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The Philanthropy Scale: a Sociological Perspective in Measuring New Forms of Pro Social Behaviour

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1 Introduction

Philanthropy re-appears on the public stage. It has become part again of daily life in most industrialized countries. Growing wealth, uneven distributed, evokes the philanthropic response. The media attention for donors as Gates and Buffet may proof this. But also the plea for a “civil society” in Western European welfare states and the founding of the Volunteering and Charitable Giving Unit in the P.M. Cabinet in the UK (2005) show a shift from state responsibility into the direction of “market” and “philanthropy”. The European Commission launched December 2007 the “European Forum on Philanthropy and Research Funding”. Giving Campaigns have been started in France and the UK, the release of Clinton’s book *Giving* (2007), the fast growth of community foundations and family foundations (Gouwenberg et al 2007), these facts and actions all show a strong and renewed appearance of philanthropy in industrialized economies.

Scholars follow and rediscover philanthropy as an interesting domain of research (Bekkers and Wiepking 2007). They stem from different academic disciplines and cover a wide range and different aspects of the phenomenon. Psychologists, economists, sociologists, anthropologists, all strive to discover the underlying incentives, facilitators and motivators of philanthropic behavior.

These developments at the academia side as well as at the philanthropic practice, amplify each other. A first question emerges “how may the appearance of a new kind of philanthropy be explained?” and “how may this new kind of philanthropy be defined?”

If motivations for philanthropic behavior are examined research usually contains socio-psychological scales. These measurement instruments reflect on personal attitudes towards interactions between giver and receiver, like the altruism scale, constructed by Gordon (1960) as part of the Survey of Interpersonal Values (SIV).

Philanthropy, however, is not about interpersonal behavior. Of course, philanthropy takes place within personal relationships, but the philanthropic goals are not. Benefitting “the arts”, a medical center, or nature preservation is an act in favor of “generalized others” or the well-being of society. Philanthropy in its new guise is from a different kind than giving alms to an

unknown beggar in the street. So, the second question emerges: “do existing psychological measurement scales reflect these new forms of philanthropy?” This article tries to shed light on both questions.

2 Philanthropy: past and present

In the past philanthropy was involved in poor relief, in helping the sick, widows or orphans. We can find many examples of philanthropy, often called ‘charity’, in history (Van Leeuwen 2000). In Europe, philanthropy, charity plays from the beginning a key-role in the Christian-Jewish European tradition. In the Middle Ages almsgiving “occurred from religious concerns with the eternal salvation of the giver’s soul” (Swaan, de 1998:252).

During the twentieth century, however, in Western Europe welfare state arrangements have taken over responsibilities in the field of poverty and social security, health care, and education. By this transformation philanthropy did not disappear – it continued to be active in fields as health, religion, welfare, culture and education – but it was sidelined in the overreaching welfare state development. Now, discussions by politicians and policy-makers concerning the financial limitations of welfare state arrangements, the withdrawal of governmental and even welfare cuts make room for a reassessment of the role of philanthropy. However, philanthropy today differs from traditional philanthropy in that sense that “modern philanthropy” is not limited to poor relief, welfare and education, but is enlarged to a wide range of public good causes, like nature preservation and health. So, philanthropy acts more active within the public domain, where, in European Welfare States governments and governmental policies dominantly operate.

The shortest definition of philanthropy today is from one of the founders of the academic study on philanthropy in the United States, Bob Payton. He defined philanthropy as “voluntary action for the public good” (Payton 1988). A broader definition sounds as follows: “voluntary contributions (money, goods, time/expertise) to the public good, given by individuals and organizations and dominantly benefitting the public good” (Giving the Netherlands 2009: 18).

If we look at philanthropic actors we will meet individuals – giving money, time or giving by bequest - , foundations, philanthropic organizations and businesses performing “corporate giving”. If we focus at the organizational landscape of philanthropy we will meet fundraising foundations (like the World Wildlife Fund), charities, endowed foundations (like the Wellcome Trust in the UK or the “Bertelsmanns Stiftung” in Germany) and good causes lotteries.

