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Philanthropy in a Changing World: An Evolving Attitude to Giving?

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Abstract

Even though philanthropy tends to be considered a sociological theme rather than an economic one, it poses a number of questions that challenge economists as well. We chose to address the following: How can economists contribute to the theories related to philanthropy? Can we consider voluntary giving a demonstration of generosity rather than a market-based solution? We examine some terms that are used in public economics theory and use them to explore the issues of philanthropy. The terms we reviewed are: the Samaritan's Dilemma, the Prisoner's Dilemma, and the Free-Rider Problem, which we consider to be interesting and inspiring (Stone 2008). We answer the second question by means of sociological theory. The economists who investigate philanthropy are repeatedly faced with the obvious fact that it does not involve any buying and/or selling; it is not a marketplace operation. We have to find and identify the social values of donors and volunteers rather than their economic values, because economists are not fully able to explain empathy, altruism, and helpful behaviour using traditional economic principles (Rutherford 2008).

The theoretical frame should be supported by relevant empirical data. There is, however, a lack of both theoretical and empirical work in this area in the Czech Republic. Before starting a large-scale survey, we decided to conduct smaller pre-research probes into people's attitudes towards altruism, philanthropy, and giving. Even though our sample was not fully representative, the responses that we collected generated interesting findings about people's views and attitudes. The first wave of data was collected between February and April 2009; the second wave between February and April 2010.

Key words: philanthropy, charity, altruism, public economics, motivation, not-for-profit

JEL classification L31, L38

CONTENT

1. Introduction	5
2. Definition of altruism	6
3. Approaches to philanthropy according to Arrow	9
4. Attitudes to donation	14
5. Results of research conducted in 2009 and 2010	15
6. Conclusion	25
7. Bibliography	28

1. Introduction

Philanthropy may often be perceived as a sociological rather than an economic topic. There are many perspectives regarding how to approach philanthropy, which presents a challenge to economists. Economists have long preferred a rational scheme of a person, i.e., as someone who calculates the profits and losses of future behaviour and makes decisions based on the benefit of immediate profit maximization. Shaped by this view, economists are sometimes unable to understand what constitutes and motivates altruistic behaviour in humans. The answer might be found in “reciprocal altruism” (Frič 2001), according to which an altruist acts without demanding a monetary reward while expecting to receive a different kind of reward instead (prestige, personal safety, increased qualifications, etc.)

We may, therefore, suppose that everybody who has the well-being of others in mind always gains something, and the awareness of these “gains” may serve as a motivator for their altruism. If this is the case, why aren’t we all altruists? The economist could say that profits made from altruism are rather uncertain. Such profits also tend to be unreliable because the influence of a single person on others may be small and insignificant. In other words, altruistic activities start to make sense only if undertaken by a considerable number of people. Even if people accept that the profits are uncertain, it is still necessary for them to overcome their mistrust of others, who might deceive them, i.e., act in a non-altruistic way. Here we refer to the well-known prisoner’s dilemma and a modification of it in which only mutual trust and cooperation lead to profit maximization and collective catastrophe avoidance (Rapaport and Chammah 1965).

Charity benefits the community as a whole; however, it may or may not benefit the individual (giver). So why should an individual act responsibly when he can pass this “duty” onto others? Here we refer to the “free rider” problem (e.g., Olson, 1965). The scope of altruism narrows in a group where the individual feels less responsible. The bigger the group, the smaller the altruism performed by its individual members. It is, however, considered necessary for every

community or society to practise charity, which means that charity and altruistic behaviour are deemed socially desirable. It is, of course, impossible to create a law that would impose a duty to act altruistically. Informal rules have this force, however. People, note with interest the actions and activities of others. They informally control the behaviour patterns in their surroundings, thus creating the norms of good behaviour that are an important source of altruism.

According to Schaad (1998), some people find it easy to identify with giving and respond swiftly when confronted with the suffering of others. Sympathy with suffering, feelings of personal satisfaction from the joy and happiness of others, and love for one's neighbour all represent the deepest roots of philanthropy. By choosing not to behave like rationally selfish people individuals give society as a whole a chance to behave rationally (Frič 2001).

2. Definition of altruism

The unresolved question of why people give gifts led to the creation of an economic theory. It is generally assumed that to fully grasp the idea of altruism we must first understand human behaviour. This seems to be the reason that philanthropy is examined and researched by other branches of science. Behaviour, including acts of charity, is very often linked with self-interest (egoism). Altruistic behaviour is explained as egoistical behaviour, the practice of which leads to profit through cooperation with others. So what does the concept of altruism entail? How should it be modelled in theory and what does it say to us? The concept of altruism was rendered well by Rutherford (2008) who explained it as “a concern for others that is not linked to a concern for oneself. This is however an internal state, and is not directly observable.”

