

GIVING AMONG SAME-SEX COUPLES:
THE ROLE OF IDENTITY IN
PHILANTHROPIC ENGAGEMENT

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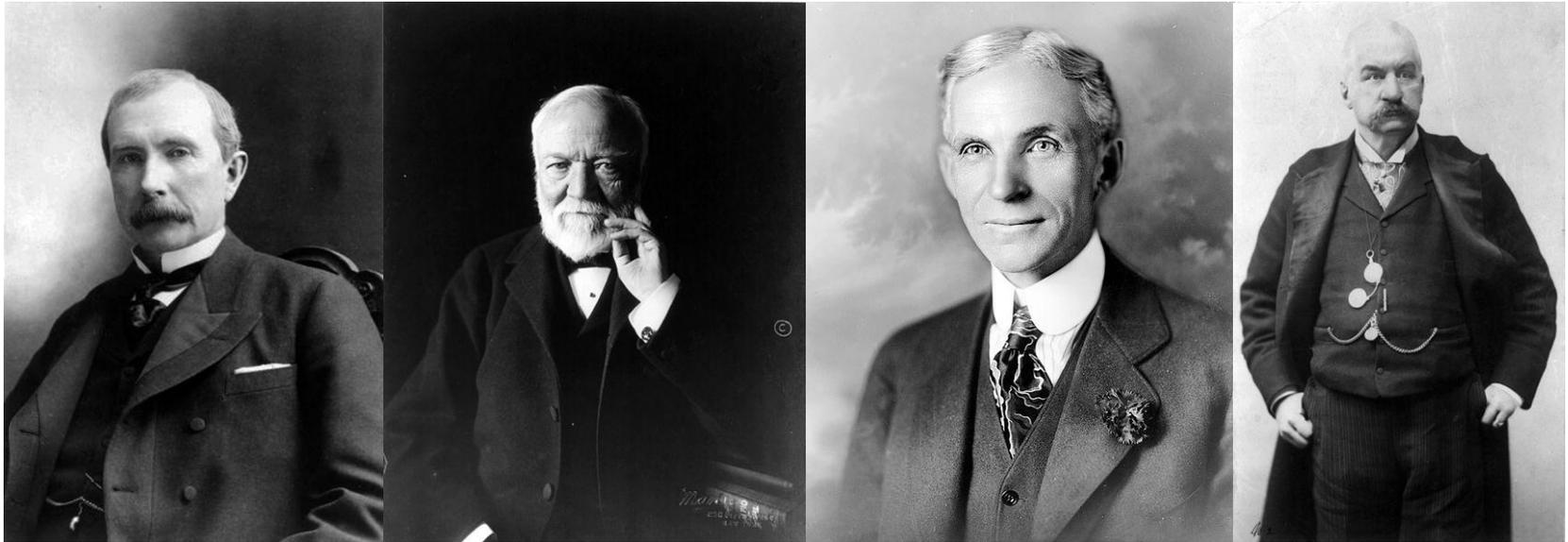
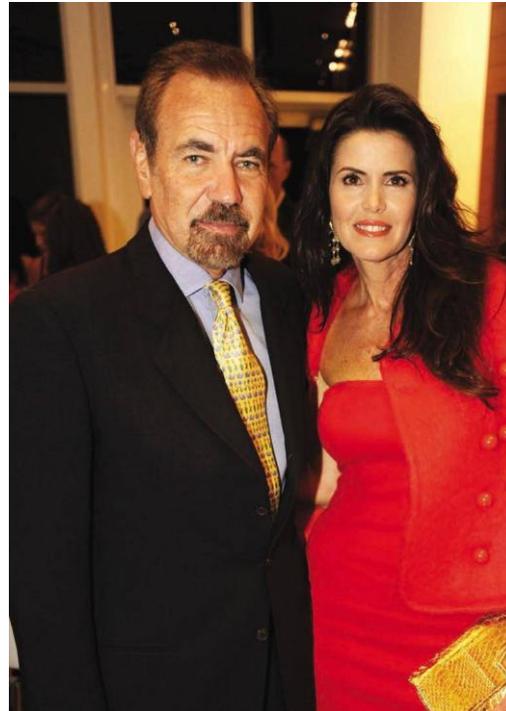


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Changing Demographics

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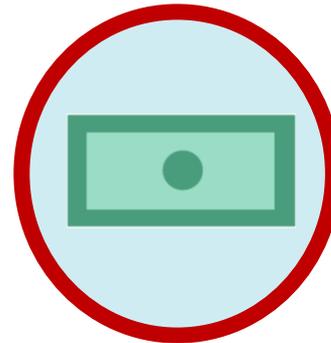
LGBT individuals:



are an ever-more
visible segment
of the U.S.
population



have gained
marriage
equality and
other rights



more likely to be
dual-income
households with
no children



but may also be
vulnerable and
facing
oppression and
discrimination

Presentation Overview

- Research questions
- Theoretical framework and relevant literature
- Methodology
- Key themes
- Discussion and future research
- Questions

Research Questions

How do same-sex households describe the meanings and experiences of their philanthropic participation?