In the John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project over 34 countries worldwide philanthropy acts as one of the three sources of civil society organization revenue:

- government funding;
- charges/fees (income from the market);
- philanthropy (voluntary donations).

(Salamon *et al.* 2004: 30-33).

“Fees are the dominant source of revenue. In the 34 countries for which revenue data are available, over half (53 percent) of civil society organizations income comes, on average ... from fees and charges for the services that these organizations provide .. An average of 34 percent ... comes from public sector Private giving accounts for a much smaller 12 percent... (ibid:30).

3 Focus on philanthropic goals

What does philanthropy stand for? In the past it was all about charity in favor of the disadvantaged and the poor. But today, in industrialized countries, what kind of goals are benefitted by philanthropic behavior? The Giving USA macro-economic research on philanthropy offers in relation to the classification of the public good nine categories: religion, education, foundations, health, human services, arts, culture, humanities, public/social benefit, environment/animals, international affairs (Giving USA 2007: 16). The categories in the *Giving in the Netherlands* studies are more or less the same (Giving in the Netherlands 2009).

Fiscal legislation provides a reasonable indication of what society accepts as a good cause. The USA National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities applies a classification system based on ten 10 subsectors: 1. Arts, Culture and Humanities, 2. Education, 3. Environment/animals, 4. Health, 5. Human services, 6. International affairs, 7. Public-societal benefit, 8. Religion-related, 9. Mutual/membership benefit, 10. Unknown/unclassified (Giving USA 2007: 235)

In England, legislation drawn up guidelines to determine what qualifies as a good cause in an early stage. Queen Elizabeth I passed a Charity Act in 1601 which made philanthropic donations to poor relief, religion and education tax-deductable.

Philanthropists are, for sure, driven by a sense of involvement, and supported by fiscal facilities offered by their governments (Koele 2007). The giver, donor, sponsor, testator ‘has a thing about’ education, conservation, the church, medical research, ballet, castles, social problems, music or some other non-profit-making domain. Philanthropy is a direct, as opposed to an indirect expression of social involvement via, for example, the redistribution of wealth through the tax system. But, again, why do they invest in public good issues, that in many cases, benefit people they hardly know: the next generation, young talented musicians and/or researchers, or school kids in Africa. The title of Wiepkings’ doctorate thesis clarifies this aspect of philanthropy: “For the love of mankind” (Wiepking 2008).

Philanthropy also means power. “The goal of philanthropy is to advance society by providing necessary social, cultural and educational services which are not provided by the state or market for political or economic reasons or which are provided by the state but not in a way that satisfies philanthropists”.....”The donor provides money, time and ideas for a project, which he or she alone, or in connection with other donors, attempts to control. Philanthropy always has something to do with power and the shaping of the future of society” (Adam 2004: 4-5).

The categories of public good – the good causes – presented in tax regulations and research show that the goals of philanthropy cannot really be understood at the level of interpersonal interactions. They refer to social phenomena at macro level, to functions in society as a whole. More specifically, they focus on activities related to the maintenance of society as a social system.

4 Advance of philanthropy

In wealthy countries in the world new forms of philanthropy has made a come-back. Community foundations are fast growing institutions (Sacks 2000; 2008), family foundations becomes serious business for private bankers, estate planners who offer “charity management” to their clients. Telethons gain popularity when disasters like the Tsunami (2005) and the Haïti Earthquake (2010) harasses the world. Philanthropy and philanthropists become daily front page news. What factors may explain this ‘revival’ of philanthropy?

First of all there is an *economic* explanation. The industrialized world has untold wealth, albeit unevenly distributed. The generation after World War II has become rich and wealthy in these countries. They are transferring their money to the next generation. Growing wealth, in general, is an important prerequisite for philanthropy (see Giving Korea 2008). Economists at the Social Welfare Research Institute in Boston have worked out how much capital will be transferred between generations in the USA in the next fifty years. The lowest estimate is 41 thousand billion dollars; the highest is 136 thousand billion dollars. They also anticipate that the testators will have enough sense not to leave everything to their own children or to the state: in many cases the children are already pretty well-off and the tax benefits and other advantages of donating to ‘good causes’ are plentiful. This may go some way to explaining the phrase: the ‘*Golden Age of Philanthropy*’ (Havens & Schervisch 1999; 2003).

