

Giving, volunteering and participating: what is the behaviour of Quebecers?

The Centre d'études sur l'action communautaire et bénévole has just completed a study entitled Giving, volunteering and participating: what is the behaviour of Quebecers?

Produced from the information contained in the microdata files of the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, this study indicates that as many Quebecers make donations as do Canadians in other provinces. The ratios during the survey were 83.3% for Quebec and 85.7% for Canadians in other provinces.

Quebecers give fewer donations than Canadians in other provinces, an average of 3.78 donations annually compared to 4.43 donations elsewhere in Canada. The average value of donations amounted to \$176.44 in Quebec and \$468.39 in the rest of Canada. In 2004, the per unit donation was \$10 in Quebec and \$50 in the rest of Canada.

Unlike Canadians in other provinces, Quebecers are less generous towards religious and worship groups. As such, they give an average of \$108.75 to those organisations as compared to \$501.35 for Canadians in other provinces.

When giving, tax incentives are much less important to Quebecers than to Canadians from other provinces. In 2004, 48.7% of Canadians from other provinces claimed a tax credit for charitable donations compared to 30.9% of Quebecers. What's more, 12.8% of Quebecers considered the tax credit as an incentive to make a donation while the proportion was 21.1% for Canadians from the rest of Canada.

In our view, several reasons can account for the differences in behaviour between Quebecers and Canadians in other provinces with regards to giving. Here are some of them:

- Quebecers are the most taxed citizens in Canada;
- Contrary to Canadians in other provinces, they put family well before the community;
- Religion has a much less predominant influence in Quebec than in Canada;
- There are fewer wealthy individuals in Quebec than in some other Canadian provinces.

The role and place of the state (government) is also a factor to be considered.

In terms of volunteering, 34% of Quebecers aged 15 and over said they did voluntary work in 2004 compared to 48.8% of Canadians in other provinces. They devoted an average of 146.01 hours compared with 172.70 hours for Canadians in other provinces.

It is worth noting that religious and worship organizations benefited from 16.8% of the volunteer manpower across Canada not including Quebec, and 9.1% in Quebec.

The Canadian survey revealed that 23.4% of volunteers from other provinces performed tasks related to fundraising as compared to 12.3% of Quebec volunteers.

While volunteers from other provinces (23.4%), primarily devote their time to fundraising, volunteers in Quebec (15.3%), for their part, mainly perform tasks related to the organisation, supervision and coordination of activities.

23.6% of volunteers from other Canadian provinces said that they volunteer to fulfill their religious obligations. In Quebec, the rate stands at 12.1%.

Why volunteer? According to the survey, Canadians in other provinces are more likely than Quebecers to work with volunteer organisations for personal reasons. Thus, 49.9% of Canadians in other provinces say they volunteer to discover their strengths while the percentage for Quebecers is 35.9%.

Building networks and establishing contacts constitute a source of motivation for 47.3% of volunteers from other Canadian provinces. The number stands at 39.8% for volunteers in Quebec.

Just as with giving, in our opinion, when it comes to volunteering, the reasons for the differences in behaviour among Canadians in other provinces and Quebecers relate to religion, family and to the role and place of State (State intervention in the field of social work, financing of groups, etc.).

In the Canadian Survey on Donating, Volunteering and Participating, Statistics Canada wanted to know if Canadians came to the aid of persons other than those in their household of their own volition, directly, without going through a non-profit organisation. Quebecers and Canadians from other provinces responded in the affirmative in the same proportions. The ratios were 83.0% for Quebecers and 83.3% for Canadians in other provinces. What's more, the resemblance in behaviours was similar in both the type and frequency of aid.

In terms of participating, 56.5% of Quebecers said they were part of a non-profit organisation and participated in the activities it organises. The ratio for other Canadian provinces is 68.3%. It is worth noting that in Quebec, the highest participation rates recorded (22.3%), were for professional associations and unions.

The above briefly describes the behaviour of Quebecers compared with that of Canadians in other provinces with regards to giving, volunteering and participating.

The study is available in French only. It can be obtained by sending an e-mail to rqcli@sympatico.ca