

American Behavioral Scientist Special Issue:

The Science and Imagination of Living Generously

Edited by: Patricia Snell Herzog, Chelsea Jacqueline Clark, and Una O. Osili

Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

Abstract: This special issue addresses the science and imagination of living generously. Generosity is investigated from multiple disciplinary approaches, across the seven articles included in the issue. The first article engages an economic approach to address heterogeneity and generosity for adult Americans, analyzing charitable giving before and after the great recession of 2008. The second article engages a psychological approach to investigate later life-course generosity by studying mortality salience – concerns over the end of life – and age effects on charitable donations. The third article engages sociological and management approaches to study how social science data impacts generosity, by investigating an interaction with data analytics during the life-course stages of emerging and young adulthood. The fourth article engages a psychological approach to examine earlier life-course dynamics, by studying whether and under what conditions children exhibit generosity of affection towards religious out-groups. The fifth article engages a psychological approach to investigate generosity, religion, and moral foundations for adults. The sixth article engages an economics approach to probe millennial generosity, challenging popular notions of greater selfishness in younger generations. The seventh article engages an educational approach to theorize connections between global and local ecological generosity in children’s stories, finding that creating stories together can be a tool to foster intergenerational transmission of care for the environment. Cumulatively, these seven articles contribute new knowledge on generosity throughout complex and important life-course dynamics.

Our goal in this special issue is to enhance interdisciplinary attention to the study of generosity. The included studies integrate research from the disciplinary approaches that are typical of psychology, economics, management, sociology, and education. Accumulating insights across these studies allows readers to better understand an interdisciplinary and integrated approach to generosity. Across the articles included in this issue, the researchers emphasize life course development and the role of age and life experiences in evolving generosity over time. The studies also contribute insights regarding how people respond (or do not respond) to new stimuli and interventions that disrupt normal giving processes.

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Despite growing scholarly interest in generosity, researchers know little about how generosity evolves over the lifespan or about changes in response to new stimuli. Researchers have studied generosity in disparate ways, not yet combining scientific inquiry with reflective expression. Understanding the burgeoning field of generosity studies organizationally and dynamically, our assessment is that the field is moving beyond its infancy stage of topic naming and territory charting into a more advanced stage. To lead social inquiry on generosity into the forefront of new knowledge generation, the time has come to integrate approaches across disciplines, to reflect on points of connection and of divergence, and to offer new insights regarding the complex yet important dynamics of change. Generosity is not static, but existing studies all too often, and perhaps unintentionally, present giving as stable over time.

This special issue of the *American Behavioral Scientist* links generosity scholars across disciplines to expand research design, data collection, and data access. The results illuminate changes associated with key cohort and generational trends in generosity, as well as changes that result from disruptions to existing generosity processes. This special issue also expands use of and awareness regarding the Philanthropy Panel Study (PPS), the most comprehensive longitudinal study of generosity within and among American families.

The purpose for developing this special issue is to expand knowledge on life-course generosity in two distinct areas. First, the special issue focuses on innovative social science research. Second, creative insights in this issue are generated from an integration of artistic and humanistic approaches within scientific investigations, as well as through a fostering of interdisciplinary approaches to social inquiry. The goal of this unique issue is to attract and capture bold ideas within the study of life-course generosity and to advance multi-disciplinary methods and approaches within the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

This special issue is designed to appeal to an interdisciplinary audience that includes and expands upon the existing *American Behavioral Scientist* audiences of scholars in psychology, sociology, and political science. Additionally, the issue should appeal to scholars in economics, who have typically conducted the most research on generosity, as well as scholars studying life-course development and social disruption. We also intend to appeal to practitioners in nonprofit organizations and voluntary associations.

There are three unique aspects that this proposed issue contributes. First, existing interdisciplinary journals publishing articles on related topics typically focus on organizations and leadership, philanthropy, voluntarism, public policy, and civil society. These are cousin concepts to generosity. Focusing instead on generosity shifts the unit of analysis from organizations, policy, and society generally toward understanding individual-level practices.

Second, many of the approaches undertaken in the studies we include in this special issue are experimental. We think this will be of interest because it allows for careful investigation into cause-effect relationships in changes over time, while limiting potentials for spurious relationships. However, unlike many existing experimental approaches in behavioral economics and other fields, the studies in this special issue remain engaged in investigating broad topics that retain appeal across a range of disciplines, scholars, and practitioners.

