

National campaigns for charitable causes: A literature review

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Keywords philanthropy; giving; national campaign; motives; literature review

National campaigns for charitable causes: A literature review

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Abstract (110 words)

We present the first cross-national comparison of more than 300 national campaigns for charitable causes in the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the US for the period 1950 to 2011. We study frequency and amounts raised, discuss successful and failed campaigns, and review the literature with regard to potential determinants of success. We group these determinants into three categories: (a) perceived characteristics of recipients, notably their need, agency, and blamelessness; (b) donor characteristics, such as geographical and cultural proximity, a gain in status or reputation, and material incentives; and (c) structural characteristics of the giving regime, such as the frequency and media formats of campaigns, fundraising rules and regulations, and trust.

Keywords: philanthropy; giving; national campaign; motives; literature review

National campaigns for charitable causes: A literature review

While we sit comfortably in our homes, the waves sweep in through the television. The images make no sense. We watch in shock and awe; time itself seems to slow down as we struggle to understand how the warm tropical sea can suddenly do things we never thought possible, and that makes us shiver. December 26, 2004. One of the most tragic natural disasters in living memory. More than 200,000 people die in the Indian Ocean tsunami and its aftermath. Many more are threatened, having lost their homes and livelihood; surviving but disoriented, they face starvation and disease. Disaster relief organizations all over the world begin national fundraising campaigns to help the victims.

This *NVSQ* symposium focuses on such national campaigns to raise money for non-profit organizations supporting a single charitable cause, which can range from victims of natural disasters such as the tsunami, draught, or famine, to people suffering from muscular dystrophy. National campaigns are organized in many forms across the world, and benefit many different causes, both at home and abroad. A key characteristic of a national fundraising campaign is its extensive coverage in the national media, which makes it possible to solicit donations from virtually the entire population, through telethons, benefit concerts, and charitable lotteries for example.

National charitable campaigns have never been studied from a cross-national perspective, and this is what we aim to do here. We look at some basic empirical evidence to distinguish the salient features of campaign regimes, and we look at track records of giving over half a century, to distill the factors that predict success. To this end we review the literature and provide a theoretical framework to explain which characteristics and circumstances lead to higher private contributions to non-profit organizations, and how these vary across countries.

We incorporate theories from numerous disciplines: social psychology (Avdeyeva, Burgetova, & Welch, 2006; Zagefka et al., 2011), media studies (Brown & Minty, 2008),

sociology (Wiepking & Maas, 2009), economics (Brown, Harris, & Taylor, 2009; Sherlock, 2010), health studies (Eggertson, 2006), geography (Korf, 2007), history (Van Leeuwen 2000; 2012; Heerma van Voss & van Leeuwen 2012), marketing (Patten, 2007), public administration (Zhang, 2006), and developmental science (Aeberhard, 2008). Integrating such literature facilitates our understanding of national campaigns, and contributes to understanding philanthropic fundraising campaigns in general. From a practical viewpoint, a comparative case study offers fundraisers in one country the opportunity to learn from the successes and failures of their counterparts in other countries, and to redesign their own campaigns.

To delineate our topic, we begin by presenting and discussing the frequency and amounts raised by national campaigns for charitable causes in four countries: the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the US. This selection is largely a product of chance, reflecting the available sources and prior interest among scholars. Yet it is fortuitous, as these data span more than half a century (1950-2011) and are both rich – covering altogether more than 300 campaigns – and show national variations. After having presented the data, we look at two campaigns held successfully in all four countries included in this symposium – the campaigns for the 2004 tsunami and the 2010 Haiti earthquake – and also look at unsuccessful campaigns. After reviewing these data, we will be better able to review the literature on the determinants of giving to national charitable campaigns. For the sake of clarity, we cluster these in a threefold theory of giving, dealing with (a) perceived characteristics of recipients, (b) characteristics of donors, and (c) structural characteristics of the giving regime. We conclude with a discussion of such recent issues as the influence of new social media and the growing public insistence on transparency.

Track record of national campaigns: frequency and amounts raised

Not only is there much variation among individuals in giving to national campaigns, there is also much variation in giving among countries and among campaigns. Below, we present data on amounts raised and numbers of national campaigns by category in four countries from 1951 onward. To our knowledge, these are the first comparable data on national campaigns. The Swedish data cover campaigns organized by the country's dominant broadcasters, covering roughly half of the national campaigns in Sweden, both large and small (Vamstad & von Essen, this symposium). In principle, the Dutch data cover all national campaigns, regardless of size, and all culled from various broadcasting and newspaper archives, although a few might possibly have been missed (Wiepking & van Leeuwen, this symposium). The US data relate to large one-off campaigns as well as yearly recurring telethons covering the whole country – of a much greater size than the other nations covered here (Einolf, Philbrick and Slay, this symposium) Sometimes in the US, more than one campaign was launched for the same cause; this was never the case in the other nations. In Spain the national campaign is not a popular philanthropic format, and such campaigns were few in number (Rey-Garcia, Alvarez-Gonzalez & Valls-Riera, this symposium).

There was a wide variation in the number of national campaigns organized in each country, and in the amounts raised (Table 1). Allowing for the different duration of the data series per country, Sweden had the most campaigns, with twice as many as the Netherlands, which in turn had more campaigns than the US; Spain had the fewest.

