

ABSTRACT

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Attitudes towards giving and giving behavior in diverse societies: Learning from the Israeli case

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Abstract:

Faced with massive waves of immigration from the Middle East and Africa, European societies are confronting dramatic demographic changes, and are turning from culturally, religiously and linguistically homogenous societies into increasingly multicultural societies, where traditional and modern populations coexist. As the Israeli experience shows, in culturally and demographically diverse societies, attitudes towards giving inevitably diverge, resulting in varied patterns of giving behavior.

Our goals in this paper is to explore the nexus between attitudes towards giving and giving behaviors among three different communities (or subculture) in Israeli society – Arabs, Ultra-Orthodox Jews and the general Jewish population. We measured differences in attitudes towards giving between the three groups, and analyzed the correspondence of attitudes with various patterns of giving, including scope, propensity, targets of giving and modes of giving.

We conducted a telephone-based survey with a representative random sample (N=614) of Jewish and Arab Israeli adults (18+) whom we asked questions about attitudes towards giving, giving behaviors, motivations for giving, organ donations, volunteering, social trust and socio-demographic variables.

We found that more positive attitudes towards giving among the ultra-orthodox population is associated with increased likelihood and scope of giving, and a less strategic, more local and familial giving style, compared to less devout Jews. In the Arab population, critical attitudes

towards giving, mixed with a strong mistrust in institutions, result in lower rates but higher sums of giving, and in a moderately strategic, local and familial giving style, compared to Jewish donors. We discuss these findings in the context of social and cultural identities, and argue that in marginalized and clearly demarcated subcultures, in varying level of conflict with the dominant population, both values and identities affect giving, and concurrently, giving is seen and utilized as a communal building block. Such views are reflected in these communities' giving styles and patterns.

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