Abstract

What if some of the community's needs for goods and services are not provided by the private sector or public sector? This is not just for a basic need of part of the society such as helping the poor. The National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) of the US has classified main activities of the non-profit organizations (NPOs) into 26 major groups. That includes categories in culture, education, environment, health, social benefit, religion, etc. Supply of goods and services in such broad categories evidence existence of demands that were not supported by the two sectors. Alternatively, NPOs as members of a third sector (also known as voluntary sector, the non-profit sector, or community sector) have taken the action.

The importance of studying NPOs is not only because they contribute to compensation of government and market failures but also, they are viewed as a preferred mechanism to provide public goods and services that are not provided by two other sectors. NPOs are also private entities, not ruled by the government. They can steer
activities that are resulted in earnings among other financial sources such as grants from government, gifts from private corporations, and donations. The first to drives relations of NPOs with the private and the public sector. The latter, together with the NPOs’ objective, drive NPOs interactions with the community. The fact that in 2016 in the US, about 72% of NPOs financial resources are obtained by donations, shows that NPOs are financially more dependent on the public supports than the government. Therefore, the study of donations to the NPOs will shed lights on understanding the economics of the non-profit sector and it will help to gain better intuitions of interaction between NPOs and the society.

This dissertation aimed at better understanding of what drives donations to non-profit organizations (NPOs) and the interactions between NPOs and individuals. In the chapters 2 and 3, we developed models to analysis private donations over time and locations. The novelty of a long-term analysis was to assess the consistency of overall altruistic behaviors, pure or impure. Spatial analysis, on the other hand, examined spillover effects of donation and its determinants. In chapter 4, we studied NPOs provision of public services and donations based on social interactions where we modeled impacts of social capital on private giving. Considering intuitions from previous chapters, in chapter 5 we measured comparative levels of private and public provision of public goods and social services at the county levels as well as relationships between two types of provisions.