

VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

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ABSTRACT: *Using data collected in a national survey of 1,638 individuals regarding volunteer behavior, this article examines factors related to volunteer participation in local government activities. The findings suggest that among all volunteers (regardless of sector), those individuals residing in cities with populations of under 100,000, in central cities, and in states where limitations on local tax revenues have been imposed are most likely to volunteer to perform activities under the auspices of a public jurisdiction. Furthermore, none of the other sociodemographic variables are related to volunteering to public jurisdictions. The study also revealed that among those who volunteer to public jurisdictions, different combinations of sociodemographic and environmental variables are associated with different types of volunteer activities.*

INTRODUCTION

Nearly one-half of the American population over the age of 14 was involved in a volunteer activity in 1985 (Gallup Organization, Inc. 1986). Although the largest percentage of volunteer activity takes place either in churches, in other religious activities, or informally (e.g., individuals acting alone), a considerable number of volunteers devote their efforts to public and private organizations that provide services and goods related to the social, educational, and economic needs of individuals and communities. This article will focus on direct volunteering to public sector organizations and present a model explaining volunteer participation in local government agencies in contrast to volunteer participation in nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In recent years, a growing literature has developed on the general subject of alternative approaches to the delivery of public goods and services, including the use of volunteers in

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public and private organizations that provide goods and services normally delivered by public agencies for consumption by citizens (Brudney & England, 1983; Ferris, 1984, 1988; Percy, 1984; Warren et al., 1984; Sundeen, 1988). Despite this interest in general volunteer behavior or co-production, little, if any, empirical work has been done on volunteering specifically to public sector or government organizations, using the individual as the unit of analysis.¹ In this context, the purpose of this study was to distinguish from among a group of volunteers those who contribute their discretionary time to local government activities in contrast to those who volunteer to organizations under other auspices.

There has been considerable research on the correlates of whether or not one volunteers. For example, research has generally shown participation in volunteer activities to be associated with (a) dominant socioeconomic status and greater resources, especially higher income and education (Wright & Hyman, 1958; Lemon, Palisi, & Jacobson, 1972; Tomeh, 1973; Smith, 1975, 1980, 1983; Palisi & Palisi, 1984); (b) individual and family needs and their demands for service (Zech, 1982; Ferris, 1988), which are frequently related to one's place in the family life cycle, e.g., age, marital status, and parenthood (Knocke & Thomson, 1977; Clotfelter, 1985; Rohs, 1986; Sundeen, 1988); and (c) community characteristics, including city size and location within a metropolitan area, which may be associated with community cohesion and propensity to engage in local problem-solving (Sundeen, 1985; Sundeen & Siegel, 1987), the extent of unmet service demands (Zech, 1982; Ferris, 1988), or the availability of volunteer opportunities in the area (Wolch & Geiger, 1983). Also, in an earlier study of factors explaining participation in co-production, Sundeen (1988) found volunteer participation (regardless of the organizational auspices of the volunteer activity, e.g., nonprofit, private for-profit, or governmental) to be statistically associated with higher levels of education, marriage, parenthood, contributions of money and property, and residence in middle-sized cities.

In contrast to most previous research, which has focused on whether or not an individual volunteers, the sample for this study will be restricted to only those who volunteer (rather than to a population of volunteers and nonvolunteers), and a model will be specified to explain volunteer participation in local government agencies as opposed to volunteering to organizations under other auspices. It is assumed that there will be differences between those volunteers who select governmental organizations and those who select nonprofit and private for-profit organizations. The nature of these differences is a function of at least three primary factors: the source of governmental revenues is taxes; local governments tend to be associated in the mind of the public with the responsibility for the direct provision of public goods and services; and citizens have differing demands for and interests in those volunteer activities available through local public jurisdictions.

First, with respect to taxes, one factor assumed to lead to volunteer contribution of time to a local government is the expectation of tax savings. Stinson and Stam (1976) hypothesized that such a tax savings represents a "shadow wage," whereby volunteering to a local jurisdiction can reduce or prevent the increase of costs for the services one receives, thus avoiding higher taxes. For example, a homeowner who volunteers to the public schools prevents increased educational costs and higher property taxes. Also, where taxpayers' revolts have occurred or states have imposed legal limitations on local public revenues, we might expect citizens to perceive the need to contain costs and, therefore,

volunteer their time to local jurisdictions. (Contrary to this latter expectation, Ferris [1988] found a negative association between the use of volunteers by local governments and the operation of a property tax limitation on the jurisdiction after 1978, when using the jurisdiction as the unit of analysis.)

