

# CHARITABLE GIVING IN THE PUBLIC WORKPLACE

## A Framework for Understanding Employees' Philanthropic Performance

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study addresses formal workplace giving campaigns, a less-researched area of philanthropic studies that is increasingly important to the nonprofit sector and a fixture in local, state, and federal governments. Using data from an electronic survey administered to state employees at a large public university and mixed methods for preliminary analysis, a three-part analytical framework is proposed to better explain workplace giving, looking in particular at how philanthropic crowding, organizational identification, and conceptions of community influence employee donative behavior. No evidence is found that workplace giving crowds out private giving, and a possible reinforcement effect is detected in that those who give in the workplace also tend to give outside the workplace. Organizational identification and conceptions of community are also found to influence workplace donative behavior.*

**KEYWORDS:** *nonprofits, philanthropic performance, public employees, workplace giving*

The fiscal health of nonprofit organizations affects not only the management and performance of the nonprofit sector, but also the effectiveness of government organizations and the choices of public policymakers (James, 2009, p. 661; Van Slyke & Johnson, 2006, p. 467). A nonprofit manager's job of achieving financial sustainability for his or her organization can be challenging in the best of times. However, recent economic turbulence brings into sharp relief the urgency of fiscal pressures facing nonprofit organizations, which simultaneously face unprecedented demand for services (Reed, Bridgeland, McNaught, & Dunkelman, 2009). As non-

profit managers seek to diversify and focus their funding streams (e.g., Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Van Slyke & Johnson, 2006), workplace giving campaigns have become important resource pools for many charitable organizations, resources that are particularly dear in an economic recession.

Cross-sector partnerships that facilitate and encourage donations of money to charitable organizations by private and government employees have been in use for some time (Barman, 2006; Keating & Frumkin, 2003; Romney-Alexander, 2002). Nevertheless, formal workplace giving programs, usually in the form of payroll deductions, are gaining in popularity both domestically and internationally (e.g., Australian Charities Fund, 2003; Moran, 2003; Romney-Alexander, 2002). These types of campaigns are particularly noticeable in the U.S. public sector, where many states as well as the federal government host giving campaigns in public workplaces. This means that many public employees are asked, often repeatedly, to donate to charitable causes in their places of employment. The magnitude of this activity is quite large, with implications not only for the nonprofits themselves (see Bielefeld, Murdoch, & Waddell, 1997; Young, 2001) but also for the public employees who are asked to give. For example, some estimate that public employees have contributed, via the U.S. federal government's combined workplace giving campaign, between \$240 million and \$270 million in donations each year for the past decade (Bowman, 2003; Office of Personnel Management, 2010). The federal combined campaign is the nation's largest charitable workplace campaign, and the annual federal donations are a small but significant portion of the growing annual total of workplace giving campaign dollars, ranging between \$3.5 billion and \$5 billion (Barman, 2002, 2006; Foundation Center, 2010; National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2003).

While some suggest that fund-raising through workplace giving programs can be low-cost (Romney-Alexander, 2002), beneficial to employee motivation (Weiser & Zadek, 2000), and lucrative, relatively little is known about formal workplace giving based on empirical analysis. This is particularly true of public sector giving campaigns. The present study's intent is to provide some preliminary analysis of formal workplace giving by examining donative behaviors of state employees at a large public university that sponsors workplace charity campaigns.

To help analyze the data and to advance a more general understanding of formal workplace giving, a research framework is presented that it is hoped will encourage future conversations and scholarship in this area of workplace philanthropy. The framework proposes three broad questions. First, at the individual level, it asks about the relationship between donating in a public workplace giving program and private giving (outside the workplace). Do workplace giving programs have a crowding-out effect or a magnification effect with other venues of giving? Is there a relationship between socioeconomic status and giving in the workplace?

Second, at the organization/individual relationship level, how do various communication strategies utilized in public workplace giving campaigns (e.g., e-mail notices, personal appeals from coworkers, press releases) influence employee giving behavior? Does organizational identification play a role? Finally, at the organizational field level, do employee perceptions of the charitable partner(s) influence workplace giving? More specifically, are there giving effects related to employees' conceptions of their community? How does this affect the public organization's target workplace giving campaign partners, such as the United Way? These questions are addressed by means of a review of several streams of relevant research, offering several sets of hypotheses that seem to fit this "triadic" approach to workplace giving. Some of the hypotheses are technically in the form of empirically falsifiable statements, but it is important to preface the discussion in the article by underscoring its exploratory nature. The article contributes a research framework that the authors hope will encourage other scholars to undertake more systematic analyses, but it is recognized that only parts of the framework can be quantitatively tested.

### **Literature Review**

Multiple levels of analysis in the philanthropic literature are relevant to the present study. Past studies (e.g., Barman, 2007; Sokolowski, 1996) exploited micro- or macrolevels of analysis, depending on whether their conceptual approach was rooted in the individual donor ("microlevel") or the organizational/institutional environment ("macrolevel"). Barman (2007) observes a third, "relational" approach that focuses on the reciprocal (dyadic) relationship between the individual and the organization. For the purposes of the present study, this is termed a "mesolevel" approach because of its simultaneous focus on the relationship between micro- and macro-actors.

Taken together, a triadic framework can foster a better understanding of workplace giving. Relative to workplace philanthropy, the framework has three distinct conceptual levels that encompass different sets of research questions. Microlevel studies focus on individuals within organizations and encompass such phenomena as individual motivation to engage in philanthropic behavior. Mesolevel studies focus on the two-way relationship between the organization and the individual. Relevant macrolevel studies focus on the institutional arrangements and organization-level phenomena that influence workplace giving dynamics and outcomes. Each of the three levels of analysis is reviewed, and a hypothesis is offered with respect to how each approach relates to the inquiry. While the focus and data deal with public employees, the language of the hypotheses is left broad in recognition that the proposed relationships may also apply to other employees asked to give at work.

