

# "Small actions, great results": relationships between voluntarism and citizenship

"Pequenas ações, grandes resultados": relações entre voluntariado e cidadania

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## Abstract

This study draws on advances in citizenship theory and the volunteer motivation model to examine the thesis that volunteers are likely to have greater civic action than non-volunteers, stimulated by the motivations that guide their behavior: the closer they are to altruistic motivations, the more concerned they are with collective issues and the practice of citizenship. This study aims to understand the relationships between voluntarism and citizenship in light of motivation. We conducted a quantitative study with three samples of 541, 347, and 366 subjects, and used descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as structural equation modeling. The results confirm the existence of relationships between voluntarism and citizenship practices, justifying policies to encourage this activity.

**Keywords:** voluntarism; citizenship; motivation; modeling; measurement scale.

## Resumo

*Este estudo se baseia em avanços da teoria da cidadania e do modelo de motivação voluntária para investigar a tese de que os voluntários são propensos a terem maior atuação cidadã do que os não voluntários, estimulados pelas motivações: quanto mais próximos estão das motivações altruístas, mais preocupados estão com as questões coletivas e com a cidadania. O objetivo deste estudo é compreender as relações entre voluntariado e cidadania à luz da motivação. Para tanto, realizamos um estudo quantitativo com três amostras de 541, 347 e 366 sujeitos, utilizando estatística descritiva e inferencial, além de modelagem de equações estruturais. Os resultados confirmam a existência de relações entre o voluntariado e as práticas de cidadania, justificando políticas de incentivo para essa atividade.*

**Palavras-chave:** voluntariado; cidadania; motivação; modelagem; escala de mensuração.



## Introduction

The ever-changing nature of demands and issues within a society presents a challenge to the state and social management, who must explore a range of approaches and strategies to achieve social good in a democratic manner. If we wish to democratise, it would be beneficial to encourage participation. This perspective offers a new way of thinking about the relationships between public agents and citizen users. It is becoming increasingly recognised that the former are not the sole providers of public goods and services, and that the latter are expected to behave more actively in terms of citizenship.

It seems that volunteering could be a promising alternative practice that could foster participation and citizenship. It has the potential to connect individuals with the collective and with communities, developing civic skills, promoting social innovation and opportunities for active participation in solving collective problems (De Bie and Rose, 2016).

Volunteering is typically regarded as a non-compulsory and unpaid endeavour, undertaken by an individual with the intention of providing benefit to another person or group (Smith & Puyvelde, 2016). They contribute to society, working primarily in the Third Sector, which encompasses individuals and communities seeking collective well-being and, in so doing, foster citizenship.

Citizenship is associated with individuals' rights and duties in three branches: civil, which make life in society possible; political, which

foster people's participation in the government; and social, which warrant social justice; such division is addressed by the classic theory of T. Marshall (1967). However, over time, new demands have entailed new rights and duties associated with environmental citizenship, digital era, diversity, tolerance, human integrity, the role of consumer citizens, among other issues that exceed Marshall's classic split.

Expanding citizen participation locally has been considered one of the greatest challenges facing political leaderships nowadays, given the individuals' low level of interest in public and collective issues (Lie, Baines & Wheelock, 2009). Of all forms of stimulus, volunteering has been seen as one of the activities in which notions of citizenship may be reinvigorated (Bezjak & Klemenčič, 2014; Putnam, 2006). Countries like Brazil and the United Kingdom believe firmly in such a connection, based on public policies such as the National Volunteering Program (Portal Brasil, 2017), the National Volunteering Incentive Program (Ministério da Cidadania, 2019) and the National Citizen Service (NCS). The United Nations (2020) also sees volunteering as a powerful way of involving people in a progress front all over the world.

We found no direct, quantitative, locally contextualized empirical evidence that demonstrates the link between volunteering and citizenship practices. We searched the CAPES Periodicals Portal and Scopus for studies that used the terms "volunt\*", "citizenship", "scale", and "measure\*" and only found conceptual studies that made connections between volunteering and citizenship, without

quantitatively demonstrating this connection. We also found some studies that showed a connection between volunteering and one or a few specific citizenship practices, but these studies did not encompass all spheres of citizenship as defined by T. H. Marshall (civil, political, and social) or its expansions (more diffuse and transversal practices).

Smith and Stebbins (2016) affirm that volunteering and citizenship have been trends of studies for the global theoretical field. Kenny et al. (2015) also suggests the need for more specific research on this relationship, claiming the risks of overestimating the positive effects of the Third Sector on active citizenship, as it is a very diverse sector. In this sense, this study aimed to understand the relationship between volunteer work and citizenship practices, with a focus on the motivations that drive volunteers. It may be suggested that volunteers are more likely to participate and engage in citizenship practices than non-volunteers, especially those who are motivated by altruistic reasons. It could be hypothesized that the closer they are to altruistic motivations, the more concerned they are with collective issues and the practice of citizenship.

Methodologically, we conducted a quantitative study with three samples of subjects: one of 541 volunteers, one of 347 non-volunteers, and one of 366 religious volunteers. We used descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as structural equation modeling, to analyze the data. Although citizenship is a difficult construct to measure due to the complexity inherent to its concept, we validated and used a measurement scale that measures citizenship practices at the individual level of

analysis, covering the civil, political, social and environmental spheres, which can be used as a strategic management tool, shaping policies and practices of incentive and action with a view to citizenship.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on volunteering and the Third Sector in Brazil. It provides insights into the motivations of volunteers and the relationship between volunteering and citizenship practices. This information can be used to develop policies and programs that promote volunteering and civic engagement.

In Brazilian context, prior to this study, significant evidence on the relationship between volunteering and citizenship was found primarily in the research of Amorim (2018), Ferraz, Caldas e Cavalcante (2020), and Leite (2019). While these studies demonstrate a positive association, they acknowledge limitations in their measurement of citizenship. This study aims to address these limitations by utilizing a scale that more comprehensively assesses the citizenship construct.

Citizenship is one of the effects desired by public and social administrations and the study of this relationship justifies incentive policies for voluntary-based associations, supporting the provision of public services and involving citizens in the search for collective solutions and well-being. It is also important to point out that, due to the growth potential and the socio-economic role of volunteering (Ipea, 2018), it is necessary to better understand volunteering to support its operation and management. Dilemmas typical of volunteer work pose challenges daily, such as problems regarding high personnel turnover, recruiting, commitment, among others (Stukas

et al., 2016). The studies on volunteers' motivation may support the management of volunteer work towards citizenship, confirming the types of motivation profile that deliver better citizenship performance.