Volunteering by citizens to public agencies is also expected to be shaped by the perceived scarcity or availability of services provided by local jurisdictions. In some communities, dissatisfaction with the level of public services will cause citizens to volunteer in order to meet their unmet service demands or to improve the services provided to them. For example, hypothesizing that larger cities have excess service demands because of their heterogeneous population, Ferris (1988) found a positive association between city size and local government use of volunteers. In addition, central city residents may be more likely than suburban residents to volunteer to public jurisdictions. This results from unmet service needs caused by fiscal stress, as well as from the possibility that fewer resources are allocated to nonprofit sector organizations in areas that are most in need (Wolch & Geiger, 1983), thereby decreasing the opportunity for volunteering to the nonprofit sector.

Another factor related to service demand that may contribute to whether or not citizens volunteer to government agencies is their demand for a particular type of volunteer service that is more likely to be under the auspices of a public sector agency than a nonprofit organization. In general, service preference reflects the individual's social roles, some of which are related to the family life cycle, e.g., age and parenthood (Knoke & Thomson, 1977; Dye, 1980; Clotfelter, 1985; Sundeen, 1988). For example, we expect younger adults with children in the home to be likely to volunteer to various youth serving institutions and organizations, such as schools or youth clubs. Once individuals choose to volunteer in a particular functional area because of their needs and interests, they determine which sectors (if more than one) are involved in the service area and join it; otherwise, they volunteer to whichever organization is available. Because educational activities tend to be found predominantly, though not exclusively, in public sector organizations, one would expect family life circumstances to be related to volunteering to government.

In summary, the participation of individual volunteers in public sector organizations is a frequently discussed subject that has not been adequately researched. In this study, it is expected that among those who volunteer in the provision of public goods and services, volunteerism to government will be associated with one or all of these factors: the desire to reduce taxes and/or government costs; the availability of public services; the service needs of the individual; and the type of volunteer activities available under the auspices of public sector organizations. Specific hypotheses will be presented in a later section.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

In order to determine the factors contributing to volunteer participation in public sector agencies in contrast to nonprofit and for-profit organizations, a model is developed based on the concepts discussed above. This section is devoted to a description of the data set used in the analysis, the operational indicators and their hypothesized relationships, and the statistical techniques used for the analysis.

Data

The Gallup Organization, Inc., conducted a survey on volunteering for the independent sector between October 12 and October 21, 1985. The survey consisted of 1,638 personal in-home interviews with a randomly selected national sample of respondents 14 years of age and older. (Subsequently, missing data caused the exclusion of respondents under the age of 18.) For the purposes of the Gallup survey, volunteer work was broadly defined as "working in some way to help others for no monetary pay" (Gallup Organization, Inc., 1986, p.1).

The survey instrument asked for information regarding the respondents' participation in 13 types of volunteer activities, as well as social background and demographic data. Relevant to this study, respondents were asked to identify the organizational auspice of each volunteer activity, e.g., private for-profit, nonprofit religious, nonprofit nonreligious, local government, state government, or federal government.

In order to investigate the impact of fiscal limitations on volunteering, data were obtained from a report of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (1985, p.146) that itemizes those states imposing a legal limitation on the local property tax rate. All other data used in the study came from the Gallup survey.

Operational Indicators

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study is a dummy variable that receives a value of 1 if the respondent volunteered to at least one local government agency in the year prior to the interview and a value of 0 if the volunteer participated in a nonprofit or private for-profit organization. For this research, a local government agency includes local, city, and county jurisdictions, such as "schools, family services, hospitals, parks, and libraries" (Gallup Organization, Inc., 1986, p.52). Furthermore, volunteer participation may occur under the auspices of a local public sector organization in at least one of seven categories of volunteer activities: health, education, social services and welfare, community action, justice, recreation, and arts and culture.² These activities were selected because they are congruent with those goods and services most likely to be considered public in nature and delivered by local jurisdictions.³ Of the 484 respondents who indicated that they volunteered to at least one of those seven activities regardless of sector auspice, 135 (27.9%) had carried out their volunteer participation within a local government agency.⁴ The remainder volunteered to activities sponsored by private for-profit, nonprofit religious, nonprofit nonreligious, or state and federal public organizations.

