured organizational commitment using Allen and Meyer's (1990) 18-item questionnaire including affective commitment (six items,  $\alpha = .85$ , e.g., "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own"), normative commitment (six items,  $\alpha = .84$ , e.g., "It would not be morally right for me to leave this organization now"), high sacrifice (three items,  $\alpha = .77$ , e.g., "For me personally, the costs of leaving this organization would be far greater than the benefits") and lack of alternative (three items,  $\alpha = .83$ , e.g., "I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization"). Teamwork behaviors were measured using Rousseau, et al.'s (2006b) twelve items scale (e.g.,  $\alpha = .96$ , "We help others in order to achieve our work goals"). Effectiveness assessment was measured using a single item scale (one item: "Our organization is effective"). We deliberately did not refer to any specific criteria of effectiveness to avoid making the respondents rationalize their assessment through a predefined concept. A number of previous studies have shown that single item scales can present acceptable levels of reliability and robustness, and thus can be used when necessary for specific research purposes involving subjective self-reported assessment (Wanous et al. 1997; Gardner et al. 1998). In line with our research question, this single reflexive item aimed at capturing subjective assessment of effectiveness rather than objective effectiveness,

in order to study its variance not only across but also within organizations. All responses were made on 7-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

### Data Analysis

We first tested our measurement model through common method variance control and through a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). For both operations, we compared the fits using nonnormed fit index (NNFI) and the comparative fit index (CFI), looking for values higher than .95, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) looking for values lower than .06. The comparison between the hypothesized model and the nested models was based on  $\chi^2$  and the Akaike information indice (AIC) .

All our other analyses use hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), also called multilevel modeling, and were conducted with MLwiN. We tested Hypothesis 6, examining to what extent our dependent and independent variables had a significant proportion of group-level variance. We then decomposed our independent variables, for which significant group-level variance was observed, into two variables: on the one hand, the mean of each organization (as a group variable) and, on the other, the respondents' differences with the mean of their organization (as an individual measure), thus investigating the potentially distinct effects of individual versus group commitment on effectiveness assessment.

Third, we tested Hypotheses 1 to 5a and Hypothesis 7 through a series of regression analyses. Model 0 established the null model, clarifying the initial proportions of individual and group variances. In the subsequent models, control variables (Model 1), organizational commitment and teamwork behaviors at the individual level (Models 2 and 3), and then at the group level (Model 4), were added to explain organizational effectiveness assessment. For each model, we analyzed the fixed and random parts (Rasbash et al. 2005). The fixed part of our analysis corresponds to the magnitude and significance of independent variables' coefficients to explain effectiveness assessment. The random part provides the residual organizational and individual variances. Based on the latter, we calculated  $R^2$ -alike metrics indicating the proportion of organizational and individual variances explained by the different independent variables. The overall fit statistics of each model were based on the '-2\*loglikelihood'-metric (-2LLL).

Hypothesis 5b, which refers more specifically to the mediation role of teamwork behaviors, was also tested through this series of regression analyses. Following Baron and Kenny's (1986) recommendations, we first tested the three relationships involved i.e., the relationship between the independent variable (organizational commitment) and the mediator (teamwork behaviors), the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable (effectiveness assessment), and the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), there is a mediation effect when the relationship between independent and dependent variables is lower in the second regression, when introducing the mediating variable.

## Results

### Common Method Variance

Given that in the present research, as in most cognitive psychology studies, all variables have been measured using a single source, the first step was to check whether bias due to CMV might inflate the findings and cause misinterpretation. We tested the common method variance with the Harman's single-factor test using CFA (see Podsakoff et al. 2003). We first tested our seven-factor model including all the study constructs (i.e., the four components of attitudinal commitment and teamwork behavior). This model yielded a good fit to the data, ( $\chi^2 = 754.11$ ,  $df = 388$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.943$ ,  $p < .000$ , CFI = .92, NNFI = .91; RMSEA = .070; AIC = 908.1). Next, we added an orthogonal method factor to the previous model. All items were allowed to load on their theoretical construct as well as on the common method variance factor. The loadings on the common factor were constrained to all be equal, while the variance of the common factor was set to one. This model also resulted in a good fit, ( $\chi^2 = 748.63$ ,  $df = 387$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.934$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .92, NNFI = .91; RMSEA = .069; AIC = 904.6). AIC is a parsimony index used to compare the different nested models, looking for the smallest value (Hu and Bentler 1999). According to Burnham and Anderson (2002), a minimum difference of 4–7 is required to conclude that the model with the lowest AIC is significantly superior. The difference between the model with and the model without common factor was only 3.5 points. Given Burnham and Anderson's (2002) criteria and the principle of parsimony, we can therefore conclude that adding a common factor does not improve the model. Therefore, the common method bias remains limited and does not compromise further analyses.

