

**Volunteering in cross-national perspective:
Initial comparisons**

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Abstract

Despite a growing interest in volunteering at national and international levels, few studies have explored comparative aspects of voluntary activities. To remedy this situation, this paper looks at the cultural differences in defining volunteering in relation to paid work on the one hand, and compulsory work on the other. Against this background, the paper explores cross-national patterns in the frequency of volunteering, the social characteristics of volunteers, and the motivations that lie behind them. The paper finds a close relationship between the type of non-profit regime (liberal, social democratic, corporatist, and statist) and the role and importance of volunteering. In closing, the paper addresses policy issues and open research questions.

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1 Introduction

Volunteering has not only become an important issue in the United States; it is also receiving much more attention in many other countries across the globe. In many ways, volunteering enjoys greater political and cultural recognition today than it did in past decades. As it happens frequently, however, such greater awareness seems related to the extent to which an issue is seen as problematic, as something beneficial that can no longer be taken for granted. The environment, the family, community or social security are cases in point, and, as we suggest in this paper, so is volunteering, particularly when seen in a cross-national perspective.

In the past, volunteering was often seen in isolation of the wider social and cultural context in which it took place. But volunteering is much more than simply the giving of time for some particular purpose. In fact, as a cultural and economic phenomenon, volunteering is part of the way societies are organised, how they allocate social responsibilities, and how much engagement and participation they expect from citizens. As we will see below, the role of the state and the nature of state-society relations are important aspects that shape the role of volunteering cross-nationally. Not surprisingly, the fortunes of volunteering as a social institution are, and have been, changing over time, and vary by cultural and political contexts. The purpose of this paper is to shed some initial light on volunteering in different parts of the world by exploring the conceptions and patterns of voluntary action cross-nationally.

In some European countries like Sweden and Germany, volunteers were until recently regarded as amateurish 'do-gooders' and relics of the past to be replaced by paid professional staff capable of performing tasks more effectively and efficiently (Kistler et al, 1999). If there was a role for volunteers in the modern welfare state, it was a marginal one at best, i.e., to supplement professionally planned and delivered services. What is more, other countries saw no need for volunteers at all. The Japanese government, for example, drew up contingency plans for responding to natural disasters in which volunteers had neither place nor role. Dealing with disaster was seen as the primary and exclusive domain of the state administration. When the Kobe earthquake hit in 1995, conflicts soon erupted between a government too slow to respond, and the thousands of Japanese citizens who had spontaneously decided to volunteer their services to help ease the critical situation (Deguchi, 2000).

In the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the very concept of volunteering had become suddenly obsolete, being contaminated by decades of state and party-led requirements to contribute time and efforts freely for some common social, cultural or political cause. After 1989, countries in the region set out to modernise their social service and health care systems paying very little attention to the role and potential contributions volunteers could make to improving state-run institutions, many of which were under-funded and short-staffed (Kuti, 1997).

Finally, in developing countries, a great diversity of indigenous forms of volunteering co-exists next to 'western' ways. For example, in Nigeria and Ghana, like in many African countries, 'village associations' of volunteers can be found in nearly every rural and urban community. Rooted in the local culture, they provide communal services and assistance in times of need. These associations exist next to local chapters of organisations like the YWCA or the Boy Scouts, modelled after their American or British counterparts (Anheier, 1987). At the same time, however, like many countries in the North, most developing countries until recently regarded volunteering as a matter of low priority and very few put policies and programmes in place to encourage volunteering (Anheier and Salamon, 1998).

How things have changed! On 20 November 1997, the 52nd General Assembly of the United Nations declared the year 2001 as the Year of the Volunteer (United Nations, 1999), with the Japanese government as one of its main sponsors along with 122 other countries. December 5 was designated as the International Volunteer Day, now celebrated every year by over 100 countries world-wide (United Nations, 1999). The European Union is championing the case of voluntary work and greater participation at the community level (Commission of European Union, 1997). Of course, few countries can match the public recognition that was given to volunteering by the 26 October 1999 White House Conference on Philanthropy and Voluntarism hosted by President Clinton.

Yet national governments across the globe are beginning to pay more attention to volunteering and want to support and encourage it. For example, in the aftermath of the 1995 Kobe earthquake, Japan is considering ways and means to encourage volunteering (Deguchi, 2000); in 1999, the Labour government in Britain upgraded the Active Community Unit (formerly Voluntary Services Unit) in an effort to make volunteering and local community participation more a part of everyday life. Similarly, other European countries like Italy or France have established volunteer centres to inform citizens about volunteer opportunities, and the Netherlands and Germany set up local co-ordinating agencies to match volunteers to organisations that might need them. And developing countries like Brazil are considering volunteering programmes for unemployed youths in urban areas as a way to combat crime and truancy among teenagers.

At the dawn of the 21st century, volunteering is also transcending national boundaries, and is becoming ever more an international phenomenon, too. Of course, missionary societies, religious

orders and other types of religious organisations have operated internationally for many centuries, particularly so since the early 1900s, carried by the evangelical revival movement that swept US and Europe at that time. But the birth of the modern volunteer movement outside the realm of the state (e.g., volunteer armies, work corps), church (e.g., laymen) and community (e.g., mutual assistance and caring) is closely associated with the creation of the Red Cross in 1864. For over 100 years the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies have pioneered volunteering and many countries, and organised volunteers for humanitarian assistance, the alleviation of suffering and poverty.