Independent Variables

Table 1 contains the indicators and descriptive statistics of the independent variables and a discussion of them follows.

Based on the conceptual framework described above, the independent variables may be grouped into three categories. One set reflects the desire to reduce or maintain the costs of local government, thereby reducing taxes or preventing them from rising. By contributing time to the delivery of public services, homeowners have the opportunity to contain local property taxes. Thus, it is hypothesized that homeownership (HOMEOWNER), which is a dummy variable, will be positively associated with the dependent variable.

TABLE 1

Indicators and Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables

VARIABLE		MEAN ^a	S.D.
AGE 45	= 1 when respondent is over 45 years old; otherwise = 0	0.35	
FEMALE	= 1 when respondent is female; otherwise = 0	.055	
KIDS	= continuous variable ranging from 0 to 7 children under 18 years old living in the home	1.19	1.22
INCOME	= continuous variable ranging from \$1,000 to \$133,000 annual (based on mid-points of 17 income categories)	34266.3	25088.6
HOMEOWNER	= 1 when respondent is owner of home; otherwise = 0	0.79	
SMSACC	= 1 when respondent resides in central city of SMSA; otherwise = 0	0.21	
TAXLIM	= 1 when respondent resides in state that has imposed a legal limitation on tax revenues; otherwise = 0	.031	
LCITYSIZE	= 1 when city size of respondent is 100,000 or more; otherwise = 0	0.50	

^a For categorical variables, coefficient represents frequency of variable.

An additional variable representing the fiscal environment of local government is whether or not the respondent lives in a state where a legal limitation on a local jurisdiction's revenue from taxes exists (TAXLIM). Ferris (1988) found governments subject to fiscal limitations to be less likely to utilize volunteers. Attempting to explain this "perverse result," he reasoned that citizens who voted for "tax revolts" believed that public service levels could be maintained with fewer resources and, therefore, were unlikely to be willing to volunteer their time to the public sector. However, this study focuses on whether one volunteers to a public or private or nonprofit sector organization, and the choice to contribute one's time to local government may be motivated by the desire to reduce the fiscal pressures on the local jurisdiction. Consequently, it is hypothesized that residence in states that impose limitations on local governments will be positively associated with the dependent variable.

The second set of independent variables influencing whether or not one volunteers to local government includes structural factors reflecting the scarcity or availability of public services. Because central cities are more likely than suburbs to face fiscal stress and may offer comparatively fewer opportunities for residents to volunteer to nonprofits organizations, it is hypothesized that volunteers residing in central cities (SMSACC) will be more likely to volunteer to government than will residents outside the central city. Also, it is assumed that the heterogeneity and complexity of populations in large urban areas contribute to dissatisfaction with local government services. Therefore, it is hypothesized that residence in cities with populations exceeding 100,000 (LCITYSIZE) will be positively related to volunteering to local government.

The third set of independent variables are sociodemographic and reflect differences in social roles and statuses of the respondents. It is assumed here that differences in life cycle and personal circumstances determine a demand for specific services, e.g., older persons may desire greater neighborhood security and younger parents have a greater stake in educational services; and further, that such differences lead to differences in types of volunteer activities. Thus, the volunteers' life circumstances are expected to be related to