## MICROLEVEL: INDIVIDUAL CROWDING

At the microlevel, there has been extensive research on individual attributes that influence philanthropic behavior (e.g., Independent Sector, 2001). Research suggests that many individual factors influence charitable behaviors, including individual philanthropy. For example, individual charitable behaviors are linked to socioeconomic status. Those in high-status groups tend to give more, join more associations, and volunteer more (McPherson, 1981). Other strong correlates of philanthropy are age, income, religiosity, education, and volunteering (Gittell & Tibaldi, 2006). For instance, people with more education tend to donate more of their money to charitable causes (Andreoni, Brown, & Rischall, 2003; Brown, 2005). Income is also positively related to charitable giving, although many people without large incomes can be seen to give generously (Schervish & Havens, 1998). Unlike volunteering, however, philanthropy among blacks is greater than philanthropy among whites, when other factors are held constant (Andreoni & Scholz, 1998). People with a religious background are also more likely to give, and generally give larger amounts than the nonreligious (Wu, 2004; Yen, 2002). These individual characteristics are also related to volunteering—another charitable behavior. Studies of volunteering from the 1980s through the early 2000s have found that volunteers are more likely to be white, married, have children, be age 35 to 44, be employed, and have a higher level of education and greater income (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Relative to the data, the focus is on how public employee stratification influences individual giving in workplace settings. Employee stratification is particularly prevalent in public organizations, where individuals are often hierarchically arranged in workplace settings (e.g., entry level, middle management, upper management). The data have several strata, which are a function of the interplay between socioeconomic factors like education and income. The focus here is primarily on the distinction between staff and tenured faculty employees, but others are recognized. For example, within staff, another stratum differentiates between senior (more middle/upper administration) and nonsenior staff (more entry level). The former are generally salaried, with higher education levels and compensation. The latter are generally hourly (“8 A.M.–5 P.M.”) and are subject to greater levels of accountability; these employees, unlike senior staff, have to submit time sheets, leave slips, and generally deal with more administrative bureaucracy. Within the faculty, non-tenure-track, tenure-track, and tenured employees comprise other strata, again generally marked by increasing compensation and experience/prestige. Based on what research tells us about income and education, it is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 1: Employees in higher strata (reflecting compensation and education) will be more likely to donate and will give larger gifts than employees in lower strata.*

Beyond the influence of demographics, it is necessary to also focus on factors that “crowd out” individual behavior. Some of these factors are admittedly more “relational” (meso) in nature, but the discussion will briefly progress through them in order to underscore the parts of the literature that are most relevant: the individual’s personal price elasticity for various categories of giving.

Scholars have identified several sources of crowding out. One stream of research focuses on government action. The interest in this area is generally twofold: (1) *fund-raising crowding out*, which happens when government subsidizes efforts by nonprofits to address social problems, and (2) *classic crowding out*, which happens due to government taxation, such as individual taxes to fund direct public service provision or to address social problems through nonprofit organizations. Regarding the first, fund-raising crowd out, there is conflicting evidence whether government subsidies/grants displace private-sector giving by causing grant-receiving nonprofits to put fewer resources into fund-raising (e.g., Andreoni, 1989; Andreoni & Payne, 2003; Arulampalam, Backus, & Micklewright, 2009; Brooks, 2000; Kingma, 1989; Okten & Weisbrod, 2000; Ribar & Wilhelm, 2002). For example, Brooks (2000) finds that government subsidies crowd out private giving at high levels, but at lower levels government grants may stimulate private donations to the nonprofit sector. Equally conflicting findings surround classic crowd-out: “individual donors, who are also often taxpayers, will treat their voluntary private contributions as a substitute for their involuntary contributions through taxation and, as a result, reduce giving to a charity by the full amount of the [government] grant” (Andreoni & Payne, 2007, p. 2).

While some have explored government’s role in creating/exacerbating substitution effects between charities (Feldstein & Clotfelter, 1976), relatively less attention has been given to individual expenditure substitution, or the “extent to which one charitable donation displaces another” (Reinstein, 2006, p. 2). Reinstein’s study focuses on the influence of shocks (e.g., natural disasters, prolific appeals) in revealing the extent to which individual donors view various charitable causes as substitutes. Reinstein supplies some necessary background on this inquiry (we include his citations):

According to a “pure public goods” model (Becker, 1974) there should be virtually no expenditure substitution between unrelated charities. On the other hand, in the “warm-glow model” (Andreoni, 1990) if charity is a homogeneous good, when an individual increases her gift to one charity she will reduce giving to all other charities by the same amount. A “tithing model” (e.g., Laffont & Martimort, 2002) also predicts “perfect” (100%) crowding out. A warm-glow model in which different charities are distinct components of the utility function can yield virtually any result, as can an impact model (Duncan, 2004). The “Kantian” model predicts a moderate amount of expenditure substitution, but little substitution between distinct categories of charity. (2009, pp. 3–4)

In his study, Reinstein found some evidence of expenditure substitution, but he

notes that “overall, there is a greater level of substitution for the larger givers than for those who give smaller amounts. The substitution does not tend to occur at the extensive margin: a household that stops (starts) giving to one category tends to stop (start) giving to another category more often than the reverse” (2009, p. 5).