### Confirmatory Factor Analyses

The results provided in Table 1 show that the five factors models including four components of organizational commitment and teamwork behaviors had a good fit ( $\chi^2 = 512.82$ ,  $df = 350$ ,  $p < .000$ , CFI = .96, NNFI = .95; RMSEA = .043; AIC = 751.45). This model outperforms any other tested models.

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Table 2 reports descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables. Affective attitudinal organizational commitment and teamwork behavioral commitment were significantly positively related to organizational effectiveness assessment ( $r = .39$ ,  $p < .01$ , and  $r = .53$ ,  $p < .01$ , respectively). Normative, high sacrifice, and lack of alternative commitments were negatively related to effectiveness assessment ( $r = -.12$ , *ns*;  $r = -.23$ ,  $p < .01$  and  $r = -.45$ ,  $p < .01$ , respectively). Furthermore, teamwork behavioral commitment was related to affective, high sacrifice, and lack of alternative ( $r = .79$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $r = -.23$ ,  $p < .01$ , and  $r = -.56$ ,  $p < .01$ , respectively), which constituted the first condition for a mediation effect, yet this was not the case for normative commitment ( $r = .09$ , *ns*).



**Table 1** Confirmatory factor analyses

	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ ( $\Delta df$ )	CFI	NNFI	RMSEA	AIC
Five-factor model: AAC, ANC, AHS, ALA, TBC	754.11 (388)	–	.91	.92	.070	908.1
Four-factor model: combining AHS and ALA	833.96 (392)	201.79 (9)	.89	.90	.076	979.9
Three factor model: combining AAC and ANO	1384.89 (395)	472.76 (15)	.77	.79	.113	1524.8
Two-factor model: combining AAC, ANC, AHS and ALA	1704.20 (397)	232.06 (11)	.70	.72	.130	1840.2
One-factor model	1924.69 (398)	294.26 (3)	.65	.68	.140	2058.6

AAC attitudinal affective commitment, ANC attitudinal normative commitment, AHS attitudinal high sacrifice commitment, ALA attitudinal lack of alternative commitment, TBC teamwork behavioral commitment

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics and correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Organizational effectiveness assessment	5.50	1.54	–					
Attitudinal affective commitment	5.25	2.28	.39**	–				
Attitudinal normative commitment	3.70	2.43	-.13	.25**	–			
Attitudinal high sacrifice commitment	2.98	2.38	-.23**	-.14	.44**	–		
Attitudinal lack of alternative commitment	2.50	2.31	-.45**	-.56**	.23**	.60**	–	
Teamwork behavioral commitment	5.59	1.59	.53**	.70**	.09	-.23**	-.56**	–

**Individual and Group Variances Analyses**

Table 3 reports the percentage of group variance for the dependent and independent variables. These results partially support Hypotheses 6: there is a significant 29.40 % group variance for organizational effectiveness assessment ( $p < .01$ ). The level of group variance for the independent variables appears to be more contrasted with teamwork behavioral commitment showing a strong group effect (26.68 %,  $p < .01$ ), affective, and normative commitment having a lower level (19.72 %,  $p < .05$  and 18.68,  $p < .05$ ), whereas high sacrifice and lack of alternative commitment show no significant group variance.

**Multilevel Regression Analyses**

Table 4 presents the results of the multilevel regression analyses on effectiveness assessment. Model 1 first introduces the status of the respondents as a dummy control variable: volunteer versus paid worker. No significant effect was found. Model 2 introduces individual attitudinal organizational commitment variables in

**Table 3** Proportion of group variances for dependent and independent variables

Dependent variable	
Organizational effectiveness assessment	29.4 %**
Independent variables	
Attitudinal affective commitment	19.72 %*
Attitudinal normative commitment	18.68 %*
Attitudinal high sacrifice commitment	6.71 %
Attitudinal lack of alternative commitment	11.19 %
Teamwork behavioral commitment	26.68 %**

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

the regression line. Supporting Hypothesis 1, a significant positive effect was found for attitudinal affective commitment ( $\beta = .29, p < .01$ ). Supporting Hypothesis 4, a significant negative effect was found for lack of alternative commitment ( $\beta = -.21, p < .01$ ). Model 3 introduces individual teamwork behavioral commitment in the regression line. Supporting Hypothesis 5, a strong positive effect was found ( $\beta = .55, p < .001$ ), mediating the effect of affective and lack of alternative commitments, therefore becoming non-significant, while, contradicting Hypothesis 2, the effect of normative commitment becomes significant ( $\beta = .18, p < .001$ ). Introducing group variables, model 4 partially supports Hypothesis 7: beta for group normative commitment equals to  $-.23$ , which is significant with a probability of error comprised between  $.05$  and  $.10$ . Regarding the  $.05$  standard, this is not sufficient, yet, given a sample size of 51 organizations, it is worth noticing. Normative commitment probably operates at the group level.