While reading this definition, we are confronted with an important question. Could it be possible to examine and observe altruism from evident and examinable altruistic behaviour? Probably not as there are distinct differences between observable actions and the inner state and motives of the

giver. A wealthy philanthropist may, for instance, give a great amount of money to charity without being genuinely interested in those to whom the money is provided. Here “charity” may play the role of a tool for communicating with the public. Even if we label donations or observable altruistic behaviour as generosity, we can still find a huge gap between acts of generosity and an inner altruistic state of mind.

Altruism is a modern label used to refer to attitudes and acts performed to benefit others. Altruism is connected with a moral principle or motivation which, at least to some extent, compels us to give preference to the needs of others over our own needs, to make sacrifices beneficial for others, i.e., society. Altruism may be defined as any real behaviour aimed to benefit others. Sociologists, psychologists, and economists seek to explain the motivation for such behaviour. In our effort to find the reasons for such actions, we may view altruism from a few different perspectives. Some donors benefit (even economically) from giving, which is classified as altruistic behaviour by some theories but as thoroughly selfish by others. The descriptions below detail two fundamentally altruistic tendencies established by E.O. Wilson, one of the founders of socio-biology.

Soft-core altruism

One of the elementary questions pertinent to the examination of altruistic behaviour is whether it is possible for the altruist to gain nothing for his actions. This question is regularly answered by saying that we can help somebody or give them gifts without demanding a (not only monetary) reward, but this does not mean that we do not automatically link our behaviour with a specific type of reward. We may get prestige, networking opportunities, or a feeling of personal satisfaction. Some proponents of this theory even doubt the existence of altruism and claim that as every act is rewarded, it is not possible to talk about altruism.

Hard-core altruism

Hard-core altruism (also called pure altruism) refers to situations in which people act thoroughly selflessly without the slightest hope of reward. Such

behaviour, which results from “irrational” motivation and is unselfish, occurs very rarely in society. Both qualifications (complete selflessness and no profit expectations) are easy to challenge, however. As emotional and rational motivations function at the same time, it is virtually impossible for a human being to separate emotions and rationale. Therefore, it is virtually impossible to ever act selflessly. Even if we were able to act purely emotionally, i.e., selflessly, it would still be impossible to avoid all the form of profits and expectations of them. In other words, we always act selfishly and expect at least “indirect” profits. Frič points out a paradoxical finding according to which the prospect of a reward acts as a deterrent to a real altruist.

Over time, biologists made the interesting discovery that the behaviour of an individual makes sense if viewed from a genealogical perspective. In biology, altruism is defined as a form of behaviour in which an organism reduces its own biological fitness in an attempt to increase the biological fitness of another being. Pure altruism is therefore not advantageous for the organism itself, but if it supports other family members and therefore its own genes then it in effect increases its own inclusive fitness. Thus the chances of survival may be increased in an altruistic group as opposed to a non-altruistic group.

3. Approaches to philanthropy according to Arrow

The theory of altruism maintains that charitable behaviour may mean short-term sacrifice but long-term profits for a giver. In some cases, financial or other rewards may even have negative repercussions, as illustrated in the following passage.

The debate on the role of altruism in economic behaviour was launched in 1970. Titmuss (1970) explained the subject using the example of blood donation. Titmuss refers to the continual deterioration in blood donations following the introduction of a monetary reward for donors. If blood donation had been an altruistic deed before, it quickly became a means of obtaining money for the unqualified and poor. The donor checks were found to be inadequate and the blood quality of paid donors was lower. As the altruistic givers did not

want to “sell” their blood, their contributions were scarcer while the number of paid donors increased (Phelps 1975). Titmuss compared to different systems and hypothesized that the one system (of donation) would worsen if adapted the other system (of financial rewards).

Titmuss claimed that the introduction of donor payment would result in the decreased amount and quality of donated blood. Economists at the time disagreed. Kenneth Arrow, for instance, used the new utility theory (Phelps 1975) and determined three motives for altruistic behaviour. These are:

- *Social contract* – the benefit to an individual does not depend on others but cooperative behaviour tends to be effective;
- *Pure altruism* – the benefit to an individual is directly affected by the benefit to the other individual;
- *Impure altruism* – the benefit to an individual is determined by the extent of help to the other person.

Charity as a social contract

In the 1970s, charitable behaviour was not directly linked with altruism. The prevailing theories mostly focused on self-interest as the main driving force. This understanding views charitable activities as a consequence of the social contract and a tool to overcome some of society's failures, particularly those of the government and the market. Governmental failures include situations where the profit-making sector is unable to effectively provide some public goods and where the state seeks to rectify the situation through interventions. There are, however, many constraints consequently leading to state failures. Market failures tend to result from information asymmetry between buyers and sellers. These will not be further discussed, as we do not consider them to be relevant to our contribution.

Pure altruism

The theory of a social contract does not satisfactorily explain altruistic behaviour. How can we include altruism in the purely rational decision-making process of an individual? The theory of pure altruism gives a very clear answer.

