

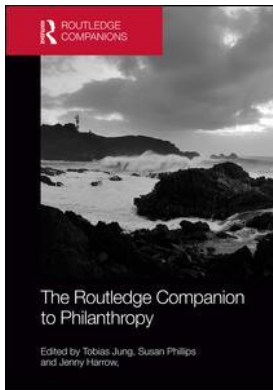
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Regional differences in philanthropy

René Bekkers

The practices and traditions of philanthropy vary strongly across the globe. From one place to another, such differences do not only relate to the size and nature of philanthropy, but also to the methods people use to give. Furthermore, regional differences do not only occur between countries. At a smaller geographic scale, contrasts can be found between states (Putnam, 2000; Bielefeld *et al.*, 2005), provinces, regions and departments (CERPHI, 2010), municipalities (Bekkers and Veldhuizen, 2008), neighbourhoods and zip codes. Focusing predominantly on the contribution of money to nonprofit organizations, this chapter explores these regional differences. Alongside helping us to develop a better understanding of philanthropy, knowledge of any differences in giving also has practical relevance: it informs fundraising practices (Schneider, 1996). Nonprofit organizations, for example, use, often quite small scale, geographic criteria to segment their donor database and to select target groups of potential donors for fundraising campaigns (Sargeant *et al.*, 2010: 160).

Regional differences in philanthropy in Europe

The majority of studies on regional differences seek to understand country differences in philanthropy, and a lot of these focus on variations between European countries. Here, three datasets are of special importance: the Eurobarometer survey (EB) from 2004 on civic engagement, a series of opinion polls commissioned by the European Commission; the Gallup World Poll (GWP), an omnibus survey on a broad variety of topics; and the European Social Survey (ESS), a biennial general household survey. The picture that emerges from these datasets is provided in Figure 7.1. This presents country differences regarding the likelihood of donating to nonprofit organizations across these three datasets. Only those countries that were covered in all of the datasets are included in this figure and the countries are ordered by the average proportion of respondents reporting donations in the three datasets.

As can be seen, the EB data show that the proportion of the population reporting donations to at least one out of 14 categories of nonprofit organizations varies from 20 percent in Spain to almost 80 percent in the Netherlands. The GWP data indicates that the proportion of the population reporting donations to charity in the course of a calendar year varies from 79 percent in the UK to 7 percent in Greece (CAF, 2011). Finally, the ESS, from 2002, also shows

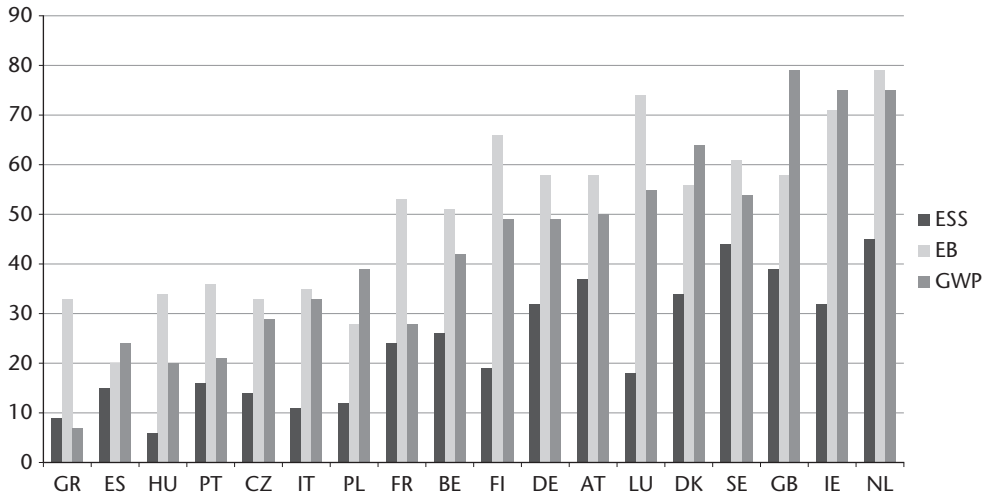


Figure 7.1 Likelihood (%) of donating to nonprofit organizations reported in the European Social Survey 2002 (ESS), the Eurobarometer 2004 (EB), and the Gallup World Poll (GWP)

considerable differences between countries in Europe. The country differences are spread over different ranges in the three datasets. In the ESS, the scores vary from 6 percent in Hungary to 45 percent in the Netherlands; in the EB, the scores vary from 20 percent in Spain to 79 percent in the Netherlands; and in the GWP, they vary from 7 percent in Greece to 79 percent in the UK.