## Theoretical foundation

### Citizenship: general concepts and notions

Citizenship, as defined by Carvalho (2016), reflects an individual's relationship with the State (loyalty) and the Nation (identification), prompting reflection on their place within society. It embodies a public and impersonal character, serving as a foundation for collective action towards shared goals (Guarinello, 2016).

Given the dynamic nature of societal life, the concept of citizenship itself evolves across time and space. Its definition is shaped by historical and cultural contexts, diverse social demands, prevailing epistemologies, and the political landscape. While ideals of participatory citizenship hold universal appeal, their interpretation and implementation vary significantly across different societies and historical periods (Costa, 2009).

Marshall (1967), a seminal figure in citizenship studies, examined the interplay between social equality and the inherent

inequalities within a capitalist system. He conceptualized citizenship as a "status" granted to members of a society, encompassing three key dimensions: civil rights (freedom of speech, religion, etc.), political rights (voting, participation), and social rights (access to education, healthcare). This framework emphasizes the importance of equal rights and obligations for all members of a society to fully participate in civic life.

Civil rights, encompassing freedoms of movement, expression, faith, and access to justice, are fundamental to individual liberty. These rights must be both recognized and upheld by society and the State. Political rights empower individuals to participate in governance, either as elected officials or as voters. Social rights, emphasizing social justice, aim to mitigate economic disparities and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities.

The concept of citizenship has evolved significantly, encompassing a broader spectrum of rights and responsibilities. This includes the rights of specific groups (Dagnino, 2004), the emergence of global citizenship (Arendt, 1989; Artero & Ambrosini, 2022) and environmental citizenship (Hadjichambis & Reis, 2020; Jørgensen & Jørgensen, 2021), the rise of digital citizenship (Atif & Chou, 2018), and the ethical considerations surrounding advancements in science and technology (Bobbio, 1992).

Furthermore, the discourse around citizenship has shifted towards a more active and engaged model. While the traditional focus was on "rights-holders," contemporary debates emphasize the importance of active citizen participation in public life (Hoskins, 2006; Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009; Çakmaklı, 2015). Isin and Saward (2013) further expand this concept with the notion of "activist citizenship," where individuals, regardless of their legal status, can assert their rights and participate in social and political change (see also Darling, 2017).

In the Brazilian context, understanding citizenship requires consideration of Santos (1987) concept of "regulated citizenship." Santos argues that citizenship in Brazil is not based on universal principles of political participation, but rather on occupational stratification determined by legal norms. This system, he contends, perpetuates inequality, injustice, and violence, ultimately raising questions about who truly possesses the right to rights (Dagnino, 2004).

While Marshall's (1967) sequential model of citizenship (civil, political, and social) may not perfectly mirror the Latin

American experience, it provides a valuable framework for analysis (Andrenacci, 2019). In Latin America, political participation often preceded the full realization of civil and social rights. Despite this deviation, the expansion of political rights played a crucial role in driving social and economic progress.

To address the persistent challenges of low civic and social participation in Brazil and Latin America, Andrenacci (2019) emphasizes the need to prioritize citizenship in public policy agendas. Fostering legitimate and inclusive political systems is essential for the continued development of a more equitable and participatory citizenry.

The concept of citizenship, while widely used, often lacks a clear and consistent definition (Morais & Ogden, 2011). To address this gap, we developed a scale to measure citizenship practices (see validation in Caldas e Cavalcante, 2023). Building upon Marshall's framework and focusing on individual and local-level actions, we identified 17 variables across four dimensions: civil, political, social, and environmental (see Chart 1 for definitions). This scale provides a valuable tool for quantitative research on citizenship in Latin America.

Chart 1 – Dimensions of citizenship practices

Dimension	Description
Civil Practices (CP)	Represent individuals' efforts to foster civilized relations and individual freedoms necessary for social life.
Political Practices (PP)	Reflect individuals' participation in exercising political power or governance of society.
Social Practices (SP)	Focus on social justice and the rights and duties that ensure minimum conditions of security and well-being, particularly for the disadvantaged and oppressed.
Environmental Practices (EP)	Reflect individuals' participation in promoting sustainable development and concern for the environment.

Source: adapted from Caldas (2020) and Caldas and Cavalcante (2023).

In the citizenship practices scale, we were concerned with measuring concrete behaviors that exemplify active and participatory citizenship in the everyday lives of individuals. We intentionally shifted the focus from abstract theoretical concepts to observable actions – what individuals actually do rather than just their beliefs or opinions. This approach aligns closely with the concept of 'lived citizenship,' emphasizing how citizenship is experienced and enacted in real-world settings (Kallio, Wood, & Häkli, 2020).

All dimensions outlined in Table 1 are relevant to volunteer work and the Third Sector. Volunteerism is widely recognized for its potential to foster civic engagement by providing opportunities for active community involvement and supporting initiatives that contribute to the collective well-being. The following section further explores this crucial relationship

## Volunteering and citizenship: relations and research hypotheses

Although it is known that promoting citizenship depends on several agents, the involvement of each individual in community issues is essential for local development (Putnam, 2006). Thus, volunteering has been defended as an option for the civil society to participate in the development of the world, in an active way (Dagnino, 2004; Sennett, 2009).

According to Çakmaklı (2015), volunteering and participation in civil society organizations promote changes across various dimensions of active citizenship, particularly in how citizenship is learned and practiced in Turkey. For Ames and Serafim (2022), throughout their experience, volunteers learn virtues such as prudence, temperance, courage and hope. These virtues are perceived as bases for knowing how to approach, advise, judge

or contain judgment and help citizens balance current priorities and future expectations. Bezjak and Klemenčič (2014) consider volunteering a new dimension of citizenship, while Putnam (2006, p. 104) affirms that, when bound to associative practice, volunteering instills in individuals habits of cooperation, solidarity and public-spiritedness.