their demand for those role- and status-related services offered predominantly by the public sector rather than by the private sector. Because nearly half (49.0%) of those who volunteer to local governments are involved in either education (35.3%) or recreation (13.7%), and because we can expect young adults with children to be involved in child-oriented activities such as PTA, teacher aides, crafts and youth sports, it is hypothesized that persons over 45 years old (AGE 45) will be less likely than those younger to volunteer to public sector organizations. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that the number of children under 18 years old in the household (KIDS) will be positively associated with the dependent variable. Because of the possible competing effects of gender on type of activity, e.g., females in health and educational activities and males in recreation, the anticipated direction of the coefficient of gender is indeterminant, but the variable FEMALE is included as a control variable. Annual income (INCOME) is added to the model because socioeconomic class is likely to make a difference in whether or not one volunteers to a public agency in certain types of activity. For example, lower-income earners are more likely than those with higher incomes to participate in community action activities such as anti-poverty programs, whereas higher-income persons might be expected to volunteer to arts and culture activities. Like gender, income may have competing effects that make prediction in the general model problematic. Therefore, income is used as a control variable. Also, it was anticipated that both of these variables would be relevant in the second step of the research.

Statistical Technique

In order to explain the dependent variable (i.e., whether or not one volunteered to a government organization in the last 12 months), a logistic regression model for a binary form of dependent variable is used. This model indicates the likelihood of an individual volunteering to a local government agency in one or more of the seven volunteer activities. For the purposes of this exploratory study, a probability level of .10 or less was considered to be statistically significant.

FINDINGS

Table 2 includes the coefficients of the logistic regression model that estimates the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, whether or not one who volunteers participates in a local public agency. First, the goodness of fit of the overall model is statistically significant (chi square = 16.28, $p = 0.0386$). Second, with respect to the specific variables in the model, only the three environmental variables (TAXLIM, SMSACC, and LCITYSIZE) have a statistically significant association with the dependent variable. As expected, volunteers in governmental activities are more likely to reside in areas where there are (1) potential fiscal pressures on local governments because of the constraints on tax revenues (TAXLIM) or (2) excess service demands that are not met by public agencies or nonprofit organizations, as is often the case in central cities (SMSACC).

Contrary to the hypothesis that residents of larger cities will be more likely to volunteer to government agencies because of excess service demands, large city size (LCITYSIZE) is negatively associated with the dependent variable; i.e., those volunteers residing in larger cities are more likely to participate in private auspice volunteer programs. Apparently, nongovernmental sector organizations respond to these service demands and provide more

TABLE 2

**Logistic Regression Results
Volunteer Participation in Local Government Activity**

VARIABLE	BETA	STD. ERROR
INTERCEPT	-0.8997**	0.3598
AGE 45	-0.1003	0.2890
FEMALE	0.1044	0.2345
KIDS	0.0789	0.1057
INCOME	-0.0003 ^a	0.0005 ^a
HOMEOWNER	-0.2939	0.2859
SMSACC	0.7610***	0.2917
TAXLIM	0.4955**	0.2511
LCITYSIZE	-0.5616**	0.2628

Model $\chi^2 = 16.28$ *** $\leq .01$
 df = 422 ** $\leq .05$
 p = .0386 * $\leq .10$

^a multiply coefficient by 10⁻¹

opportunities to volunteer, or volunteers prefer the nonprofit and for-profit agencies over the public agencies. An additional explanation is related to a study of volunteering to police departments by Sundeen and Siegel (1987) in which they found that departments in smaller, homogeneous communities tended to have greater levels of volunteer participation than did those in larger cities with diverse populations. It is likely that local public agency needs for volunteer assistance are more visible and commonly acknowledged in smaller cities than in larger ones. Also, city size often reflects the size of local governmental agencies, and residents view smaller agencies as being less impersonal and more receptive to local citizen volunteer efforts.

In contrast to the hypothesized relationships, neither the indicator of a potential tax savings to the homeowner nor the sociodemographic variables (age, gender, number of children, and income) is statistically related to the dependent variable. This leaves open the possibility that such attributes are likely to determine participation in specific types of volunteer activities that happen to be under the auspices of a local public agency. That is, whether or not one participates in the public, for-profit, or nonprofit sectors is due to a decision to volunteer to a particular type of activity that happens to be provided by one of these sectors. The selection of the activity depends in large part on interests and needs related to sociodemographic and life cycle variables, as well as to the community context of the volunteer. These personal needs and interests will serve as the basis for participation in a particular volunteer effort; for instance, a family with school-age children will become involved in providing educational services, or an elderly person will participate in a neighborhood watch program.

