WHY DO PEOPLE GIVE?
INTRODUCTION

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Academic fellow of the GCP
Moral and Financial Values in the Brain

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What Motivates Philanthropy?

Material (e.g. financial) preferences

Moral Preferences
Are Moral and Material Values Equivalent?
What Money Can’t Buy

Sandel, 2012
Crowding Out

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Crowding Out


50.8 % ✔ ≥ 24.6 % ✔
How does the Brain represent Material and Moral Values?
Material and Moral Values in the Brain

- Money
- Food
- Beauty
- ...

Clithero and Rangel (2014)

Ugazio et al., (submitted)
Material and Moral Values are Different

$ = \neq \text{Angel}
Implications for Philanthropy

- Targeting individual differences in sensitivity to different types of incentives

- Studying how to complement different kinds of incentives

- Anticipating and avoiding crowding-out effects
Transcending the self?
Positive emotions and philanthropic behavior

Florian Cova
Swiss Center for Affective Sciences
Emotions and motivation to give

- **Motivation** (or **action tendencies**) is an essential component of emotions.
- Emotions play a crucial role in **motivating human behavior**, including **altruistic** and **philanthropic behavior**.

- Emotions such as **empathy** or **pity** have been shown to underlie and motivate **altruistic behavior** and giving to help people in need.
The need to go beyond charity and negative emotions

• However, this focus on empathy and pity (= negative reactions to the suffering of people in need) have led researchers to focus on one particular kind of philanthropy: charities.
Three examples of ‘transcendent’ positive emotions

- **Gratitude**
  - Reaction to act of kindness directed towards the self
  - Motivation to help the person who helped you, but *spillover effect*: additional motivation to help other persons

- **Elevation**
  - Reaction to act of generosity, heroism, and moral virtue
  - Motivation to become a better person, and thus to help others

- **Awe**
  - Reaction to objects greater than us (natural phenomena, etc.)
  - Feeling that the self is little, unimportant, leading to less selfish behavior and donation
A fourth candidate: Being Moved

• The expression ‘being moved’ is not a generic expression. It actually refers to a particular positive emotion.
• This emotion is (i) elicited by core, important values, (ii) accompanied by a warm feeling in the heart, a lump in the throat, tears, (iii) a motivation to focus on what really matter to us.
Being moved and values

• Prior studies suggest that what moves us depends on our own personal values. E.g. people who care more about being moral are more likely to be moved by stories of moral actions.
• For example, past studies have shown that people who volunteer in pro-environmental organizations are more likely to be moved by stories about environment.
Current project: being moved as predictor of donations to specific charities

- **Hypothesis:** The tendency to be moved by a given value predicts real-life donations non-profit organizations promoting this value.
- E.g. being moved by art predicts real-life donation to organizations that promote art manifestations, fund artists, protect and restore past works of art, etc.

- **What we need:**
  - A measure of people’s tendency of being moved by different topics.
Constructing the scale

• **General items:** I often feel moved; I often feel touched; I often shed tears of joy; etc.

• **Specific items, moved by...**
  • *Social contexts* (e.g. I find weddings to be moving)
  • *Moral contexts* (e.g. I'm often moved when I see somebody go out their way to help someone else; either in real life or in a fiction)
  • *Effort and perseverance* (e.g. I am easily moved by stories about people who are born in difficult circumstances (handicap, poverty, etc.) but who nevertheless succeed in overcoming these challenges to realize their dreams)
  • *Nature* (e.g. Thinking about how diverse life is and how many different animal and plant species actually exist makes me feel moved)
  • *Art* (e.g. Certain works of art are so beautiful that they make me cry)
Pilot experiment

• 300 participants (US residents) recruited online (236 after exclusion)

• Participants interrogated about the kind of organizations they give to:
  • Ones that seek to **help people in need** (e.g. by giving food, shelter, or providing medical care)
  • Ones that help people **reach their goal or realize their projects** (e.g. support for education, young artists, young athletes, etc.)
  • Ones that promote **science and knowledge** (e.g. by funding research or promoting popular science events)
  • Ones that promote **art and culture** (e.g. by funding artists, exhibition, concerts, art festivals, restoring works of art)
  • Ones that seek to **protect or restore nature** (e.g. fighting pollution, saving endangered species, preserving natural landscapes)
## Results – Specific instances of being moved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moved by...</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Nature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
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<td>Moral</td>
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<td>Effort</td>
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<td>Art</td>
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<td>Nature</td>
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<td>EMPATHY</td>
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Tentative conclusion

• If negative reactions to the suffering of others are indeed good predictors of participants’ giving to charities, positive emotions such as being moved seem to play a more important role in other domains (art and nature).

• A better understanding of why people give thus need to take into account positive emotions. We can react to the negative, but also be inspired by the positive.