Because there are so few empirical studies about workplace giving, it is not known in which direction crowding out might occur—either private giving crowding out workplace giving or vice versa—or in which direction it might be the strongest. This is an empirical question. Therefore, the causality is left indeterminate in the second hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2: Giving at work will affect giving and volunteering behaviors outside work.*

### **MESOLEVEL: RELATION-BASED**

Beyond a more individual-centric approach, another important theme in the literature focuses on the relationship between individual donors and their organizations (e.g., Healy, 2004; Schervish & Havens, 1997; Straub, 2003). People tend to both volunteer more and give more when they are asked to do so (Independent Sector, 2001; Okun & Eisenberg, 1992; Wymer, 1997). The point of interest here is whether the relationship between organization and organization member has any impact on workplace giving. Management scholars have identified many antecedents and correlates of organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), and it should be noted that affective commitment is closely related to organization identity (Riketta, 2005). For example, sex and position play a relatively small to insignificant role (Bruning & Snyder, 1983; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), but job satisfaction is substantially related to organizational commitment and identification.

So far as can be determined, the relational framework has not been explicitly applied to workplace giving. They are associated here primarily by bringing to bear the organizational identification and communication literature to examine this topic of inquiry.

Organizational identification research examines the driving factors and consequences of organizational membership. This line of scholarship argues that the more a member accepts and internalizes an organization’s values, the stronger the identification (or relation-based bond) will be between the individual and the larger system. “Simply put, an individual who is inclined to identify with an organization will be open to persuasive communication from various sources within that organization” (Cheney, 1983, p. 347). Through the process of identification, individuals not only accept or feel bound by the organization’s goals; they embrace them as their own (Deetz, 1992; Gossett, 2002; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). An identified member is one who sees his or her personal interests and the organization’s interests as joined. Related to the first two hypotheses with respect

to workplace giving, one might expect that members highly identified with the organization would not necessarily feel a conflict between donating at the office and donating privately. Based on the organization identification literature, it is hypothesized that organizational identification will have an impact on an individual's workplace giving.

*Hypothesis 3a: Respondents who identify with their organization will be more likely to give to the organization's workplace giving campaign.*

Extending the organization identification reasoning to organization communication, organizational scholars argue that members who identify with their employer are more likely to pay attention to official messages from management and voluntarily engage in appropriate workplace behavior (e.g., engage in acts of corporate citizenship, make personal sacrifices for the benefit of coworkers) (Barker, 1993; Gossett, 2006; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Employees who feel connected to the larger system are more likely to make individual decisions that promote the values and goals of the organization, without requiring direct managerial oversight or additional incentives (Barker, 1993; Bullis & Tompkins, 1989; Pepper & Larson, 2006; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). This line of research is particularly interesting when thinking about public employees, who may have higher levels of public service motivation and potentially higher identification with the values of their public employer.

Workplace giving campaigns rely upon employees to voluntarily contribute their own money and time to a cause selected by their employer, although these campaigns are increasingly changing to incorporate more choice for individual donors. Organizations often gain public goodwill and positive press when their members engage in philanthropic efforts, such as contributing money to the United Way campaign, building homes for Habitat for Humanity, or donating food and volunteering time to a local homeless shelter (Carman, 2004; Moran, 2003; Smith & Sypher, 2010). The success of these workplace charity programs requires that employees actively participate. Members who identify with the values and goals of their employing organization and care about its image in the community are more likely to willingly support these efforts. As such, it seems important for researchers interested in issues of philanthropy to consider the degree to which workplace charity campaigns may facilitate, rely upon, or otherwise affect member identification.

Evidence also suggests that individual workplace giving is, in part, structured and facilitated by organizations seeking to elicit, through communication, their members' philanthropy (e.g., Healy 2004, p. 387). Thus it is hypothesized that an organization's communication strategies will have an impact on individual donative behavior. The hypothesis is multidirectional, reflecting a paucity of theory in this area. No previous research was found that would inform how identification

might mitigate an employee's perception of organizational communication when it comes to workplace giving campaigns.

*Hypothesis 3b: Respondents are expected to notice types and frequency of communication and to respond to those messages.*

## MACROLEVEL APPROACHES

Barman's (e.g., 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008) research encompasses good examples of macrolevel analyses of the organizational field/institutional arrangements that influence philanthropy in the workplace. Indeed, using workplace giving as her substantive area of research, Barman's work (2006, 2007) has pioneered much at this level of analysis.

Researchers and practitioners find that workplace giving is undergoing dramatic changes, such as increasing competition for workplace donations and an increasingly tenuous role for the United Way—one of the primary charitable partners in workplace giving campaigns (Barman, 2006; Conference Board, 1994). Barman (2006) postulates that these dynamics can be better understood by employing a macrofield framework. Her research confirms United Way's traditional deep involvement in workplace giving campaigns, its recent decline in support, and the emergence of competitor fund-raisers ("Alternative Funds"). Barman's (2006) field-level framework makes sense of these phenomena by suggesting that the changes are not necessarily a product of individuals' relationships with their organizations, but of competing notions of community. Drawing a distinction between *communities of place*, the United Way model of workplace giving, and *communities of purpose*, the Alternative Funds model, Barman finds some evidence that society's contested concepts of community may explain the new competition among workplace giving organizers. She concludes that the "contestations between the United Way and Alternative Funds represents something much larger and more significant than simply fighting among organization rivals for charitable donations. Instead, this contestation represents a series of struggles between two different institutionalized conceptions of community" (2006, p. 156).

The distinction between the macrofield and mesorelational approaches is underscored by Barman: "Unlike the social relations approach, an analysis located at the level of the organizational field permits for an assessment of how and why fundraisers come to offer specific strategies of solicitation to donors and, in result, how and why donors make charitable gifts" (2007, p. 1423). In other words, the focus of a macro-field perspective is the relationship between the nonprofit and the "organizational field, rather than individuals' attributes or their dyadic ties with fundraisers that ultimately explains variation in patterns of charitable giving" (Barman, 2007, p. 1418).

While the range of workplace giving partners is certainly growing, the pres-

ent discussion focuses on the United Way because it has played a central, if not ubiquitous, role in workplace giving campaigns—including those where the data for this study were collected. No claim is made here to test the macrolevel effects that might be introduced by employees' perceptions of United Way vs. non-United Way partners. Indeed, Barman's work (2007) might be situated here to address this question. Rather, the focus is on the United Way to illustrate the role of macrolevel institutions in individual workplace giving behaviors.