<<Insert Table 1 about here>>

Although there are significant differences in the nature and coverage of the sources, these do not seem to drive the national variations observed. The Swedish data are partial, the Dutch are not, and yet the Swedish numbers are higher than the Dutch. If all Swedish national campaigns could be included, Sweden would be even more of an exception. Although it is

difficult to make comparative statements about differences in campaign regimes due to the differences in sources, in terms of average amounts raised Sweden would seem to have had many small campaigns. The US and Spain organized few campaigns, but those raised considerable sums, while the Dutch regime is a hybrid: a relatively large number of campaigns raised moderately large sums. This conclusion probably holds true even if, again, we allow for the fact that the Swedish data are partial, and that the total amounts given might well have been double what our figures suggest. The variation in public generosity in the four countries in response to national campaigns cannot be due to differences in population size. In 2010 the Swedes were fewest in number (nine million), followed by the Dutch (seventeen million), the Spanish (forty-seven million), and the Americans (310 million).

Although Table 1 reports decadal totals and thus masks yearly fluctuations, the annual volatility is still evident, varying per country. This is so even if we remove the exceptionally high outlier for the US due to generous donations by the American public in the aftermath of the exceptional tragedy of 9/11. Table 1 indicates large variations in amounts raised by national campaigns; those are only partly captured by national differences in giving traditions.

Table 2 distinguishes between campaigns for causes in the donor country and those abroad. The Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden saw more national campaigns for international causes than national causes; the reverse was true for the US. This does not imply that more was actually given to charitable causes abroad than at home in the three non-US countries. For the three countries for which we have sufficient data – the Netherlands, Sweden, and the US – it is clear that national campaigns for natural disasters such as tsunamis and earthquakes were more successful than those for disasters caused by humans, such as wars.¹ Why is this so? We will be seeking answers to these and similar questions through a survey of the literature, but we start with some salient examples.

<<Insert Table 2 about here>>

Examples of successful and failed campaigns

Some national campaigns succeeded in all countries; others did not. Looking more closely at the two campaigns that had universal success – for the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 and the Haiti earthquake of 2010 – and at examples of campaigns that failed, we can obtain a sense for what drives campaign success or failure.

In the US, there was one national campaign for the tsunami victims, and it raised sixteen million euros (2010 value), whereas the Haiti earthquake of 2010 prompted the Hope for Haiti Now telethon and concert, which raised forty seven million euros (Einolf, Philbrick and Slay, this symposium). Why was the Haiti campaign much more successful than the tsunami campaign in the US? The Haiti disaster certainly got a lot more media coverage. Perhaps this is because Haiti is closer geographically, historically, and culturally to the US than Indonesia and Sri Lanka, which were hardest hit by the 2004 tsunami. In addition, at the time of the Haiti earthquake the former US President Bill Clinton was United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti and worked hard to push for relief, so maybe there was a celebrity effect.

In Sweden too both the Haiti earthquake and the tsunami campaign were successful. The Haiti earthquake raised about 27 million euros. As in the American case, the Haiti campaign saw the breakthrough of text messaging as a method for donating. The tsunami campaign was almost five times as successful, raising a total of 120 million euros in donations in Sweden. Organized during the first few months following the disaster on December 26, 2004, it spearheaded the use of new technology for donations. The number of gifts over the Internet rose sharply. In 2004 the Swedish Red Cross received 55,500 euros in donations over the Internet, and no less than 2.8 million euros in 2005. The tsunami campaign seems to have successfully reached out to new groups, including young people, who usually do not give to charities. One explanation given in the literature is that in terms of trips per capita Swedes

travel to Thailand more more frequently than even other prosperous countries in Europe and America (Vamstad & von Essen, this symposium).

The tsunami campaign was the most successful Dutch national campaign ever, raising 219 million euros (Wiepking 2011; Wiepking & van Leeuwen, this symposium). The Dutch Cooperative Aid Organizations (Stichting Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties) organized a national television campaign, broadcast for a whole evening on three public and commercial television channels. Many individuals, schools, volunteer organizations, and companies organized modest initiatives to raise money, including sponsored walks, collecting deposits for recycled bottles, organizing concerts or bake sales, and, in the case of companies, collecting donations from staff and customers. More than half of the donors were donating to international causes for the first time (Meijer, Bekkers, & Schuyt, 2005). Presumably because of the immense public interest, the high number of donations, and the large amount raised, the tsunami campaign, incidentally, also triggered public insistence on transparency and accountability. The national campaign for the victims of the Haiti earthquake in January 2010 was the second most successful Dutch campaign ever, raising seventy million euros. Because the Haiti campaign was also organized by the Dutch Cooperative Aid Organizations, in terms of format it was very similar to the tsunami campaign, but it raised only a third of what had been raised in 2005. Why?

The tsunami appears to be the “ideal media disaster” (Meijer, Bekkers, & Schuyt, 2005). Many Western – including Dutch – tourists filmed the monstrous waves, and this footage was broadcast endlessly, imprinting the need for donations. There were fewer images of the Haiti earthquake, and these became available only days after it struck. Furthermore the dramatic footage struck the potential donor at Christmas, for many a time of both leisure - perhaps luxury - as well as, if not contemplation, at least a somewhat increased sense of morality: a good time to give.