The random part of our multilevel analysis allows us to examine the evolution of the remaining individual and group variances compared with Model 0. As the control variable is not significant, its introduction in Model 1 does not improve the explanatory value of our regression analysis ( $\Delta -2LLL = -.02$  (1df), ns). Adding the independent individual variables in Models 2 and 3 contributes to significant improvements compared to previous models ( $\Delta -2LLL = -55.11$  ( $\Delta 4df$ ),  $p < .001$  and  $\Delta -2LLL = -39.17$  ( $\Delta 1df$ ),  $p < .001$ ). Adding the independent group variables in Model 4 resulted in a more modest yet still significant improvement compared to the previous model ( $\Delta -2LLL = -15.41$  ( $\Delta 3df$ ),  $p < 0.0015$ ). Models 2 and 3 explain and therefore reduce the percentage of variance at the individual level (from 70.6 to 65.2 % and from 65.2 to 55.37 %). Model 4 explains and therefore slightly reduces from 44.63 to 42.65 % the variance at the group level, yet the latter remains above the 29.30 group variance initially measured in the null model. To summarize, the model improvements observed are obtained with the individual-level variables more than with the group-level variables. Moreover, these improvements concern the individual rather than the group variance of effectiveness assessment.

We conducted a supplementary analysis to determine whether the commitment variables were differentially related to effectiveness assessment depending on the role of the respondents i.e., volunteers or paid staff. We tested an alternative version of our Model 3 (not reported in table for reasons of conciseness), where in addition

**Table 4** Multilevel regression analyses on organizational effectiveness assessment (fixed, random parts, and fit statistics)

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<b>Fixed part</b>					
Intercept	1.47***	1.49	1.42	1.50	2.67 <sup>+</sup>
<b>Control variable</b>					
Volunteer (reference category)					
Paid staff		-0.02	.01	-.13	-.12
<b>Independent variables at the individual level</b>					
Attitudinal affective commitment			.29*	.19	.17
Attitudinal normative commitment			-.10	-.18**	-.17**
Attitudinal high sacrifice commitment			.03	.05	.05
Attitudinal lack of alternative commitment			-.21**	-.05	-.06
Teamwork behavioral commitment				.55***	.54***
<b>Independent variables at the group level</b>					
Attitudinal affective commitment (organization)					-.02
Attitudinal normative commitment (organization)					-.23 <sup>+</sup>
Teamwork behavioral commitment (organization)					-.03
<b>Random part</b>					
Variance at the group level	.69**	.69**	.77**	.89***	.82***
Variance at the individual level	1.67***	1.67***	1.45***	1.10***	1.11***
<b>Fit statistics</b>					
-2*loglikelihood:	740.74	740.71	685.60	646.42	631.01
Improvement compared to Null Model (Model 0)		-0.02	-55.14	-94.31	-109.73
Degrees of freedom		1	5	6	9
Significance of model improvement		0.88	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Improvement compared to previous model			-55.11	-39.17	-15.41
Degrees of freedom			4	1	3
Significance of model improvement			<0.001	<0.001	0.0015
<b>Explained variances/dependent variable (<math>R^2</math>)</b>					
At the group level		0.00	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
At the individual level		0.00	0.21	0.33	0.33
Residual proportion of organizational variance	29.40 %	29.37 %	34.84 %	44.63 %	42.65 %

<sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.10$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

to the control variable of the respondents' role in the organization, we also included in the regression interaction terms based on the product of individual-level commitment variables and the control variable. The result is borderline with the statistic for improvement compared to previous model reaching a level of

significance of .051. The only interaction term with a significant effect on effectiveness assessment is high sacrifice (Coefficient = .371;  $p < .05$ ): the effect of high sacrifice commitment would be stronger for paid workers than for volunteers. However, these results should be interpreted with caution, due to our sample size (see limits).

