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Thesis on

Éva Perpék

Volunteerism and community development

PhD dissertation

Supervisor:

Dr. Habil Zoltán Szántó

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1. Introduction

My thesis focuses on formal (organizational) and informal (non-organizational) voluntary work from comparative aspect. There exist many studies on volunteerism in Hungary but its formal and informal statistical differentiation has still not been in focus yet. The relevance of the topic comes from the fact that the year of 2011 was proclaimed as the European Year of Volunteering by the European Commission and the Council. Timing is not accidental, ten years have passed since the United Nations announced the International Year of Volunteers in 2001. Another evidence to highlight the importance of the present research is that in Hungary scarcity of representative statistical analysis is documented on formal and informal voluntary work and its causal explanations.

Since some researchers (Gallagher 1994, Smith 1994, Wilson, Musick 1997) argue that formal and informal volunteering are strongly and positively correlated, raises two comprehensive questions of my research: is there a real, “qualitative” difference – in activity, composition, motivation - between Hungarian formal and informal volunteers? If yes, which is the more adequate form for community development? My general hypothesis is that organizational and non-organizational volunteers significantly differ from each other. Moreover, formal volunteerism is the frame which fosters local development more effectively for three reasons: it strengthens the frequency of the activity more successfully and this effect increases by time (H_1); it is preferred by higher social status holders (H_2); and it is moved by “modern” motivations (H_3).

Empirical evidences of the thesis come from the secondary analysis of two Hungarian representative surveys’ data on volunteering, conducted in 1993 and 2004. The methods of hypothesis testing are linear regression, logistic regression, and confirmatory factor analysis. The second hypothesis’ higher social status is conceptualized by human, cultural and social capital, each of them measured with a composite index. Motivations in third expectation are derived from so-called traditional and new inspiration factors. Additionally, research questions are answered within the framework of a case study, examining civil guard (formal voluntary crime prevention) and neighborhood watch initiatives (rather informal voluntary crime prevention) in Törökszentmiklós and Csákvár.

2. Research questions, hypotheses, methodology

In order to understand the research questions more deeply, at first statistical data sources should be outlined. Empirical evidences of the study come from the secondary analysis

of two Hungarian representative surveys' data conducted in 1994 and 2005. In 1994, nearly 15 thousand adult respondents were interviewed on individual giving and volunteering. The 2005 data collection referred to Hungarian population above 14 years. This sample contained nearly 5 thousand people. The basis period of the questionnaire was the previous year in both cases: 1993 in the first and 2004 in the second wave.

The concrete research questions and expectations would be as follows:

1. Does the way of volunteerism (formal or informal) have an effect on frequency of activity (1.1). If yes, is there any change by time (1.2)?

- I expect that the form of helping does affect regularity: the formal or the organizational volunteers work more frequently than the informal ones in both periods of time ($H_{1.1}$). Moreover, I assume that the role of organizations strengthens by time ($H_{1.2}$). The dependent variable of this hypothesis is the frequency of helping, the independent variable is the formal and informal volunteering dummy. Explanandum is actually measured on an ordinal scale starting with one extraordinary case, and ending with every day basis. The measurement level of this variable originally would not allow using linear regression, but this 7 point scale offers a possibility to "overestimate" it, and handle it as a numeric variable. In order to compensate this statistically not perfectly correct procedure, I do introduce a dummy variable – where 0 represents 'volunteers rarely', and 1 means 'volunteers frequently' – thus besides linear regression logistic regression is applied as a complementary method. Formal volunteers' stronger activity ($H_{1.1}$) requires positive b_1 coefficient and $\text{Exp}(b)$ coefficient above 1 in hypothesis testing either in 1994 or 2004. Increasing role of organizations ($H_{1.2}$) implies higher b_1 and $\text{Exp}(b)$ coefficients in 2004 .

2. The *second* research question concerns the respondent's social status and form of volunteering. Namely: which way of voluntary activity is chosen by those with higher social status (2.)?

- I suppose that high-status people prefer organizational helping (H_2). The verification of this hypothesis would mean that formal volunteers are recruited from more prestigious members of the Hungarian society than the informal ones.