In 1971 the United Nations Volunteer programme was set up; government-organised programmes like Peace Corps, Canadian University Service Overseas, Britain's Voluntary Service Overseas and similar programmes in other countries began to operate in many parts of the world, and offered opportunities for people to volunteer in developing countries. More generally, the internationalisation of voluntary efforts developed alongside the expansion of non-governmental organisations active in development and relief efforts in many countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia. While some volunteer organisations like Amnesty International, Médecins Sans Frontières or Greenpeace may have started as national organisations, they have become increasingly international in their recruitment and operations.

Like so many other parts of economy and society, volunteering has entered the age of globalisation. The International Association for Volunteer Efforts has member organisations in over 100 countries; and the Internet has brought new initiatives to matching volunteers to organisations, from the International Medical Volunteers Association and Global Volunteers to One World One Volunteers and Virtual Volunteering (see: www.unv.org/unvols/volhelp.htm). At the international level, the role of volunteers has also become politically more vocal and visible, and indeed sometimes influences the ways of 'official politics'. For example, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, the World Women's Conference in 1997 in Beijing, and the 1999 meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Seattle would most likely have achieved different outcomes had non-governmental organisations and their many volunteers not been present.

Yet while volunteering is emerging as an international phenomenon, there is at the same time growing awareness that the meaning and pattern of volunteering are changing at the local level in particular. As we will see below, individualisation and secularisation are redefining volunteering: as a phenomenon, it is today ever less linked to religion, notions like 'service to the nation' and traditional expectations, and tied more to specific needs, self-interest and greater individual choice. In response, governments and non-profit organisations alike are trying to create new institutional structures to encourage volunteering, and to give it forms regarded as more appropriate for the more self-interested member of modern societies. Examples are the 'voluntary social year' in Germany, where youths can volunteer in social services programmes linked to skills training and professional qualifications (Kistler et al, 1999), or the Active Community Unit of New Labour in Britain that

seeks to encourage participation and caring behaviour at local levels by drawing in socially excluded parts of the population.

International organisations, too, try to foster greater recognition and support for volunteers. The Final Declaration of the 1995 UN World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen called for the promotion of volunteering and requested governments to make appropriate resources available to support such work (United Nations, 1995). Other international institutions see a strong link between individual participation in public life, volunteering and democracy (Commission of the European Communities, 1997). In this sense, today's governments are resounding the Tocquevillian notion that volunteers are part of the 'social glue' that holds modern societies together, counter-acting what are seen as the divisive tendencies of increased individualism and greater materialism (de Tocqueville, 1990/1835).

For one, even in countries where volunteering has been widespread, it can no longer be taken for granted. In Britain, France and Germany, levels of volunteering have at best stagnated in recent years. For some international organisations, such shifts had disastrous consequences. The International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies reported a drop in volunteers from 250 million in the late 1980s to little over 100 million in 1998 (IFRC, 1999, p. 141)¹. Even though this drop is in part the result of the disintegration of former Soviet-type Red Cross societies in Central and Eastern Europe, the decline in volunteering for organisations like the Red Cross is also pronounced among the developed market economies of the European Union. As a consequence, the Federation is reconsidering the role of volunteers, and searching for ways to upgrade their status in national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies. We can assume that changes in family structures and values have meant significant shifts in the supply, type and motivation of volunteers.

What is more, many countries, particularly in Europe, struggle with persistent unemployment, and calls for a redefinition of traditional forms of work have become politically more acceptable. Some authors like Beck (1999) and Rifkin (1993) suggest elevating voluntary work to a status equal to paid work, and encourage the establishment of some form of social credit system for those performing communal tasks of various kinds. Under this system, volunteers could earn 'social dollars' that would count alongside their monetary contribution to social security system, health, educational or retirement benefits and the like. Irrespective of the merits of Beck's or Rifkin's approach, their thinking suggests that shifts are taking place in the role and potential of volunteering, and with it the role of paid work, service to the community and social responsibilities. What is behind these developments? What factors draw attention to volunteers and volunteering?

¹ In the former Soviet Union the Red Cross was a quasi-state organisation. Membership in it was encouraged, if not expected, by the Communist Party. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the decline of the Communist Party, membership in the Red Cross dropped, and with it levels of volunteering. It is likely that the number of volunteers active in the former Red Cross societies of Central and Eastern Europe were over-reported, as volunteering and membership were frequently treated as the same.

2 Definitions

Not surprisingly, the notion of volunteering and volunteer varies across countries. For sure, the British and American concept of volunteering, the French *voluntariat*, the Italian *voluntariato*, the Swedish *frivillig verksamhet* or the German *Ehrenamt* have different histories, and carry different cultural and political connotations. In some countries like Israel, volunteering is intimately linked to the cultural identity and community as a substitute for nationhood as exemplified in the long experience of Diaspora and the collectivist voluntary spirit of Zionism (Gidron, 1997). Similarly in the United States, strong links exist between volunteering as a cultural expectation and the reality—and mythology as well—of the frontier society and the country's individualistic 'can-do' spirit (Bellah, 1985).