As these numbers demonstrate, the proportion of the population reporting engagement in philanthropy varies considerably for specific countries between the three datasets. The figures for Finland are 65 percent in the Eurobarometer but only 50 percent in the Gallup World Poll. The figures for the UK show an opposite difference: a higher percentage (79 percent) in the Gallup data than in the Eurobarometer (58 percent). In the ESS, only 19 percent of the respondents in Finland reported donations, and 39 percent of the respondents in the UK.

The discrepancies between these proportions vividly illustrate that in research on philanthropy ‘methodology is destiny’ (Rooney *et al.*, 2001, 2004): the different sampling strategies, data collection modes and questions used to measure philanthropy can yield very different estimates for specific countries. While the proportions are markedly different for some countries, the correlations between the proportions from the three datasets are, however, fairly strong: the EB–ESS correlation is .74; the ESS–Gallup correlation is .81 and the EB–Gallup correlation is .80. The fact that these correlations are so high underscores that there are reliable cross-country differences in philanthropy.

How can the differences between countries in Europe in the engagement in philanthropy be explained? What are the commonalities between countries with high proportions of donors in the various datasets, and what are the commonalities between countries with low proportions? One commonality of more philanthropic countries seems to be a geographic location in the richer northwestern part of Europe, opposed to the more southern location and lower gross domestic product (GDP) of less philanthropic countries. Furthermore, when looking outside Europe, we see high proportions of the population engaging in philanthropy in countries with a higher GDP, like Australia and the US (CAF, 2012). In other respects, however, the highest proportions of donors are found in a quite heterogeneous collection of countries. Both densely

populated countries, like the Netherlands, and sparsely populated countries, like Sweden, have high proportions of donors. While a predominantly Catholic religious tradition is a commonality of the low ranking countries, we also see high proportions of donors in two Catholic countries (Ireland, Luxemburg), amidst predominantly Protestant countries (Denmark, Sweden) and secular countries (the Netherlands). Additionally, there is a mix of both large (Great Britain, Sweden), as well as small countries (the Netherlands, Luxemburg) at the top, and we also find large (Spain), as well as small countries (Czech Republic) at the lower end of the distribution.

A warning on the analysis of regional differences

While for fundraising purposes it may be enough to know which zip codes yield the highest levels of giving, for scholars, any regional differences pose an interesting, yet notoriously difficult, research problem with both theoretical and empirical challenges. From a theoretical point of view, regional differences can be explained by a plethora of different theories and hypotheses. These theories, and a review of the empirical evidence surrounding them, are at the heart of this chapter. The methodological concerns involved in testing hypotheses on regional differences pervade the literature and discussing them is beyond the space available. However, it does seem just to issue a general warning.

One of the most pressing problems is the ecological fallacy that arises from correlating macro-level characteristics with each other (Snijders and Bosker, 1999). Analyses that report correlations between characteristics of regions suggest that contextual, i.e. 'ecological', effects are at work. In fact, however, compositional effects are often driving regional differences. In most cases, differences in the composition of the population are generating regional differences; not so much the nature of the region. Without adequate data, and statistical models to analyze them, the results of comparative studies can be highly misleading. In the 1990s, hierarchical, or 'multilevel', regression models were popularized as a statistical tool for the analysis of context influences (Snijders and Bosker, 1999 for a useful introduction). Multilevel models can be used to test whether regional differences are due to compositional or contextual influences.