The United Way is a federated nonprofit organization with more than 1,300 geographically based affiliates in local communities. The national United Way is the largest philanthropic organization in the country (Hendricks, Plantz, & Pritchard, 2008), with widespread brand recognition. United Ways primarily serve as fundraisers, often for local human service organizations. But in most communities, the United Way also provides support and technical training to local nonprofit organizations and brings community leaders together to address local issues.

Although the United Way is known for building and strengthening communities through its support of nonprofits, it has also sometimes been known for a lack of accountability, mismanagement, and even fraud. Several United Ways have been plagued by scandal in recent years. One of the most newsworthy was the indictment of the executive director of the national United Way, William Aramony, in the early 1990s for fraud and misuse of United Way funds (Shepard & Miller, 1994). The backlash in the wake of this event was considerable. Some member organizations refused to pay their dues during the investigations (Babcock, 1992). Charitable donations to the United Way, both nationally and locally, were down significantly following the event (Miller, 1993). Even worse, the scandal was blamed for a decrease in charitable donations across the sector (Simross, 1992).

Just a decade after this scandal, Oral Suer, the director of the United Way of the Capital Area, located in Washington, DC, was accused of fraud and mismanagement. During his 27-year employment at the agency, he cheated the charity of close to \$500,000 (Wolverton, 2004). Smaller, more local United Ways have suffered from similar problems with transparency and accountability. A vice-president at the United Way of East Lansing cheated the organization out of almost \$2 million by forging checks to herself to buy horses for her personal business (Wolverton, 2003). Fraud and financial mismanagement have been documented at more than 20 local United Ways across the country (Snyder, 2008). Most recently, a controversial and extravagant executive compensation package for the United Way director in Charlotte, North Carolina, resulted in the resignation of the director and several board members (Frazier, 2008).

Fraud and mismanagement of United Way agencies have decreased donor and client organization confidence in the United Way generally and in local United Way agencies. This, in turn, affects the financial capacity of nonprofits to provide public goods and services. It was expected that this lack of trust and discouragement

ment would also affect giving in the sample, given that there had been a recent United Way scandal in the state where the survey was performed just weeks before the combined campaign was to begin.

The scandals and shifting notions of community bring into question workplace giving associated with traditional, place-based workplace giving campaigns (e.g., those workplace campaigns that partner with the United Way). Since it seemed possible that the veracity of United Way's role as a workplace giving partner might be called into question by individuals in the study, it was hypothesized, more generally, that:

*Hypothesis 4: Perceptions of workplace campaign giving partners will affect workplace giving.*

## **Data and Methods**

The data for this paper came from an electronic survey administered in late 2008 at a large public university. The survey was sent out to all university employees, both faculty and staff, immediately after the state-employee combined giving campaign (SECC) came to a close. The SECC is a state-level giving campaign for all state employees. Each state-run university, as well as other state-run organizations, such as the Department of Transportation, administers its own combined giving campaign. Givers to the campaign can request that their donations be deducted from their paycheck in any amount or they can pay by credit card. Donors can make donations to the general campaign or can designate specific nonprofit organizations as recipient of their donations. In 2007, the SECC at this particular university raised more than \$115,000. In 2008, the SECC achieved just over \$75,000. The campaign at this state-run university is not a United Way campaign, meaning that the funds do not go directly to the United Way. However, the United Way has been a partner with the campaign, with the responsibility of disbursing the funds to certain designated organizations. In short, the United Way was a designee in the campaigns studied, but a designee with an administrative role.

The survey produced 720 usable responses, for an approximate response rate of 30%. Information was obtained from the university about the number of employees in each employment stratum at the university (staff, tenure-track faculty, non-tenure-track faculty) and the percentage of each stratum that gave to the workplace giving campaign in 2008. This information was used to create post-stratification weights (Lynn, 1996) with which to align the proportion of campaign givers in each employment stratum of the survey data with those in the population. These should not be misconstrued as sample weights, because the entire population being considered was surveyed. Instead, they are post-stratification weights to correct for nonresponses in the survey data.

## VARIABLES

The primary dependent variables in the study pertain to employee giving. Respondents were asked whether they gave to the 2008 combined campaign or not. If they answered affirmatively, they were asked to indicate the amount they gave. The answers to these two survey questions were used to construct a dummy variable indicating whether the person gave and a continuous variable with the amount donated (\$0 for those who did not donate). Next, respondents were asked if they had donated money to any organization outside the combined campaign during the previous year. Those who said yes were asked to indicate how much they gave. As with the previous set of questions, the answers to these questions were used to construct a dummy giving variable and a continuous variable with the amount given. Respondents were also asked if they had volunteered to a charitable organization during the previous year, and the answers were used to construct a dummy variable for volunteering.

Respondents' organizational identifications were probed using qualitative data from the open-response items to assess affective organization commitment and identification (Celsi & Gilly, 2010; Cheney, 1983; Miller, Johnson, & Grau, 1994). Frequency and type of organizational communication were measured using records that the campaign manager maintained during the campaign.

The survey included two questions to capture attitudes about the United Way. The first was: "To what extent do you think that the United Way is associated with the 2008 [combined campaign]?" with possible responses ranging from 1 (no affiliation) to 6 (full affiliation). The second question asked: "Do you feel the United Way is a desirable partner for the [combined campaign]?" Respondents could answer "yes," "no," or "not sure." An open-ended question was included to allow respondents to share anything about the giving campaign that they felt was relevant. Anecdotal evidence of the broader quantitative patterns observed was drawn from these responses.