In addition to this a *demographic* explanation matters. In many “post WW II wealthy generation” countries the number of older people is growing rapidly. At the same time families are smaller. There is more left for less. And, coming of age itself increases generosity. Age turns out to be an important predictor for giving behaviour (Giving The Netherlands 2009; Midlarsky, E. & E. Kahana. (1994).

A third explanation is a *socio-cultural-political one*. The awareness of citizenship in industrialized societies, a trend of “Do It Yourself”(DIY), triggered by higher educational levels, the feeling of self-reliance related to a sense of interdependency in a global world (an awareness of nearness, evoked by travels and modern communication), these developments create new forms of expressions of self as “global citizen”, expressions of which philanthropy is one.

These structural developments may explain the growth of philanthropy and the increase of scholarly attention from al kind of disciplines for this subject matter. How do they reflect; what do they focus on?

5 Philanthropy among scholars today

There is recently a lot of research done on philanthropy. As a piece of good fortune, Bekkers and Wiepking reviewed, systemized and categorized more than 500 titles they found on the subject of “Generosity and Philanthropy” (Bekkers and Wiepking 2007). Their review “aims to guide scholars as well as practitioners in the third sector through the available knowledge on determinants of charitable giving by individuals and households” (ibid:2). Bekkers and Wiepking limit themselves to papers “that contained empirical analyses of charitable giving by adult individuals or households”(ibid:3). In their literature review they attempted to answer the following questions: 1. Who gives how much? 2. Why people give?

Related to the first question they surveyed literature on characteristics of individuals and households that are related to giving. As a result of their search to answer question two, they identified eight mechanisms as the most important forces that drive giving: 1. awareness of

need; 2. solicitation; 3. costs and benefits; 4. altruism; 5. reputation; 6. psychological benefits; 7. values; 8. efficacy.

They conclude that a general theory on philanthropy doesn't exist due of the lack of multidisciplinary research, the fragmented character of research questions, the lack of "solid theoretical foundations. The literature on philanthropy may be characterized as largely empirical" (ibid:39). They make just one exception. In economics, the explanatory model of the public good, extended to a theory of impure altruism, combined macroeconomics with individual characteristics (gain; warm-glow) and may be considered as "a clear example of theoretical progress" (ibid:39).

To comment on their valuable work: Bekkers and Wiepking have searched on a specific domain (giving by adults and households) and they used a specific definition of "empirical" and "theoretical", which excludes more general theoretical works on the subject matter.

Komter has published a whole array of articles discussing diverse theories from, amongst others, economics and cultural anthropology (Komter 1996; 2007). Reciprocity appears to be an important motivator for 'giving' behavior. However, reciprocal altruism also presupposes interaction in relationships. Komter explains 'giving' as follows: "The survival value of giving can be most clearly witnessed in studies on animal behavior, such as those by primatologist Frans de Waal. In his book *Good Natured* (1996) he describes how the principle of reciprocity works in a community of chimpanzees. Chimps share and exchange food and groom one another on the basis of this principle: those who deviate from the rule by not grooming others or sharing food with them will not be groomed or allowed to participate in food-sharing practices themselves. They are, so to speak, outlawed, a status which obviously undermines their survival chances. Evolutionary biologists such as Trivers (1971) and Dawkins (1976) have analyzed the evolutionary advantages of 'reciprocal altruism'. Because it is reciprocated, this form of altruistic behavior among animals as well as humans helps to preserve the species" (Komter: 2007). Gouldner toned down the reciprocity principle in his article "The importance of something for nothing" (Gouldner 1973: 260-299). Again, Komter summarized Gouldner's statement: "Although equivalence and mutuality can be powerful motives to exchange gifts, Gouldner, following Simmel, points to the fact that reciprocity does not necessarily mean equivalence.... In addition to the norm of reciprocity, Gouldner distinguishes the "norm of beneficence" or the norm of giving "something for nothing" (Malinowski's "free gift"): the expression of real altruism. It is a powerful correction mechanism in situations where existing social relationships have become disturbed, or where people need care of help" (Komter 2009: 111)