1. **What do LGBT donors identify as their motivations for giving?**
2. **How do LGBT donors use philanthropy as an expression of identity and values?**
3. How do same-sex couples make philanthropic decisions within the context of the larger household economy?

Theoretical Framework

- Interdisciplinary work on the motivations for giving.
- Bekkers and Wiepking (2011) present eight mechanisms for giving:
 1. Awareness of need
 2. Solicitation
 3. Costs and Benefits
 4. Altruism
 5. Reputation
 6. Psychological benefits
 7. Values
 8. Efficacy

Theoretical Framework

- Identification model of giving (Schervish & Havens, 1997; 2002) finds that an aspect of the donors' "self" is present in the motivation to give.
 - ▣ Most important is donors' "communities of participation"
 - ▣ Jackson et al. (1995) describe this as "the sense of being connected with another" or "we-ness"
- Justice motivation theory says that the urge to fix an injustice motivates some people to engage in action (Lerner, 1975; Miller, 1977)

Theoretical Framework

- Identity-Based Motivation Model (Oyserman, 2007, 2009)
 - ▣ People are motivated to act in identity-congruent ways, and when they feel that actions are aligned with their identity, those actions feel natural.
 - ▣ Perceptions and actions are not separate from situated contexts, but are shaped by those contexts.

Theoretical Framework

- Using the IBM model, Aaker, Akutsu and Liu (2009) found there were three different identities people claimed when asked why they give:
 - ▣ Familial identity
 - ▣ Community or social identity
 - ▣ Personal identity
- Identities can also interact in ways that relate to larger societal patterns of power and advantage, often referred to as intersectionality (Davis, 2008)

Relevant literature

- No comprehensive study of LGBT individuals' philanthropic giving
- Studies have found LGBT donors are more likely to give to advocacy and civil rights, health, and the arts, and are less likely to give to religion (Horizons Foundation, 2008).
- Estimates are LGBT donors contribute between 50 and 75% of their giving to non-LGBT organizations.
 - The Horizons Foundation (2008) estimated only 5% of LGBT people in the San Francisco Bay area gave to LGBT-affiliated causes



Giving Among Same-Sex Couples

Data and Methodology

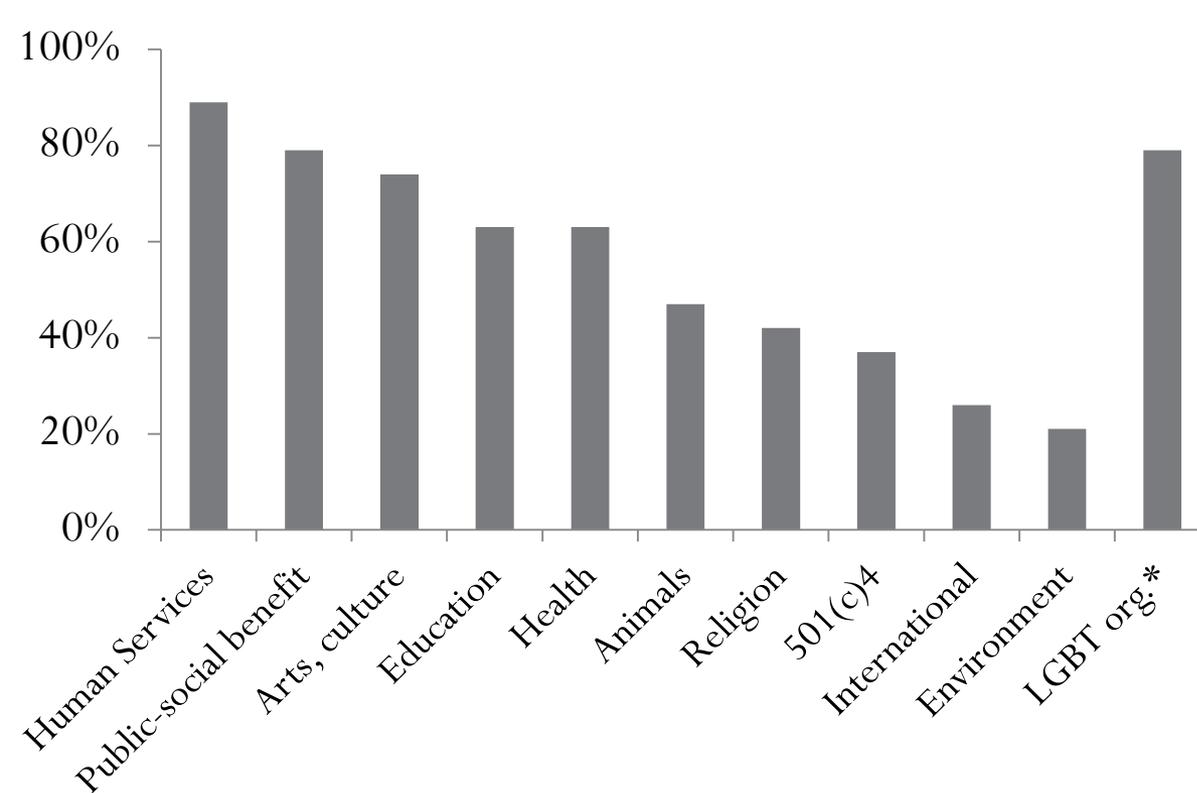
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- Qualitative approach
- Semi-structured joint interviews with 19 couples in Indiana
 - ▣ 10 male and 9 female couples
- Participant demographics:
 - Aged 29 to 66 (mean 47.5 years)
 - 97% graduated college
 - 82% employed full-time
 - 39% identified as religiously affiliated
 - 21% previously married or in a committed partnership
- Transcribed verbatim and analyzed using grounded theory techniques (Charmaz, 2014)