For Smith and Laurie (2011), volunteering can promote global equity by promoting social justice in different parts of the world, thus increasing global citizenship. Artero and Ambrosini (2022) state that through volunteering, immigrants perceive both their belonging and their citizenship in ways that challenge restrictive belonging policies and traditional conceptions of citizenship. This way, volunteering becomes an important support for the active role of citizenship in civil society and, alongside the other agents, this activity has a direct impact on the formation of young people and their values, increasing their interest in the environment and for the society in which they live (Cintulová & Beňo, 2020)

Despite said evidence, some currents of thought are against the positive effects of such relation. According to Bezjak and Klemenčič (2014), two interrelated difficulties arise from the equation. The first one is related to the degree to which these private worries or individual interests can be translated into collective issues. The second is related to the fact that citizenship actions do not depend only on what individuals decide to do or not to do, as is the case of volunteering actions. According to Milligan and Fyfe (2005), the increased

professionalization of volunteers can influence the disconnection with local communities or the devaluation of citizens, generating more passive forms of citizenship and sacrificing the critical and transnational potential of NGOs. Kenny, Taylor and Onyx (2015) also warn of generalizations about the positive impact in the third sector on active citizenship: Is the Third Sector more present and active in issues of democracy, human rights and social justice? Or are Third Sector organizations being co-opted into the neoliberal agenda and acting as state subcontractors?

Even though these may occur, as they are inherent to any human action, it is not possible to generalize them or neglect the benefits that such sector and this type of work have brought forth. According to Ipea (2018; 2023), the third sector plays a significant social and economic role in Brazil, which recorded 879,326 civil society organizations in 2023, an increase of 7.8% compared to 2021. According to IBGE (2022) The volunteering rate in Brazil also follows a growing trend: in 2022, 7.3 million people carried out volunteer work in 2022, an increase of 603 thousand people between 2019 and 2022.

Studies such as Lough's (2019) have found correlations between volunteering (formal and informal) and seven categories of human development: overall human development, income, poverty, human inequality, gender development and gender inequality, employment and labor-force participation, and education. Devereux (2008) also argues that volunteering can raise awareness of,

and a commitment to, combating existing unequal power relations and deep-seated causes of poverty, injustice, and unsustainable development.

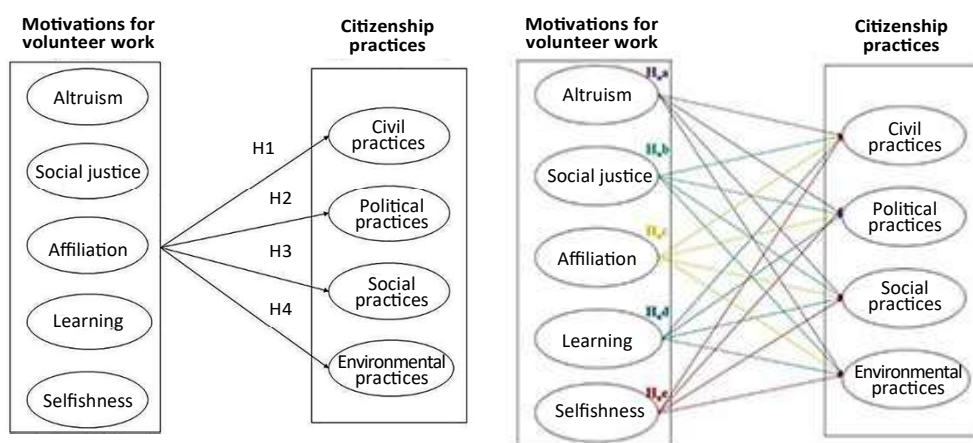
To analyze the relationship between volunteering and citizenship, we chose to measure the construct of volunteering from their motivations, as they lead to any type of human behavior (Musick & Wilson, 2008), including citizen actions. From the point of view of the volunteer, the motivations are different from the formal worker (Cavalcante et al., 2015).

For Cavalcante et al. (2015) e Cavalcante (2016) there are five factors (altruistic, social justice, affiliation, learning, selfish) that identify the motivations of voluntary work, arranged in a hierarchical relationship. “Altruistic” profile characterizes a volunteer with a societal

conscience who shows concern for universal causes. “Social justice” factor portrays the motivations of individuals who yearn to build citizenship and reduce inequalities. The “affiliation” profile refers to people who want to join a group focused on social well-being. “Learning” profile, on the other hand, describes subjects who aspire to self-development, stimulating their intellect. Furthermore, finally, the “selfish” factor concerns the individual who seeks with greater intensity his satisfaction and personal promotion.

Based on these perspectives, it is argued that the closer to altruistic motivations, the more volunteers are concerned with the more collective issues and, consequently, the more likely to perform citizenship practices (see theoretical model in Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Theoretical model and research hypotheses



Source: the author.



According to figure 1, in theory, motivations lead individuals into citizenship practices. This premise, four hypotheses of study arise, relating the motivation factors (altruism, social justice, affiliation, learning and selfishness) to each of the citizenship practices (civil, political, social, and environmental). However, based on the theoretical construction and interdependence of factors, it is expected that the five motivation profiles have a similar effect on the consequences in citizenship, acting in bloc, generating sub-hypotheses for this study.

As for the specific relationship between motivations for voluntary work and civil citizenship, people can be motivated to practice volunteering to know, access and fight for civil rights, these linked to the "I" and individual freedoms, which provide civilized relationships. These rights give people voices, making them intervention agents, recognized, and respected in their community.

This way, Jiang, Hosking, Burns and Anstey (2018) state that volunteering brings life satisfaction and social well-being, changes life goals, reorients social roles and connects unknown people. According to Musick and Wilson (2008), this is so because volunteer work gets people more intensely involved in the organizational life of nonprofit organizations, teaches them civic skills and raises their awareness of their rights. In Brazil, since the 1964 dictatorship that repressed civil rights such as freedom of expression, there has been a revival of popular civil movements and the emergence of NGOs focused on the dissemination of notions of citizenship, motivating volunteers to fight and defend civil and political rights (Silva, 2010). Given such evidence, the first hypothesis to be tested by this study is:

**H1: The motivations for volunteer work foster civil practices of citizenship.**

H1a: Altruistic motivations foster civil practices of citizenship.

H1b: Social justice motivations foster civil practices of citizenship.

H1c: Affiliation motivations foster civil practices of citizenship.

H1d: Learning motivations foster civil practices of citizenship.

H1e: Selfish motivations foster civil practices of citizenship.