Third, while presenting primary social science research, the studies included in this issue also engage in developing insights garnered from artistic and humanistic approaches, such as philosophy, theology, arts, education, and political philosophy surrounding sustainability. This provides unique insights in the interpretations and implications of all the study findings.

Before presenting the articles, we first include brief biographies on our editorial team.

Patricia Snell Herzog, PhD is a sociologist who earned her PhD from the University of Notre

Dame, was then a Postdoctoral Fellow at Rice University, subsequently and Assistant and Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology & Criminology and Co-Director of the Center for Social Research at the University of Arkansas, and is now the Melvin Simon Chair and Associate Professor of Philanthropic Studies in the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. Herzog served as a special issue editor with an open call for submissions to the peer-reviewed journal called *Religions*, for which she facilitated publication of 10 articles on giving and youth. She was also a co-investigator on a \$5 million grant initiative called the Science of Generosity (<http://generosityresearch.nd.edu/>).

Herzog's interests include social scientific investigations of generosity, youth and emerging adults, and religiosity, especially with attention to how social inequalities permeate, shape, and are shaped by organizational participation. Her award-winning and collaborative scholarship includes 63 academic products: books, journal articles, chapters, reviews, reports, grants, including *American Generosity: Who Gives and Why* (Oxford University Press, 2016) and *Souls in Transition: The Religious Lives of Emerging Adults in America* (Oxford University Press, 2009), and more than \$10 million in sponsored research. With a strong commitment to disseminating research to relevant constituents, Herzog has delivered 124 invited talks, keynotes, guest lectures, and conference presentations, and her research has garnered media attention in 15 newspaper articles, blogs, radio interviews, and podcasts, including feature stories in the *New York Times*, *CNBC*, *ABC News*, *Seattle Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Foundation Review*, *Philanthropy News Digest*, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *The Nonprofit Times*, and *NPR*.

Una O. Osili, PhD is an economist who earned her B.A. in Economics at Harvard University, and her M.A., and Ph.D. in Economics from Northwestern University. Osili has significant experience in research and policy in the fields of household behavior and economic

policy. She is also associate dean for research and international programs at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, the world's first school dedicated to increasing the understanding of philanthropy and improving its practice worldwide.

An internationally recognized expert on economic development and philanthropy, Dr. Osili speaks across the globe on issues related to national and international trends in economics and philanthropy. She testified at the U.S. Senate subcommittee on the role of philanthropy and remittances in foreign aid and has been quoted by international and national news media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *Financial Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. She has also served as a member of several national and international advisory groups, including the African Development Bank, Social Science Research Council, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Development Program.

Osili leads the research and publication of Giving USA, the annual report on American philanthropy. Beginning in fall 2016, she has led the research and publication of *Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances* and *Index of Philanthropic Freedom*. She has pioneered new approaches to using data to better understand global and national trends in philanthropy with the Million Dollar List and the new Generosity for Life project (<https://philanthropy.iupui.edu/research/generosityforlife/index.html>). She also directs the school's research program with its partners including Bank of America, United Way Worldwide, Coutts Inc, and National Collegiate Athletic Association. She has served as an associate editor for the *Journal of African Economies* and guest editor of the *Journal of African Development*.

Chelsea Jacqueline Clark, PhD earned her Ph.D. in Political Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2014 and began working in the Research Department at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy in 2015. She manages the School's Study

of High Net Worth Philanthropy, Generosity for Life project, and Human Needs Index, among other projects. Clark's research interests include the intersection of political and charitable giving and the role of interpersonal relationships in the giving decision-making process. In addition to her role with the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Chelsea is the Founder and President of Chelsea Clark Consulting, LLC, a relationship research firm located in Carmel, IN.

ABS Editorial Team – Contributor Statements

To acknowledge the individual and collective contributions that each scholar brought to this special issue, we include contributor statements, below for our editorial team, and subsequently within each article for co-author teams. These statements are publicly shared in order to facilitate inclusion within hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, when appropriate.