Dependent variable of the second hypothesis is formal and informal volunteering dummy. Higher social status is conceptualized by human, cultural and social capital, each of them measured with a composite index. These independent variables are inspired by Wilson and Musick (1997). According to the Hungarian questionnaires' features, there are three items indicating human capital, and four-four variables

referring to cultural and social capital. In the second hypothesis capital indices as independent variables are simple sums of item scores. Human capital index (HCI, 0-9) is represented by recoded education (0-2), economic activity (0-3) and occupation (0-4). Cultural capital index (CCI, 0-7) is composed of cultural events as information sources about social organizations (cultural information source, 0-1), sharing the opinion that 'it is a moral obligation to help people in need' (0-3), subjective religiosity (0-2), and religious events as information sources about social organizations (0-1). Social capital index (SCI 0-6) contains the number of children in the household (0-2), organizational membership (0-1), interpersonal relations as information sources about social organizations (0-1), and acquaintances as motivators to volunteer (0-2).

In order to examine separate effect of index elements – e.g. education, occupation, religiosity or number of children – on formal or informal volunteering, all of them are also involved into the analysis. Index dummies seemed to be rational to introduce because increasing scores in one item are sometimes accompanied by rising scores in one or more items. Values ranging from 0 to 4 in case of human capital, and scores between 0-2 in case of cultural and social capital are defined as low level of capital. Respondents possessing more scores belong to high-level capital holders. The second hypothesis is tested by the statistical method of logistic regression. If the hypothesis is verified, positive $\text{Exp}(b)$ coefficients should be observed in both years.

3. The *third* research question is related to the motivation of volunteers: are there any differences in motivations of formal and informal helpers, namely the formal volunteers are moved by modern, and the informal volunteers by traditional motivations (3.)?
 - I assume that formal volunteers are moved by modern or new motivators ($H_{3.1}$), whereas informal volunteers are moved by traditional impulses ($H_{3.2}$).

Similarly to the second hypothesis, explanandum would be the form of volunteering as a dummy variable. Regarding explanatory variables, a good feeling of helping, family tradition, community, acquaintances, and gratitude specifying old (Czike, Bartal 2005:94-95) or traditional (Czike, Kuti 2006) motivations. Goal achievement, useful leisure activity, experience, self-recognition, professional improvement, and new workplace are labeled as new or modern impulses (Czike, Kuti 2006). Motivations are measured on a 5 point Likert scale. In view of the fact that traditional and new motivations are not derived from multivariate statistical

analysis, confirmatory factor analysis is used to oversee the relevance of these two types. Then the factors are involved into logistic regression as independent variables to explain informal and formal volunteerism. Only the 2004 database is used because it contains more relevant statements on motivation.

If the expectations above are confirmed, within present research conditions, we can state that formal volunteering is the more effective form contributing to community development.

The research questions are answered within the framework of a *case study* as well. The case study contains illustrations of formal and informal voluntary activity, namely Hungarian civil guard and neighborhood watch movements. Two local initiatives were selected in Törökszentmiklós and Csákvár where both civil guard and neighborhood watch activities were registered. The data sources of the case study are 8 personal and group interviews with 22 civil guard and neighborhood watch participants in Törökszentmiklós and Csákvár.

3. Main findings

Statistical analysis:

- **Hypothesis 1:** The first part of the hypothesis ($H_{1.1}$) is confirmed either in 1993 or 2004 by both regression models: formal volunteers work more regularly than informal ones. At the same time the difference is not so large.
- The second part of the first hypothesis ($H_{1.2}$) is rejected by the linear regression model: the intermediary role of organizations does not increase by time. The reason of this phenomenon could be that along with increasing publicity and prestige of volunteering, and the strengthening of civil society in Hungary, people do not need organizations as intermediary tools to volunteer. This possible “explanation” is supported by the fact that in 2004 informal volunteers worked more intensively than eleven years before ($b_0=2.74$ in 1993, $b_0=3.86$ in 2004). A more persuasive answer requires further statistical analysis.
- Concerning $H_{1.2}$, logistic regression coefficients contradict the linear regression model results: the difference between informal and formal volunteers’ work intensity slightly strengthens by time. Transferring this into hypothesis testing, $H_{1.b}$ hypothesis is verified. Due to contradictory findings, $H_{1.b}$ cannot be convincingly confirmed.