De Swaan touched on this theme in 1984 in his Duijker Lecture. Socio-biologists and evolutionists explain pro-social behavior by pointing to the survival instinct of social groups: be good to members of your own species and enhance your survival chances (De Swaan 1984). (Inter-)generational solidarity makes communities stronger (Trivers, 1985). Historians and sociologists have also pointed out that integration and cohesion increase a society's chance of survival (De Swaan, 1988; Elias, 1929).

Cultural anthropologists, like Mauss and Malinowski, sociologists like Simmel and Gouldner, they all stressed the functions of philanthropy for the well-being of society.

To sum up: most philanthropy in industrialized societies today is for the benefit of unknown strangers or far-reaching goals. Key motives for philanthropy may be tied in with stewardship

and a sense of social responsibility for the well-being of society as a whole, both now and in the future. These motives have not been incorporated in the theoretical constructs underlying scales used to measure the ‘philanthropic impulse’.

6 Measuring the philanthropic attitude

In research on giving by individuals social psychological scales are used to answer the question why people give. Of these, just two validated scales are presented here: the altruism scale and the social value-orientation scale. The first was constructed by Gordon (1960) and it was translated into Dutch by Drenth and Kranendonk (1973) and has since been used frequently in The Netherlands. In her PhD research on voluntary work Lindeman (1996) adapted it to a simple 5-point Likert scale. A few items were adjusted slightly in later research.

This version of the altruism scale consists of 8 items:

- I prefer to work for my own well-being than for the well-being of others.
- I strive to work for the well-being of society.
- I don’t feel much for helping others.
- I find it important to share what I have with others.
- I don’t much like spending my time doing things for others.
- I find it important to make an effort for others.
- I don’t much like contributing to charity.
- I find it important to help the poor and any others in need.

These items attempt to measure the attitude to “the other” in abstract terms and to charity. One item refers to “society”.

The social value-orientation scale was developed by Messick & McClintock (1968) and has been used in the Netherlands by Van Lange (1997; 2007). Theoretically, the concept of social value orientation extends the "rational self-interest" postulate by assuming that individuals systematically differ in their interpersonal preferences, with some seeking to enhance joint outcomes and equality in outcomes (pro social orientation), and others seeking to enhance their own outcomes in absolute terms (individualistic orientation) or comparative terms (competitive orientation). The scale is based on a task which is assigned to the respondents:

“This task requires you to make choices by encircling the letter A, B, or C. Your choices determine the number of points that you and another person are awarded. Imagine that this other person is someone you have never met.

Assume that this **other person is also making choices** and is performing exactly the same task. Also assume that every point **counts**. The more you get the better. The same applies to the other person: the more points he/she gets the better. An example is provided below.

| | A | B | C |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|
| You get | 500 | 500 | 550 |
| The other gets | 100 | 500 | 300 |

It works as follows: if you choose A you get 500 points and the other gets 100; if you choose B you get 500 points and the other gets 500; if you choose C you get 550 points and the other gets 300.”

Methodologically, the concept of social value orientation is rooted in the experimental game approach, assessing individuals' preferences by allocating a set of tasks, or more precisely, a set of decomposed games, which represent outcomes for oneself and another person (cf. Messick & McClintock, 1968).

These two scales measure attitudes to interpersonal contacts and relationships and, as such, belong in social psychology (Batson 1991; 1998). But do they really get to grips with philanthropy? Are they appropriate tools for measuring and scrutinizing philanthropic behavior? To put it bluntly: may a person, labeled an altruist, also be called a philanthropist and vice-versa? Can a man be regarded as an altruist if his widow – after his death - sets up a trust in his name to rehabilitate his lifelong reputation as a ruthless businessman?