In Spain, both campaigns were particularly effective (Rey-Garcia, Alvarez-Gonzalez & Valls-Riera, this symposium). Around 135 million euros was raised for the tsunami victims, and 86 million euros for Haiti, ranking Spain among the top donor countries (ICFO, 2010). In comparing the outcome of the two campaigns, it is important to remember that: the number of tsunami casualties was more than double the presumed death toll from the Haiti earthquake; the tsunami took place on December 26, at Christmas; and the Haiti earthquake happened when Spain was suffering the domestic effects of a financial crisis.

Having some indications as to the possible drivers of success in national campaigns – media coverage, geographical and cultural proximity, the Christmas season, and the portrayal of victims – we will now try to understand why some campaigns failed.

One notable US campaign, which failed was the 1986 “Hands Across America” fundraiser for homeless people (Einolf, Philbrick and Slay, this symposium). Its aim was to form a human chain from Los Angeles to New York, with participants each paying ten dollars. However, the national chain was never formed, although local chains covering short distances were. The campaign raised only thirty-two million dollars, seventeen million of which was spent on administrative costs.

The two least successful Swedish campaigns were the 1978 campaign for people with mental illness, raising only 218 euros, and the 1992 campaign for Finnish war veterans, raising 1,096 euros. The latter lacked a sense of urgency, since the Finnish-Russian war had ended in the 1940s, fifty years before the campaign, and the forgotten plights of the still surviving relatively small number of Finnish war veterans did not ring a bell among the general public in Sweden. The mental illness campaign is interesting in that it was one in a series of failed campaigns for the disabled in Sweden in the 1970s. The 1970s were not only a decade when public expectations of the legendary Swedish welfare state reached a zenith, but also a time when Swedish organizations representing the disabled became very vocal in their demands for special assistance and access to the public space as a social right. It is possible

that fundraising campaigns for these causes failed not just because generally lower amounts of money are raised for mental as opposed to physical disabilities but also because the general public considered the issues to be matters of rights to be upheld by the state rather than matters of charity supported by philanthropy (Vamstad & von Essen, this symposium).

A Dutch campaign that raised relatively little was that for the victims of the Japan tsunami in April 2011 (Wiepking & van Leeuwen, this symposium). Despite extensive media coverage of the 24,000 victims of the tsunami and the subsequent nuclear disaster, only seven million euros was raised. The campaign was organized by the Dutch Red Cross, because it was one of the few large Dutch international aid organizations with a Japanese counterpart. There was no major television show to raise funds; instead the Red Cross organized a concert and a soccer match between a Dutch and a Japanese professional soccer club. One reason for the relatively low amount raised, in addition to the absence of a major television show, may have been that the Dutch perceive Japan as being a technologically advanced, well-organized, and prosperous society, very capable of overcoming its misfortune. When Hurricane Katrina hit the US in 2005, the Dutch Cooperative Aid Organizations actually refused donations, telling the public that the US was capable of addressing the crisis without foreign help. Dutch people might have concluded that this was true for Japan too, though in this case donations were encouraged.

In Spain, it is less the failure of a particular national campaign that strikes one as the near absence of such national campaigns in the first place. Also interesting is the modest success charitable campaigns in the form of benefit concerts have had in Spain, compared to the success of this type of campaigns in for example the U.S. (Rey-Garcia, Alvarez-Gonzalez & Valls-Riera, this symposium). The most successful benefit concert organized in Spain is *Principales Solidarios*. This benefit concert is organized since 1999 by the country's main music radio station, sponsored by companies and public agencies and devoted to a different cause every year. In 2001 around 150,000 euros was raised, peaking in 2007 at three times

that figure; since then, donations have declined to their initial level. Its success has been modest, despite the support of nationally and internationally famous musicians and actors, the participation of many television and radio channels, and the use of text messages. One possible cause of this failure is the tax restrictions on Spanish NPOs, which limit their national campaigns to traditional fundraising formats of a recurrent nature, which benefit from the direct or indirect support of the government. The utilization of formats “new” to the country, such as telethons and charity concerts, and the capacity of charitable organizations to mobilize private donors through media beyond their control (television and radio) have been successful only for a select group of international major crises, such as the 1998 Hurricane Mitch, Indian Ocean tsunami and the Haiti earthquake, where the format defined abroad overcame barriers posed by tradition and the tax regime.

Overall, unrealistic aims with high overheads, a lack of urgency, expectations placed on the welfare state, and the perception that victims are capable of handling their own plight seem to have been among the most prominent obstacles to the success of national campaigns.