In the field of political practices, volunteers can be motivated by defending and fighting for political rights, participation in public governance, decision-making about the direction of cities, participation in the production and use of space; making choices, deliberating, contesting and transforming

inequalities and injustices (Comelli, 2021). Volunteering is an opportunity to engage in political debate, through councils, committees, public assemblies, participatory budgets, Master Plan, among other forms of public participation (Arnstein, 2002; Carvalho & Santos, 2020). To Lee (2022), voluntary

organizations that pursue social missions are more likely to facilitate political participation. Kang et al. (2020) presents that volunteers can assist public agencies to comprehend the needs of citizens more effectively by serving as liaisons

for public outreach to garner support for public services, increase familiarity of local resources, and tailor services to local needs. Thus, the second hypothesis is:

**H2: The motivations for volunteer work foster political practices of citizenship.**

H2a: Altruistic motivations foster political practices of citizenship.

H2b: Social justice motivations foster political practices of citizenship.

H2c: Affiliation motivations foster political practices of citizenship.

H2d: Learning motivations foster political practices of citizenship.

H2e: Selfish motivations foster political practices of citizenship.

Regarding the relation of volunteering and citizenship in the social aspect, de according to Lie, Baines and Wheelock (2009), the volunteering is a means of transforming the economic and social well-being of individuals, households and communities. In the fight against Covid-19, the support of volunteers in various social services is of fundamental

importance, such as collecting donations and supplies to control the epidemic, providing specialized services to help people in vulnerable conditions, supporting research and tests for vaccines, among others (Cheng et al., 2020). So, volunteers work to improve their communities, helping the less fortunate. Thus, our third hypothesis is:

**H3: The motivations for volunteer work foster social practices of citizenship.**

H3a: Altruistic motivations foster social practices of citizenship.

H3b: Social justice motivations foster social practices of citizenship.

H3c: Affiliation motivations foster social practices of citizenship.

H3d: Learning motivations foster social practices of citizenship.

H3e: Selfish motivations foster social practices of citizenship.

Finally, with the increase in concern and discussion about sustainable development, the defense of environmental rights has motivated the practice of volunteering. For Ganzevoort and Van den Born (2020, p. 1), "the care for and protection of nature is inextricably tied to the efforts of volunteers". According to Larson

et al. (2020), conservation-oriented motivations are most important and grow as voluntary participation progresses. Yet et al. (2016), demonstrate that environmental concerns lead to an increased propensity to volunteer. Thus, below is the fourth hypothesis of our research:

**H4: The motivations for volunteer work foster environmental practices of citizenship.**

H4a: Altruistic motivations foster environmental practices of citizenship.

H4b: Social justice motivations foster environmental practices of citizenship.

H4c: Affiliation motivations foster environmental practices of citizenship.

H4d: Learning motivations foster environmental practices of citizenship.

H4e: Selfish motivations foster environmental practices of citizenship.

Given the theoretical models and research hypotheses above, which will be tested in this study, we now proceed to the presentation of the methodological procedures.

## Methodological procedures

This is a quantitative study, using surveys with three samples of subjects: one of 541 volunteers that was compared with another of 347 non-volunteers, to compare respective citizen performances; and another of 366 volunteers working in the religion segment to analyze relationships between motivations and citizenship.

Our concern with limiting the survey to a specific volunteering in the third sample (n=366) follows the guidelines of Wilson (2000) and Music and Wilson (2008), who do not recommend using several institutions of different nature and objectives when studying motivation, since this may influence the volunteers' motivations and hamper the comparative analysis. We chose the field of religion for its representativeness across the CSOs in the Brazil, since we found no study in the country that shows the total number of volunteers per area. According to IBGE (2019b),

in 2016, most of the Fasfils (35.1%) in Brazil were in the religious field, on an average 1.8 person on an employment contract.

Brazil was selected as the research setting primarily due to data accessibility given the researchers' location. The study period, April to September 2019, coincided with the first year of Jair Bolsonaro's presidency, a right-wing leader elected in a highly contested election. This period was characterized by significant political polarization and institutional tensions, with intense debates surrounding citizenship and the role of the State. This heightened political climate provided a valuable context for applying the citizenship practices scale.

Despite this challenging political environment, Brazil was also witnessing a growth in civil society engagement. According to IPEA (2023), the country boasted 847,585 civil society organizations (CSOs) in 2019, reflecting a 1.27% increase compared to 2015.

To ensure a representative sample, we included a diverse range of participants, incorporating standard sociodemographic controls such as age, marital status, education, income, and location (see questionnaires in Caldas, 2020). The sample was mostly female in three samples (55.3%, 56.2%, and 55.5%),

with a predominance of young people between 14 and 24 years old in the non-volunteer group (37.2%) and adults from 35 to 44 years old among volunteers and religious volunteers (27% and 30%, respectively). There was a slight majority of singles among non-volunteers (55.3%) and married among volunteers (49.9% and 57.4%). In the non-volunteer group, there was a slight predominance of postgraduates (34.3%), while volunteers had a college degree (33.3% and 38.8%).

Considering the territorial scope of this research, despite efforts to reach respondents nationwide through social media and outreach to CSOs, the majority of participants (340, 92.6%) resided in Paraíba. However, the survey also included participants from 14 other Brazilian states.

It's important to note that the Northeast region of Brazil, which includes Paraíba, is home to a significant number of CSOs, constituting 25% of the national total (IBGE, 2019a). Furthermore, Paraíba exhibits a higher rate of volunteerism (3.8% in 2018) than the regional average, second only to Bahia (3.9%). In terms of FASFILs (Federative Associations of Social and Philanthropic Institutions), Paraíba ranks fourth within the Northeast region, with a total of 4,004 organizations (IBGE, 2019b).

In the third sample, the majority follow the evangelical religion (77.9%), followed by Catholics (10.9%), spiritualists (10.4%) and others (0.8%). As to the length of volunteer work, most (79.2%) have been involved for over a year. Their main activity is in the field of social work (26.3%), which encompasses charity, food and clothes distribution, house rental assistance and healthcare for people in need.

For data collection, two surveys were carried out – one for the group of volunteers and the other for non-volunteers. The questionnaires were sent out online via Google Forms, in the period of April and September 2019. For the third group of religious volunteers, data collection utilized the "Map of Civil Society Organizations" (IPEA, 2019) to identify and contact relevant religious CSOs. Data collection methods included both email invitations and in-person administration of the questionnaire. The questionnaires included an Informed Consent Form, 13 sociodemographic items, and 17 items for "Citizenship Practices," which were developed and validated by Caldas and Cavalcante (2023). The third sampling (n=366) also included 21 items for "Motivations for Volunteer Work," which were developed and validated by Cavalcante (2016) and Ferraz, Caldas and Cavalcante (2020). Chart 2 shows the variables of the survey.