Patricia Snell Herzog: Suggested the special issue; identified the journal; co-drafted the prospectus; drafted an abbreviated special issue description to send to authors; provided extensive tracked changes feedback on seven papers prior to reviewer submission; invited (and re-invited) esteemed scholars to review for the special issue; confirmed nine esteemed scholars as reviewers, sent papers for review, and followed up to receive reviews; received reviews; provided a total of nineteen authors with reviewer feedback; communicated with authors regarding questions related to reviewer feedback; to aid authors in contributing to the goals of the special issue, as well as to respond to reviewer feedback, compiled extensive reference lists on (a) generosity-related research and (b) life course development and emerging adulthood; significantly edited papers and mentored emerging scholars in the peer-review process; aided authors in addressing interdisciplinary audiences.

Chelsea Jacqueline Clark: Managed all components of the Science and Imagination of Living Generously (SILG) project, generously funded by the John Templeton Foundation and

the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which is on-going. The first wave of the SILG grant funded the majority of studies included in this special issue. That project links generosity scholars across disciplines, expanding research design, data collection, and data access while illuminating key cohort and generational trends in generosity. The project has also expanded the Philanthropy Panel Study (PPS), the most comprehensive longitudinal study of generosity within and among American families. Clark invited scholars to contribute papers to the special issue; co-drafted the prospectus; provided preliminary feedback, including tracked changes, on the papers prior to reviewer submission; invited esteemed scholars to review for the special issue; confirmed two esteemed scholars as reviewers for a paper; sent a paper to two reviewers for review, and followed up to receive reviews; co-edited the papers and provided feedback at multiple stages of reviews.

Una O. Osili: Served as the Principal Investigator on the Science and Imagination of Living Generously (SILG) project. The first wave of the project included four outputs, including (1) the construction of an interactive website, GenerosityForLife.org, for use by children, parents, educators, nonprofit leaders, and researchers that uses PPS, in combination with insights from scientific inquiry and humanities research, to provide customized information about Americans' generosity at different life stages over time using highly visual and dynamic web components that highlight generosity research; (2) the expansion of life-course generosity science and humanities research via an RFP regranting program that increased the depth of generosity research by combining engagement, relevance, and meaning with scientific fact; (3) the expansion of generosity life-course research by investigating three important themes of generosity: intergenerational dynamics in generosity, consequences of generosity on well-being, and experimental evaluations that objectively measured how social information provided through

GenerosityForLife.org influences an individual's decision-making in generosity (see Herzog et al. in this issue for details regarding a pilot study); and (4) the collection and cleaning of the 2015 and 2017 waves of PPS datasets. Osili also provided summative feedback for the special issue regarding needed revisions during the first round of paper reviews.

Contributing Authors & Affiliations *in order of appearance

1. **Chelsea Clark**, IU Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
2. **Una O. Osili**, IU Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
3. **Xiao Han**, IU Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
4. **Jennifer R. Roberts**, Department of Psychology, University of Colorado Colorado Springs
5. **Molly Maxfield**, Department of Psychology, University of Colorado Colorado Springs
6. **Patricia Snell Herzog**, IU Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
7. **Casey T. Harris**, Department of Sociology and Criminology, University of Arkansas
8. **Shauna A. Morimoto**, Department of Sociology and Criminology, University of Arkansas
9. **Jared L. Peifer** Narendra Paul Loomba Department of Management, Baruch College
10. **Larisa Heiphetz**, Department of Psychology, Columbia University
11. **Liane L. Young**, Department of Psychology, Boston College
12. **Tyler S. Greenway**, School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary
13. **Joel Jin**, School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary
14. **Abigail M. Shepherd**, School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary
15. **Sarah A. Schnitker**, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Baylor University
16. **Peter Koczanski**, Department of Economics, Princeton University
17. **Harvey S. Rosen**, Department of Economics, Princeton University
18. **Laura B. Liu**, Department of Education, Indiana University-Purdue University, Columbus
19. **Qiong Li**, Department of Education, Beijing Normal University

In addition, we wish to acknowledge helpful contributions of esteemed colleagues, who provided input on earlier paper drafts. This includes Kim Scharf, Department of Economics, University of Birmingham; Jonathan Meer, Department of Economics, Texas A&M University; Mark Wilhelm, Department of Economics, IUPUI; Kraig Beyerlein, Department of Sociology, University of Notre Dame; Carolyn Warner, Department of Sociology, Arizona State University; Jessica Collet, Department of Sociology, University of California Los Angeles; Jonathan Hill, Department of Sociology, Calvin College; Nadia Chernyak, Department of Cognitive Sciences, University of California Irvine; and Heather Price, Department of Education, Marian University. We are grateful for their contributions and retain responsibility for any remaining imperfections.