- **Hypothesis 2:** If capital indices – no matter if dummy or not – are taken into account, we can conclude that the more capital a respondent has, the higher probability of formal volunteerism is either in 1993 or 2004. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H₂) is verified in the case of capital indices.
- The highest impact belongs to social capital index dummy in 2004: big amount of social capital (SC dummy=1) represents 2.5 times higher probability of formal volunteerism.
- In 1993 social capital's effect was weaker, cultural capital's one was stronger than eleven years later. In 1993 odds of becoming a formal volunteer is more than two times larger among those who own "much" (CC dummy=1) cultural capital.
- The role of personal networks rises by time, whereas cultural capital slightly loses its importance. Human capital has only a weak positive effect on the form of voluntary work, and no considerable change is observed between the two periods of time.
- Shifting to the index components, no significant effect can be found in the case of education and economic activity (human capital) in 1993, and obligation of helping poor people (cultural capital) in 1993 and 2004.
- Education's insignificant impact in 1993 supports Smith (2006) findings on 2002 and 2004 data of American General Social Survey, and partly confirms Van Ingen and Dekker's conclusions (2011)¹. Insignificant outcomes on economic activity in 1993 contradict previous expectations (Van Ingen, Dekker 2011, Rotolo, Wilson 2007). As we can see, human capital components delineate weak or insignificant probabilities. From this fact we understand more human capital index's low effect. An additional explanation could be that comparing the elements of the three different capitals, human capital indicators are the most unchangeable, objective or tough ones.
- From separate index constituents, religious information source (Exp(B)=2.78) is the most influential item in 1993, not only within cultural capital but among other capitals too. Although this item does not describe religious practice very well, no better indicator is found in the questionnaires. Thus, to some degree we can state that religious behavior's anticipated positive effect is affirmed (Musick 1997, Caputo 2009, Paik, Navarre-Jackson 2011).

¹ Present and previous research outcomes only partly can be compared in the sense that numerous results featured before concern voluntary activity itself, not formal or informal type of it. Thus, comparison of research findings should be handled with this limitation.

- The religious information channel variable is followed by cultural information source about social organizations ($\text{Exp}(B)=2.37$). The third important variable in 1993 was the membership in an organization ($\text{Exp}(B)=1.87$) as social capital item (Czakó et al. 1995, Czike, Kuti 2006). These three leading factors' weight is even larger eleven years later.
- Contradicting capital index outcomes, not social, but cultural capital's impact is the highest in 2004 (sum of significant coefficients=10.03). Primacy of cultural capital is probably due to two pulling items, namely cultural ($\text{Exp}(B)=5.45$) and religious ($\text{Exp}(B)=4.06$) information sources.
- The effect of subjective religiosity is the weakest one among significant cultural capital variables in 1993 and 2004. Based on Cnaan et al. (1993) and Wilson and Musick's (1997) findings, we expected the same results. The altruistic value-oriented variable does not show a significant effect either in 1993 or 2004. This result contradicts Wilson and Musick's (1997) outcomes who indicate a positive effect of valuing help on both formal and informal voluntary activity.
- Another dominant variable, strengthening social capital would be the organizational membership ($\text{Exp}(B)=3.62$) in 2004. Organizational affiliation was assumed to be a reasonable item strengthening volunteering (Czakó et al. 1995, Czike, Kuti 2006). In comparison with other social capital components, in this variable considerable growth is measured by time. This fact is particularly noticeable because organizational membership has been lower among volunteers than eleven years before.
- All in all, since human, cultural and social capitals are defined by the capital indices and they have a significant positive effect on probability of formal volunteering, the second hypothesis is confirmed. If capital components are taken into consideration, four insignificant coefficients are measured.
- **Hypothesis 3:** According to the expectations (Czike, Bartal 2005, Czike, Kuti 2006), factor analysis indicates that the importance of self-recognition, experience, professional challenges, community and personal connections, and useful leisure activity are labeled as new or modern impulses.
- Community and personal connections originally were expected to belong to traditional motivation. I consider that this new classification is also acceptable because making friends or joining a community, and "using" them as personal resources, play a crucial role, not only in a traditional but in a modern person's life

too. All other new motivations are rather instrumental and related to gaining knowledge, experience and personal improvement.