## Discussion

The objective of this study was to understand how internal stakeholders i.e., volunteers and paid workers, individually and collectively form their assessment of their NPO's effectiveness. This study is among the first to use a multilevel quantitative design combining individual and group measures of attitudinal organizational attitudinal commitment and teamwork behavioral commitment. Our results first show that individual attitudinal affective commitment has a positive effect i.e., highly committed volunteers and paid workers will assess the same NPO higher than those with a lower affective commitment. On the contrary lack of alternative has a negative effect, i.e., those who stay because they cannot find any equivalent alternative rate their NPO lower than those who stay because they want to.

Thus, this research constitutes a bridge between the “*reputation*” approach to NPO effectiveness advocating measures including multi-stakeholders assessment (e.g., Lecy et al. 2012; Herman and Renz 2008) and the various case studies describing volunteers and paid workers' commitment (e.g., Cumming 2008; Kelley et al. 2005; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011). In line with previous literature (Herman and Renz 1997; Kanter and Summers 1987; Lecy et al. 2012), our results show that individuals' ratings of their NPO's effectiveness do not only refer to objective matters, but also will be significantly influenced by their experience, their feelings, and their goals. Research on effectiveness assessment has often insisted on rating contingencies depending on stakeholders' place, roles, and related goals (Lecy et al. 2012; Herman and Renz 1997; Kanter and Summers 1987). We add that, within the same group of stakeholders, in this case volunteers and paid workers, these ratings also vary depending on the nature and level of individuals' attitudinal organizational commitment.

Our results also indicate that the effects of volunteers' and paid workers' affective commitment on organizational effectiveness assessment can be mediated by their engagement in concrete teamwork behaviors, namely teamwork behavioral commitment. Similarly, the reduction of a lack of alternative's negative effect can be explained by the fact that individuals actually engaged in teamwork behaviors will be less interested by the possibility of working for other organizations (Mobley et al. 1978). The effect of teamwork behavioral commitment on organizational effectiveness assessment appears particularly strong. This confirms previous theoretical and empirical research on the effect of behaviors on judgements (Festinger 1957; Kline and Peters 1991; Olson and Stone 2005; O'Reilly and Caldwell 1981; Salancick 1977). Thus, NPOs provide a typical situation where the individuals' affective and ideological agreement or disagreement get transformed by

their engagement in day-to-day action. Part of our contribution to the understanding of the effect of behavioral commitment on effectiveness assessment lies in the use of Rousseau et al.'s (2006a, b) teamwork behaviors. The strength of the effect found can be discussed in relation to the foci of this behavioral commitment i.e., the team. According to Mueller and Lawler (1999), such a proximate unit nested in the organization tends to produce strong emotions mediating the relationship with the organization as a whole. However, teamwork behavioral commitment is not meant to introduce another object of commitment, but rather a type of behavioral commitment. This type of behavioral commitment is based on solidarity and mutual aid among members in the realization of the goals of the organization. It is to a certain extent similar to civic organizational citizenship behavior. Teamwork behavioral commitment constitutes a form of concrete enactment which is different from the "mental" nature of attitudinal commitment.

This research is also, to our knowledge, one of the first attempts to measure group-level attitudinal and behavioral commitment and effectiveness assessment. Our results indicate that there is a significant proportion of group variance for attitudinal affective and normative organizational attitudinal commitment, for teamwork behavioral commitment, and for effectiveness assessment. In other words, as expected, the averages of these different variables vary significantly from one NPO to another, showing that these attitudes, behaviors, and judgements are not only just a matter of individual subjectivity, but also collective constructions of shared realities. Case studies on NPO development often describe phases during which all members share the same vision and work toward the same goal (Cumming 2008; Kelley et al. 2005; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011). The group levels of attitudinal organizational commitment, teamwork behavioral commitment, and organizational effectiveness assessment measured in this study could be the expression of the social cohesion of internal stakeholders. In other words, these group variables measure a level of collective agreement with the pathway of development their NPO is following.

However, the unexpected result concerning the negative effect of individual and group attitudinal normative commitment on organizational effectiveness assessment leads us to add some important precisions. This result means that volunteers and paid workers with high normative commitment assess their NPO less favorably than others. This can be interpreted as these volunteers and paid workers voicing their concern that the NPO is not doing well, or more precisely, is not doing what, in their opinion, is the right thing. Referring back to the qualitative case studies (Cumming 2008; Kelley et al. 2005; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011; Reid and Karambayya 2009), normative judgements can either be made by highly committed volunteers and paid workers who strongly disagree with professionalization, considering it as a threat to the mission, or by volunteers and paid workers supporting professionalization who perceive informal practice as a form of chaos. In both cases, normative commitment constitutes a mind-set very different from that of affective commitment (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001; Meyer et al. 2004): whereas affective commitment leads to unconditional positive benevolent bias, normative commitment can become more critical. While affectively committed volunteers and paid workers would tend to agree with their NPO whatever the latter does, and adhere to its goals even when it

changes, normatively committed individuals would have a tendency to judge severely any deviation from the goals they think should be followed. According to Meyer et al (2004), individuals can distinguish between their commitment to the organization and their commitment to its goals. Based on this unexpected result, we argue that this separation could be stronger for normative commitment than for affective commitment.