The academic debate features many articles and books on these issues (Piliavin & Charng 1990). Researchers from different disciplines can successfully explain individual giving when the beneficiaries are close by or are perceived as such. The same applies, for instance, to the notion of kinship altruism, which clarifies why people support their family and friends. But why should someone whose spouse has died of cancer still donate to cancer research? The people who benefit are not known or seen; there is no interaction between the giver and the recipient. Do socio-psychological scales really cover philanthropic behavior as they claim to do?

7 A sociological frame of reference

All societies have to cope with fundamental problems: the problem of inequality or stratification, which provoke the need for social cohesion; the problem of integration which provokes the need for socialization of next generations, and the problem of how to manage the planet and the need for conservation of ecosystems.

In the 1920s, Talcott Parsons was one of the first American sociologists to study the European sociological tradition. Parsons' studies present an abstract, theoretical analysis of society. In *The Social System* he identifies “functional requirements” for the continued existence of social systems (Parsons 1951: 26-36). Parsons identifies four factors that need to be managed if social systems like societies are to survive, namely: adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance (Parsons 1960: 164-168).

If we ‘translate’ these factors into actual societal activities, then adaptation may be associated with economic performance, goal attainment with politics and policies, and integration with social security and the problem of cohesion. Pattern maintenance may stand for socialization, education and the preservation of culture and nature.

Following on from Parsons, philanthropic goals may fit in with the last two: ‘integration’ and ‘pattern-maintenance’. Philanthropic efforts contribute to the maintenance of core social functions (education, human services) as well as ecological functions in society, such as wildlife conservation. These functions are relevant in the national and international arena and will continue to be so in the future (intergenerational relationships).

Philanthropic efforts therefore express much more the sociological dimensions of society as a social system; they contribute, in terms of Parsons, to *sui generis* system requirements without which society cannot survive. Philanthropic goals, in this sense are ‘organic’ or ‘systemic’; they serve the social system now and in the future (intergenerational contributions).

The philanthropic goals, as identified in tax legislation and research on philanthropy, may be categorized under three main functions that enable society to survive:

- Social functions:
 - Socialization: education, human services, public benefit, international aid
- Intergenerational functions
 - Healthcare: health and medical research
 - Culture: arts, culture and humanities, religion, sport
- Ecological functions
 - Environment, wildlife

A second dimension of philanthropy concerns the sense of responsibility felt by people and the drive to act. More specifically, philanthropy expresses this sense of responsibility for the well-being of unknown others, larger groups, or the community in general. Philanthropists show personal initiative, triggered by strong commitments to the goals they want to support. They are not obliged to give; instead, they are willing to give.

This categorization into ‘functions’ does not ignore the pureness of individual philanthropic behavior. Indeed, ‘social functions’ and ‘human actions’ are concepts from a different level of analysis. People may or may not be aware of the effects of their actions on ‘the workings of society’.

8 The Philanthropy Scale

If the social functions of philanthropy are matched with this dimension of ‘personal social responsibility’ we can formulate a preliminary definition of philanthropy and clarify our aims in developing a philanthropy scale.

The philanthropy scale aims to measure the attitude of individuals to a sense of personal responsibility and readiness to act (by contributing time and /or money) in the interest of the social and ecological well-being of society for current and future generations.

Philanthropy, the new form in wealthy countries, is considered here as “voluntarily serving the public good” as its core value. Philanthropy here function as a mean. It offers the

possibility to link to something greater than oneself. Philanthropists are motivated and attracted by the gospel “to become part of the soul of the world” (Coelho1993) referring to the general interest, the public good.

The scope is enlarged from “charity” to “contributing to the public good”. In doing so, philanthropists gain a lot: “Philanthropy serves as a way to define social distinctions and social classes” (Adam 2004: 5). “Lässig argues that economic capital was not sufficient grounds to be integrated into high society; only its exchange into cultural capital enabled wealthy citizens to be acknowledged by and integrated into the leading circles of their cities” (ibidem: 9).

This feature of philanthropy has not be taken into account is scales measuring philanthropic behavior till now. Concerns about cohesion and socialization, agreement with intergenerational solidarity and acceptance of personal responsibility are regarded as three aspects of a philanthropic attitude.