- Only two items belong to traditional motivation: the altruistic impulse, such as the good feeling of helping others, and family tradition. This altruistic motive is the most popular one among all volunteer respondents. Except for these, joining a community, getting acquaintances, and gratitude were supposed to belong to the traditional group.
- The first part of the third hypothesis (H_{3.1}) is confirmed: the likelihood of organizational volunteering is significantly and 2.7 times higher among new motivation holders.
- No significant relationship is found between traditional motivation and non-organizational volunteering: the second part of the third hypothesis (H_{3.2}) is refused. Not only the effect of the independent variable is insignificant, but the entire informal model too. However, the good feeling of helping others (Czakó et al. 1995, Czike, Kuti 2006, Sherer 2004, Boz, Palaz 2007) and parental pattern (Fitzsimmons 1986, Caputo 2009) seem to be influential variables on volunteering, they do not affect the probability of non-organizational helping together.

Case study:

- All four activities (civil guard and neighborhood watch initiatives in Törökszentmiklós and Csákvár) are heteronomous and autonomous at the same time because their general rules and tasks come from outside, but their particular activities are formulated inside the group. All observed movements are autocephalous because the leader is selected by the members (Weber 1987).
- According to Gilchrist's (2004) dichotomy, the civil guard movement is rather an organization type, whereas neighborhood watch is rather a network type voluntary activity.
- Observed civil guard movements tend to become professional, bureaucratic and – partially – economic activities (Czakó 1992). This is only partly the case with neighborhood watch movements.
- The experiences of the case study indicate that in case of Törökszentmiklós three expectations are verified: formal civil guard volunteers work more frequently (H_{1.1}), they own more human capital (H_{2.1}) and social capital (H_{2.3}). In case of Csákvár no expectations were confirmed. Concerning the second part of second hypothesis (H_{2.2}), there is no coherent information on cultural capital and testing the

expectation. Both types of volunteer activities are moved by mixed motivations, so the third hypothesis (H₃) was not confirmed.

4. Conclusion

Statistical analysis:

- In the first hypothesis the way of volunteerism has a significantly positive effect on the frequency of work in both linear and logistic regression models. So the regularity part of the first expectation (H_{1.1}) is verified: formal volunteers work more often than informal ones. Regarding expanding role of organizations, results are ambiguous, as no convincing evidences are produced to accept the second part of the hypothesis (H_{1.2}).
- According to the results of logistic regression in the second hypothesis (H₂), odds of formal volunteering as dependent variable significantly increases alongside with human, cultural and social capital index scores. Consequently, the second hypothesis is confirmed. It is the cultural capital which has the strongest positive effect on the probability of formal volunteering.
- The outcomes of logistic regression in the third hypothesis (H₃) point out that according to the expectations, the likelihood of organizational volunteering is significantly higher among those respondents who vote for new motivations (H_{3.1}). Regarding informal helping and old motivations, there is no significant relationship between these two (H_{3.2}). This underlines that the first part of the third hypothesis (H_{3.1}) is confirmed whilst the second one (H_{3.2}) is rejected.
- Summing up the findings, statistical data analysis has confirmed that groups of formal and informal volunteers are significantly different in at least three fields, such as the frequency of activity, prestige and motivations of the participants.
- The main consequence of the statistical analysis would be that within this present research framework, organizational volunteerism is a more modern and effective tool of community participation and local development for three reasons. First, it fosters better regularity of the activity. Second, organizations as intermediary tools to volunteer are chosen exactly by those with higher social status. Third, formal volunteers are moved by new or instrumental motivations which could activate masses of people not only in 2004 but in present days too.

Case study:

- Since the majority of hypotheses are confirmed in Törökszentmiklós, this outlines at first sight that formal volunteerism (i.e. civil guard movement) is the way, which encourages community development more effectively. From the other side, this statement should be adjusted and complemented. Civil guard activity is strongly supported by the neighborhood watch movement, which has wide local community embeddedness.
- Generally speaking, it is the civil guard and the neighborhood watch activities' cooperation which actually fosters community development. Thus, formal volunteering is often accompanied by informal one and vice versa (positive correlation between formal and informal volunteering: Gallagher 1994, Smith 1994, Wilson, Musick 1997), these two together "produce" community development and civil society development.

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