Furthermore, partially supporting Hypothesis 7, attitudinal normative commitment is the only group independent variable having an effect on group organizational effectiveness assessment. Partially nested at the group level, this negative effect could be the sign of a change in the NPO's development strategy. Nonprofit literature insists on the strength of social cohesion during the first grassroots activist generation stage (e.g., Batliwala 2002; Graddy and Wang 2009; Laville 2010; Rothschild and Stephenson 2009; Valeau 2015). This cohesion explains why the introduction of professionalization can lead to strong resistance (Cumming 2008; Kelley et al. 2005; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011; Reid and Karambayya 2009). Professionalization is often led by a small group of new managers, while a majority of volunteers and paid workers remains faithful to the initial grassroots culture. For instance, Kelley et al. (2005, p. 379) reported a collective "*anger at the growing bureaucracy which came mostly from the long-term providers who continued to adhere to the original goals of Prevention Point, which were centered on a nonhierarchical model of leadership. (...) They saw formalization as a severe blow to the organization's identity.*" The negative effect of group normative commitment on group organizational effectiveness assessment would be the result of the gap, collectively felt, between this initial grassroots culture and professionalization. The fact that the effects of individual and group normative attitudinal commitment, unlike the effects of affective and lack of alternative, are not mediated by teamwork behaviors would correspond to the long lasting resistance of certain volunteers and paid workers reported by qualitative cases. Cumming (2008) labels them the "*old guard and unreconstructed cold warriors*" (p. 390).

The first limitation of this study lies in the fact that, despite the group variances measured, the effect of the between group variances of our independent variables on the group variance of our dependent variables remains limited. With a probability of error comprised between .05 and .10, the effect of group-level normative commitment is not significant according to the .05 rule, yet should not be completely ruled out. The fact is that within a 51 organization sample, very strong effects are required to reach the significance level. Future research would definitely require a bigger sample to confirm that a group effect exists beyond individual variation.

The second limitation concerns our ability to measure the differences between volunteers and paid workers. The supplementary analyses provided at the end of our result section suggest that the effect of high sacrifice could be stronger for paid workers than for volunteers. However, we remain very cautious about the interpretation of these results, due to our sample size for such a complex model. Differences between the commitment of volunteers and paid workers have already been found for instance by Van Vuuren et al. (2008), although not with the same

variables. Future multilevel research could investigate these differences by looking at how volunteers and paid workers form their judgements about their organization's effectiveness using bigger samples.

A third limitation is that our data did not control for the level of professionalization. Therefore, we could not verify the above explanations relating our unexpected effect of group normative commitment to professionalization. Future research should control for this contextual element as previous qualitative cases show that this is an issue dividing internal stakeholders (Cumming 2008; Kelley et al. 2005; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011). Group effects may depend on the stages of development of NPOs: while the negative effect of group normative commitment may be stronger when moving from the grassroots stage to the professional stage, the effects of other group variables may be weaker during this transition.

## Conclusion

This research contributes to the literature on the assessment and management of NPO effectiveness, showing that internal stakeholders, individually and collectively, differ in a significant way in their rating of organizational effectiveness and that these variations are influenced by both their attitudinal and behavioral commitment. Therefore, organizational effectiveness assessment can be seen as a form of agreement with the goals followed by the NPO. Thus, we propose to extend the “*reputation*” approach to effectiveness conceptualized for external stakeholders (Lecy et al. 2012) with a “*commitment*” approach integrating the position of internal stakeholders and their willingness to invest their labor in the NPO. Ultimately, the question is: do volunteers and paid workers have faith in their NPO? In order to deal with this issue, managers need to understand how and why their volunteers and paid workers form their judgements about their NPO's effectiveness.

Laville (2010) recalled that associationism, i.e., the coming together of individuals for a common cause, depends on ideals but also on concrete daily actions. Our results suggest that the most efficient way to promote a given pathway of development, beyond advocacy and debate, consists in implementing changes in day-to-day functioning by engaging volunteers and paid workers in new teamwork behaviors.

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