This possibility could have best been investigated by disaggregating the dependent variable into its seven component functional activities and then estimating a model for each of them. Unfortunately, the limited number of volunteers involved in justice and in arts and cultural activities prevented carrying this out for all seven.⁵ Instead, this possibility was examined by using the same independent variables with dummy variables indicating the five remaining public sector volunteer activities: health, education, recreation,

social services and welfare, and community action. In this step of the research, the question was asked: Among those who volunteer to a local public agency, what independent variables are related to each specific type of volunteer activity?

It was predicted that among those who volunteer to a public agency, the type of activity to which they volunteer will reflect their own service needs and demands related to sociodemographic factors. For example, we would expect that whether or not a government volunteer participates in an educational activity, as opposed to other types of volunteer activities available, would be a function of having school-age children in the home. Furthermore, this ought to be related to the volunteer's age, with persons in the childrearing stage of life (roughly under 45 years old) being more likely to volunteer. Also, recreational activity may be oriented to serve youth; consequently, we expect that volunteering to a public sector recreation program will be associated positively with the number of children in the home and negatively with the age variable.

Compared to educational and recreational activities, the kind of services offered and the recipients of the other services are less precisely defined. Consequently, it is difficult to predict voluntary participation in health activities on the basis of service needs related to sociodemographic variables. However, given the traditional volunteer role played by women in hospitals, one might predict that being female will be associated with volunteer participation in health activities. Volunteer participation in social services and welfare activities also encompasses such a broad range of service, e.g., services for youth as well as for the elderly, that demographic variables reflecting children in the home or age may not be significant. Rather, participation in these areas may be related to being a consumer of the service, which, in the case of social services, reflects financial need.

Finally, in contrast to the first four activities, participation in community action programs is oriented toward social change and influence rather than solely toward the provision of goods or services. However, the type of community action to which the organization is devoted was not available. Consequently, without knowing the change target, it is not possible to predict participation in community action based on the individual's role or status. For example, one might expect an older person to be involved in a community action program to reduce discrimination against the elderly, whereas a person with school-age children could be expected to participate in a program to prevent child abuse. On the other hand, the existence of an unresponsive government or a general dissatisfaction with local services could serve as the common condition for participation in community action. In this case, structural variables, such as city size or central city residence, would be expected to explain volunteer participation in a public, locally based community action group.

Findings

Table 3 contains the results of five logistic regression model estimates, using the original set of independent variables used in the first model in Table 2. Limiting the sample to those who volunteer to a local government agency, the five columns are estimates of whether one volunteers to each of the respective types of volunteer activity. Four of the five estimates indicate limited support for the hypotheses stated above. First, the probability levels of the model chi-squares for educational and health activities are below .10, whereas the probability levels for social services and welfare and community action activities are slightly above .10. Second, with respect to those activities that are

TABLE 3

**Logistic Regression Results
Participation in 5 Types of Volunteer Activities
by Local Government Volunteers**

VARIABLE	Education	Recreation	Health	Social Services	Community Action
INTERCEPT	-0.9559 (0.6766)	-0.9850 (0.8116)	-2.3989 (0.8948)	-2.5464 (1.2189)	-0.9041 (0.9700)
AGE 45	-0.7949 (0.5630)	-0.6380 (0.6520)	0.7614 (0.7144)	1.1816 (0.8063)	0.9846 (0.9507)
FEMALE	0.6416 (0.4371)	-0.6093 (0.4952)	1.0626* (0.6030)	-1.0846 (0.6613)	-1.5531** (0.6910)
KIDS	0.4635** (0.2103)	0.0363 (0.2256)	-0.2931 (0.2814)	0.0610 (0.3330)	-0.1184 (0.3249)
INCOME	-0.0002 ^b (0.0001) ^a	-0.0009 ^b (0.0001) ^a	0.0002 ^{a*} (0.0001) ^a	-0.0001 ^a (0.0001) ^a	0.0002 ^a (0.0001) ^b
HOMEOWNER	0.5793 (0.5257)	0.7698 (0.6577)	-0.6013 (0.6612)	0.8031 (0.9355)	-1.1574 (0.8316)
SMSACC	-0.1297 (0.5109)	-0.3137 (0.5772)	-0.5279 (0.7031)	1.1983* (0.6972)	-0.8995 (0.9701)
TAXLIM	0.5155 (0.4830)	-0.8378 (0.5746)	-0.1182 (0.6258)	-1.1134 (0.8797)	1.3058* (0.7767)
LCITYSIZE	-0.3882 (0.4772)	0.4666 (0.5391)	0.1353 (0.6094)	0.7569 (0.7385)	-0.6032 (0.7864)
Model X ² =	19.11	6.41	13.18	15.04	12.74
df =	115	115	115	115	115
p =	.0143	.6010	.1060	.0583	.1210
^a multiply coefficient by 10 ¹			*** ≤ .01		
^b multiply coefficient by 10 ⁻²			** ≤ .05		
			* ≤ .10		