The typical finding in multilevel analyses is that contextual influences are fairly small, usually explaining only 5 to 10 percent of the variance. This means that the strong correlations that are often found between regional characteristics are primarily due to the composition of the population. An example is the correlation of .77 between voter turnout and the proportion of blood donors in municipalities in the Netherlands (Bekkers and Veldhuizen, 2008). A subsequent multilevel analysis (Veldhuizen and Bekkers, 2011), however, showed that only 6.5 percent of the variance in blood donation at the individual level is due to the characteristics of the municipality: 93.5 percent of the variance was due to composition effects. Voter turnout was one of the significant municipality characteristics, but it explained only 0.03 percent of the variance. Another example is the .58 correlation between GDP and the proportion of the population reporting engagement in philanthropy (CAF, 2010). In a multilevel model, Gesthuizen, Van der Meer and Scheepers (2008b) found the correlation between GDP and engagement in philanthropy at the individual level to be only .005. These two examples should remind us that aggregate correlations are likely to be substantially higher than the contextual influence. The implication for research on regional differences is that explanations of regional differences should take the composition of the population into account.

Two types of explanations of regional differences

Explanations for regional differences originate in different disciplines. Mirroring the wider, cross-cutting nature, of philanthropy, these include cross-cultural psychology, political science,

economics, history, sociology, and geography. Each of these its own theories and perspectives. In this sense, the explanation of regional differences is similar to the explanation of differences at the individual level (Adloff, Chapter 3; Pharoah, Chapter 4; Mesch and Pactor, Chapter 5): a comprehensive understanding of regional differences requires a multidisciplinary approach.

Across these different disciplines, explanations of philanthropic activity can be grouped into two types (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011a): explanations that focus on the characteristics of donors (and nondonors), and explanations that focus on the characteristics of situations in which people donate (or do not donate). At the individual level, the first type of explanation answers the question ‘Who gives?’; the second type answers the question ‘When do people give?’. At the country level, the first type of explanation implies that philanthropy is flourishing in some countries simply because these countries are populated by more philanthropic citizens. This type of explanation figures prominently in cross-national comparative research. However, the composition of the population is hard to influence by policymakers and fundraising professionals. In contrast, the second type of question focuses on situations that are amenable to change and influence. Hence, it is this type of question that should occupy policymakers, fundraising professionals and other professionals and stakeholders in the nonprofit sector.

Mechanisms that explain country differences in philanthropy

A comprehensive review of the empirical literature on philanthropy by individuals and households by Bekkers and Wiepking (2011a) groups the characteristics of situations into eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving: (1) awareness of need; (2) solicitation; (3) costs and benefits; (4) altruism; (5) reputation; (6) psychological benefits; (7) values; (8) efficacy. Translating these mechanisms from the individual level to a higher level of aggregation, individuals are expected to give more when they live in regions in which they (1) are more strongly aware of the needs for contributions; (2) are more actively solicited for contributions; (3) face lower material costs and reap more benefits from contributing; (4) are more strongly concerned with the welfare of recipients; (5) obtain more social rewards or avoid larger punishments for contributing; (6) feel better about their contribution or avoid feeling bad about not contributing; (7) more strongly recognize their contribution as a way to create a world that is consistent with their ideal world view; (8) experience their contribution to be more effective. The remainder of this chapter is a discussion of these mechanisms. For each mechanism, the hypothesis is presented, followed by a discussion of the empirical evidence in research on regional differences.

Awareness of need

The awareness of need mechanism implies that knowing about the existence of a need for contributions is a necessary condition for philanthropy. It is not a sufficient condition, however. The empirical literature on philanthropy shows that many factors are moderating the effect of need on giving (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011a). The road from objective need to donations is difficult, twisting and turning between the hills of the media landscape and the mountains of denial of responsibility. Potential donors get information about objective needs through various information channels: from nonprofit communications (Hibbert, Chapter 6) to news media. The news media infrastructure, especially, affects the information available to individuals. As part of that, news media preferences of consumers determine the selection of information that reaches them, with potential donors interpreting this information in a way that fits their worldview and that suits their psychological needs. Research in social psychology shows that people

have refined ways of legitimizing inaction when faced with opportunities to give. These individual level processes, however, do not seem to be much different between regions.

