



Summary: Uncovering the Research Potential of Administrative Data on Charitable Foundations

Iryna Khovrenkov & Lynn Gidluck



INTRODUCTION

This is the first study of its kind to assess the untapped capacity of administrative data on Canadian foundations. This article explores some of the questions this data can potentially answer.

01 Importance of the Canadian foundation sector



\$54 billion transferred as gifts to charities



"This makes them the most significant funders, controlling about one out of every six dollars in the charitable sector in Canada"



02 Canada's unique situation

Only country in the world with more than 20 years of administrative data available for the entire population of charitable foundations

Data is publicly accessible, at no financial cost, to researchers



03 State of the literature

"An extensive literature review revealed a paucity of literature on Canadian foundations"



Number of papers identified that covered the subject of Canadian foundations



Number of papers identified that used quantitative data



Number of years within which the majority of papers have been written

04 Available Data



280 variables

- Descriptive exercises such as identifying trends
- Empirically rigorous efforts such as understanding the effects of policy changes on foundation outcomes



How does collected information about foundations translate into research-suitable data?



Given that the CRA tracks the same kind of information about the same foundation at different points in time, researchers can create a longitudinal sample of foundations. The value of the longitudinal sample is the ability to draw comparisons within and between records.

05 Conclusion

Engaging in the analysis of administrative data, however, requires considerable caution if it is to be used for research purposes. From the analysis of data issues identified in existing quantitative literature on Canadian foundations, it can be concluded that it is important for researchers to devote considerable time to converting administrative data to a research-suitable dataset.



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