In the Giving in the Netherlands Panel Survey (GINPS) we used the philanthropy scale to measure feelings of personal social responsibility (see Table 1). Items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 refer to concerns about (a decline in) cohesion in society. Items 6 and 9 refer to intergenerational solidarity. Items 5, 7, 10 refer to personal responsibility versus institutional responsibility (politics, government, businesses) for the welfare of others.

Table 1: The Philanthropy Scale

The questions listed below are about what motivates people to donate to good causes.

Here is a list of statements. To what extent do you agree with each one?

Response categories: 1 – disagree completely; 2 – disagree; 3 – neither disagree nor agree; 4 – agree; 5 – agree completely

-
1. I don't feel familiar with people on the other side of the globe. *
 2. It is hard for me to support causes I do not benefit from. *
 3. Society is in danger because people nowadays are less concerned about each other.
 4. The global warming issue is exaggerated. *
 5. The world needs responsible citizens.
 6. I often think: tomorrow can take care of itself *
 7. Charity and public benefit should be supported by the government and not by citizens and business corporations. *
 8. People are part of the community.
 9. We have to make this world a better place for the next generation.

10. I don't feel responsible for society's well-being. *

* agreeing with the statement indicates a lack of a philanthropic attitude

9 Data and methods

This new philanthropy scale has been incorporated in the *Giving in the Netherlands* (GIN) study 2007, conducted among 1474 Netherlands by TNS/NIPO. The scale consists of 10 items and has a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .78

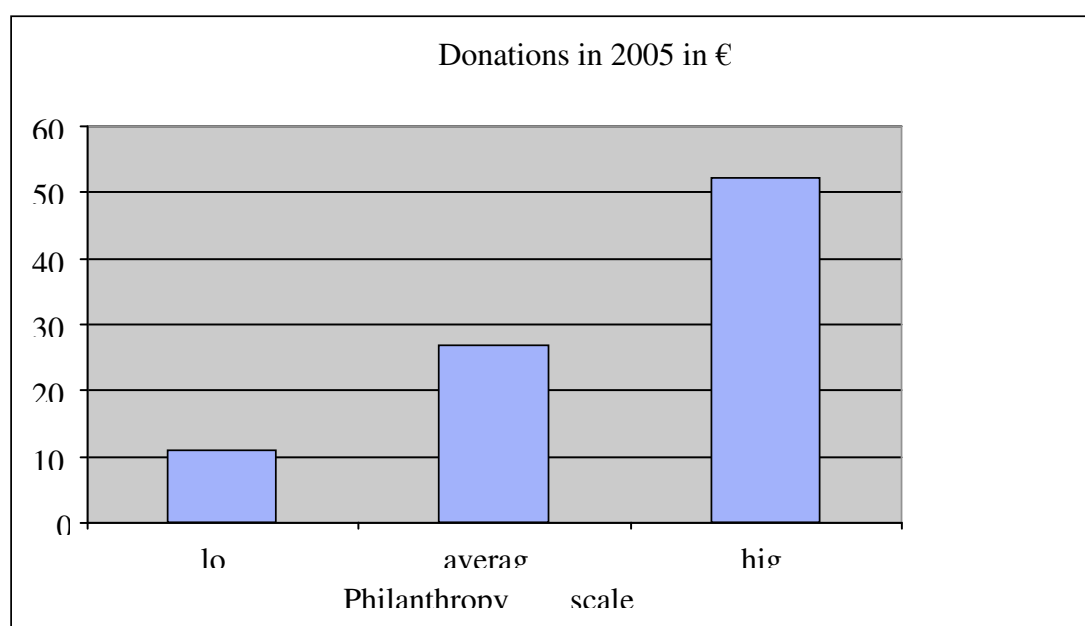
The *Giving in the Netherlands Panel Survey* provides detailed information on charitable donations and voluntary work in a representative sample of individuals in Dutch households. The first part of the survey was held in 2002 (n=1.707); the second in 2004 (n=1.316) and the third in 2006. Respondents were selected from a pool of about 70,000 individuals from 40,000 households in the database of NIPO (Netherlands Institute of Polling Research). Households in the pool received a computer with an Internet connection in exchange for participation. Self-administered polling surveys were offered weekly to different sub-samples of the pool. The reward for completion consists of a number of points which are allocated according to the length of the survey. At the end of the survey, the points can be exchanged for a voucher or a donation to charity.