A general hypothesis is that freedom of press and a higher level of activity of news media increases the availability of information on social needs. A more specific hypothesis is that individuals in countries with a stronger international orientation, have a higher awareness of needs among distant recipients, and the amount contributed to international relief and development organizations is larger. Individuals living in countries with a stronger focus on local issues will be less likely to know about natural disasters, famine, war and disease overseas and will therefore be less likely to engage in international philanthropy. The assumption that individuals in countries with a stronger international orientation are less parochial and more prosocial towards anonymous strangers in other countries receives support in an experiment (Buchan *et al.*, 2008) and in an advanced analysis of data on willingness to help immigrants from the European Values Study (Koster, 2007). The specific hypothesis about engagement in international philanthropy has not been tested extensively. A comparison of donations to international relief and development in the US and the Netherlands provides support for the hypothesis. The US media are more strongly focused on domestic and local issues than the Dutch media (Janssen *et al.*, 2008). Correspondingly, international giving accounts for a much smaller portion of total giving in the US than in the Netherlands. Further comparisons of additional countries are required to test this hypothesis.

At a smaller scale, awareness of local needs may translate into higher giving to address these needs. For instance, one would expect higher levels of giving to local organizations in regions with higher proportions of unemployed and homeless people. To date, only one national study has tested such predictions. Borgonovi (2006) found that the percentage of the population in poverty in US counties is not related to either religious or secular giving, controlling for individual level covariates. This finding shows that ‘voluntary resources are manifestly not funneled to those most in “need”, nor are organizations agglomerated in the most needy areas of the metropolitan region’, as Wolch and Geiger (1983: 1078) concluded in an early study of voluntarism in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. More recently, Britto *et al.* (2011) analyzed data from 20 counties in the greater Metro Atlanta Area, finding that engagement in philanthropy actually decreased with an index of community problems composed of the percentage below poverty, the crime rate, and the median income of the respondent’s county. This finding shows that the capacity to engage in philanthropy is an important factor in responsiveness to need. As community problems increase, the resources to engage in philanthropy to fight these problems decrease.

Solicitation

Many forms of philanthropy occur in response to solicitations for contributions. Without solicitations, people are unlikely to engage in philanthropy spontaneously. However, it is difficult to estimate the causal effect of solicitation at the individual level using cross-sectional survey data. As targeting donors is selective, and often based on past donation behaviour, solicitations are endogenous (Lim, 2010; Paik & Navarre-Jackson, 2011). Experiments show that many people actively avoid situations in which they are likely to be asked to donate money (Pancer *et al.*, 1979; DellaVigna *et al.*, 2012). Participants in these experiments who do receive solicitations are more likely to donate. This does not mean, however, that an exogenous increase in the number of solicitations will lead to higher levels of giving. In fact, two large scale studies among donors of health charities in the Netherlands, one field experiment and an analysis of registered contributions, even find that donors receiving an additional solicitation decrease the level of giving, at least in the short run (Van Diepen *et al.*, 2009a, 2009b).

No studies to date have tested the hypothesis that individuals residing in places that are targeted more heavily for fundraising campaigns are more likely to donate. One study has tested whether the presence of a higher number of active nonprofit organizations in a region makes individuals in that region more likely to contribute. Controlling for numerous other factors, Bielefeld *et al.* (2005) find no relationship between the number of active nonprofit organizations in an area and the volume or likelihood of engagement in philanthropy; Rotolo and Wilson (2012) do find a positive relationship between the number of nonprofit organizations in a state and the likelihood of secular volunteering at the individual level, but not with religious volunteering.

Costs

Access to financial resources lowers the costs of engagement in philanthropy (Wilson and Musick, 1997; Bryant *et al.*, 2003). At the individual level, a higher level of education, household income, income from wealth, and a stronger sense of financial security are associated with higher levels of philanthropy (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011b; Wiepking and Bekkers, 2012). Mohan *et al.* (2004) document the importance of resources in regional differences in blood donation. Gesthuizen *et al.* (2008b) analyze data on charitable giving of money from the EB in a multilevel model; they find that donations are lower in countries with more highly educated citizens, taking individual level education into account.