Interestingly, while success is shared to some extent – certainly for the tsunami and Haiti campaigns – failure is not: there are no campaigns that failed in all or even most countries. This reflects transnational influences. The highly popular Dutch Serious Request campaign for example – where, for several days, radio DJs broadcast from a glass house in a central town square and invite requests for songs to be played on the radio in return for a donation – is replicated in Sweden by the *Musikhjälpen* campaign. Other Swedish campaigns were also subject to transnational influences (Vamstad & von Essen, this symposium). The first major telethons on Swedish television in the 1980s were inspired by similar events in the US. American influences on national campaigns are also clearly visible in the case of the Netherlands. The UK influences the US, and vice versa. For example, the first US charity entertainment event was the Concert for Bangladesh in 1971, which eventually reached an international audience through a record album and a film of the concert (Einolf, Philbrick and

Slay, this symposium). Both the Concert for Bangladesh and Live Aid featured British and American performers, but were led by British musicians performing in the US. The UK and US have shared a common musical culture, at least since the 1960s, and British musicians regard the US as a larger and more lucrative market. Through a common musical culture and language, campaign ideas can travel easily from the UK to the US, the more so because when UK musicians want to raise funds for a good cause they are aware of the potential of the US market. The existence of a global pop music culture made it easier for the music to further travel around the world. This, incidentally, illustrates how social, or psychological, distance between victims and donors is becoming less dependent on their physical, or geographical, distance. Bob Geldof, then the lead singer of the Boomtown Rats was inspired to organize Band Aid in London after watching a TV documentary about the Ethiopian famine. Band Aid in turn was the inspiration for the American Live Aid, which in turn was instrumental in making such campaigns popular in other countries as well (on Geldof see Romanieko 2010).

Why do we give to national campaigns?

In what follows, we incorporate the determinants of success and failure into a theoretical overview. For the sake of clarity, we group these determinants into three categories: (a) perceived characteristics of recipients, (b) characteristics of donors, and (c) structural characteristics of the giving regime, while acknowledging that this is a simplification if only because there is a degree of interaction among the three clusters.

A. Perceived characteristics of recipients

There would be little point in having national campaigns if the proceeds are spent on minor needs while the victims of major disasters are left dying. One would certainly hope that disasters with a *large number of victims* receive more attention than those with few victims.

There is indeed evidence supporting that claim (Feeny & Clarke, 2007; Simon, 1997). We also know, however, that some serious needs get less attention than others.

Measurable, “objective” characteristics of recipients and their fate are one thing; *perceived characteristics* are what matter most (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2007; 2011). These perceptions are the result of interactions between the characteristics of recipients and their plight, and the characteristics of donors and their culture and giving structure. Adams (1986) studied US television news coverage of thirty-five major natural disasters occurring around the globe between 1972 and 1983 (a period covered by the national campaigns discussed here), and found that “(about one-fifth) of the variation in news attention can be explained using logarithms of estimated disaster deaths. Overall, the globe is prioritized so that the death of one Western European equaled three Eastern Europeans equaled 9 Latin Americans equaled 11 Middle Easterners equaled 12 Asians” (Adams, 1986: 117). This was due partly to reasons which have since been virtually eliminated, such as the difficulty of getting a reporter on the scene, the unfamiliarity of the audience with strange countries, or a Chinese state embargo on news about an earthquake that killed 800,000 persons. Nonetheless, this finding does serve to stress the sometimes precarious link between needs and proceeds. To give another example, the 1972 Nicaraguan earthquake received an unusually high degree of airtime because a popular American baseball player of Nicaraguan descent was involved, because it was Christmas, and because rival news was thin at the time. In contrast, a major Italian earthquake in 1980 had to compete with the primaries for the US presidency, and fundraising efforts proved less successful (Adams, 1986). This makes the link between need and response tenuous. In 2004, to give a final example, a famine in Niger killed slightly more people than the Asian tsunami of the same year; the Australian public donated two million Australian dollars to the famine victims and 100 million to the tsunami victims (Feeny & Clarke, 2009).

The degree of media interest in a disaster is determined not only by the number of victims, but also by the *distance to the disaster* (Adams, 1986; Feeny & Clarke, 2009; Meijer, Bekkers, & Schuyt, 2005; Simon, 1997). Distance affects how easy reporters can cover a disaster, but also how interested the audience is in hearing about it.

At the core of the fragile nexus between objective plight and amount raised is the issue of media coverage. *Coverage* in different types of media is an important determinant of giving. It is not a simple reflection of need but rather a reflection of the plight of recipients in the eyes of the donors as presented in the media.² Brown and Minty (2008) studied Internet giving in the US for the 2004 tsunami. They found that one additional minute of nightly news coverage increased average daily Internet donations by thirteen per cent, while an additional 700 words in an article in the *New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal* raised donations by eighteen per cent of the daily average. Olson, Carstensen, and Hoyen (2003) report similar correlations between newspaper coverage of, and donations to, victims of a 1999 Indian cyclone and flooding in Mozambique in 2000, while also stressing the tenuous nature of this association. For example, private donations to relief agencies in the early stages of the 1994 Rwandan genocide were substantial, but they fell after crime scandals involving O. J. Simpson and Tanya Harding began to dominate the news (Brown & Minty, 2008).

Awareness of a campaign is not a condition sufficient to persuade people to give. Potential donors must be convinced that the cause is worth their money or effort. While what one person finds noble, the next may find ignoble, most people have a preference for “*blameless victims*” (Bennett & Kottasz, 2000). The degree to which we feel empathy with a needy person influences our giving, and empathy is higher for blameless victims (Davis, 1983). However, this sense of basic rationality is heightened by the current media focus on “toxic charity” (Lupton, 2011). Lupton applies Dalrymple’s (2001, 2006) complaint against state welfare to private charity: misguided giving, we are told, increases the needs we want to combat. If this is true, most citizens are likely to think that, by not giving, they are not being

cold hearted but merely being rational: it is better not to give and so avoid perpetuating social problems. It also provides those unwilling to give, for whatever reason, a socially acceptable excuse. Thus one structural characteristic of the present giving regime – a heightened public sensitivity to perceived wasteful charity – interacts with notions of the “deserving poor”.