10 Measuring donations

The GINPS contains an extensive Method and Area module to measure donations to charitable causes and non-profit organizations. Previous research has shown that such modules reveal a higher incidence of donations and higher amounts, probably because donors are sent reminders (Rooney, Steinberg & Schervish 2001). We investigated the effects of personal social responsibility on two variables: (1) whether households had made donations to charitable causes in eight different sectors in the preceding calendar year (2005); (2) the total amount donated to organizations in these sectors.

The philanthropy scale is related to 'giving' behaviour.

Table 2: Score on the philanthropy scale and giving behaviour



The score on the philanthropy scale revealed a correlation of .480 with the charitable causes to which the GIN respondents in 2006 (claimed to have) donated.

Table 3: Correlation between the philanthropy scale and donations to charitable causes

| | Donated/did not donate | | Amount |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Correlation ^a | Chi Square ^b | Correlation ^c |
| Church/philosophical organizations | .230 | 32.97 | .188 |
| Health | .159 | 4.34 | .136 |
| International aid | .371 | 67.29 | .148 |
| Environment | .289 | 69.52 | .167 |
| Nature | .242 | 28.12 | .144 |
| Animal welfare | .118 | 11.86 | -.016 ^x |
| Education/research | .116 | 19.41 | .032 ^x |
| Art/Culture | .188 | 22.38 | -.064 ^x |
| Sport/Leisure | .096 | 9.44 | .145 |
| Societal/social | .233 | 41.95 | .132 |
| Others | .182 | 40.02 | .107 |

^a Correlation of average score for items from the philanthropy scale for donated/did not donate to organizations in this sector

^b Test to establish the correlation between a high score (>1 standard deviation above the average) on the philanthropy scale and making donations to organizations in this sector

^c Correlation of average score for items from the philanthropy scale with total amount of donations to organizations in this sector (among donors)

All correlations are significant at $p < .05$, except those marked with ^x (not significant)

A longitudinal study of the stability of the philanthropy scale using a structural model that takes account of calculation errors showed that the latent stability for the period 2002-2006 is .60. This is a high result and tells us something about the underlying theoretical construct. The philanthropy scale also correlates strongly with other scales which measure pro-social motives. The correlation with the altruism scale is .631; with the empathy scale .628; and with the 'principle-of-care' scale .624.

11 Discussion

The philanthropy scale tries to explain philanthropic behavior and to measure prevalence (how many people?), distribution (what kind of people?), consistence (will the behavior continue and under what conditions?) and universality (is the scale valid for different societies and cultures around the world?).

So far, the philanthropy scale seems to have been reliable. But we need to be prudent about validity. We are, after all, presenting a first attempt. A more serious problem is range. The scale can be used for individuals and /or households who donate to charitable institutions, but it is not appropriate for measuring gifts to acquaintances and friends outside the nuclear family, as in the case of the *Giving Korea* study, with an over-presentation of charity-like efforts, including a category for “donations to acquaintances such as friends and relatives” (*Giving Korea* 2004: 33).

In the US and Western Europe ‘clan support’ among people is not regarded as philanthropy. The same holds for measuring ‘ethnic philanthropy’ in ‘communities of colour’ (Smith *et al.* 1999), where contributions to friends, family are considered to be philanthropic.

The philanthropy scale discussed here is about “*giving among strangers*”, not about “*giving among friends*” (Burnette 2002:4). So, its use will be limited to western industrialized countries. Studies on philanthropic contributions therefore should not be disconnected from the society in which they occur (Luhmann 1975). Hence, the definition of good causes, philanthropy and the philanthropy scale presented here for the first time need to be seen in a societal context; they have to be “contextualized”. Nonetheless, the development of a philanthropy scale marks another step in the theorization of a societal phenomenon who is gaining importance in the industrialized and industrializing world.

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