Let's say that we have two people, Anna (A) and Ben (B). We mark their utility as U_A (Anna) and U_B (Ben). The number of goods consumed is X_A for Anna and X_B for Ben. The basics of this theory are summarized by the following formula:

$$U_A = f(X_A, u_B(X_B)) \quad (1)$$

What does the formula show? Anna's utility is not only the amount of goods that she consumes but also the amount of goods consumed by Ben. If Anna consumes a sufficient amount of goods X , while Ben consumes none, Anna will provide part to Ben and thus increase his utility. This model provides us with a clear model of how to examine altruism. In other words, this model assumes that people will be concerned with the amount of public goods only to the extent to which it affects their own consumption.

This model also deals with the free rider problem. In economics, collective bargaining, psychology, or politology, "free riders" are those consuming more than their fair share, or paying less than the fair share of what their production costs would justify. Parasitism is usually considered to be an economic issue only if it results in production termination or underproduction of a public good (and therefore not in Pareto effectiveness).

Anna is concerned with the absolute utility enjoyed by Ben regardless of her contribution to it. Ben, however, may be supported by entities other than Anna. If Anna reduces her support as a result of another entity's contribution, her utility will increase. (Anna does not include the loss of utility of others in her own utility function). This reinforces the free rider problem which, in turn, decreases support for Ben.

This model is rightly labelled as a "theory" because in reality we can never measure the degree of utility of people who have never met. Even if they did

meet, the utility still remains an individual category impossible to measure. The free rider problem seems to be a significant issue in donation. In practice, however, its importance is substantially diminished. People often give small gifts to charity while gaining almost nothing for themselves. The theory of pure altruism is unable to explain why this is so.

Impure altruism

When donating money to charity, people are influenced by many important factors, including social pressure, feelings of guilt, sympathy, or just a subsequent good feeling. To fully grasp the low occurrence of the free rider problem regarding donation in practice, we must first understand the concept of the “warm glow” as used by economists. This term, referring to the warm feeling resulting from a good deed, was first introduced by the economist James Andreoni (1990) who argued that the inner motivation resulting in donation carries much more weight than people might think. This theory states that people provide aid not only to help something or somebody, e.g., to save dying whales, but to enjoy the good feeling that providing aid induces. People give money not only to support a project but also because they simply enjoy doing so.

The model of pure altruism suggests that neither gift recipients nor the way the money will be used are known to the giver. This is absolutely acceptable in the context of impure altruism, where the giver gives for the sake of giving.

The perception of non-profit-making organizations Frič (2001) conducted research in the Czech Republic on donation and voluntary activities. This unique research project gathered important data on motivation and attitudes towards donation.

To examine attitudes towards donation in depth, we must first outline the general public view of non-profit-making organizations. According to the data collected in 2001, non-profit-making organizations enjoy a reputation as trustworthy organizations providing high-quality services. The perception of the role played by these organizations varies, however. “The main factor

characterizing the differences in the way non-profit-making organizations are seen is the meaningfulness of their existence with regard to interests of the individual and the society. The Czech public is divided in two camps, those who believe it is meaningful and those who do not.” (Frič 2001).

The list of positive qualities of non-profit-making organizations include especially those related to charity and the services they provide: charitable efforts to help the most needy (79% of respondents), spreading a sense of solidarity among people (75% of respondents), extending freedom of individuals (60% of respondents), providing solutions to dramatic consequences of the market economy failures (58% of respondents), preventing increasing selfishness (53% of respondents), etc.

The negative perception of non-profit-making organizations is associated with those that do not provide any specific services but represent group or ideological interests instead. Non-profit-making organizations are often blamed for being founded to serve the desires of ambitious people, instead of serving the needy (52% respondents). This negative view is reinforced by the claim that these organizations are especially interested in their own profits (34% of respondents).

This short summary shows that although for many decades non-profit-making organizations did not have the opportunity to present themselves, teach people about charity and philanthropy, or establish a firm position in society, the public tends to view them favourably.

4. Attitudes to donation

The aforementioned conclusions are linked to the research led by Frič in 2001. In 2009 and 2010, the authors of this article conducted their own research and acquired new data supporting the findings on the public attitudes and opinions on donation.

Research in the area of philanthropy usually involves the following questions: What do we know about people who donate money to non-profit-making

organizations? How much money do they give? What are the main methods of funding? Why do people donate money? What projects (areas) does the public tend to support? The goal of the projects we conducted was not to answer each of these questions, but to ascertain the attitudes of the general public to these issues.

Before we attempt to answer any other questions, we deemed it necessary to ask the following fundamental question: How do people assess donation in today's society? Do they assume non-profit organizations acquire their funds (donations) in a transparent way? Who should support charities – individuals or governments? Do people trust non-profit-making organizations? Do they view donating as the moral responsibility of every person?

Data providing answers to these questions were drawn from 823 surveys collected by students of the Department of Public Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Administration, Masaryk University. The research was conducted over a period of two years. In 2009, 359 surveys were collected; in 2010, 464 surveys were collected. We repeated the first study because we wanted to communicate with a larger number of people, test the reliability of responses gathered by students, and discover any differences in the responses.