Following on from this, the more interesting question concerns which victims we blame (and leave in their misery) and which we help. This is determined partly by how the case is presented to us. Are women with HIV portrayed as powerless, victims of male sexual aggression, or as careless prostitutes and drug users? Are men with HIV portrayed as promiscuous homosexuals or just as promiscuous heterosexual truck drivers? Or is the whole issue of guilt sidestepped by presenting those with HIV simply as seriously ill and incapable of paying for medical treatment? Flora and fauna threatened by human pollution or extinction are blameless enough; they have no agency, and the same applies to young children, and, to a lesser extent, the elderly. Adult males and females have some agency, and perhaps it crosses our minds that our charitable behavior might sometimes be toxic.

There is a long dominant tradition in the West of viewing victims of epidemics as victims of nature and not of moral failings. For those involved in civil wars, however, we often simply do not know whether they are victims or aggressors, and we are thus ignorant as to whether our generosity encourages the problem or not. Even vulnerable and suffering children might become murderous child soldiers. In all, we give more gladly to victims of natural disasters than to those we think might have caused their own misfortune (Bennett & Kottasz, 2000; Meijer, Bekkers, & Schuyt, 2005; Miller, 1977; Zagefka et al., 2011).

While we prefer to give to innocent victims, we do not want their lack of agency to imply that they have been waiting passively in the face of danger, ignoring warnings to act before it is too late (Bennett & Kottasz, 2000; Dean & Breeze, in press; Korf, 2007). Relief agencies have to portray the needy as individuals doing what they can while ultimately being overwhelmed by natural forces beyond their control and which they could not anticipate

(Dean & Breeze, in press). Zagefka et al. (2011: 361) formulate this in terms of the following policy recommendation: “For humanly caused disasters, appeals could explicitly stress that even though an armed conflict is going on, the victims are impartial civilians, who did not trigger the fighting. Similarly, appeals could stress that victims are making an effort to help themselves. This last idea might be particularly helpful, given that many appeals in the past have tended to portray victims as lethargic and passive, presumably to underscore their neediness [...] [S]uch a portrayal might actually be counterproductive”.

In short, a successful campaign entails the need being perceived to be great (many victims and ample media interest) and the victims being perceived as blameless but still having agency.

B. Characteristics of donors

Giving is part of writing “moral biographies”, and with these “narrative procedures” wealthy people “explain how it is possible for them to be rich and good at the same time” (Schervish, 1994; Wiepking & Breeze, 2012 see also Van Leeuwen 2000, 2012). We may give to national campaigns because it is a pleasurable experience, which in addition makes us feel good about ourselves and to confirm or create a positive self-image of helpfulness, being a good citizen, an influential person, or a righteous believer. Economists call this the “warm glow” or “joy of giving” effect (Andreoni, 1990; Sugden, 1986). This warm glow, although not easy to model, functions as a selective incentive to overcome the classic problem of collective action as formulated by Olson (1965): a rational citizen does not contribute voluntarily to a public good because their contribution has only a marginal effect, and the end result will be similar regardless of whether they give. Even purely rational individualists, however, may be persuaded to give if they receive something in return personally, such as a sense of warmth, or, as we will discuss later, social status or reputation. As the “warm glow” comes from, or is embedded in, shared opinions on what constitutes a good society, it has also

been called a moral dimension (Etzioni, 1990). A degree of proximity between donor and victim helps in making prospective donors generous. It may manifest itself as geographical or *cultural proximity*, as captured for example by the number of tourists from the donor country in the country of the victims, or the extent to which donor and recipient countries vote alike in the United Nations (Adams, 1986) or share similar political systems (Feeny & Clarke, 2009).

Even if the “warm glow” does not act as a selective incentive, *gaining status or reputation* certainly does. A US study of a cerebral palsy telethon found that pledged donations were higher when the telethon announced the amounts of pledges and the names of the donors (Silverman et al., 1984). Publication of a donation can help enhance the donor’s reputation as a helpful and empathic person, and it creates the impression that giving is a public norm. This not only holds true for giving to national campaigns or other types of philanthropic behavior, such as collections in churches today (Soetevent, 2005) or the foundation of almshouses and other large bequests in the past (Looijesteijn, 2012; McCants, 1997; van Nederveen Meerkerk, 2012).

Another private benefit is provided by charitable lotteries (Rey-Garcia, Alvarez-Gonzalez & Valls-Riera, this symposium). Giving to a national campaign, or to any charitable cause, is also a ticket to, if not financial paradise on earth, at least a chance of a small prize. It attracts more donors without, however, increasing the amount given per donor (Landry et al., 2006). And it is a time-honored way to persuade rational individuals to give to a public good; charitable lotteries existed in Europe at least as early as the sixteenth century (Huisman & Koppenol, 1991). Giving a donor a ribbon – besides preventing a donor to be approached several times - serves a similar function: while it does not constitute a material prize, it provides the bearer with a warm glow and symbolizes a gain in social status.

In short, for a national charitable campaign to be successful it helps if donors are aware of the victim’s plight, experience a warm glow when giving, share characteristics with

the recipients, gain in status when giving, or receive material incentives such as a lottery ticket.