The demographic variables included in the analysis are a gender dummy variable (female = 1) and a dummy variable for whether or not the respondent had children. Another survey question asked respondents to indicate how often they attended religious services (never, occasionally, almost weekly, weekly, or more than weekly), and these responses were used to construct a dummy variable for those who attended either weekly or more than weekly. Respondents were asked to indicate how they would describe themselves politically (very liberal, liberal, neutral, conservative, or very conservative). These responses were used to construct a dummy variable for those who were liberal or very liberal and a second dummy variable to indicate those who were conservative or very conservative. Respondents were asked to indicate their position at the university (senior staff, nonsenior staff, tenured faculty, untenured faculty, or non-tenure-track faculty), and a series of five dummy variables was constructed for each of these positions. Respondents also

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Workplace Givers and Nongivers**

	<i>Gave at work in 2008</i>	<i>Did not give at work in 2008</i>	<i>t-test</i>
Female	58%	61%	0.76
Married	86%	81%	-1.50
With children	68%	63%	-1.09
Attend religious services weekly (or more than weekly)	33%	26%	-1.64
Never attend religious services	29%	30%	0.41
Liberal/very liberal	60%	42%	-4.20***
Conservative/very conservative	23%	30%	1.92†
Mean years employed at workplace	9.7	7.2	-3.46**

†  $p < 0.10$ . \* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

indicated the number of years they had been employed at the university.

The mixed-methodological techniques used in this paper are primarily descriptive statistics and simple hypothesis tests comparing givers and nongivers on a variety of characteristics. Some qualitative techniques were used to supplement the analysis of mesolevel questions. Finally OLS and Poisson regression were used to analyze communication data obtained from the campaign administrators.

## Results

The results are organized from the micro- to the macrolevel of inquiry. Table 1 shows the basic demographic characteristics of givers and nongivers to the 2008 SECC.

Givers and nongivers were similar in several dimensions. The two groups exhibited fairly equal percentages of women, married people, people with children, and people attending religious services. However, there were a few characteristics on which the groups differed. First, more SECC givers considered themselves liberal or very liberal (60%) compared to SECC nongivers (42%) ( $t = -4.20, p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, SECC nongivers were more likely to be conservative (30%) than givers to the SECC (23%) ( $t = 1.92, p < 0.10$ ). People who gave to the SECC campaign had been working at the university 9.7 years, on average, compared to 7.2 years for SECC nongivers ( $t = -3.46, p < 0.01$ ).

### MICROLEVEL FINDINGS

Table 2 presents the results of H1—the impact of tenure and status on giving in the SECC campaign. This table shows the results of adjusted Wald tests (similar

**Table 2. Tenure and Status of Workplace Givers and Nongivers**

	<i>Gave at work in 2008</i>	<i>Median amount gave at work in 2008</i>	<i>Gave privately in 2008</i>	<i>Median amount given privately in 2008</i>	<i>Volunteered in 2008</i>
Nonsenior staff	10%	100	77%	1,347	51%
Senior staff	25%	190	84%	2,430	57%
Tenured faculty	33%	360	97%	2,383	52%
Untenured faculty	16%	119	85%	1,738	48%
Non-tenure-track faculty	5%	125	86%	1,220	62%
Adjusted Wald F-Test	17.69***	4.17**	10.74***	2.64*	0.83

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

to ANOVA tests, but for weighted survey data) on the major giving variables by faculty/staff status at the university.

The results in Table 2 show that there was a difference in the giving habits of faculty and staff in various categories. The results were mixed for the expectation that employment stratum (correlated with an individual's income and education) would influence workplace giving. In terms of frequency of giving, entry-level staff and non-tenure-track faculty gave at the lowest rates (10% and 5%, respectively), as expected. Tenured faculty gave at the highest rate (33%), followed by senior staff (25%) and untenured faculty (16%). Overall, these results followed the hypothesis. Senior staff members were more likely to give than entry-level staff. Tenure-track faculty were more likely to give and gave more than non-tenure-track faculty, and tenured professors gave more than untenured professors. In terms of donation size, as expected, tenured faculty gave the largest gifts (mean of \$360), and senior staff gave larger gifts than nonsenior staff (\$190 compared with \$100).

Also of interest was the question of whether workplace giving had any kind of crowding out influence on nonworkplace giving. Generally, workplace giving is not found to crowd out private giving, and vice versa. People who tended to give in the workplace indicated that they also gave privately and at very high rates. There were some differences, however, across employment strata. In terms of frequency of nonworkplace donations, tenured faculty members (sample responsible for the largest median workplace donations) were most likely to indicate that they gave privately (97%). Senior staff, untenured faculty, and non-tenure-track faculty gave privately at similar rates, between 84 and 86 percent, and nonsenior staff gave at the lowest rate (77%). The findings may be more intuitive from a social capital rather than an economic (i.e., expenditure substitution) perspective. For example, based on the social embeddedness of a person in networks of affiliation and trust, one might expect that higher-strata workers are likely to have larger stocks of

**Table 3. Other Charitable Behaviors of Workplace Givers and Nongivers**

	<i>Gave at Work in 2008</i>	<i>Did Not Give at Work in 2008</i>	<i>t-Test/Wald F</i>
Mean amount given in 2008 at work (\$)	172	0	—
Percent that gave privately in 2008	93%	80%	-4.45***
Mean amount given privately in 2008 (\$)	2,339	1,508	5.44*
Percent that volunteered in 2008	63%	52%	-2.40*
Mean hours volunteered in 2008	82	61	2.40
Percent that gave in 2007 at work	82%	25%	-15.62***
Mean amount given in 2007 at work (\$)	170	86	12.89***
Percent that gave less at work in 2008 than in 2007	12%	—	—
Percent that gave about the same at work in 2008 than 2007	60%	—	—
Percent that gave more at work in 2008 than in 2007	28%	—	—

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

social capital, and thus a greater propensity to give and volunteer outside work (Brown & Ferris, 2007).