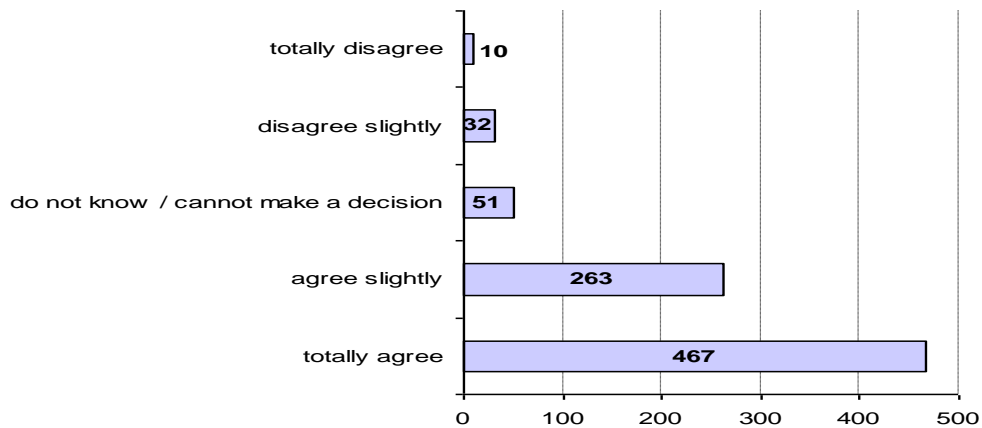
The respondents were asked to evaluate 15 fundamental statements using a 5-point rating scale: totally agree (1), agree slightly (2), do not know / cannot decide (3), disagree slightly (4), totally disagree (5).

5. Results of research conducted in 2009 and 2010

The first important finding is that most respondents agree on the moral value of philanthropy. Of the 823 respondents, 730 (88%) agree with this view. It is interesting that there was no difference between the responses of people who classified themselves as either believers or non-believers. Of the respondents who fully or partially disagreed with the moral value of philanthropy, 64% are males with average salaries who do not share a household with a person under 19 years of age. Nevertheless, 76% of the

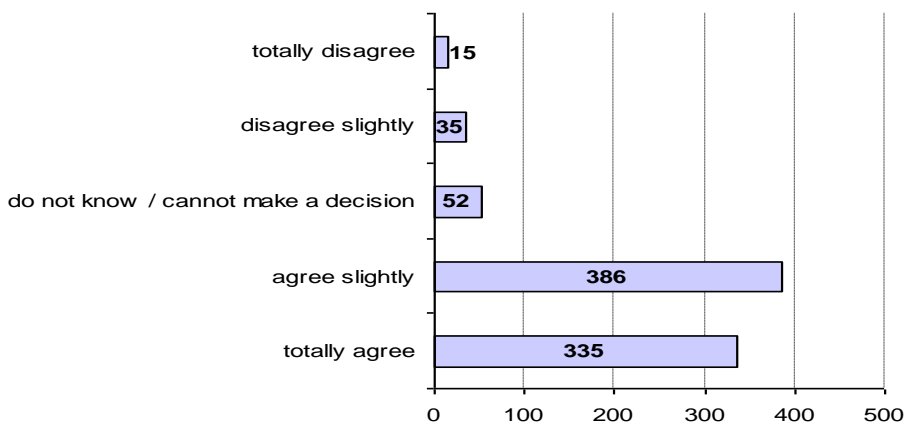
respondents who disagreed with this statement would donate money to non-profit-making organizations if they could check how it was used.

Chart 1: Donating money to people in need is morally right



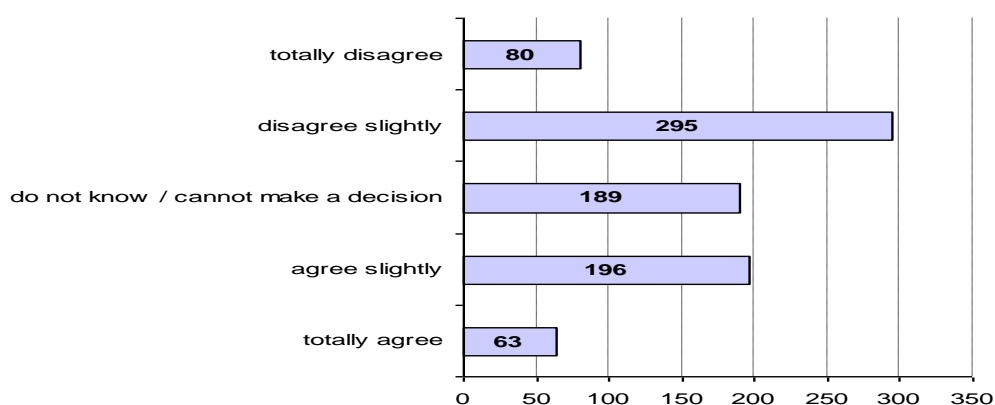
The first set of statements in the survey focused on the necessity of non-profit-making organizations in the area of donation. The results show that people consider activities of non-profit-making organizations highly important. The people who disagreed with this (6%) do not trust non-profit-making organizations; this view is outlined in later statements.