In Australia or Britain, volunteering is closely related to the concept of a voluntary sector—a part of society seen as separate from both the business sector and the statutory sector of government and public administration. This notion of voluntarism has its roots in Lockean concepts of a self-organising society outside the confines of the state. Civil society and voluntary action also resonate in the thinking of Scottish enlightenment philosophy, yet find their most eloquent expression in the work of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1990/1835). For Tocqueville, voluntary action and voluntary association become cornerstones of a functioning democratic polity, in which a voluntary sector shields society from the tyranny of the majority. The link between voluntarism and democracy became deeply imprinted in American culture and the country's political self-understanding.

In other countries, however, the notion of volunteering is different yet and puts emphasis on communal service to the public good. The German term *Ehrenamt* or honorary office comes closest to this tradition. In the 19th century, the modernisation of public administration and the development of an efficient, professional civil service within an autocratic state under the reformer Lorenz von Stein allocated a specific role to voluntarism: voluntary office in the sense of trusteeship of associations and foundations—positions that became the domain of the growing urban middle class (Pankoke, 1994; Anheier and Seibel, 2000). A vast network of associations and foundations emerged in the mid to late 19th century, frequently involving paid staff, but run and managed by volunteers. Unlike in the United States, however, the German notion of voluntarism as a system of 'honorary officers' took place in a still basically autocratic society where local and national democratic institutions remained underdeveloped. This trusteeship aspect of voluntarism began to be seen separately from other voluntary service activities such as caring for the poor, visiting the sick or assisting at school. These latter volunteer activities remained the domain of the church and, increasingly became part of the emerging workers' movement during the industrialisation period.

In addition to different national traditions, voluntarism is also closely linked to the self-understanding of larger non-profit organisations like the Red Cross: voluntary service is one of the seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement next to the notions of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, unity and universality (IFRC, 1993). The Red Cross defines volunteers as ‘individuals who reach out beyond the confines of paid employment and normal responsibilities to contribute in different ways without expectation of profit or reward in the belief that their activities are beneficial to the community as well as satisfying to themselves’ (IFRC, 1993).

The UN offers a broader definition of volunteering as ‘contributions that individuals make as non-profit, non-wage, and non-career action for the well-being of their neighbours, and society as large’ (United Nations, 1999)—a definition that is rather broad and includes mutual self-help and many forms of collective action. The UN sees volunteering primarily in its service function: ‘voluntary service is called for more than ever before to tackle areas of priority concern in the social, economic, cultural, humanitarian and peacekeeping fields’ (1999, p. 2).

How do the social sciences approach volunteering? In economics, volunteer work is a somewhat problematic concept because no market price exists to establish its value. The United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA) is a case in point. The SNA serves as the global methodological system on how to treat, measure and report any type of economic activity (United Nations, 1993). The system treats volunteer work as a non-market activity² just like housework or leisure activities such as gardening.³ As a result, we have little systematic information on volunteering at the international level: virtually no statistical office collects data on volunteering as part of its regular, ongoing reporting.

These non-market activities are set apart from both mutual aid and forms of barter. Volunteering work is work in the sense that it is different from leisure; and it is voluntary and therefore distinct from paid work. The objective distinction between volunteer work and leisure is based on the third-party criterion (Hawrylyshyn, 1977), i.e. the fact that some activities are non-marketable because ‘it is impossible for one person to obtain another person to perform instead’ (United Nations, 1993, pp. 6–16). For example, a sports club can either hire a paid coach or opt for asking someone to volunteer. Yet if members choose to play some sport like tennis, they cannot pay a third party to play for them

² To calculate the imputed value of volunteer work, social scientists typically rely on data from population samples. The two key items are the number of volunteers in the sample, and the number of hours volunteered per volunteer. The proportionate share of volunteers is extrapolated to the whole adult population to obtain the total number of volunteers, which, in turn, is multiplied by the average number of hours volunteered. Finally, the total number of hours volunteered is then multiplied by a monetary value or shadow wage, which yields the imputed value of total volunteer time. This is the replacement value of volunteer time, but other approaches are also possible (Archambault, Anheier and Sokolowski, 1998).

³ Recognising that the SNA treatment may be somewhat simplistic, Chadeau and Roy (1986) suggest breaking down economic activities into five categories: (i) activities that are remunerated, reported, and typically included in official statistics; (ii) remunerated activities that are either legal or illegal but remain unreported; (iii) activities that are unpaid and intended for parties outside households; (iv) unpaid activities within households; and (v) other activities. The third category is of special interest and includes all unpaid activities carried out for the benefit of an economic unit other than the household itself.

without losing the benefits of playing (pleasure). Thus, membership participation is leisure, coaching is work. Likewise, attending an environmentalist rally is participation, organising it without pay is volunteering.

From the subjective point of view, however, this distinction is not always clear, as Archambault, Anheier and Sokolowski (1998) point out. One source of confusion is tied to personal motivations and dispositions, especially when volunteering is mixed with advocacy functions: can I pay somebody to visit the sick or the handicapped instead of me? Another is the mix of membership and volunteering. For example, the Red Cross traditionally made little distinction between members and volunteers, as did many political parties and social movement organisations.