Citizens in countries with a more stable economy can be expected to feel more financially secure and to donate more as a result. The level of financial security is likely to be lower in countries with higher levels of income inequality, especially among lower educated citizens. Higher GDP, national wealth, and lower levels of income inequality are likely to be associated with higher levels of philanthropy, in part through a higher sense of financial security. The World Giving Index (CAF, 2010) shows a positive association between the proportion of the population in a country reporting donations to charity and GDP. This analysis, however, did not take individual level characteristics into account. Data from the Eurobarometer show a negative relationship between income inequality and donations, controlling for many individual level characteristics of households (Gesthuizen *et al.*, 2008a). A study of donations in Indonesia also shows a negative relationship between income inequality and giving (Okten and Osili, 2004). A sophisticated analysis of data from the US, however, shows no relationship between income inequality at the county level and household giving (Borgonovi, 2006). The same paper also shows a surprisingly negative relationship between mean county income and secular household giving. A previous analysis at the aggregate level of giving in metropolitan areas in the US does reveal a positive relationship between median income and amounts donated (Wolpert, 1988). A historical geography of almshouses in the UK shows a positive relationship between accumulated wealth of regions and the number of almshouses (Bryson *et al.* 2002). Olson and Caddell (1994) find that individuals contribute less to their congregation when the average income of fellow congregation members increases. This is most likely the result of 'free riding': a lower perceived need for contributions.

People in different countries experience different levels of fiscal incentives for charitable giving (Dehne *et al.*, 2008), affecting the monetary costs of financial donations. One testable hypothesis in this area is that countries which offer a deduction for donations have higher levels of philanthropy. Another one is that persons with more financial resources will be more likely to engage in philanthropy in countries which allow charitable deductions in the income tax. Individual tax benefits for giving resulting from these fiscal incentives are larger for people with more financial resources (Simmons and Emanuele, 2004). It should be noted, however, that the establishment of such laws depends on the attitudes and political preferences of citizens.

Estimates of the cross-national or regional effects of tax laws should therefore take political values (discussed below) into account. Without such controls, it is difficult to avoid finding support for a crowding in hypothesis. Long (2000) also warns for omitted variable bias, but does not examine political values.

Benefits

The benefits expected to be received upon a donation increase the likelihood of giving to a nonprofit organization. If the organization provides collective goods to its members, such as in the case of a church, a trade union or a sports club, members of smaller groups contributing to collective goods enjoy more benefits from their contributions (Olson, 1965). Support for the hypothesis that selective benefits increase giving is provided by the finding that giving is higher in congregations in which the size of the church budget per person is higher (Peifer, 2010).

The more general hypothesis is that philanthropy decreases with group size. This hypothesis could also be explained as a result of ‘free riding’: the larger the number of potential other contributors, the lower each individual contribution is required to be in order to produce the desired level of the collective good. In addition, the ‘bystander effect’ also leads to the hypothesis that group size is negatively related to philanthropy (Darley and Latané, 1968). In larger groups, the feeling of responsibility for collective well-being is spread over more thinly over a larger number of people. At a higher level of aggregation, research on experimental games across different cultures shows strong regional differences in monetary offers to anonymous others in an ultimatum game (Henrich *et al.*, 2005). The experiments show that stronger market integration is positively related to offers in ultimatum games. This finding can also be explained as an investment with uncertain revenue. Individuals who are used to economic interdependence upon strangers tend to have a higher level of trust that their investment will be rewarded.

Altruism: The crowding out hypothesis

The altruism mechanism implies that individuals engage in philanthropy in order to help recipients (Adloff, Chapter 3). Economists have tested the implications of theoretical models of giving including altruistic motives by testing the ‘crowding out hypothesis’. Assuming that individuals are motivated to give, at least partly, because they care about the well-being of recipients, they should lower their own contributions when others increase their contributions. Vice versa, donors should increase their contributions when others decrease theirs. At the regional level, individuals should lower their contributions to nonprofit organizations as the amounts contributed by other individuals, corporations, institutional donors, or government increase.

Research testing the crowding out hypothesis in philanthropy has focused mainly on the relationship between the level of government funding and private contributions to nonprofit organizations within a specific country, yielding mixed results (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011a: 936, 949–951). Some studies find no significant relationship between government funding and private giving (Brooks, 1999); some do find that government funding crowds out private giving – though the crowd out is usually less than ‘perfect’ (Payne, 1998; Brooks, 2003a); still others find crowding in: the level of government funding is positively related to the level of private giving (Khanna *et al.*, 1995; Khanna and Sandler, 2000; Brooks, 2003b). One study of donations to American theatres found that government funding from the federal, state, and local level affected donations differently (Borgonovi, 2006). A study of religious giving (Peifer, 2010) found that contributions were lower in congregations with higher levels of alternative funding from investments or fees.