Chart 2: Activities of non-profit-making organizations are beneficial to society and therefore it is right to support them financially



A majority of respondents (87.6%) agreed on the necessity of financially supporting non-profit-making organizations. The agreement may be so strong because the respondents did not have to decide about who should fund non-profit-making organizations, i.e., whether it should be the state, the profit-making sector, individuals in society, etc. This possibility is supported by the results of the next question. Here, we did not receive such a clear answer as shown in Chart 2. The statement addressed whether non-profit-making organizations should be supported by companies and entrepreneurs.

Chart 3: The activities of non-profit-making companies are praiseworthy but they should be funded by companies and entrepreneurs



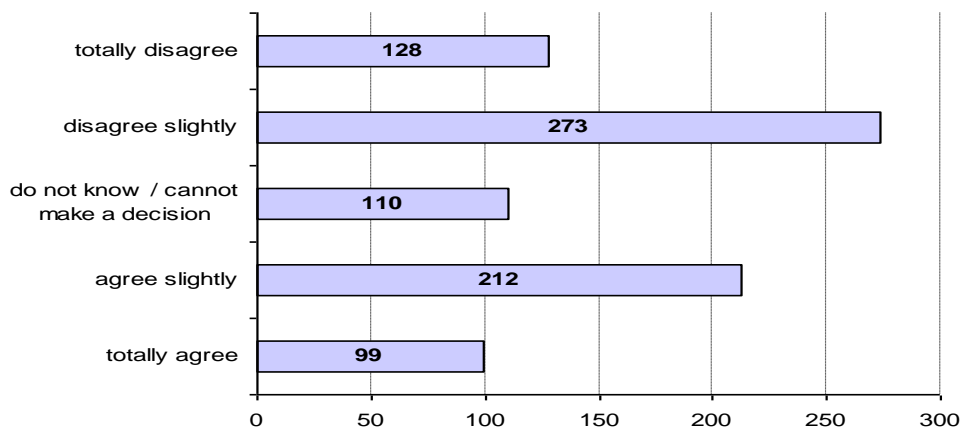
Some respondents agreed with this statement (31%) but more disagreed (41%). Nearly a quarter of the respondents (23%) could not decide. The reason such a large percentage could not decide may be very simple. They may indeed believe that the profit-making sector should support the non-profit-making one, but this view may extend beyond the profit-making sector; they may believe that others, such as the government and individuals, should participate as well. Another explanation can be that these respondents do not have a clear opinion on who should actually support the non-profit-making organizations financially.

The next statement was worded as follows: People involved in non-profit-organizations are pursuing their own interests and therefore they should fund their activities themselves. Over two thirds (70%) of respondents did not agree with this view. Activities and services of non-profit-making organizations are

provided for external consumers rather than for their members (employees, volunteers).

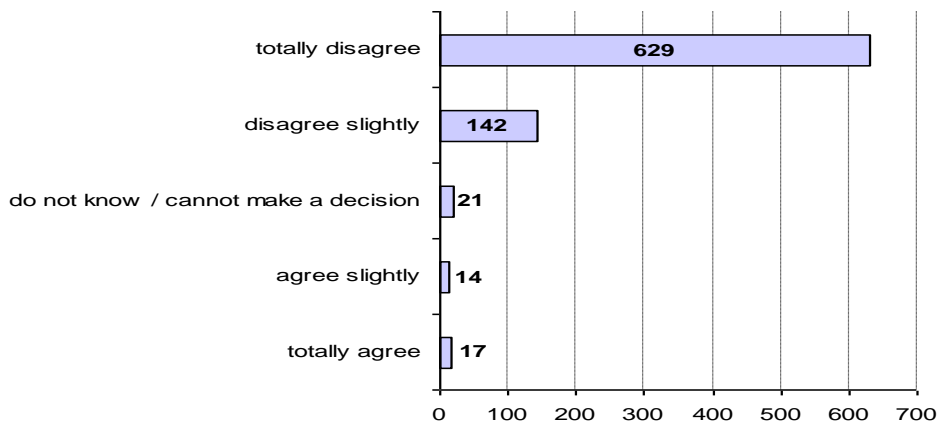
What part does the state play in funding the non-profit-making sector? Should non-profit-making organizations be funded from public budgets? We decided to slightly modify this more or less uninteresting statement (regarding the expected response) to: Non-profit-making organizations should be completely independent and the state should not fund them. The respondents answered as expected: nearly two thirds disagreed with this view. They believe that the state should fund non-profit-making organizations.

Chart 4: Needy people should be taken care of by the state, as that is what we pay our taxes for



We can see that the responses to this statement differ as people do not have a clear opinion. The larger part of the respondents (49%) disagrees with the statement. People believe that the (either positive or negative) governmental decision of whether to support the activities of non-profit-making organizations does not depend on the fact that we pay taxes.