To minimise the effect of subjective interpretation, time-use tables and population surveys typically use some general description of volunteer work, and use examples to illustrate salient aspects of volunteering. In a French population survey carried out by Archambault (1997), the questionnaire used a very specific definition of volunteer work to separate it from related aspects like membership, informal helping behaviour and the like:

‘We will now ask you about volunteer work (or volunteering). By this, we mean unpaid work and time spent to offer a service to groups or non-profit organisations, outside your family, your neighbours and your friends. For example:

- Doing clerical work for an association or union
- Running a youth organisation
- Coaching at sports clubs
- Distributing food, clothes or helping with other relief activities
- Volunteering as a fire-fighter or in emergency rescue programs
- Cleaning open spaces or helping preserve wildlife, or
- Working on committees or serving on boards. ’

The distinction between voluntary and paid work is easier to make, and there is a clear difference in the status of volunteers as opposed to employees. Of course, there are intermediate positions between totally unpaid work and work paid at labour market price. For example, volunteers, in particular when serving on boards, are frequently reimbursed for related expenses, and some receive in-kind compensation. Similarly, larger non-profit organisations in Germany provide benefits like health and accident insurance to volunteers, and some charities cover the pension payments for those working as volunteers overseas.

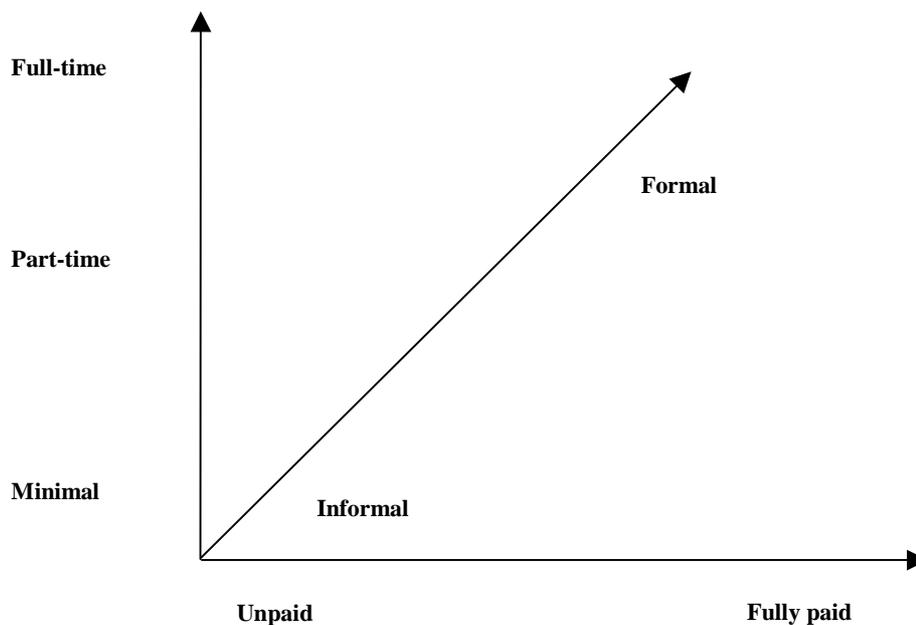
By contrast, some paid employees work for wages that are below market value. There are a variety of reasons for this. For one, employees may agree with the aim of the non-profit organisation and not demand a market rate. What is more, they may see volunteering as an investment for gaining skills and experience, which is typically the case for apprentices in many European countries. Or they may be required to take on lower wages because of labour market imperfections. Such is the case in

countries with structural unemployment problems such as Spain or France, but also in virtually all developing countries where large portions of the population work in a 'gray zone' of paid and unpaid labour. Certainly, these examples go beyond the narrower meaning of volunteering.

More generally, and especially when seen from a comparative, cross-national perspective, these examples illustrate the conceptual and methodological difficulties conventional social and economic reporting systems have with the concept of volunteering, and suggest that we may have to consider different 'packages' of paid and unpaid activities. For example, we arrive at a three-dimensional array that includes the following (figure 1):

- A time dimension (full time \longleftrightarrow part time);
- An economic dimension (paid activities \longleftrightarrow unpaid activities); and
- A social dimension (formal work environment \longleftrightarrow informal work environment).

Figure 1: Combinations of work activities and characteristics



Across different countries and population groups, we are likely to find different combinations among the three dimensions. What seems clear is that the combination 'unpaid, formal and part-time', which comes closest to a conventional understudying of volunteering, captures only one particular aspect that may be typical for industrial countries only. By contrast, the combination 'informal partly-paid and part-time activities' might well be characteristic for many developing countries. What is more, the supply of the combination 'part-time, unpaid and formal' in Europe or America has become more precarious among some population groups because of the greater labour market participation of women and the elderly.

3 Volunteering and volunteers⁴

A 1995 study of volunteering in Europe found that 27 per cent of the adult population in the eight countries studied volunteered in the previous year (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Netherlands, Slovakia and Sweden).⁵ As table 1 shows, the level of volunteering among the adult population in the nine countries varies significantly from a low of 12 per cent in Slovenia to a high 43 per cent in the Netherlands.⁶ Two thirds of those reporting voluntary activity did so at least once a month, with 5–10 hours per month the most frequent category in terms of time given (Gaskin and Smith, 1997, pp. 28–31). The ten most frequent areas for volunteering were:

- Sports and recreation (28% of all reporting to have volunteered during the last year);
- Social services (17%);
- Kindergarten and child care (13%);
- Community development (13%);
- Religion (13%);
- Health (8%);
- Culture and Arts (7%); and
- Advocacy (7%).