• Next steps: (i) improving the survey methods, (ii) use it to study other populations (donors), (iii) in-lab studies.
Thank you for your attention!
# Appendix – Results for different positive emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Nature</th>
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<tr>
<td>Being moved</td>
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<td>Joy</td>
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<td>Contentment</td>
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<td>Pride</td>
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<td>Love</td>
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<td>Compassion</td>
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<td>Amusement</td>
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<td>Awe</td>
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warm glow altruism

• Emma Tieffenbach
• Academic fellow of the Geneva Centre for Philanthropy
• Chargée de cours, Department of philosophy, University of Geneva
I recognise that I can use part of my income to do a significant amount of good. Since I can live well enough on a smaller income, I pledge that for the rest of my life or until the day I retire, I shall give at least ten percent of what I earn to whichever organisations can most effectively use it to improve the lives of others, now and in the years to come. I make this pledge freely, openly, and sincerely.
"I've made some simple material sacrifices but sufficiently small that I don't really care about them. In terms of emotional comfort, you feel more satisfied with what you're doing with your life."

Toby Ord, “Why I'm giving £1m to charity”, BBC News Magazine, 13 December 2010
"Taking the Pledge has been found to be incredibly rewarding... [and what makes it so] is “having a community, having a greater purpose in life, the feeling of making a difference”
William MacAskill, *The Joe Rogan Experience*, 13 mars 2017
“Our intuitions about what will make us happy are sometimes wrong.”

“You’ve got to enjoy what you’re doing to be effective: I feel best when I’m doing something that’s going to make a difference... it’s not a sense of duty, rather this is what I want to do... I feel best when I’m doing it well.”

What does the science say?

• Spending money on others is more rewarding when:
  
  • It is voluntary (Cutler 2019)
  • One believes that one is making a difference (Aknin 2013).
  • It is given to charity that is near one’s heart (Berman et al. 2018; Breeze 2010).
  • One can identify the recipient of one’s donations specifically rather than statistically (Small and Loewenstein, 2003, 2007; Fethersonhaugh et al. 2007).
  • Done often, benefiting many charity organisations (Null 2011).
The warm glow is the goal

• Consider the following question: “Can private charity eliminate world poverty – or is it about making the givers feel better about themselves?” (cf. Eliot Marriott, 2012, Aeon)

• Either: [A] Donors are motivated by the warm glow
• Or: [B] Donors are motivated by the prospect of doing good to others.

• [B] makes wrong prediction: crowding out
• Therefore [A]
The warm glow is a side-effect

• If donors had not cared at all for the welfare of their beneficiaries, how could they derive any pleasure from having made these donations?

• The very fact that they feel the warm glow from giving shows that they have a pre-existing desire for something other than their own pleasure.

• It is when that desire for something else than their own satisfaction is satisfied that they experience the warm glow.

• If anything, the warm glow is a side-effect of giving — not the goal.
Why is it so important to resolve the question?

- Whether the warm-glow is a goal, or a side-effect, of giving has implications regarding:
  - Whether it should be used as a rule of thumb in fund-raising—or not.
  - Whether it provides an answer to the question: “Why do people give?”—or not.
  - Whether warm-glow donors do deserve less praise than other kind of donors—or not.
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CONCLUSION
Prof. David Sander
UPDATE ON THE GENEVA CENTRE FOR PHILANTHROPY

Laetitia Gill
Executive Director of the GCP
RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

- 8 Academic fellows of the Centre focussing on research areas:
  - Hybrid entities
  - Shareholders foundations
  - Social Impact Bonds
  - Warm-glow effect of Philanthropy
  - Morale
  - CSR/ SDGs and Philanthropy
  - Philanthropy giving for arts and cultural heritage

- Expert Focus, 21 articles published last March 2019

- Other publications referenced on the GCP website

- Other research projects:
  - «Swiss Philanthropic Vitality Index» - Pilot project in Romandie
  - Beyond charity: the varieties of value-driven emotions in philanthropic behavior
  - Philanthropy and taxation
TEACHING

- Semester course “Philanthropy and its main legal implications” - Autumn 2019
  Every Thursday, 4.15 - 6.00 p.m., from 19.09 to 19.12.2019 - Uni Mail (room MR 030)

  Every Monday, 4 to 06:00 p.m. from 16.09 to 16.12. 2019, Uni Bastions (room B109)

- New - Semester course «La philanthropie culturelle et le droit». Spring 2020
  Every Wednesday 4:15 -06:00 p.m, from 17.2.2020 au 23.5.2020, Uni Mail (room 1150)

- Courses as part of the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations Chair in Behavioural Philanthropy
NEXT EVENTS

- **11.9.2019**: Philanthropy Lunch «Philanthropic organization and business activity: what are the tax issues?»
- **01.10.2019**: Forum des fondations, organized by Swissfoundations, in partnership with proFonds, AGFA and IMD
- **15.10.2019**: Inaugural lecture of the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations Chair in Behavioural Philanthropy «Philanthropy meets neurosciences»
- **17.10.2019**: Colloque «Philanthropy and Art law»
- **26-27.11.2020**: International conference «Philanthropy and taxation»
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