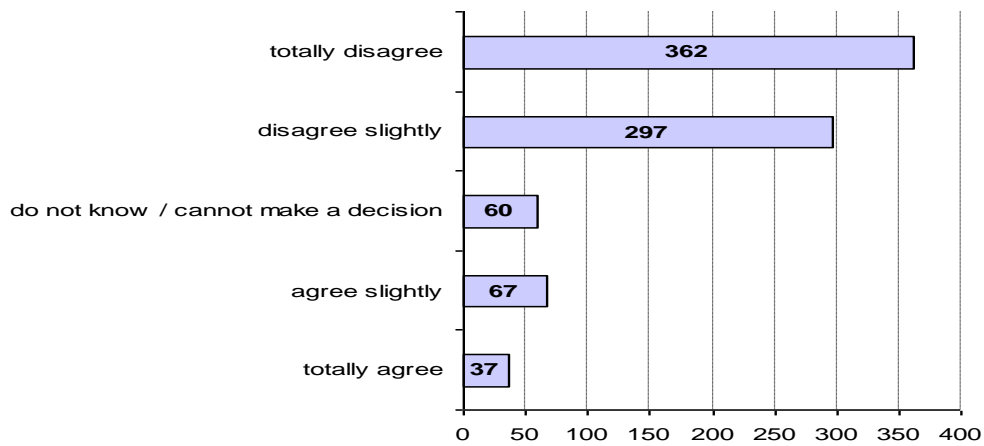
Chart 5: Charity belongs in the 19th century and there is no need for it in modern society



Although people differ in their opinions of who should actually support non-profit-making organizations, they definitely agree on the response to the following statement: Charity belongs in the 19th century and there is no need for it in modern society. A remarkable 629 respondents (76%) strongly disagree with this statement and 142 respondents (17%) disagree slightly. No other statement achieved such a unified response.

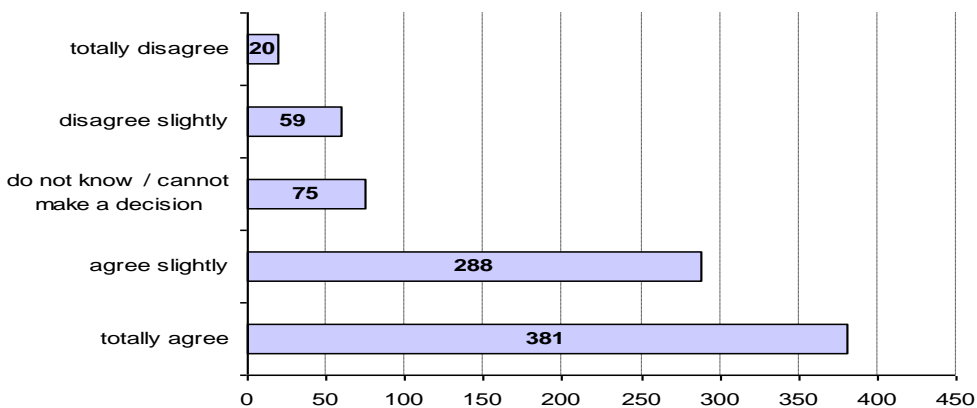
The second set of statements concerned the transparency of non-profit-making organizations. We included the transparency issue in several statements. The following two charts present two very similar statements and responses to them. In the first chart, we can see that the trust in non-profit-making organizations influence opinions and attitudes of the public to a great extent. Broadly speaking, people trust non-profit-making organizations. It is interesting that this opinion is held both by donors and by people who have never donated to a non-profit-making organization.

Chart 6: I do not trust non-profit-making organizations and therefore I will not donate to them



In the next chart, we can observe that people differentiate between trust in non-profit-making organizations and the transparency in raising and spending money. A citizen's decision to donate money depends significantly on the possibility of checking how the money has been used. A donor's wish to have this possibility cannot therefore be interpreted as distrust of non-profit-making organizations. A somewhat higher number of respondents (75) could not decide, just as in the previous question.

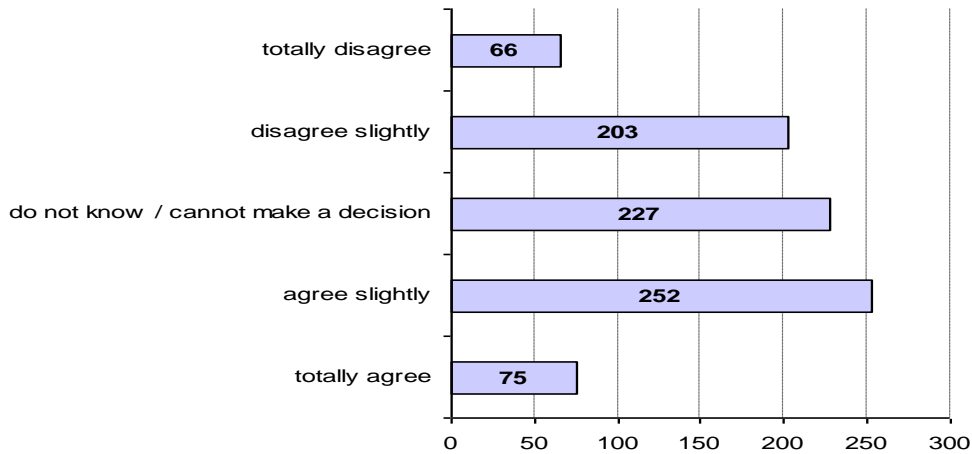
Chart 7: I would like to donate to a non-profit-making organization if I could check how the money has been used



The findings mentioned thus far imply that people generally trust non-profit-making organizations. However, their opinions differ if they are to decide whether they trust the non-profit-making organizations more than they do the state. Almost a third of the respondents could not even decide.

