

Intentions and reciprocal behavior

This topic proposes to study the importance of intentions on reciprocal behavior. The key contribution will be to design a series of experiments that will allow to vary the level or nature of intent as opposed to only controlling for intent as observed in the existing literature (Cox, 2004; Charness, 2004; Cox and Deck, 2005; McCabe, Rigdon, and Smith, 2003).

The research will involve laboratory and field experiments and might be conducted as a cotutelle (double degree) under the supervision of Prof Maroš Servátka at Macquarie Business School in Sydney.

Social influence in charitable giving

Charities often publicize generous contributions as fund-raising strategy and encourage individuals to donate more. This topic proposes to analyze the effect of social influence in charitable giving and experimentally test the conjecture that different types of social information about other donors' decision will have different effects on donors.

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Uncovering Motives for Volunteering and Charitable Giving

Volunteering is often a two-stage process. People first register their interest to volunteer and then, on the day, they decide to whether to indeed volunteer or not, if asked to. For example, in some countries people first decide to join a blood or bone marrow registry and later, when approached by the registry, decide whether to actually donate or not. This two-stage decision is particularly interesting from the perspective of moral consistency and moral licensing academic debate in social psychology.

According to moral licensing, behaving in a moral or socially desirable way, such as signing up for a registry, might result in people later on being less worried about the negative consequences of their subsequent actions and thus displaying behaviors that are in contrast with their original choices. For example, they may not volunteer when contacted by the registry when there is an urgent need for their help. Moral consistency gives the opposite prediction – to stay consistent with the initial action of joining the registry the individual will be more likely to volunteer when contacted later on. Getting an individual to sign up for the registry might also increase psychological affiliation with the registry's administering organization, and more so the higher cost to sign up.

The time dimension between has been shown to influence volunteering and other prosocial activities. The time elapsed between the expression of interest to volunteer and volunteering itself is therefore a probable factor interacting with moral licensing/moral consistency, influencing the decision to actually volunteer. The objective of this dissertation is to theoretically and experimentally examine the relationship between the good deed of expressing the interest to volunteer that likely creates warm glow and the likelihood of following through when contacted by the volunteering organization. The understanding of the relationship is crucial for providing policy recommendations aimed at increasing the efficiency of volunteering process.

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