In terms of size of nonworkplace donations, as expected, tenured faculty's (mean of \$2,393) and senior staff's (mean \$2,430) nonworkplace gifts were larger than gifts from employees in other workplace strata. And while nonsenior staff, as expected, gave smaller mean nonworkplace donations (\$1,347), senior staff gave more in nonworkplace settings than untenured (\$1,738) and non-tenure-track faculty (\$1,220). There was no statistically significant difference in the volunteering rates of these groups.

Also of interest, although not directly hypothesized as with employment strata, is how workplace giving generally influenced other types of giving. Table 3 probes more deeply into crowding-out effects with *t*-tests (and adjusted Wald tests), analyzing differences between public sector givers and nongivers.

According to the results in Table 3, there is little statistical evidence that giving at work crowds out nonwork giving. Altogether, 93% of workplace givers also gave privately in 2008, compared to 80% of nonworkplace givers who gave privately in 2008 ( $t = -4.45$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Workplace givers also tended to give greater amounts (mean of \$2,339) in nonworkplace settings than nongivers (median of \$1,508) ( $f = 5.44$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, there appears to be a reinforcing rather than a crowding-out effect between workplace and nonworkplace giving. While it is possible that employees might decrease their outside contributions in order to make

contributions in the workplace, they still gave to outside causes at very high rates, so workplace philanthropy was not a substitute for private philanthropy.

Thus it was not surprising to discover that there was little evidence of temporal crowding. Givers in the 2008 workplace campaign were also more likely to have been workplace givers in 2007 (82% compared with 25%) ( $t = -15.62, p < 0.001$ ). These 2008 givers also gave more, on average (mean \$170 compared with \$86). There was also a reinforcing effect, as opposed to a crowding-out effect, with respect to gifts of time. The number of workplace donors who volunteered in 2008 was 62%, compared to 52% of nongivers ( $t = -2.40, p < 0.05$ ).

### MESOLEVEL FINDINGS

The evidence for mesolevel factors that affect workplace giving is more qualitative in nature. Previous research has examined the ways in which employees articulate a connection (or lack of a connection) between their personal interests and those of their employing organization in order to assess member identification (Bullis & Tompkins, 1989; Cheney, 1983; Gossett, 2006). Highly identified members tend to describe their interests as joined with the organization. In contrast, people who indicate that their personal interests are different from or threatened by the organization's goals are not thought to be strongly identified members. Finally, individuals who intentionally frustrate, rather than support, organizational goals are considered disidentified or alienated members.

In an open-response section of the survey, and in support of H3a, some participants directly cited their identification with the university as a primary reason for participating in its philanthropy campaign. These donors expressed that contributing to the university charity drive was the right thing to do simply because they were employees. For example, one campaign donor stated: "I gave because I wanted to support the university's goal." Another survey participant indicated that the campaign was a benefit provided by university administration rather than a burden: "I think these opportunities are important to offer on campus, and I appreciate the fact that the university allows united campaigns." One respondent even indicated giving more in the 2008 campaign than in the past, precisely because the university was having a tough time meeting its annual donation goal. "I generally give more each year, but given [the] plight of the campaign, I definitely wanted to give more for '08." For these *willing* donors, part of the reason they participated in the workplace giving campaign was to demonstrate their loyalty, dedication, and identification to their employer. They donated because their employer wanted them to and not because they necessarily felt a strong connection to the charity being served.

A somewhat surprising finding was that the open-response data also revealed several ways in which workplace giving campaigns might undermine member identification rather than foster it. For example, some of the survey respondents

indicated that they were *reluctant* donors, and only participated in the campaign because they felt there would be negative professional consequences if they did not. One respondent indicated, "Pressure to contribute influenced my decision more than any communications." Other employees observed that they felt their participation (or lack thereof) in the campaign was being monitored by the administration. For example, one person wrote: "My feeling is that there is a 'list' of who has and who has not and that this can be used for or against you. I assure you I am not the only person who feels this way." These *reluctant* donors were particularly difficult to locate. On the surface they looked and acted like identified workers. They were donating money to a cause advocated by their employer. However, survey comments indicated that these workers did not give money to the campaign because they wanted to support the university's goals. Instead, these individuals stated that they donated to avoid negative personal repercussions within the work environment. For these reluctant donors, giving money was not an example of member identification, but rather an act of self-defense. Over time, participation in charity campaigns may breed resentment rather than loyalty to the organization or even toward the charities themselves. It is unclear what impact workplace giving campaigns might have on the long-term philanthropic behavior of these individuals.

In contrast to reluctant donors, the open-ended survey data revealed another group of nonidentified employees: *resistant* nondonors. These were members who refused to donate as a form of protest against their employing organization or its policies. For example, one nondonor wrote: "It is hard to donate as a workforce when you have to pay to come to work . . . meaning parking." Another said: "You can't contribute money you don't have. I'm underpaid as it is, so I don't believe in giving money back." Finally, one respondent argued: "Making far less than market value for my job, the outrageous prices for parking, and the measly raises we've been given, all the while my job duties continue to increase." *Not* contributing to the workplace charity drive was a way (even if anonymously) these employees could demonstrate their lack of organizational identification. These types of expressions were perceived as active statements of resentment and resistance. Once again, based on qualitative interpretation it is unclear how many people in the study fell into this category, as this is the type of behavior that is politically risky to report—even in anonymous surveys. However, the fact that it came up as a strong theme among the nondonor responses indicates that it is an important issue for continuing exploration. More research is necessary to discover whether the campaigns themselves actually foster this resentment/resistance or they are simply a vehicle with which disenfranchised employees vent their frustrations.