Same-Sex Couples' Giving Patterns

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Percentage of Couples Who Gave to Each Subsector



85% of gifts to
non-LGBT
causes

Key Themes: Role of Identity

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1. Giving to build and uplift the LGBT community
2. Giving to shape public policy and law
3. The experience of HIV / AIDS: Giving for loss and giving back
4. Using philanthropy to assert LGBT identity in the mainstream
5. Seeking acceptance and avoiding discriminatory organizations

Key Themes: Role of Identity

1. Giving to build and uplift the LGBT community.

“It was a community thing, and I guess any kind of donating I did, whether it was to the HRC, to the Damien Center, and then to the [Indiana] Youth Group, it was always about the local gay community. What am I doing to help develop, or what little can I do to contribute to the gay community? To me, that was one of the most significant things: it was helping build community.”
(David)

“If there had been an IYG for me growing up, that would have made a difference. I see this as an organization that really can make a difference in kids’ lives in this area. And so I would say certainly my identity motivates my desire to do something for them.”(Jackie)

Key Themes: Role of Identity

2. Giving to shape public policy and law.

Evelyn: I'd say this year, I might be close to about a third [of my giving] for LGBT [causes]. But normally it would be not much more than I give to any other [cause].

Ruth: But this year was critical. I mean, we knew once the Supreme Court made its decision this summer, that opened up a whole world of possibilities for us that didn't exist before.

Evelyn: And some real hope.

Ruth: Some real hope, exactly. And then when Indiana was going in the opposite direction, we said, "Well, if not now, when? I mean, we have got to get involved and do something about this."

Key Themes: Role of Identity

3. The experience of HIV / AIDS: Giving for loss and giving back

“[The Indiana AIDS Fund] is important to me because, personally, I am HIV positive, and I know that when I first found out, [...] I didn’t have anything, and I had a lot of folks helping me along the way. [...] For me, giving back to that community means a lot because it’s so personal. I got assistance at a time in my life when I was going through a really rough time.”(Patrick)

Key Themes: Role of Identity

4. Seeking acceptance and avoiding discriminatory organizations

“I would typically invest or donate time or money to organizations that share my beliefs or values. So for me specifically, I don’t support organizations that are not supportive of gay rights or of equal opportunity.” (Jessie)

“We will never support anyone or we will never give money or any items to someone who does not support gay rights. That is a deal breaker.” (Victor)

“If there’s any organization that I think has any kind of negative either impact or outlook on the gay community, they’re not gonna get a dime from me. I’m gay, I mean, I can’t do that to myself.” (David)

Key Themes: Role of Identity

5. Using philanthropy to assert LGBT identity in the mainstream

“To me, it’s important that we show students that, “Wow, there are alumni who are same-sex married couples.” (Tony)

“I think it’s important for us to be seen as a couple for a lot of reasons. I mean, not only because we give together, but also because we’re a gay couple who’s making an impact in the community.” (Peter)

Other aspects of the self

- Sexual orientation was only one of many identities that activated participants' philanthropy.
 - ▣ Hobbies and interests (i.e. a singer)
 - ▣ Life stages (i.e. becoming parents)
 - ▣ Religious beliefs (i.e. a Catholic)
 - ▣ Values (i.e. environmentalist, animal lover)
 - ▣ Profession (i.e. social worker)

Discussion

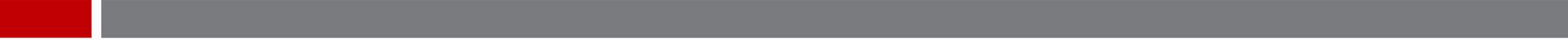
- ❑ Multiple mechanisms of giving are related to identity-based philanthropy, including values and psychological benefits.
- ❑ As participants expressed a sense of belonging to a larger LGBT community or a commitment to help others, particularly youth, this closely represents the identification theory of giving.
- ❑ Giving to support public policy changes reflects the justice motivation of giving.

Discussion

- Identification and justice models were also present in a study of donors to women's and girls' causes
- Are all identities the same?
 - ▣ Is an identity that is marginalized, where donors have experienced discrimination first-hand or could imagine it happening to themselves, distinct from mainstream identities?
 - ▣ “Differential identity motivation”

Limitations and Future Research

- Limitations
 - ▣ Sample size
 - ▣ Generalizability
- Implications
 - ▣ For Researchers
 - ▣ For Fundraisers
- Future research



Thank you!

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