C. Structural characteristics of the giving regime

Before we can be mobilized into giving, we have to be aware, and thus we return to the issue of *media interest* (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). A study of Internet donations to victims of the 2004 tsunami found that donations varied directly and immediately in response to coverage on the nightly network news or in major newspapers (Brown & Minty, 2008). The degree of media interest is thus of paramount importance not only to the success of a national campaign but to its existence in the first place.

Smith (2012) has looked into the mobilization of donors through new fundraising strategies in relation to media attention. He examined the question “why mobile phone users texted millions of dollars in aid to the Haiti earthquake and how they got their friends to do the same”. The typical Haiti text donor was a first-time mobile giver who, on the spur of the moment, seeing the disaster on television, made a single contribution to earthquake relief using their mobile phone. About half tried to solicit a similar donation from their friends or family members, and in three-quarters of cases these solicitations are believed to have been successful. The mobile phone donors resembled Americans as a whole in many ways, including news exposure and civil participation, but they were at the forefront of possessing and using technology such as e-readers, accessing Internet on their mobile phone, and using new social media such as Twitter. It is clear that popular social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter represent a potential source of money for national campaigns, although as yet few non-profit organizations earn much money from these sources (Einolf, Philbrick and Slay, this symposium). Social media do have the ability to show what people are concerned about. Both “Gulf Oil Spill” and “Haiti Earthquake” were in the top-ten trending

topics for Twitter, in fourth and first place respectively. Campaigns still need to figure out how to convert this high level of awareness into donations however.

There might be an upper limit to success in soliciting donations, both for the new interactive social media like text messaging, Facebook, and Twitter as well as direct mail campaigns or grand gala shows (Boonstoppel & Wiepking, in press). Soliciting money is a gentle art. If we receive a direct mail request every other time we empty our mail boxes, we might get irritated; if many different charitable organizations bombard us with requests to give in a short time span, we might suffer from *giving fatigue*, and national campaigns might in turn suffer from our suffering. Campaigns need to generate interest, but they should not overdo this. This leads one to wonder whether repetitive national campaigns – in response, for example, to the perennial flooding in Bangladesh – also causes giving fatigue. Kinnick, Krugman, and Cameron (1996) claim the major cause of compassion fatigue is the media, which continuously broadcast coverage on the same subjects.

Another issue is the place of a campaign in the *economic cycle of a country*. A rising tide also lifts the boats of charitable organizations, as Einolf, Philbrick and Slay on the US show in this symposium. Soliciting donations during a recession is problematic, as the public will be more concerned with their own financial situation (Breeze & Morgan, 2009). When, on the other hand, the public feels financially secure it will be easier for charitable organizations to solicit donations (Schervish, 2005; Wiepking & Breeze, 2012).

Our awareness is organized awareness, raised by campaign organizers, journalists, and presenters anticipating our wish to be aware and anticipating that we are likely to make a national campaign a success. In a sense, we see what they think we want to see. The awareness that sparks our giving might find us most receptive when the defense mechanisms that keep us from being overwhelmed by all the world's disasters and requests for aid have been lowered. The *timing of a request* may influence our generosity. It is no coincidence that charities receive more at Christmas (Adams, 1986; Banks & Tanner, 1999; Carroll,

McCarthy, & Newman, 2005). In predominantly, or former predominantly, Christian societies the Christmas season is a good time for a disaster to happen (if it has to happen at all that is). We have more leisure time, and we can be “reached”. Particularly at Christmas, we want to be regarded as good and moral citizens, not just by those we care about, but by ourselves too (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). We may secretly know that the jeans we buy are so cheap that they were probably made by child labor in some far-off country, but often we cannot change this easily or directly. The small, hidden but persistent anxiety between how we want the world and ourselves to be and how we perceive these to be might, however, be minimized, at least temporarily, and the balance of morality restored, at a small, almost symbolic, cost. This might be most gratifying when religious morality is at its height. The same holds true perhaps for other religious festival, such as Eid-ul-fitr in predominantly Islamic countries.

The creation and organization of trust by campaigners or others might determine income in general and in particular the resilience of income after a campaign mistake or a perceived misdemeanor by relief agencies. In 1995, Greenpeace’s campaign against sinking the “toxic” offshore oil platform Brent Spar in the Atlantic hit news broadcasts and newspaper headlines, and Greenpeace appealed for donations to help prevent what it claimed would be an environmental disaster. It subsequently transpired that the platform was not as toxic as Greenpeace had claimed, and donations dropped (Wikipedia, 2011). Public disinformation is more of a problem if a charitable organization tries to play down its mistake. The *trust* we have in the information given to us, and in the efficacy of the measures taken to report and alleviate problems, is crucial. Trust appears to be specifically important when the cause supported is more abstract (empowerment of women for example) or when the problem is more difficult to solve (famine in the Horn of Africa) (Bekkers, 2003; Bekkers & Bowman, 2009; Bowman, 2004; Wiepking 2010). In these cases especially, campaigners are well advised to consider how trust is organized.