Chart 2 – Measurement Variables

Factor	Code	Item
<b>MOTIVATION FOR VOLUNTEER WORK SCALE</b>		
<b>Why do I stay in volunteering?</b>		
Altruism	ALT_1	1. I stay because I have managed to help people.
	ALT_2	2. I stay because I have managed to change peoples' lives.
	ALT_3	3. I stay because I have taken hope to underprivileged people.
	ALT_4	4. I stay because I see that the people I help have had the opportunity to live better.
	ALT_5	5. I stay because I believe my work is important.
Social justice	JUST_1	6. I stay because I feel I am helping the communities.
	JUST_2	7. I stay because I am fixing social injustice in the communities.
	JUST_3	8. I stay because I am improving the quality of life in the communities.
	JUST_4	9. I stay because I am helping achieve social rights in the communities.
Affiliation	AFF_1	10. I stay because I have the company of people with the same interests as me.
	AFF_2	11. I stay because I feel that I am part of a group.
	AFF_3	12. I stay because I am making new friends.
Learning	LEAR_1	14. I stay because I am learning to deal with people.
	LEAR_2	15. I stay because I am learning new things.
	LEAR_3	16. I stay because I am having new challenges and experiences.
	LEAR_4	17. I stay because I am learning something.
Selfishness	SELF_1	13. I stay because I am filling in my free time.
	SELF_2	18. I stay because I am getting recognition.
	SELF_3	19. I stay because I am feeling better as a person.
	SELF_4	20. I stay because it is good for my self-esteem.
	SELF_5	21. I stay because I feel important doing this job.
<b>CITIZENSHIP PRACTICES SCALE</b>		
Civil practices	CP2	1. I seek ways of changing unfair laws.
	CP3	2. I use my freedom of speech for collective interests: to participate, claim rights and give my opinion without insulting other people, for example.
	CP4	3. I engage with other people to find solutions for collective problems.
	DP2C	4. I engage in actions to protect against and tackle human discrimination (based on gender, color, age, religious belief, or social class).
	DP9C	5. I take part in discussions about topics that influence human integrity (abortion, disarmament, death penalty etc.).
Political practices	PP1	6. I take part in actions that may influence politicians or representatives, such as demonstrations, rallies, public meetings, councils etc.
	PP2	7. I supervise the actions of public managers or representatives of my community.
	PP4	8. I take active part in the debate of proposals and decision making in political, public or social organizations.
	PP5	9. I use the internet to engage in political actions, such as discussions, social movements, demonstrations, petitions etc.
Social practices	SP1	10. I take part in social actions that cater to the needs of underprivileged and oppressed people.
	SP2	11. I engage in actions to fight for social improvements for the working groups of which I am part.
	SP3	12. I engage in actions that protect the human rights for dignity and equality among people.
	SP5	13. I denounce public social work not provided adequately, as in the cases of health, education or security.
	SP7	14. I take part in discussions about public social issues regarding education, health, security, transport etc.
Environmental practices	EP5A	15. I reuse, reclaim and recycle everything I can.
	EP6A	16. I consume consciously, e. g., I buy only the essential, I prefer recyclable products or those that do not use slave labor etc.
	EP7A	17. I engage in actions of collaborative consumption: I trade, loan or buy used products, and avoid buying new things.

Source: Cavalcante et al. (2015; 2016); Caldas and Cavalcante (2023).

The quantitative analysis was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, we compared the groups of volunteers (n=541) and non-volunteers (n=347) using descriptive statistics (arithmetic mean, trimmed, winsorized, quartiles, variance, standard deviation, asymmetry, and kurtosis) and the t test for independent samples. This was done to determine if there were any significant differences between the two groups in terms of their citizenship practices. In order to analyze citizenship practices across different dimensions (civil, political, social, and environmental), the data were organized within SPSS to group variables corresponding to each dimension. This organizational structure enabled the calculation of descriptive statistics specific to each dimension.

In the second stage, we used structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the relationships between motivations and citizenship practices in the sample of religious volunteers (n=366). SEM is a statistical technique that allows us to analyze models with relations between dependent and independent variables simultaneously. It also allows us to perform factor analysis and multiple regression.

The sample size of 366 respondents was 9.6 times as large as the number of items (28) in the model, which met the minimum sample size requirement of five times the number of items (Hair et al., 2009). We used electronic spreadsheets and statistical software (IBM SPSS 20 and R Studio) to organize and analyze the data.

## Results' analysis

### Modeling Citizenship Practices on Motivations for Volunteer Work

The results are presented in two stages: 1) comparison between the groups of volunteers (n=541) versus the non-volunteers (n=347) and, 2) the SEM used to test the research hypotheses and the theoretical model (Figure 1).

### Citizen performance: comparing volunteers versus non-volunteers

The first phase of the research found that the averages of volunteers' citizenship practices are higher than those of non-volunteers in all dimensions of citizenship practices (civil, political, social and environmental). This superiority is observed both through means and quartiles. However, there was a predominance of means in both groups, classified as low to moderate intensity (means between 4.0 and 6.9, on an 11-point scale, weighted from 1 to 11). The Table 1 shows these results.

Illustrating the overlap of arithmetic means for citizenship practices in Figure 2, a slight superiority in the averages of volunteers is observed across all dimensions and variables of citizenship practices, particularly in the social and civil domains.

Table 1 – Analysis of citizenship practices, by dimension and by groups

Dimension/ Variable	Arit. Mean	Trimmed Mean (10%)	Wins. Mean (10%)	Quartiles			Variance	SD	Asym.	Kurtosi
				25	50	75				
VOLUNTEERS (N=541)										
Civil	6.617	6.771	6.617	4	7	9	11.605	3.407	-0.375	1.879
Political	4.817	4.551	4.740	1	4	8	11.693	3.419	0.352	1.770
Social	6.267	6.333	6.267	3	7	9	11.869	3.445	-0.224	1.743
Environmental	6.893	7.105	6.984	5	7	9	09.698	3.114	-0.417	2.119
NON-VOLUNTEERS (N=347)										
Civil	5.674	5.593	5.674	2	6	9	12.321	3.510	0.037	1.644
Political	4.402	4.032	3.308	1	3	7	11.899	3.449	0.579	1.929
Social	4.852	4.589	4.771	1	4	8	11.605	3.407	0.345	1.779
Environmental	6.144	6.180	6.144	3	6	9	10.890	3.301	-0.139	1.851

Source: survey data.

