RATES OF PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTEERING AND CHARACTERISTICS OF VOLUNTEERS: EUROPEAN COMPARISONS

LIONEL PROUTEAU, CESALTINA PIRES, BOGUSLAWA SARDINHA

1LÉMNA - UNIVERSITY OF NANTES, NANTES, FRANCE, 2UNIVERSITY OF EVORA, EVORA, PORTUGAL, 3ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE CIÊNCIAS EMPRESARIAIS, INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO DE SETÚBAL, SÉTUBAL, PORTUGAL

The aims of the paper

Some studies have shown the international diversity regarding volunteering. These differences can be explained by social factors related to the history of the Nonprofit Sector (Salamon and Anheier, 1998) and, in particular, they can be related to different traditions concerning the welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Thus, Salamon and Sokolowski (2001) distinguish four models: the static model, the social-democratic model, the liberal model and the corporatist one. Concerning European volunteering, Archambault (2002) presents four models three of which being quite similar to those defined by Salamon and Anheier: the Rhineland (or corporatist model), the liberal (or Anglo-Saxon) model, the Scandinavian (or social-democratic) model and the Mediterranean (or emerging) one.

The aim of this paper, which deals with volunteer work in the enlarged Europe, is twofold. First, it studies the differences between countries concerning the rates of participation in volunteering. For this purpose, it considers the overall participation as well as the participation by type of activity. From these observed differences, can we constitute groups of countries which make sense? Secondly, it investigates the profiles of the volunteers in these countries. Despite the country differences, are the volunteers profiles similar? As the volunteer activity is influenced by cultural, social and economic environment it will be very interesting to identify some differences between the volunteers' profiles in European countries. Because this study is a work in progress, the final results cannot be given. However, the first estimates obtained from econometric investigations show that there are substantial differences among European countries concerning the propensity to volunteer. In addition, it seems that there exist some differences concerning the types of activities in which the volunteering are engaged in different countries. Among other observations it is shown that this propensity is markedly lower in many of the more recent members of European Union. Despite this diversity, many variables have a similar effect on the participation.

Methodology

Though estimates on volunteering concerning different countries have been obtained from the Johns Hopkins comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2001), research on volunteering in international perspective often meets difficulties because of the lack of similar surveys from different countries. It is known that different survey research methods may cause great changes in the estimates concerning the voluntary participation rates as well as in those relating to the time dedicated to volunteering (Steinberg, Rooney and Chin, 2002). In order to overcome these difficulties, the Center for Civil Society of the Johns Hopkins University and the International Labor Organization are currently designing a Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work and they recommend inserting a regular supplement about volunteering into the national labor force surveys. However, we can already obtain some comparable data from European Value Survey. Therefore, we use the fourth wave of this survey, conducted in 1999 because the data from the last wave (2008) are not available yet. This data set has the advantage of being obtained from similar questionnaires in the different countries. Consequently, a comparison of the estimates can be implemented. But this data also has limitations. The main disadvantage concerns the absence of information concerning the amount of time which is dedicated to volunteer work. In this data we have predominantly qualitative categorical variables. This fact is determinant in the choice of the econometrics methods. Therefore, this paper will not be able to measure the volume of volunteering work in each country. However, the numerous variables concerning the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents allow analyzing precisely the profiles of volunteers. Because the decision of volunteering may pertain to a more global behavior, and
in order to enrich our analyses, we identify some attitudinal variables which will be used to better analyze the profile of volunteers.

**References**