In this respect, there is an interesting but disquieting paradox, one to which we alluded when discussing the issue of “toxic charity”. The paradox is one of increasing public awareness of the importance of philanthropy at a time of increasing public distrust and public calls for accountability. Our data show the amounts being given to national campaigns increasing in real terms in all four countries. This increase has been accompanied by a growing emphasis on effectiveness and accountability.

Charitable organizations know they must meet this demand for effectiveness and accountability. In the Netherlands, for example, virtually all major philanthropic organizations provide annual accounts – subject to voluntary audit by a national branch association – on their websites. There are now various private intermediaries between donors and charitable organizations; watchdogs evaluate charitable organizations on issues of transparency (website, annual accounts, identity of board members), organization (specificity of the cause, cooperation with similar organizations, control by, and of, board members), activity (empirical basis of efficacy, expert involvement), and the quality of the website (Liket & Maas, 2012). Being perceived as effective and accountable is of great importance to national charities, because people donate less if they perceive the agency to be poorly run or corrupt, or believe the distribution of aid to victims is unfair (Bennett & Kottasz, 2000).

Public trust may be increased by the charitable organizations themselves being honest and transparent about efficacy, mistakes, and misdemeanors. It can also be created by having rich, famous, or respected individuals act as ambassadors. As the article by Einolf, Philbrick and Slay on the US in this symposium states, ordinary citizens might feel a special bond with a celebrity, and be more willing to donate (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Meyer, 1995). This mechanism of creating trust through trusted spokesmen is a very old one. Local Dutch campaigns in the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries also used respected clergymen or well known political authorities as spokesmen, their personal reputation vouching for the

common good, and for a similar reason such individuals were often active as charity administrators (Teeuwen, 2012; Heerma van Voss & van Leeuwen 2012; van Leeuwen 2012).

To summarize, the level of media interest a campaign generates is one factor determining its success. So too are the media formats of the campaign, and fundraising rules and regulations, including the organization of trust – certainly if public opinion tends to be critical. State types and fiscal regimes might also be important, a point noted in the articles on Spain and Sweden in this symposium.

Conclusion and discussion

What does the empirical evidence and the theoretical literature on national charity campaigns over more than half a century tell us? How can it be used to improve the success of such campaigns? And what are the prospects for further research on national campaigns, both with regard to empirical research and theory formation? To begin with the latter, this symposium in *NVSQ* marks the beginning of comparative research into the track record of national campaigns. There is an ocean to be explored: the inclusion of more countries, and a longer timeframe, would help us capture differences in the determinants of giving and broaden the options for using global history as a quasi-natural experiment. Testing the explanations adduced here with experimental designs already in place before a campaign is initiated would be another promising research avenue.

As to the track record of the campaigns studied here, our exploratory analyses suggest a large variation in giving, both among countries and among different campaigns within a single country. The number of national campaigns varied much between the four countries covered here. Sweden had twice as many campaigns as the Netherlands, which had more than the US. Spain had the fewest. Sweden had many small campaigns, in terms of amounts raised. The US and Spain organized few campaigns, though they raised a lot; the pattern in the Netherlands was a hybrid: a relatively large number of campaigns raising fairly large sums of

money. In national campaigns, Americans give more to charitable causes in their own country than to causes abroad; the Dutch give slightly more to national causes per campaign but as there are many more campaigns for international causes in total they give more to international causes. The reverse is true for Sweden and Spain, where people tend to donate more for causes outside their own country.

Regarding the success and failure of national charitable campaigns, we have presented the literature on their determinants in a threefold theoretical framework. First, the perceived characteristics of recipients are important. These include the number of victims, but also perceptions of certain categories of victim as being blameless but not overly passive. Secondly, the characteristics of donors are relevant: whether they experience a “warm glow” or “joy of giving” effect, whether giving promotes their status or reputation; whether they receive a material reward, as in the case of charitable lotteries. Thirdly, certain structural characteristics of giving regimes have an effect, not just the amount of media interest, but also campaign media formats, and fundraising rules and regulations, including the organization of trust, and the type of state and fiscal regime.

As to future developments, three issues seem of importance: transnational influence, new media, and issues of transparency and accountability. With future globalization, transnational influences on campaigning – and by extension possible transnational competition – are likely to grow. The example of Spain provides an illustration (Rey-Garcia, Alvarez-Gonzalez & Valls-Riera, this symposium). Traditionally Spain has been less oriented toward the Anglo-Saxon world, and more to France and the Mediterranean world (and, for that matter, to Latin America). It is no coincidence that a significant proportion of Spanish support for international aid since the 1990s has gone to organizations affiliated to multinational NGOs of French origin, such as Médecins Sans Frontières [Doctors Without Borders], Médecins du Monde [Doctors of the World], or Action contre la Faim [Action Against Hunger]. French influence is particularly noticeable in Catalonia (for example

through its regional telethon, modeled after TF1, the French television channel). However, Anglo-Saxon influences, particularly through Oxfam and also Action Aid and Amnesty International, are on the rise. Not necessarily because of demand on the part of the public, but rather because the economic situation in Spain has led to traditional sources of subsidies drying up and to Spanish charities being forced to reinvent their financial structures. A good pioneering example is the *Salvemos a Safiya* online campaign, successfully imported into Spain by Amnesty International. It received the “Best Interactive Global Campaign” award from the American Marketing Association.