Table 1: Volunteers as percentage of adult population in Europe by sex, 1995

Country	Per cent of <i>male</i> population reported volunteering	Per cent of <i>female</i> population reported volunteering	Per cent of <i>total</i> population reported volunteering
Belgium	27	35	32
Bulgaria	21	18	19
Denmark	29	27	28
Germany	18	17	18
Great Britain	31	36	34
Ireland	28	24	25
Netherlands	43	34	38
Slovenia	12	12	12
Sweden	38	32	36
Total	27	26	27

Source: based on information reported in Gaskin and Smith (1997, pp. 28–29)

The study found little systematic gender difference in overall levels of volunteering across countries (table 1), but reported higher levels of voluntary activities in the field of social services and health for

⁴ Information on volunteering in most countries is still very limited. Even more scant is systematic, cross-national and over-time information that would allow comparisons based on a consistent methodology in terms of definitions, data collection and sampling procedures. We will therefore have to draw from different surveys that vary in terms of the comparability, time period covered and topics covered.

⁵ Reported percentages are weighted averages based on the response distribution in each country. The study was co-ordinated by the National Centre for Volunteering in Britain and involved population surveys as part of a larger omnibus survey fielded as a face-to-face questionnaire. Each national team used a standard set of questions, but a somewhat different sampling approaches. This included quota sampling (Belgium, Republic of Ireland), random location (Netherlands), random location combined with quota controls (Britain), multi-stage cluster sampling (Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Slovakia, and Sweden). Sample sizes were Belgium, 870 (French speaking population only); Bulgaria, 1,073; Denmark, 1,843; Germany, 1,717; Great Britain, 1,054; Ireland, 1,404; Netherlands, 1,020; Slovakia, 1,015; and Sweden, 1,000 (Gaskin and Smith, 1997: 115-117).

⁶ In the section 'Cross-national patterns' below, we will explore some of the reasons why volunteering levels vary across different countries.

women, and in the areas of sports, recreation and culture for men. Moreover, men are more likely to be involved in committee work (30% versus 22% for women), and less likely to be engaged in befriending and visiting activities (17% versus 25%). In most other areas of typical volunteer activity such as office work, fund-raising, advocacy, teaching, personal care, etc., Gaskin and Smith found no major gender differences in the ten countries studied (1997, p. 37).

Regarding social class, an earlier study of 14 European countries showed a pronounced relationship between volunteering and social status (Barker 1993, p. 24).⁷ As table 2 shows, with 34 per cent of respondents in the upper and upper middle class stratum reporting having volunteered during the last year, volunteering is more frequent among higher socio-economic groups (professionals, academics and managers) than any other group: only 21 per cent of lower-middle class and 16 per cent of working class respondents volunteered. Volunteering also varies with education, with higher educated people are more likely to volunteer than less educated: 37 per cent of those with college degree volunteered, as opposed to 18 per cent for those with less than high school equivalent (table 2).

Table 2: Volunteering, social class and educational background, Europe, 1990^a

	SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS				TERMINAL AGE OF EDUCATION					
	Upper and upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	16	17	18	19	20	21+
% volunteering	34	27	21	16	18	29	29	31	30	37
% not volunteering	66	73	79	84	82	71	71	69	70	63
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

^a Weighted average percentages for response distributions from Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.
Source: based on information presented in Barker, 1993: 12, 23–24.

Gaskin and Smith (1997) and Barker (1993) also looked into reasons why people decide for and against volunteering. In the Gaskin and Smith study (1997, p. 50), 51 per cent volunteered because they enjoyed doing so; 36 per cent as a means to make new friends; 34 per cent liked the satisfaction of seeing the results of their work; 29 per cent as way to stay active; 24 per cent volunteered for the experience gained; 18 per cent for the social recognition they gain in the community, and 18 per cent because volunteering helped them to uphold their basic religious or political values (multiple answers). The basic reasons for not volunteering are: no spare time left (41%), never having been asked (28%), and never thought about it (18%) (Gaskin and Smith, 1997, p. 54).

⁷ Barker (1993) used the results of the 1990 European Value Surveys which covered Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. The same questionnaire, which included questions on volunteering, was used in all participating countries. Sampling methods varied across countries, with most employing some form of quota sampling, cluster sampling or some combination of both. Sample sizes ranged between 4,147 for Belgium and 702 for Iceland, with most countries between 1,000 and 1,500, which are standard sample sizes for population surveys in Europe.

The reasons for becoming a volunteer underscore the importance of social networks in the recruitment of volunteers. Gaskin and Smith (1997) report that 44 per cent of all respondents in their multi-country study found out about volunteering through family and friends; 27 per cent by being member of an organisation, and 13 per cent through their church, congregation or some other form of religious affiliation. In other words, the connections individuals have to social institutions make people more likely to volunteer. Indeed, Gaskin and Smith found a strong relationship between membership and volunteering: 60 per cent of all volunteers are members of the organisations in which they volunteer. By implication, in communities where such social inclusion mechanisms (like the family, friendship networks, community groups, membership organisations, etc.) are less strong, volunteering tends to be less frequent and less developed as a social institution.

Following Barker (1993, p. 28) we can identify three basic motivational factors which explain why people volunteer: altruism, instrumentalism, and obligation. He suggests a close connection between the rise of instrumental motives and changes in volunteering toward greater output orientation. Specifically:

Altruistic motives include notions of:

- Solidarity for the poor;
- Compassion for those in need;
- Identifying with suffering people; and
- Giving hope and dignity to the disadvantaged.