Few respondents were able to either strongly agree or strongly disagree with the following statement.

Chart 8: I trust non-profit-making organizations more than I trust the state and therefore I will be happy to donate to them within my limits



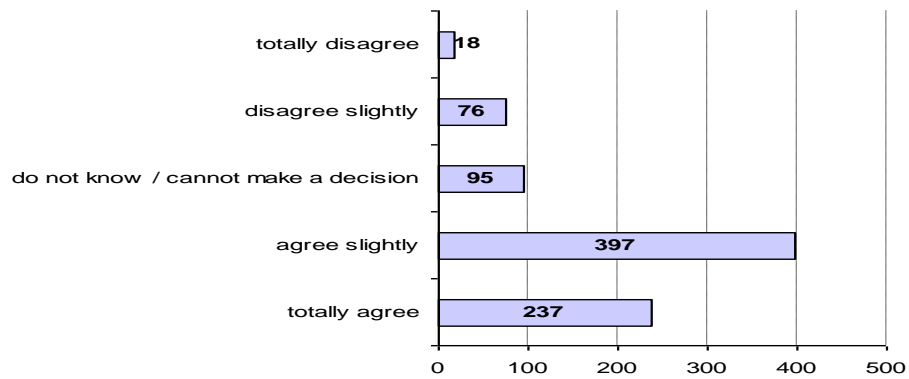
These results can be interpreted in two ways. It may be difficult for respondents to measure their trust in the state and in non-profit-making organizations. Alternately, even if people trusted the non-profit-making organizations more than the state, this may still be an insufficient reason for supporting them financially.

People trust non-profit-making organizations and most perceive donating money as the moral obligation of every person. If they do not want to donate money, it can be assumed that the reason for this must be the lack of transparency of non-profit-making organizations. Is it also possible that, in spite of trusting non-profit-making organizations, people will not donate money to them because they consider them amateurs? The responses to the statement I would never donate to non-profit-making organizations because they are amateurs were clear: 88% of respondents disagreed.

A third of the respondents believe that if we want to help somebody or to support an activity, we should donate our money directly to the recipient. If we give money via a non-profit-making organization, part of this money is

unnecessarily spent on operating expenses. This view is reflected in the next statement presented in the last chart.

Chart 9: Donating money to a non-profit-making organization is reasonable as they can help better than an individual, thanks to their expertise



The above-stated results were presented as combined figures for years 2009 and 2010. We were able to combine the data because of the negligible differences in respondents' opinions between those years. Their attitudes regarding confidence and the necessity and transparency of non-profit-making organizations managing raised financial resources only changed very subtly. The opinion shifts are presented in the following table. The number represents the arithmetic mean of responses: totally agree (1), agree slightly (2), do not know / cannot decide (3), disagree slightly (4) and totally disagree (5).

Table 1: Respondents' average rating in individual years

		2009	2010
1	Activities of non-profit-making organizations are beneficial to society and therefore it is right to support them financially.	1.8	1.8
2	I would donate to a non-profit-making organization if I could check how the money has been used.	1.8	1.9
3	People involved in non-profit-organizations are pursuing their own interests and therefore they should fund their activities themselves.	3.7	3.8
4	Non-profit-making organizations may be able to help in individual cases but they cannot handle problems on a systematic basis.	2.4	2.4

5	I do not trust non-profit-making organizations and therefore I will not donate to them.	4.1	4.0
6	Non-profit-making organizations should be fully independent with no funding from the state.	3.8	3.5
7	Charity belongs in the 19th century and there is no need for it in modern society.	4.5	4.7
8	Needy people should be taken care of by the state, as that is what we pay our taxes for.	3.1	3.2
9	If I want to give a gift, my trust in the respective organization plays no role.	4.0	4.1
10	Donating money to a non-profit-making organization is reasonable as they can help well than an individual, thanks to their expertise.	2.1	2.1
11	I would never donate to non-profit-making organizations as they are amateurs.	4.2	4.4
12	Donating money to people in need is morally right.	1.6	1.6
13	Activities of non-profit-making companies are praiseworthy but they should be funded by companies and entrepreneurs.	3.1	3.2
14	People in need should be helped directly; the money should not be given to non-profit-making organizations that spend part of it on operating expenses.	3.1	3.2
15	I trust non-profit-making organizations more than I trust the state and therefore I will be happy to donate to them within my limits.	2.9	2.9

Source: Own research carried out in 2009 and 2010

As previously mentioned, the statements fall into three groups.