Taken together, the data illustrate that participation in the workplace giving campaign was a way in which members who were already identified with the university demonstrated their identification and commitment to the organization. An

employee's failure to participate, on the other hand, was not necessarily indicative of a lack of desire to donate to charity, but might instead indicate a sense of alienation from the employing organization. This is an important issue for philanthropy scholars to consider when examining the success or failure of workplace giving programs. Organizations that struggle to promote charitable giving in the workplace may need to consider the extent to which employee identification issues may be creating unique barriers or challenges to the success of their philanthropic efforts. Workplace charity programs may not necessarily *foster* identified and committed workers, but might instead highlight divisions between those employees who feel connected to the larger system and those who do not.

With respect to the specific communication techniques used by the organization to promote the charity drive (the design of the campaign in this study), those employees who *did* donate cited the frequent e-mail and print messages as effective communication strategies for motivating their participation in the program. As illustrations of support for H3b, one respondent wrote that "the e-mail communication and link to the Web site made it easy." Not only did donors praise the ease of the online donation system, but they saw the e-mail reminders as effective. One employee wrote: "I'm new; without the e-mail I wouldn't have known about [the workplace giving program]." Another donor claimed: "Had I not gotten an e-mail, I wouldn't have sought to give. I don't often give to charities." Finally, a third survey respondent indicated that the repetition of the messages was what finally encouraged participation: "*Several* e-mail reminders make you more likely to act."

Not all survey respondents were so positive about the multiple communication strategies used to promote workplace donations. One nondonor stated: "They were too pushy and therefore turned me off. I don't mind being asked once or twice to give at the office, but I do not like being harassed about it." Another survey respondent stated: "I have always resented the way the [workplace giving] campaign has been run (you **MUST** reply even if you're not giving). . . . it works on guilt and peer pressure, and I **HATE** it." These data suggest that the frequent and varied communication strategies used to promote the workplace giving campaign may have been an effective way to motivate some members of the university to contribute to the program. However, the same strategies may have alienated other employees or made them feel like it was an organizational obligation rather than a philanthropic opportunity.

This was explored in another way by interviewing the campus campaign manager (who tracked donation levels each day of the campaign, noting days when some type of reminder went out, whether video, e-mail, or campus news article). She said: "Our observation has been that pledge activity increases whenever we send out an e-mail reminder or video. Videos sent at the beginning of the campaign get viewed more, and we receive more pledges. My gut feeling is that it is because of the reminder—not necessarily the person or message of the video."

**Table 4. E-Mail Communication Regressions**

	<i>Number of Donors (Poisson Regression)</i>	<i>Amount Donated (OLS Regression)</i>
Constant	1.77***	773.60*
E-mail	1.34***	2,370.97*
<i>N</i>	52	52
LR $\chi^2/F$	150.52***	5.23*
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.11	0.09

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Quantitative analysis supports H3b that organization communication frequency and content have an impact on aggregate levels of giving. The workplace giving campaign ran over the course of 54 days. During that period, there were 454 donors to the campaign. On seven of the 54 days, the campaign administrators sent out some kind of e-mail correspondence to the university community—a video from a local charitable organization, an update about the campaign in the campus news publication, or some other e-mail appeal. Some basic analyses looking at the days of the campaign and the amount given each day were conducted. These analyses are shown in Table 4.

A simple Poisson regression on the number of donors each day using an e-mail appeal dummy variable showed that on the days of an e-mail appeal, there were, on average, 1.3 more donors ( $p < 0.000$ ). A regression analysis on the amount given each day using the e-mail appeal dummy variable as an independent variable showed that the days with an e-mail appeal garnered \$2,371 more in donations than days without such an appeal ( $p < 0.026$ ). Therefore, there is strong indication that the net effect of repeated communications from the campaign administrators helped to increase both the number of donors and the amount of the donations given.

## MACROLEVEL FINDINGS

Table 5 exhibits the results for the final research question (H4). It reports a comparison of giving behaviors based on perceptions of the local United Way.

The results in Table 5 confirm that the role of the United Way was contested. The survey asked respondents to indicate how strongly they felt that the United Way was affiliated with their workplace giving campaign (seven-point scale). They were also asked to indicate whether they felt that the United Way was a desirable partner for the workplace giving campaign (yes/no). In support of H4, employees who felt that the United Way was not a desirable workplace giving partner were less likely to give than those who did not (40%, compared with 26%) ( $t = 3.60$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This effect was stronger for those who felt that the United Way was

**Table 5. Perceptions of United Way**

<i>Perception</i>	<i>Gave at Work in Did Not Give at</i>		<i>t-Test/Wald F</i>
	<i>2008</i>	<i>Work in 2008</i>	
United Way is not affiliated with workplace campaign	26%	40%	3.60***
Unsure whether United Way is affiliated with workplace campaign	44%	32%	-2.72**
United Way is strongly affiliated with workplace campaign	31%	28%	-0.78
United Way is a desirable partner for workplace campaign	33%	15%	-4.53***
United Way is not a desirable partner for workplace campaign	30%	40%	2.60*
United Way is strongly affiliated with workplace campaign and is a desirable partner	46%	24%	6.58*
United Way is strongly affiliated with workplace campaign and is not a desirable partner	22%	38%	6.68**

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

not a desirable partner *and* who perceived that the United Way was strongly affiliated with the SECC (38% of nongivers, compared with 22% of givers) ( $F = 6.68, p < 0.01$ ).