NOTE: Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

supplemental and more likely to have a specific client group, e.g., education and recreation, the findings support the notion that participation in local public education activities is a function of family life cycle circumstances; i.e., it has a statistically significant positive association with the number of children in the home under 18 years old. On the other hand, recreation is unrelated to the set of independent variables. Apparently, opportunities for volunteer activities in recreation encompass a broader age range than those associated with youth programs.

With regard to activities that have a broader and more diverse client or recipient group, e.g., health and social services and welfare, the findings differ from those related to education. As expected, participation in health activities is associated positively with being female. However, health is also associated positively with annual family income level, thus suggesting that these female volunteers are financially able to use their time for charitable purposes. Among those who volunteer to public agencies, whether or not one volunteers to social services and welfare is statistically associated with residence in central city areas. This appears to support a structural explanation of participation; i.e., in central cities where social welfare needs are greatest, residents participate to assist in the provision of these goods and services.

Finally, participation in the volunteer activity that tends to be focused on bringing about community change rather than on supplementing the delivery of services, i.e., community

action, is related to being male and residing in an area where limitations on local taxes exist. Although no clear theoretical rationale exists for the role of males in community action, the other statistically significant coefficient supports the hypothesis that participation in community action will occur in areas where, because of revenue constraints, residents perceive government as unresponsive.

CONCLUSION

This study has focused on volunteer participation in the delivery of goods and services through local government agencies. Although it has revealed that volunteering directly to public jurisdictions is not widespread (approximately 9% of the adult population), nevertheless it represents a substantial number of citizens volunteering time and services to the provision and delivery of local public services. Consequently, during times of shrinking resources, a pool of volunteers exists that local governments depend upon for assistance. This finding supports the notion that community systems may adapt to reduced external resources by increasing the role of local units, e.g., local volunteers to public jurisdictions, to provide for local goods and services (Warren, 1978).

Second, the findings confirm that distinctions do exist among volunteers in whether or not the volunteering is with a public jurisdiction or a private for-profit or nonprofit organization. As expected, in areas where tax revenue limitations have been set, apparently volunteering to local governments is viewed as a way to maintain services and/or reduce costs of government. Second, with their high demand for services, fiscal stress, and the possibility of providing fewer opportunities for volunteering to nonprofit organizations, central cities attract volunteers to public sector agencies. Also, volunteers in larger cities are less likely to devote discretionary time to public agencies, which suggests that nonprofit sector volunteer opportunities are greater in cities of over 100,000. Conversely, volunteering to public jurisdictions in smaller cities may be encouraged by greater visibility of local government needs, as well as by more personalized and responsive ties and relationships with public agencies. These findings suggest a model of general volunteer participation in local government agencies as being primarily explained by the social, economic, and political environment of the volunteers, rather than by their demographic characteristics; that is, the available resources, the quantity and/or quality of public services provided, and the opportunities for volunteering in the respective sectors set the conditions for the act of volunteering to government. Given these structural factors, sociodemographic characteristics appear to make no difference in the choice of a sector type for volunteering when volunteering is an aggregate measure.

When the dependent variable is disaggregated, the results are instructive in explaining the types of activities in which government volunteers participate. This helps in identifying who volunteers to local government agencies because they have a stake in a particular type of volunteer activity. The findings showed each activity type (except recreation, which was not statistically related to any independent variables) to be statistically associated with a different independent variable or combination of variables. It appears that unique motivational and opportunity substructures underlie each of the types of activities of volunteers to government. For example, the differences in participation among the types could be attributed to whether the purpose of the activity tended to supplement the provision of a service or bring about change in the community. Thus, those living in areas

where government is unresponsive or unable to provide services are more likely to participate in community action activities.