This brings us to the growing influence of interactive new social media. Increasingly the public is approached not only through newspapers, radio, and television, but also through new social media, such as text messaging, Facebook, and Twitter. These have the potential to persuade a large share of the public to donate, sometimes instantaneously, and to seek similar donations from their friends and family. This article has discussed examples of such beneficial effects of new social media. At the same time, the grassroots and near instantaneous character might make them more difficult to predict. At present, social media are largely a terra incognita for fundraising organizations.

Traditionally, in predominantly Christian societies Christmas was a focal point for generosity. The religious and family associations of that festivity still give it an advantage over other periods, but, as societies secularize, this advantage might lessen and new focal points arise, such as the summer music festivals that now proliferate around Europe, where festival participants are called upon to text a contribution for a worthy cause. Another possibility, however, is that it will become increasingly difficult to find focal points. In their contribution to this symposium, Einolf, Philbrick and Slay speculate that while the rise of the Internet, texting, and social media has made it easier for charities to ask for money, the increase in news and entertainment sources has made it more difficult for a single charitable campaign to capture the nation’s imagination.

There is another development currently underway that deserves consideration, one that might exacerbate the growing unpredictability just discussed. In a sense, the current political climate in much of the world favors private action benefiting the public good – as the zenith of the welfare state fades somewhat; on the other hand, in certain countries, including those discussed here, the public is increasingly distrustful of “toxic charity”. These worries need to be addressed through forms of transparency and accountability, including those that use new social media. Creating greater transparency and accountability might not always be easy and immediate, but nor is it impossible. Public distrust of charitable giving is nothing new. In the Netherlands, for instance, distrust among citizens and the authorities at the beginning of the twentieth century led to the establishment of a national branch association of philanthropic causes, which monitored charities and acted as a seal of approval (Wortmann, 2007). Although the proceeds of national campaigns have been increasing steadily, if the present century continues to see similar new initiatives, at both the national and international level, greater transparency and accountability will be crucial to ensuring continued public support in response to national charitable campaigns.

Notes

¹ In reality the distinction between “natural” and “human” disasters is not always clear-cut. Sen (1981) – studying the Bengal famine of 1943, the Ethiopian famine in Wollo in 1973 and the Bangladesh famine of 1974 – concluded that these famines should not be seen as simple consequences of harvest failure, notably due to droughts or alternatively too much rainfall, but as the consequence of entitlement failures of the starving. The hoarding of staples, storage in bad conditions and government food subsidies for some but not for all social groups were arguably more important than natural causes in determining famines. More recently, to give another example, water supplies in rural parts of Syria have been exhausted as the Syrian regime, hoping to gain the support of farmers, supported overly large irrigation projects to allow farmers to grow cotton, a water-intensive crop. This has led to the collapse of agriculture and to the induced migration of farmers to the towns, contributing to the social problems that have recently culminated in a civil war (Luttikhuis, 2012).

² This exemplifies the limits to our simple threefold classification. Media coverage of national campaigns and their beneficiaries is a structural characteristic of the giving regime. However, the extent and content of media coverage is also a key determinant influencing how potential donors perceive the recipients (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011).

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Biographical paragraph

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Table 1 Number of national campaigns for charitable causes and average amount raised in the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the US, by decade (1950-2011)

Decade	Netherlands	Spain	Sweden	US
1950-1959	10 (6.3)	-	23 (1.7)	-
1960-1969	10 (28.0)	-	32 (2.1)	-
1970-1979	8 (39.9)	-	32 (.5)	4 (1.8)
1980-1989	19 (13.7)	-	33 (1.3)	2 (71.3)
1990-1999	28 (15.5)	2 (51.4)	64 (.6)	1 (1.3)
2000-2009	20 (18.4)	2 (89.7)	38 (4.1)	4 (93.1)
2010-2011	7 (20.4)	1 (85.8)	4 (3.1)	2 (24.6)
Total	102 (18.2)	5 (73.6)	226 (1.7)	13 (55.9)
Annual average number of campaigns	1.6	0.2	3.6	0.3

Note: In brackets: average amount raised in millions of euros at 2010 prices.

Source: Data kindly provided by the contributors to this symposium. See also their contributions to this symposium.

Table 2 Number of national campaigns for charitable causes and average amount raised in the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the US, by type of cause

	Netherlands	Spain	Sweden	US
<i>International</i>				
Human disaster (incl. war and famine)	34 (14.5)	-	46 (1.0)	1 (1.0)
Natural disaster	28 (22.4)	3 (111.6)	43 (1.7)	3 (136.4)
General development support	21 (17.1)	2 (16.6)	43 (3.9)	2 (4.2)
<i>Total international (average amount)</i>	83 (17.8)	5 (73.6)	132 (2.2)	6 (69.8)
<i>Donor country</i>				
Human disaster	3 (11.8)	-	-	1 (1.3)
Natural disaster	3 (37.5)	-	-	1 (97.9)
General	-	-	-	4 (131.4)
War	-	-	-	1 (196.8)
Diseases and disabilities	13 (16.6)	-	94 (0.9)	-
<i>Total donor country (average amount)</i>	19 (19.7)	-	94 (0.9)	7 (117.4)

Note: In brackets: average amount raised by type of cause in millions of euros at 2010 prices.

Source: Data kindly provided by the contributors to this symposium. See also their contributions to this symposium.