To ensure that the differences between the groups are real and significant, we chose to use the T Test for independent groups. According to Table 4, it is observed that the difference in means between the groups is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) in all dimensions of citizenship practices: Civil ( $t(886) = 5.593$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ); Policy ( $t(886) = 2.183$ ;  $p = 0.029$ ); Social ( $t(886) = 7.953$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and Environmental ( $t(886) = 4.471$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

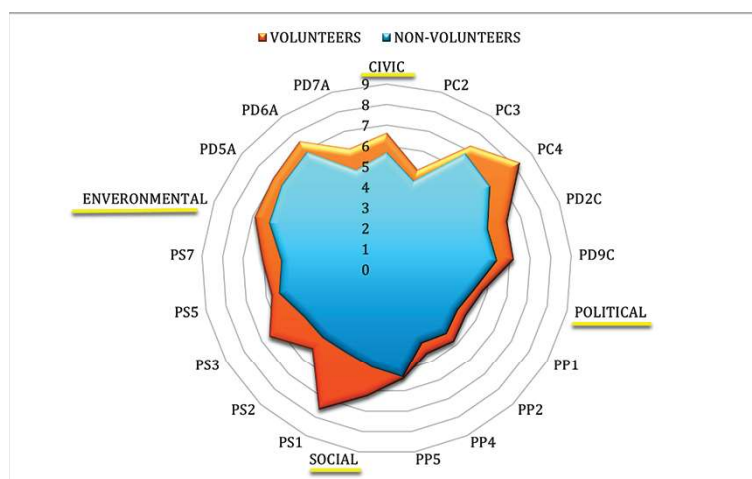
Table 2 shows that the dimension with the greatest difference between the groups is "Social" and the one with the smallest difference is "Politics." This suggests that volunteers are more likely to engage in social activities than political activities. This is likely due to the fact that social activities are often more visible and tangible than political activities. For example, volunteers may be

more likely to help out at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter than to attend a political rally or write a letter to their elected official.

In relation to the political sphere, the smallest difference between the groups and also the one with the lowest averages, there is an indication of low-moderate participation in political issues. This suggests that Brazilians are still relatively apathetic about politics. This is likely due to a number of factors, including the country's history of political instability and corruption.

In fact, in all dimensions, in both groups there is a predominance of low or moderate intensity behavior in citizenship practices. This suggests that, overall, Brazilians are not very civically engaged. This is a concerning trend, as civic engagement is essential for a healthy democracy.

Figure 2 – Overlap of averages for citizenship practices



Source: survey data.

Table 2 – T Test of the Groups

Variable	$\bar{x}$	Levene Test of variance equality		T Test on the equality of means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig.	Dif. Means	Standard Error	95% Conf. Int	
									↓	↑
Civil										
Volunteers	6,617	2,147	0,143	5,593	886	0,000	0,940	0,168	0,612	1,273
Non-Volunt	5,674									
Political										
Volunteers	4,817	0,096	0,756	2,183	886	0,029	0,415	0,190	0,042	0,788
Non-Volunt	4,402									
Social										
Volunteers	6,267	0,004	0,948	7,953	886	0,000	1,414	0,178	1,065	1,763
Non-Volunt	4,852									
Environmental										
Volunteers	6,893	0,795	0,373	4,471	886	0,000	0,749	0,167	0,420	1,077
Non-Volunt	6,144									

Fonte: dados da pesquisa.



The result of a certain superiority of superior performance of volunteers over non-volunteers in citizenship practices reinforces the confirmation of the intimate and close relationship of volunteering with citizenship. This result aligns with previous research, which has shown that volunteers are more likely to be civically engaged than non-volunteers.

However, the question remains: what makes volunteering foster citizenship? To better understand this affinity, we chose to analyze the relationships between the motivation for volunteer work and citizenship practices.

## Modeling the relationships between voluntary motivations and citizenship practices

We start the procedures to assess the model's goodness-of-fit by using the Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation method. As can be seen in Table 3, column 'Initial Model (M1)', at first sight the fit is acceptable. However, to improve the quality of the model, the software suggested establishing covariances between some variable measurement errors. Then, a second model (M2) was created,

Table 3 – Citizenship practices model fit measurements

	Initial Model M1*	Re-specified Model M2**	Acceptance level
Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ )	1797.92	1453.41	–
Degrees of freedom (d.f.)	629.00	606.00	Maior que 1
P-Value	0.00	0,00	Maior que 0.05
<b>Absolute fit measures</b>			
Root Mean Square Residual (RMSR)	0.07	0.06	Inferior a 1
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.78	0.82	Próximo a 1
Normalized Chi-square ( $\chi^2/d.f.$ )	2.86	2.40	Menor que 3
<b>Incremental fit measures</b>			
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.85	0.89	Próximo a 1
Normalized Fit Index (NFI)	0.79	0.83	Próximo a 1
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.84	0.88	Próximo a 1
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.86	0.90	Próximo a 1
<b>Parsimony fit measures</b>			
Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI)	0.66	0.67	Maior que 0.60
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.71	0.72	Maior que 0.60
<b>Population discrepancy measures</b>			
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.07	0.06	Inferior a 0.08

\*M1: First order model on the 5 motivation factors and the 4 citizenship factors.

\*\*M2: Second order model on the 5 motivation factors, the 4 citizenship factors and the 23 correlations between same-factor items.

Source: survey data.

Table 4 – Results of the SEM multiple regressions

	Altruism		Social Justice		Affiliation		Learning		Selfishness	
	$\beta^*$	p-value	$\beta^*$	p-value	$\beta^*$	p-value	$\beta^*$	p-value	$\beta^*$	p-value
Civil	-0.472	0.001	0.693	0.000	0.160	0.359	-0.111	0.357	0.200	0.049
Político	-0.446	0.002	0.602	0.000	-0.002	0.752	0.990	0.279	-0.132	0.027
Social	-0.353	0.009	0.656	0.000	-0.041	0.805	-0.175	0.132	0.341	0.001
Environmental	-0.098	0.443	0.272	0.028	0.197	0.269	-0.152	0.216	0.200	0.520

$\beta^*$  = Standardized estimates

Source: survey data.

with 23 correlations suggested across items of the same construct to maintain theoretical coherence.