Finally, this study has shed additional light on the concept of volunteering and its relationship to the provision of public goods and services. When used in an inclusive way by aggregating several types of volunteer activities into a single measure, it lacks the precision to detect the distinctive motivational patterns that underlie specific volunteer activities. For example, it is likely that volunteer participation in education and in health, though both are done without compensation, reflect different motivational patterns and opportunity structures. Although the commonality between all of the types of activities comprising volunteering is their unremunerated character, substantive differences among the various types of activities are conceptually important and require different explanations of why persons volunteer to serve in them. Further research along these lines would assist in determining the differences between a general model of volunteering (such as that measured by the aggregated model) and volunteering in specific types of activities.⁶ A useful contribution to the field would be for future research to focus on the development of multiple measures of volunteering that reflect different functional areas, e.g., criminal justice, education, environmental concerns, and similar public goods and services.

Although citizens do not volunteer to local government agencies in large numbers, they do, in fact, play a role in assisting jurisdictions facing excess service demands and restricted revenues. According to Hatry and Valente (1983, p.209): "The key to a successful [volunteer] program is identifying, recruiting, and properly placing volunteers." If local governments desire to increase the number of volunteers, part of their success will depend on matching their volunteer activities with citizens' life circumstances. In order to enlist the services of citizens, these findings imply that local jurisdictions need to understand that citizens will consider their participation in terms of how a specific type of volunteer activity will benefit their own and their family's needs and interests, as well as those of the community.

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NOTES

1. Stinson and Stam (1976) developed an economic model of volunteer behavior in local government but did not test it empirically. Sundeen and Siegel (1986) studied the police uses of volunteers, Zech (1982) focused on volunteer fire fighters in Germany, and Ferris (1988) researched local government use of volunteers. See also Hatry and Valente (1983) for a description of survey findings of local governments and their use of alternatives to service delivery approaches, including volunteers. All of these studies used the organization as the unit of analysis.

2. Examples of the seven types of activities include the following (Gallup Organization, Inc., 1986):

Health: Hospitals, rescue squads, mental health clinics, blood donation stations, blood banks, nursing and personal care facilities, visiting nurse associations.

Education: Elementary and secondary schools, college and universities, libraries, information centers, and auxiliary organizations such as PTAs and alumni groups.

Social Services and Welfare: Community and neighborhood centers, centers for senior citizens, meals on wheels, child day-care centers, job counseling and training, homes for the aged, destitute men and women, orphanages, the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries, Lighthouse for the Blind, Alcoholics Anonymous.

Community Action: Anti-poverty boards, environmental, consumer organizations, advocacy organizations.

Justice: Courts, legal aid societies.

Recreation: Little leagues, membership clubs in such areas as swimming, boating, skiing, aviation, rifle, hunting.

Arts and Culture: Theaters, operas, symphony orchestras, public TV, art galleries and museums, zoos and botanical gardens.

3. It should be noted that as an indicator of the co-production of public goods and services, this dependent variable has restricted use. It includes only the decision to volunteer to government agencies and excludes volunteering to nongovernmental groups that also co-provide services normally provided by government. Also, as pointed out by one of the anonymous reviewers for this journal, the aggregated dependent variable includes educational and health activities, both of which have long histories of using local volunteers prior to the recent interest in the concept of co-production. The author would agree that much of the co-production phenomenon has its roots in traditional volunteer and community behavior and its related literature. (Sundeen [1985] discusses the attributes that co-production shares with the concept of community.)

4. Because of missing data, the size of the sample for the logistic regression analysis was 415, with 108 (26.01%) being volunteers to local government.

5. Although participation in justice activities was dropped because of the small number in that category, the majority of the cases were in public sector organizations.

6. Among those who volunteer to a local government jurisdiction, the proportion who volunteer to each of the activity types is as follows: education (52.8%), recreation (21.3%), health (18.5%), social services and welfare (13.0%), and community action (12.0%).

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