Because most of the evidence cited above comes from data about one single region, it is not necessarily bearing on the cross-national relationship. The relevant question is whether the level of private giving to nonprofit organizations is lower in regions that provide higher levels of government funding for these organizations. Many studies on volunteering have tested such a crowding out hypothesis. Most find no crowding out (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2001; Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006; Van Oorschot and Arts, 2005; Van Oorschot, Arts and Gelissen, 2006), except for two recent studies who find, albeit weak, crowding out (Stadelmann-Steffen, 2011; Hackl, Halla, and Pruckner, 2012). In respect to charitable giving, however, research has been limited. One study in the context of public broadcasting contributions (Kropf and Knack, 2003) finds some support for ‘crowding in’. It is not clear though whether government subsidies increase private giving or vice versa, or both. Another study on donations to a variety of nonprofit organizations in Europe based on EB data finds no relationship between social security expenditure of countries and engagement in philanthropy at the individual level (Gesthuizen *et al.*, 2008b). A recent study (Sokolowski, 2013) reports a positive correlation between government payments to nonprofit organizations and aggregate levels of private giving, but fails to take individual level correlates into account.

Reputation

Individuals living in regions in which philanthropy is valued positively will be able to obtain positive social rewards for making donations as a form of action in line with the norm. In the literature on volunteering, it has been argued that the presence of religious groups creates a positive social norm with respect to volunteering (Ruiter and De Graaf, 2006). This argument can be generalized to all forms of prosocial behaviour, including kindness to strangers (such as in the parable of the Good Samaritan; Wuthnow, 1991) and organized philanthropy. The level of compliance with the norm depends on the level of cohesion within the group: the higher the level of cohesion, the higher the level of compliance (Bekkers and Schuyt, 2008). This hypothesis has been labeled the ‘community explanation’ for the differences in levels of philanthropy between religious groups (Wuthnow, 1991; Bekkers and Schuyt, 2008).

From this perspective, it is not merely an individual’s religiosity that encourages philanthropy, but also the religious context in which individuals decide on donations. A testable hypothesis is that regions with a higher level of religiosity have higher levels of philanthropy, net of individual level religiosity. Gitell and Tebaldi (2006) find that average the charitable contribution per tax filer in US states decreases with the proportion of the population that is Catholic, and increases with the proportion that is protestant or has another religion. A similar finding is reported for 453 municipalities in the Netherlands (Bekkers and Veldhuizen, 2008). It should be noted, however, that these studies did not include religious affiliation at the individual level. A study on charitable donations in 23 European countries shows that not only individual religious values affect donations, but also the religious context in which people live (Wiepking *et al.*, 2014). In her article on differences in giving and volunteering across US counties, Borgonovi (2006) finds that religious giving and volunteering increased with the county level of devoutness, controlling for individual levels of religiosity. In addition, religious giving is lower in counties dominated by Catholics. County level religious heterogeneity is associated with a lower likelihood of religious volunteering. In an analysis of country level data (n=15), Sivesind and Selle (2009) report that the negative association between public welfare spending and donations is weaker in religious heterogeneous countries.

Several other findings can be viewed as support for the influence of reputation. Assuming that communities in less densely populated areas are more close-knit, one would expect negative

relationships between population density and engagement in philanthropy. Indeed, lower population density has been associated with acts of helpfulness shown by local residents to strangers in field experiments (Levine *et al.*, 1994; Levine *et al.*, 2008). Borgonovi (2006) find religious household giving to be higher in less densely populated counties. While these findings are surprising from an economies of scale hypothesis (Booth *et al.*, 1989), they fit the ‘community explanation’ of giving and volunteering.

The behaviour of others can be taken as a proxy or cue for the social norm that individuals need to comply with in order to maintain a positive reputation. Indeed, survey studies suggest that people adapt their giving to what others in their environment are giving (Olson and Caddell, 1994; Wu *et al.*, 2004; Carman 2006). It is important to note, however, that positive ‘peer effects’ may also be the result of psychological benefits. For example, one might feel good about conforming to internalized social norms and bad, or guilty, when departing from the norm. Additionally, ‘peer effects’, as observed in surveys in the form of a (partial) correlation between contributions of individuals in the same environment, may be the result of either correlations among omitted variables, or of self-selection of individuals with similar gift levels in the same environment, or of both (An, 2011). In a survey study on social influences in workplace giving, Carman (2006) finds that charitable giving is especially influenced by behaviour of co-workers in the same salary quartile. Bekkers (2012) analyzes a large sample of tax payers in the Netherlands and finds that individuals living in municipalities with a higher proportion of citizens donating more than 1 percent of income are more likely to do so themselves.