Instrumental motives are:

- To gain new experience and new skills;
- Something worthwhile to do in spare time;
- To meet people; and
- Personal satisfaction.

Finally, obligation motives are:

- Moral, religious duty;
- Contribute to local community;
- To repay debt; and
- Political duty to bring about change.

Of course, these motivations rarely occur in isolation. In reality, we find different combinations among them. The factor that bound these motivations in the past was frequently religion or more specifically, religiosity. In fact, many studies (e.g., Wuthnow and Hodgkinson, 1990; Sokolowski, 1996) suggest that the degree of religiosity is one of the most important factor explaining variations in volunteering both within countries and cross-nationally.⁸ It is also the factor that seems to be declining in its importance, particularly in Europe, Australia and other parts of the developed world with pronounced secularisation trends. In these countries, instrumental orientations seem to have gained in relative weight since the 1980s, while religious values and selfless motivations appear to have lost ground (Ingehart, 1990). Moreover, as Barker (1993) suggests, in particular younger cohorts reveal more instrumental and less religious-moralistic attitudes toward volunteering compared to those 55 and older. Volunteering, it seems, is finding new motivational bases, perhaps signalling a continuing shift in overall levels and types of voluntary activities over the next decades.

The willingness to volunteer and the frequency and pattern of volunteering are not constant over time. Over the last few decades, volunteering has undergone significant changes. The exact nature and end product of these changes are not well understood in their full complexity and implications. It is likely that volunteering is subject to greater individualisation and secularisation in most industrial countries. Both forces lead away from traditional forms of volunteering: lifetime volunteering becomes less frequent, and many more voluntary activities are short term; volunteering is less seen as service to others and more often tied to qualifications and self-interest. Volunteers have become more output oriented in the sense that they would like to see a link between contributions and efforts on the one hand, and their results on the other. As a consequence volunteers are more interested in shorter-term assignments with tangible pay-offs (Barker, 1993, pp. 25–28).

4 Cross-national patterns

How does volunteering vary across countries, and what is the contribution of volunteers to the size of the non-profit sector overall? Most studies assume that volunteering takes places in non-profit or voluntary organisations, and neglect volunteering for public organisations and business. For example, Gaskin and Smith report that in the countries they studied, one in ten volunteered for state or public organisations (1997, p. 33). The share of public sector volunteers was highest in Slovakia (23%), Belgium (20%) and Germany (14%), whereas in other countries like Ireland or Sweden, the percentage was very low.

As part of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, Salamon et al (1999) collected basic information on volunteering in over twenty countries world-wide. Table 3 shows the relative

⁸ In population surveys, religiosity is typically measured by the frequency of religious attendance in church, synagogue, mosque, etc. This is a better predictor of volunteering and giving behaviour than religious affiliation or denomination, i.e., Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islam, etc.

size of the non-profit sector for each country included in the study grouped by geographic regions. Let us first consider the size of the non-profit sector without volunteers, i.e., looking at paid employment only. Perhaps the most surprising outcome of that comparison is that the US, commonly thought to have the largest non-profit sector, ranks only fifth on both the employment and the pertaining expenditure measures, after the Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium and Israel.

Table 3: Relative size of the non-profit sector with and without volunteering by country 1995–97

REGION	COUNTRY	SIZE INDICATORS			
		Total paid non-profit employment	Population volunteering	FTE volunteers in 1,000	Total paid and unpaid employment
<i>European Union</i>	Austria	4.5%	n/a	41	5.7%
	Belgium	10.5%	30%	99	13.0%
	Finland	3.0%	33%	75	6.3%
	France	4.9%	23%	1,022	9.6%
	Germany	4.9%	26%	979	8.0%
	Ireland	11.5%	20%	32	14.2%
	Netherlands	12.5%	46%	678	18.7%
	Sweden	2.5%	51%	229	8.3%
	Spain	4.5%	12%	254	6.8%
	UK	6.2%	48%	1,120	10.5%
<i>European Union average</i>		6.9%	32.1%	452.9	10.3%
<i>Other developed countries</i>	Australia	7.2%	19%	177	10.1%
	Israel	9.2%	12%	32	11.0%
	Japan	3.5%	very low	695	4.6%
	US	7.8%	49%	4,995	11.9%
<i>Other developed country average</i>		6.9%	26.7%	1474.8	9.4%
<i>Central and Eastern Europe</i>	Czech Rep.	1.7%	n/a	94	2.7%
	Hungary	1.3%	7%	10	1.6%
	Romania	0.6%	34%	91	1.3%
	Slovakia	0.9%	n/a	7	1.2%
<i>Central and Eastern Europe average</i>		1.1%	20.5%	50.5	1.7%
<i>Latin America</i>	Argentina	3.7	20%	64	6.0
	Brazil	2.3	12%	139	2.5
	Colombia	2.4	48%	111	3.1
	Mexico	0.4	n/a	47	0.7
	Peru	2.4	31%	26	2.9
<i>Latin American average</i>		2.2	27.8%	77.4	3.0%
Overall average		4.8%	26.8%	193.6	6.9%

Source: based on data reported in Salamon et al, 1999

Generally speaking, the non-profit sector is larger in more developed countries and much less in evidence in Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, compared to an average of 5 per cent for all the countries, non-profit organisations account for close to 7 per cent of the non-agricultural labour force in Western Europe and in the other developed countries we examined, but only 2.1 per cent in Latin America and 1.3 per cent in Central and Eastern Europe (see table 3).