From a qualitative perspective, several of the observed important themes underscore the contest in Barman's conceptions of community. For example, one participant commented in the open-response section of the survey: "Although [our workplace giving campaign] declares [itself] to be separate from the United Way. I just don't believe it. . . . Most employees, I would bet, believe that United Way is involve[d], and the United Way is just no longer a good option. . . . I do not want the money I earn to go to overhead, executive-size salaries, benefit plans, retirement plans, travel expenses, and sabbaticals." The opposite is true for those who felt that the United Way was strongly affiliated with the workplace giving campaign and that the United Way was a desirable partner (46% gave and 24% did not) ( $t = 6.58, p < 0.05$ ). One survey respondent cited the United Way's involvement in the university's campaign as a primary reason for having made a donation: "The United Way is a valuable asset to the social support network of this region." These results indicate that organizational members' individual attitudes toward the United Way affected their participation in the university's philanthropy program. Regardless of whether the United Way was actually a participant in the workplace giving program, employee assumptions about the organization's involvement affected the degree to which they were likely to donate to the university's charity campaign.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Because of the paucity of research on workplace giving programs, particularly at the micro- and mesolevels, this article aids the understanding of the relationship between workplace giving and other forms of private philanthropy. The framework and findings help to clarify how the structure of workplace giving programs affects employee giving. In particular, the study examined the process by which public employees are often asked to give at work to expand the financial capacity of charitable organizations.

In sum, the study found that publicly employed, tenured faculty were more likely to give than untenured faculty and non-tenure-track faculty. Senior staff were more likely to give than nonsenior staff. While this finding is related to past research that education and income are related to donative behavior (Andreoni, Brown, & Rischall, 2003; Brown, 2005; Schervish & Havens, 1998), there is need for future work to assess the extent to which job socialization or length of employment accounts for this variation. For instance, it is possible that this link is due to the fact that more senior staff and faculty members have been working at the university for a longer period of time and thus feel more organizational attachment. These individuals might also be subject to more informal pressure from others to give because of their rank and status in the organization. In addition, senior staff and tenured faculty might be more invested in the local community due to a longer length of residence. They might be more likely to serve on nonprofit boards, support nonprofits that provide services to friends and family members, and have more contacts and associations with people who work or volunteer for local nonprofit organizations. They may participate in the workplace giving campaign because of their greater attachment to the local community. Future research is needed to explore how these factors affect giving among higher-status public employees.

The study also found no evidence for a substitution or crowding-out effect of workplace giving on private giving. On the contrary, it observed that workplace and nonworkplace charity reinforce each other. Ninety-three percent of those who gave at the workplace indicated that they also gave privately. It is possible that workplace giving might shift some dollars given directly to organizations to dollars given in the workplace campaign, but further research would be needed to explore this question. Either way, those who give in workplace giving campaigns also tend to give privately to charitable organizations.

Qualitative responses on the survey revealed that some employees disliked the strategies used to promote the workplace giving campaign, particularly those who were not strongly identified with the organization. No single strategy emerged as more or less persuasive than others. Moreover, respondents frequently reported feeling organizational pressure to donate or worried that their job status might be negatively affected if they chose not participate. This finding indicates that the

success or failure of workplace giving campaigns may be more closely tied to the internal power dynamics of the workplace than to the specific communication strategies or messages used to promote the campaign. However, evidence was also found that multiple campaign appeals over several communication channels (e-mail, newsletters, etc.) coincided with larger aggregate daily donation amounts. Future work should further explore the relationships between organizational identification and workplace giving, especially among reluctant donors. Quantitatively, it would be important to analyze how organizational identification may moderate employee donative behavior. In addition, it would be useful to explore larger models that include individual job satisfaction, with controls for sex, organizational tenure, and positional stratum (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Finally, there was evidence of the contest in conceptions of community that Barman (2006) proposed, as marked by the reluctance many people felt about giving to a campaign associated with the United Way.

Employee donations may be more important than ever, a valuable tool as nonprofits seek to diversify their funding streams (Van Slyke & Johnson, 2006). Workplace giving campaigns have historically been a strong source of funds for human services and the arts—two areas that are particularly vulnerable during an economic recession. The survey, done at the height of an economic recession, underscores that public employees are still willing to personally support charitable funding, but that their giving is conditioned by more than just individual-level factors. This observation notwithstanding, future research along these lines might explore how individual public service motivation moderates workplace giving behavior. There is already evidence that public sector workers are more supportive of the nonprofit sector through volunteering than those employed in the private sector (Rotolo & Wilson, 2006), and it is likely that giving to nonprofit organizations may fit the same pattern (Clerkin, Paynter, & Taylor, 2009).

This underscores one of the limitations of the present study. While the three-part framework presented here has the potential for broad applicability to help researchers understand workplace giving in a variety of settings, the findings of the study can only be generalized to public workplace campaigns. Since nonuniversity public workplace giving settings may differ somewhat from the ones treated in this article, it would be worthwhile for future research to test the three-part model in a variety of private and public workplace settings. Furthermore, the article does not offer an exhaustive test of each of the framework's three parts. Rather, the intent was to offer some illustrative analyses around each of the framework's three concepts in order to encourage critiques, replication in other settings, new research, and theorizing.

Despite the limitations of the study, at least several of its findings have a bearing on current practice and future research. For example, beyond the likelihood of giving based on personal demographics and motivations, a public employee's status

in the organization and relationship with the organization also influence workplace giving behaviors. This provides a strong argument for workplace campaign strategies that reinforce positive relationships and are tailored to different groups within the organization. The managers of public workplace charity campaigns would be well advised to conduct a preliminary inventory that categorizes employees by length of service or by position. The study found some evidence, for example, that these factors have an impact on amount and relative frequency of giving. Campaign managers might use such inventories to better target recruitment messages and adjust giving forecasts. Campaign managers might also consider the specific role of communication around the campaign. The present study found that donations were larger *and* more frequent on the day an appeal was sent. This suggests that campaign managers should, in advance, formulate a communication plan to consider the frequency and content of their appeal messages. For example, information technology glitches that might occur on those days (e.g., server maintenance that the campaign could plan around) might be especially costly.

While more research is certainly needed in this area, the study provides not only a framework to study workplace giving, but also some public sector evidence that workplace giving operates differently than giving outside the workplace. Future research should focus on longitudinal patterns of workplace giving to better analyze these differences.

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