Upon analyzing the reliability of the variables, for all motivation factors and citizenship practice factors, latent variables had a significant p-value ( $p < 0.05$ ), which can be explained by the observed variables. The factors' reliability was also fit for the acceptable parameters ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ;  $CC > 0.7$  and  $AVE > 0.5$ , except for the altruistic factor,  $AVE = 0.4$ ).

As we analyze the regressions (Table 6), we notice that the influence of the motivation factors differs depending on the citizenship practice they are associated with: the civil practices may be explained by the Altruistic and Social Justice factors ( $p < 0.05$ ),  $R^2 = 34\%$ . Political and social practices are affected by Altruistic, Social Justice and Selfishness factors;  $R^2 = 21\%$  and  $35.2\%$ , respectively. Moreover, environmental citizenship practices are influenced only by Social Justice ( $R^2 = 16.4\%$ ).

It is worth mentioning that in social sciences and human behavior studies different concepts attempt to explain a phenomenon. In this sense, while there is clear evidence

of interference, it cannot be affirmed that motivation can explain 100% of the citizenship behavior, while there is clear evidence of interference.

## Discussions

As to type of motivation, Social Justice has explanatory potential over all the citizenship practice spheres (civil, political, social and environmental). Such connection was expected due to the very conceptual content of the construct. According to Cavalcante, Souza and Mól (2015), this factor has indicators typical of social justice and equality, bringing together motives regarding the feeling of helping individuals and communities in a situation of exception while the volunteer is interested in regaining citizenship on a local perspective. Although Social Justice is theoretically in line mainly with social citizenship practices, given the polysemy and the complexity involved in the concept of citizenship, all the practices are eventually correlated and interdependent.

The altruistic motivations also showed to have potential on the civil, political and social citizenship practices. This factor brings together the motivations that are more directed to others and depicts a societal awareness, of universal character on the part of the volunteer (Cavalcante, Souza & Mól, 2015). For this reason, a volunteer is likely to be more concerned with others than her/himself and, therefore, with the community, thus getting closer to the concept of citizenship.

Altruistic motivations – due to their definition and concern with others (be they a subject or context) – were also expected to relate to environmental practices but there was no statistical evidence to justify this relation. In this sense, it is necessary that further studies investigate (in other ways or through other methodologies) the reason why this relation is not there. Perhaps because it is a new theme, which addresses practices that people are still internalizing, this relation is not yet happening.

Finally, we found that selfish motivations also have some influence on the sample's citizenship performance in the political and social aspects, which was also not an expected outcome. However, perhaps this result reflects the individual benefits that all (not only those who are marginalized) eventually get as they participate in political actions and enjoy social rights, at least in the national or local context.

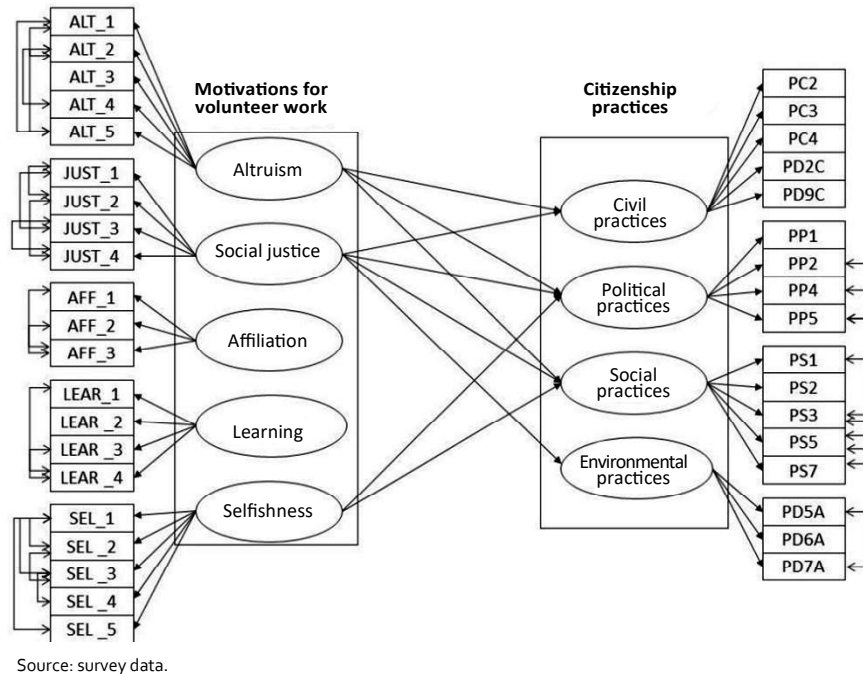
Every action is usually influenced by the individuals' beliefs, interests and values (concept of methodological individualism,<sup>1</sup> but

in the field of citizenship, these aspects have to be in line with those of the community. Brazil seems to still suffer due to the history of individual interests interfering in collective interests, and the survival of negative cultural values in its political processes that might justify this relation: characteristics such as clientelism, personalism, spectator's attitude, paternalism and corporatism are rooted in the population, in management and in Brazilian politics, interfering in its rationality (Carvalho, 2016).

In a study with congressmen with a record of more than four consecutive terms in office, Veloso (2006) concluded that successful clientelist trades are a guarantee of political success. In addition, Pandolfi (1999) concludes that, in the mind of Brazilians, the word "rights" is associated with the set of benefits guaranteed by labor and social security laws which have a specific focus and are understood as favors or privileges and not as an outcome of political action. Perhaps in our sample, political and social citizenship actions are influenced by the intention of achieving personal well-being. Let us not forget, however, that such spheres of citizenship have also been affected by altruistic and social justice motivations.

In addition, even if there are cases of selfishness and the search for personal advantages, realizing that those who are concerned about doing good and contributing to society are also benefited, can be an incentive for those who still do not volunteer (Lopes et al., 2023).

Figure 3 – Re-specified model (M3)



Finally, affiliation and learning motivations do not influence any citizenship practice. Figure 3 illustrates the final re-specified model with the influence relations.