Assuming that the reputational damage of not engaging in philanthropy is bigger in those regions with higher levels of prosocial behaviour, one would expect to find higher levels of philanthropy in such regions. Kropf and Knack (2003) show that contributions to public broadcasting are higher in areas with stronger civic norms, measured by an index of census response rates, voter turnout, and belief in the honesty of others. In their early study on United Way contributions, Booth *et al.* (1989) find voter turnout to be positively correlated to the amount raised. In a study of donations to secular charities, Bekkers and Veldhuizen (2008) find a very strong correlation between voter turnout and the amount donated per household in municipalities in the Netherlands.

Values

Values are crucial for engagement in philanthropy. At the individual level, religious, political, and altruistic values can explain differences in charitable giving (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011b). As these values are more dominant in a region, they can be expected to create a culture in which giving is viewed as more positive and desirable.

Altruistic values

Engagement in philanthropy may be motivated by altruistic concerns for recipients. Such concerns may be internalized into a stable disposition, which we call altruistic values. Several studies have found positive relationships between altruistic values and engagement in philanthropy at the individual level. It is likely that cultural differences in value systems are associated with differences in philanthropy. To study cultural differences in value systems, several models of values have been advocated in cross-cultural psychology (Schwartz, 1992; Hofstede, 2001). One testable hypothesis based on Hofstede’s system is that individuals in collectivist cultures are more likely to engage in informal helping family members and friends, but are less likely to

help strangers. One study testing this hypothesis (Kemmelmeier *et al.*, 2006) found that more individualistic states in the US had higher rates of donors to causes that represent individualist values – self-actualization, personal growth and development, and individual achievement. This study, however, did not include individual level controls. From Schwartz’s theory, benevolence and universalism would be expected to be associated with engagement in philanthropy (Plagnol and Huppert, 2010). To date, however, no study has tested this hypothesis.

Religious values

Religious involvement is one of the strongest correlates of charitable behaviour by households and individuals (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011b). The stronger people’s religious involvement, the more actively they follow their group’s (positive) norms on altruistic behavior (Wuthnow, 1991; Bekkers and Schuyt, 2008). As explained above, individuals in more religious regions may be more active in philanthropy due to higher levels of solicitations and reputational benefits. A third perspective on the relationship between religion and philanthropy is that religion is an institution that instils prosocial values in individuals (Einolf, 2011). From this perspective, it is not merely being asked more often or the social pressure to be a good citizen that explains the relationship between religiosity and philanthropy, but also the endorsement of religious values that inspires people to engage in philanthropy.

Political values

Political values are also important factors in philanthropy, though the relationship at the individual level is complicated because of conflicting influences of cultural conservatism and prosocial value orientation (Malka *et al.*, 2011). In a book primarily about the US, Brooks (2006) argues that the extent to which people believe in state-induced income redistribution is negatively related to philanthropy. In Europe, however, persons with a left wing political orientation are found to be more active participants in voluntary associations (Van Oorschot *et al.*, 2006). A study on philanthropy in the Netherlands found that persons with a left-wing political orientation are more likely to give to charitable organizations (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2006). Hughes and Luksetich (1999) find that total private contributions to art museums are higher in states with a higher proportion of the population voting Republican in presidential elections. In contrast, Bielefeld *et al.* (2005) find no support for a link between political colour of a state and individual giving. Positive relationships between democratic history and donations are found in two studies (Gesthuizen *et al.*, 2008a, b).