- There was no difference in respondents' opinions in statements aimed at the role and necessity of philanthropic activities (or non-profit-making organizations) in today's society (statements 1, 4, 10, and 12). The only difference is connected with statement 7: people more often asserted that charity is necessary even in today's society.
- It is not as easy to interpret responses to the statements concerning transparency of non-profit-making organizations and their credibility. Their credibility slightly weakened in the eyes of the public. This is indicated

by responses to statements 5 (distrust of non-profit-making organizations, leading to no donation, increased moderately) and 9 (if an individual wants to donate, trust in a non-profit-making organization plays a more important role than in the previous year). Respondents' opinions comparing trust in non-profit-making organizations and in the state (statement 15) did not change. In 2010, respondents rate activities of non-profit-making organizations higher; they less often see their representatives as amateurs (statement 11), they less often think that these organizations spend disproportionate amounts of money on operating expenses, and that they cannot support needy areas to the same extent as an individual could by supporting those areas directly (statement 14).

- The third set of statements pertained to funding. All relevant statements achieved more points on average this year. People more often believe that non-profit-making organizations should not be funded primarily by the people involved in them (statement 3) and they should be also funded by companies (statement 13). The responses also indicate the retreating role of the state in funding charitable activities. People are more inclined to think that non-profit-making organizations should be independent and that the state should not fund them (statement 6, which was the only one to achieve an opinion shift of three decimal places). The respondents also agree less with the statement that the state should fund non-profit-making organizations since we contribute by paying our taxes (statement 8).

6. Conclusion

The aim of the conducted research was to examine public opinions regarding donation. The goal was not to collect empirical data about the amount of donation but rather to conduct a survey of altruistic behaviour. We can know, for example, the average value of a donation, but it is also important to know this person's attitudes and values as well as their motivation to donate. Donating is no proof of either altruistic behaviour or the maturity of a particular society with regard to charity. Questions concerning altruistic behaviour may include: Are people willing to help others in need or do they instead rely on the

state to deal with this matter? Are people eager to contribute financially or do they consider this nothing more than a moral obligation? Do people trust non-profit-making organizations in terms of how they raise money, such as holding public collections? Could people suspect non-profit-making organizations of being amateurish or even worse?

At this time, there is not enough research in the Czech Republic pertaining to these issues. We do not have the necessary amount of analyses of charitable behaviour explaining altruistic motivation. The most significant studies that have been carried out are Non-profit-making sector in the Czech Republic: Results of an international comparative project of Johns Hopkins University (1998) and Donation and voluntary activities in the Czech Republic (Frič 2001).

In concluding the research conducted in 2009 and 2010, and examining the findings of said research, what can we learn about attitudes towards charity in the Czech Republic? Philanthropy has traditionally been perceived by the Czech public as a “social practice” built on tradition and connected to national pride and respect. In the early 20th century, philanthropy developed dynamically on traditional values, hand in hand with the development of civil society. However, this long tradition was disrupted by fifty years of Nazism and Communism. After 1989, philanthropy returned to Czech society along with other moral and social values. Nonetheless, this return was slow, complex, and erratic.

Despite having only sporadic data from previous years, we can assume that individual philanthropy is gradually developing. An increasing willingness to donate can be observed, especially with small and impulsive gifts related to events presented in the media (e.g., natural disasters, humanitarian tragedies, etc.) or to “popular” areas of support (children with disabilities, ill people, etc.).

Our research, carried out in 2009 and 2010, shows certain observable public attitudes. Generally, we can say that most respondents have a positive attitude towards donation; people feel morally obliged to support charitable purposes

(to help people in need). Nearly 90% of the respondents agreed that donating to people in need is morally right. However, if it comes to the question about who should support these people in need – whether it should be the state or the non-profit-making organizations – respondents show hesitation. They believe that non-profit organizations are doing a good job and that their activities are valuable. They also believe that these organizations should be supported financially. However, they hesitate when deciding whether the organizations should be supported by the state, by companies, or by individuals. Furthermore, although people agree that they should contribute as well, they are only willing to put their hands into their pockets if they have a guarantee that their money is spent in a credible way.

The fact that non-profit-making organizations are perceived positively in the eyes of the public is a very interesting finding when compared with the fact that only 47% of the population (STEM 2004) donated to a non-profit-making organization at least once in the previous year. Even though people consider donating money morally right, many have never donated. We would like to further our studies to determine why this is the case.

Another interesting finding is the prevailing opinion that non-profit-making organizations are beneficial to society and that charity is necessary in society. This conclusion may seem banal, and it is. However, its confirmation in a society severely damaged by a totalitarian regime is extremely important. In a society where less than half of the population support non-profit-making organizations financially, it is important to find the reason for this fact. Our research has shown that “needlessness of philanthropy” in the Czech Republic is most likely not the reason.

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