Again, we found goodness-of-fit measures ( $\chi^2 = 1483.91$ ;  $d.f. = 617$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ;  $RMSR = 0.07$ ;  $\chi^2/d.f. = 2.4$ ;  $CFI = 0.9$ ;  $TLI = 0.9$ ;  $IFI = 0.9$ ;  $PGFI = 0.7$ ;  $PNFI = 0.7$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.07$ ), and reliability ( $\alpha > 0.8$ ;  $CC > 0.7$ ), which attest to a valid model for explanation. Considering the measures and the final re-specified model, the sub-hypotheses H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, H2e, H3a, H3b, H3e and H4b were confirmed.

Given the outcomes, the relation between motivations and citizenship practices is confirmed, however, it does not occur in a homogeneous way and is mainly explained by social justice, altruistic and selfish motivations.

## Final remarks

We concluded that there are differences in citizen performance between volunteers and non-volunteers, whose former tend to have higher averages than the latter. Relationships were also found between volunteering and citizenship practices, explained mainly by social justice and altruistic motivations, at least in the field addressed in this study. The confirmation of such relation justifies promoting incentive policies for such activity. Still, it is possible to improve citizenship management and performance since we understand volunteers' motivations.

Based on our outcomes, we may think that volunteers with a focus on rewards that go beyond the personal spectrum and social

justice motivations is the profile that will deliver a greater citizenship performance in all spheres of citizenship (civil, political, social and environmental). In this sense, non-profit organizations that aim to support citizenship, in all its areas, must value volunteer workers with motivational profiles more focused on social justice and altruism, in their actions of recruitment and selection of human resources.

This is the profile people think of when the word "volunteer" is mentioned, oftentimes romantically outlined and moved by a more subjective rationality, which is responsible for the intensity, direction and persistence of efforts in favor of collective well-being and, therefore, citizenship. These are the volunteers who get involved in a bigger cause, who are eager to defend civil, political, social and environmental rights without forgetting their duties, which allow them to fight, discuss and get involved in public issues to seek collective well-being.

Furthermore, this study revealed an unexpected finding: volunteers with primarily selfish motivations were not necessarily less engaged in political and social citizenship practices. This challenges the conventional assumption that individuals driven by personal interests would exhibit lower levels of civic engagement. This result might be influenced by the Brazilian context, where historical and cultural factors may associate political and social participation with personal benefits. This raises a critical question: Could political and social citizenship in Brazil be inadvertently fostering a more self-oriented form of civic engagement?

Building upon the work of Penna, Carvalho, and Zanandrez (2022) and Brennan (2007), it's crucial to acknowledge that

increased participation does not automatically translate to improved civic outcomes. In some cases, it may even lead to unintended consequences, such as passivity or a focus on individual gain rather than collective good.

Future research should delve deeper into the relationship between selfish motivations and political and social citizenship in Brazil, exploring whether similar patterns exist in other contexts. This research will be crucial to understand the complexities of civic engagement and its impact on society.

To Piccoli and Godoi (2012), even in a subjective scenario of intentions and motivations in which volunteers will obtain some reward, they donate something of their own and have their arms and hands open, whether in favor of the happiness of others, or the fulfillment of helping improve the local community or achieving their own feeling of well-being.

In general, to think about a volunteer as an individual, unstable agent, with limited dedication, few resources and little stimulus to solve small and big problems seems to have, at first sight, little impact when we think about the structured and complex problems of society. However, when the outcomes of this individual's action are taken as a whole, they amount to significant numbers that influence or help meet the demands of society.

In democratic regimes, citizenship is a shared responsibility between institutions and individuals, with the citizen positioned as the focal point. Individuals are expected to participate equally and voluntarily in the development and creation of their communities. Volunteering empowers individuals to engage

in public spheres for the common good. As noted by Amorim and Cavalcante (2023), participation at various levels fosters democracy through the exercise of active citizenship. This active citizenship, in turn, provides greater opportunities for participation, creating what is referred to as the "boomerang effect."

All this considered, at least two knowledge gaps were filled: (1) empirical study relating volunteering and citizenship, as appointed by Musick and Wilson (2008), Smith and Stebbins (2016) and De Bie and Rose (2016); and (2) study about volunteering locally (Salamon et al., 2023; Smith, Stebbins and Grotz, 2016). Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that, with the outcomes reached in this study, it is unwise to make irresponsible generalizations.

The choice of the religious segment for modeling, due to its representativeness in the Third Sector, may have influenced certain perceptions of citizenship, particularly those involving conflicts with specific religious dogmas, such as issues related to tolerance and human diversity. Additionally, the concentration of samples in the state of Paraíba may also have impacted the measurement of citizenship practices as well as the motivational profile of volunteerism, which could differ from profiles found in other geographic regions of Brazil.

Furthermore, the inclusion of respondents under 18 years old (but older than 14, in accordance with IBGE respondent profiles), despite their capacity to engage in civic actions, may have influenced the validation of certain citizenship practices, such as voting (PP3) and leadership with public and social purposes (PP5).

Therefore, it is necessary to expand the sample's scope to other regions of the country and to other areas of volunteerism and CSO activities, enabling comparative studies. Despite these limitations, this study highlights the effort to align with the national context and the novelty of these data on volunteerism, positioning itself as a closer Brazilian reference compared to foreign studies.

Therefore, for a greater expansion and complementation of the understanding about the relationship between volunteering and citizenship, further studies are necessary, developed in other realities, in other nations and in other segments of activity of the Third Sector.

It is also suggested that future studies also analyze with greater depth the relationship between altruistic motivation and environmental citizenship. Apparently, people who have environmental concerns may not be motivated by issues around the general conditions of life of human beings, which may be a paradox, given the environmental discourse of saving the planet.

Moreover, there has been evidence that selfish motivations may have some impact on civil citizenship practices. The p-value for this hypothesis was 0.49, as can be seen in Table 4. This is a threshold value, which does not allow, in a *lato sensu* view, taking this association as true. In this sense, it is necessary to conduct a specific study to better understand this result.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the concept of citizenship is collective and there is no good or bad citizen, except that some people are more active than others, either because they are more critical or are more aware of their

rights and duties, or because of their free will to choose to claim them or not. In addition, citizenship depends on people but also on other agents capable of intervening and meeting the existing demands of society in several economic

sectors both in the State and private enterprise. There must be ambience for the full exercise of citizenship: if everyone does what they have to do or at least a bit for the community, life in society will be better.

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## Note

(1) Elster's concept of methodological individualism (1994).

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