Evidently, the scale of the non-profit sector may have as much to do with the availability of resources, including volunteers, and the capacity of societies around social or economic needs. In sum, the comparison of the non-profit sector size reveals a substantial degree of variability, from about 1 to 13 per cent of total employment. How does this picture change when we include volunteers? Table 3 shows that the percentage of volunteers in the adult population ranges from a high of nearly 50 per cent in the US to a low of less than 10 per cent in Hungary, with a mean of 27.7 per cent. For the countries studied, this translates into another 10.4 million full-time equivalent employees, which boosts the total number of full-time equivalent employees of the non-profit organisations to 29.3 million.⁹ With volunteers included, the non-profit sector thus represents, on average, 7.1 per cent of the total non-agricultural employment in these countries: 13 per cent of the service employment, and 43 per cent of the public sector employment.

In general, adding volunteers (table 3) thus widens the range in non-profit sector size among the countries, from two thirds of a per cent in Mexico to nearly 19 per cent in the Netherlands. Volunteer input contributes much more in both relative and absolute terms in developed countries than it does in the rest of the world. Table 3 confirms this observation, showing the number of volunteers converted to full-time equivalent jobs. The level of volunteering in developed countries surpasses that of Central and Eastern Europe by a ratio of 5:1, and Latin America by the ratio of 4:1.¹⁰

How can we make sense of the differences in volunteering and the size of the non-profit sector cross-nationally, as presented in table 3? Are they more or less random compilations or do we find systematic patterns in the way different facets and structures relate to each other? If so, what is behind these patterns, and what social, economic or political forces do they reflect? Based on a modifications of Esping-Andersen's analysis of the welfare state (1990) to incorporate the non-profit sector, we identified four more or less distinct models of non-profit sector development, or four types of 'non-profit regimes' (see Salamon and Anheier, 1998 for a more detailed discussion). Each of these types is characterised not only by a particular state role, but also by a particular position for the non-profit sector, including the role of volunteering. Most importantly, each regime type reflects a particular constellation of social forces that can help account for cross-national differences in the basic concept and relevance of volunteering.

Table 4 differentiates these regimes in terms of two key dimensions—first, the extent of government social welfare spending; and second, the economic scale of the non-profit sector, whereas table 5

⁹ The conversion of volunteering into full-time equivalent jobs is done in a number of steps. The data from the various population surveys provide two key items: the number of volunteers in the sample, and the number of hours volunteered per volunteer. The proportionate share of volunteers is estimated to the whole adult population to yield the total number of volunteers, which, in turn, is multiplied by the average number of hours volunteered. Finally, the total number of hours volunteered is then divided by a average number of full-time equivalent hours per job for each country.

¹⁰ However when we consider only the per cent of population volunteering, (table 3) the differences among the countries are less pronounced. The difference between these two measures of volunteering thus suggests that volunteers in developed countries put in more hours on average than their counterparts in the developing world.

relates the regime types to volunteering. Thus, in the liberal model, represented by the US and the UK, a lower level of government social welfare spending is associated with a relatively large non-profit sector. This outcome is most likely where middle class elements are clearly in the ascendance, and where opposition either from traditional landed elites or strong working class movements has either never existed or been effectively held at bay. This leads to significant ideological and political hostility to the extension of government social welfare protections and a decided preference for voluntary approaches instead. The upshot is a relatively limited level of government social welfare spending and a sizeable non-profit sector. Volunteering is pronounced, with a strong emphasis on service provision.

Table 4: Non-profit sector regime types

GOVERNMENT SOCIAL SPENDING	ECONOMIC NON-PROFIT SECTOR SIZE	
	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Low</i>	Statist (Japan)	Liberal (US)
<i>High</i>	Social democratic (Sweden)	Corporatist (Germany)

The social democratic model is very much located at the opposite extreme. In this model, exemplified by Sweden or Finland, state-sponsored and state-delivered social welfare protections are extensive and the room left for service-providing non-profit organisations quite constrained. This type of model emerged where working class elements were able to exert effective political power, albeit typically in alliance with other social classes. This is particularly true in much of Scandinavia, where working class political parties were able to push for extensive social welfare benefits as a matter of right in a context of a weakened, state-dominated Church and a limited monarchy. As a result, there is a limited service-providing non-profit sector. However, it is not necessarily a limited non-profit sector overall, as shown above. Rather, the non-profit sector performs a different function in social democratic regimes—an advocacy and personal expression, rather than a service-providing role. In Sweden, a very substantial network of volunteer-based advocacy, recreational and hobby organisations exist alongside a highly developed welfare state (see Lundström and Wijkström, 1997). This may help explain our earlier finding that while Sweden ranks at the low end of European countries when only paid employment in the non-profit sector is considered, it ranks at the high end when account is taken of the involvement of volunteers and membership. In this kind of setting, in fact, the non-profit sector may actually come closest to the ideal of a ‘civil society’ sector functioning to facilitate individual and group expression.