Political values are embodied in institutions and visions of the role of the state in the provision of welfare (Salamon and Anheier, 1998). In the literature on civic engagement, several studies have examined whether volunteering rates differ between types of welfare states (Van Oorschot *et al.*, 2006). Based on the work of Esping-Andersen (1990), nation states with different work and social welfare policies are expected to have different volunteer rates. The usefulness of the typology in comparative research has been contested, as the level of welfare effort seems to be the driving influence behind the differences between types (Scheepers *et al.*, 2002). Salamon and Anheier (1998) present four ideal types of regimes by crossing government social welfare spending (low vs high) with the size of the nonprofit sector (small vs large), hypothesizing that the level and nature of volunteering varies between these types. Comparisons of means suggest support for these hypotheses (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2001) but they are not formal statistical tests. The low numbers of countries in some of the types would make such tests fairly meaningless.

Efficacy

Countries differ in their legal systems and their treatment of nonprofit organizations (Salamon, 1997; Dehne *et al.*, 2008). These differences may translate into differences in philanthropy. One important pathway is through charitable deductions, which lower the costs of giving (see above). In addition, legal systems influence philanthropy through regulation of the activities of nonprofit organizations, including fundraising practices. The regulation of fundraising and the level of transparency of charitable organizations are likely to affect the level of charitable confidence among the general public (Bekkers, 2003). The level and nature of regulation differs strongly between countries (Breen, Chapter 14). Ortmann and Svítková (2006) formulated a theoretical model of regulation and predicted that certification increases the quality of services provided by charitable organizations, as well as private donations. One would expect that regions with more strict requirements for registration, transparency and accountability of charitable organizations – such as the US, UK and the Netherlands – would experience fewer cases of fraud, abuse of donations and the misleading of potential and actual donors (Bekkers, 2003). As a result, one would expect public support for charitable organizations in these regions to be higher. In a comparison of US states, however, Irvin (2005) discovers no difference in amounts donated between states with loose and stricter nonprofit regulation. In a cross-sectional analysis, however, it may be that regions with higher levels of fraud and abuse are found to have imposed more strict regulation to reduce these problems. Also donors may suspect that irregularities are more frequent in countries with more strict regulations. Another problem in the identification of effects of regulation is that more regulation causes more bureaucracy, which may decrease actual or perceived efficacy, as well as private donations (Charity Commission, 2005).

Investigating donations to ‘activist organizations’ – humanitarian and environmental, peace, and animal organizations – Evers and Gesthuizen (2011) find that the national level of trust is positively related to engagement in philanthropy in a regression analysis including individual level trust as well. This finding is consistent with the explanation that citizens in high trust countries have more confidence in fundraising nonprofit organizations and are therefore more likely to engage in philanthropy. Unfortunately, however, confidence in nonprofit organizations was not measured in this study.

Conclusion

There seem to be strong regional differences in philanthropy. A higher GDP, a northwestern location in Europe and a less Catholic cultural background seem to be characteristics that countries with higher levels of engagement in philanthropy have in common. One should be careful to make such generalizations because different datasets yield very different estimates of the proportion of the population engaging in philanthropy in specific countries. Also, it should be noted that data on amounts donated in different countries are not yet available for comparative research. In an ongoing research project (Wiepking and Handy, 2015), existing datasets are compiled. Given the differences in the research methodology used in different datasets, however, it will be extremely difficult to estimate the magnitude and origins of the differences in philanthropy.

Progress in research on regional differences in philanthropy is hampered by a lack of high quality data. The collection of high quality data on philanthropy that allow for a cross-national comparative study should be placed at the top of the priority list of scholars in this field. When such data become available, researchers should use adequate statistical models to test for the origins of regional differences. Such hierarchical or multi-level models should include both

individual, as well as country level predictors. The current practice in many studies suggests regional differences to be due to context effects, but fails to take account of composition effects. Do citizens give less in Catholic countries because a Catholic tradition discourages giving or because Catholics give less, regardless of where they live? Do citizens in higher GDP countries give more because of the more favourable macro-economic situation in their countries or because these citizens have higher incomes and are more likely to have wealth in assets? In addition to GDP and religious tradition, there are likely to be other regional characteristics that are correlated with philanthropy, such as a democratic history, welfare state regimes and openness of the economy. Given the current state of research, it is too early to jump to conclusions about the existence and origins of regional differences.

In the absence of high quality data, I have discussed some of the hypotheses that can be constructed to explain regional differences in philanthropy. When high quality data become available, these hypotheses should be tested using appropriate statistical models.

Notes

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