Two additional models are characterised by strong states. However, in one, the corporatist model represented by France and Germany, the state has either been forced or induced to make common cause with non-profit institutions, so that non-profit organisations function as one of the several ‘pre-modern’ mechanisms that are deliberately preserved by the state in its efforts to retain the support of

key social elites while pre-empting more radical demands for social welfare protections. This was the pattern, for example, in late nineteenth century Germany, when the state, confronting radical demands from below, began to forge alliances with the major churches and the landed elites to create a system of state-sponsored welfare provision that over time included a substantial role for non-profit groups, many of them religiously affiliated (Anheier and Seibel, 1997; Seibel, 1990). Volunteering is lower than in both the liberal and the social democratic states, and historically tended to be defined in relation to state provision and administration (for example, the German term honorary office or *Ehrenamt* mentioned above).

The statist model is the fourth possible model. In this model, the state retains the upper hand in a wide range of social policies, but not as the instrument of an organised working class as in the social democratic regimes. Rather it exercises power on its own behalf, or on behalf of business and economic elites, but with a fair degree of autonomy sustained by long traditions of deference and a much more pliant religious order. In such settings, in our analysis, Japan's limited government social welfare protection does not translate into high levels of non-profit action, as in the liberal regimes. Rather, both government social welfare protection and non-profit activity remain highly constrained, as does volunteering.

Developing countries seem, historically at least, close the *statist* model of non-profit development. This is consistent with several key features of the social circumstances in these countries—an authoritarian political structure, dominant urban elites holding power in alliance with a colonial administration and, subsequently, its local middle class elements; a frequently a religious apparatus firmly allied with the conservative elites or those holding governmental power; and limited or non-existent working class power or peasant mobilisation.

One of the most salient features of this recent history has been the emergence of newly emboldened educated middle class elements seeking greater economic and political opportunities. In some countries, political elites have resisted the resulting pressures and sought to dampen the civic activism and non-profit development to which it has given rise. Elsewhere, however, traditional elites have sought to encourage civic involvement through grassroots non-profit institutions and to search for a *modus vivendi* under which the State and the non-profit sector can co-operate to promote development. The result is what the social origins approach would characterise as a corporatist model featuring significant expansion of both government and the non-profit sector to address development needs. In either case, levels of volunteering remain low.

Table 5: Non-profit sector scale and volunteering

NON-PROFIT SECTOR TYPE	SIZE OF PAID LABOR	VOLUNTEER INPUT
<i>Liberal</i>	High	High
<i>Corporatist</i>	High	Low
<i>Social Democratic</i>	Low	High
<i>Statist</i>	Low	Low

In summary, according to the social origins theory, we found a relative correspondence in non-profit sector scale and volunteering for countries that fall within the same regime type. Indeed, this is suggested in table 5: France (see Archambault, 1997) and Germany (see Anheier and Seibel, 2000), both corporatist regimes, are similar in both the scale of the non-profit sector overall, and in volunteer input, with 26 per cent and 23 per cent of the adult population serving as volunteers. The UK (see Kendall and Knapp, 1996) and the US are exemplars of the liberal non-profit regime. In the UK and the US government social welfare spending is relatively low and the size of the non-profit sector relatively large. Volunteering is much higher than in the corporatist regime (nearly half of the adult population). The US and the UK, in turn, are set apart from Sweden, (see Lundström and Wijkström, 1997), a social democratic country, where volunteering, as we have seen, is rather pronounced (36 per cent). Japan fits the statist model, with low levels of government social welfare spending accompanied by a relatively small non-profit sector. Combined with extensive corporate welfare, the result has been a relatively low level of government social welfare protection without a corresponding growth of independent non-profit activity (see Yamamoto, 1998). Volunteering levels are low. The same holds true for the developing countries of Latin American as well as the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

5 Conclusion

Public discourse in the past suffered frequently from a narrow perception of volunteering. It was seen in isolation of the broader political and economic context in which it takes place. This applies both to the supply and demand of volunteers as well as to the wider implications voluntary efforts have for society. However, there are signs that a more contextual approach toward volunteering is emerging. The greater recognition of value changes, social capital and social exclusion mechanisms at the local level are indications of this process.

In this context, the social origins theory helps to put volunteering in perspective, both terms of how it relates to the non-profit sector, and state-society relations at large: in liberal non-profit regimes, volunteering plays economically and politically the most important role. It is part of the cultural repertoires of these countries, and typically expected from citizens. In corporatist non-profit regimes, volunteering is less pronounced and frequently stands in an instrumental and somewhat strained relationship with the state. In social democratic regimes, such strains are typically absent, and the

relationship between volunteering and the state is much less instrumental. Volunteering is less linked to service provision, where the state remains dominant—based on a broad political consensus. Volunteering is thus far more a matter of community-building, life style and recreation. Finally, statist societies have traditionally found no special place for volunteering in the way their societies are set up.

Yet even in some statist societies, the public recognition and role of volunteers seems to be changing. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Japan has become active in the proportion of volunteer programmes, both domestically as well as internationally. Likewise, Germany is beginning to ‘rebrand’ volunteering, searching for new terms and mechanisms to engage volunteers (Kistler et al, 1999). Behind these efforts is the ongoing process to negotiate the public and private involvement of citizens in societies that have become increasingly diverse, mobile, fast changing, and ever more part of a global economy. With these developments, the meaning, roles and patterns of volunteering are changing, too. Whatever these changes imply in the end, they will probably result in greater importance and recognition attributed to private voluntary activities for the public good.

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