

## Understanding individual voluntary giving as a practice

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**UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTARY GIVING AS A PRACTICE:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL ARTS ORGANISATIONS IN THE UK**

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# **UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTARY GIVING AS A PRACTICE: IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL ARTS ORGANISATIONS IN THE UK**

## **Abstract**

This research examines individual voluntary giving as an integrative practice. Our research speaks to the new funding challenges traversing the British arts sector. Historically reliant on government funds, increasingly regional non-profit arts organisations must diversify their income sources and target a range of voluntary givers. By drawing on practice theories and interpretive qualitative data, we illuminate how giving understandings, procedures and engagements interconnect and interact, coming together in ways that lead to specific giving choices that prioritise cause-based charities over the arts. In doing so, we make two original contributions towards existing sociological research on voluntary giving. Firstly, we transform and broaden the scope of empirical research by conceptualising voluntary giving as an integrative practice. Secondly, we offer a lens through which to investigate and explicate shared social processes, mechanisms and acts that traverse structures and individuals, co-construing and reproducing voluntary giving patterns.

## **Keywords**

Affinity, arts philanthropy, identification, integrative practice, non-profit giving, practice theories, qualitative research, sociology of voluntary giving.

## **Introduction**

Our research examines individual voluntary giving as an integrative practice, to illuminate ‘not giving’ to regional non-profit arts organisations in Britain. This research speaks to new funding challenges traversing the British arts sector, including government funding cuts during a period of political and economic uncertainty around Brexit. Arts Council England (ACE) now funds a greater number of organisations compared to previous years (ACE, 2018). However, many of these organisations have experienced either a stabilisation or reduction of public funds for the 2018-2022 period and have had to diversify their fundraising strategies. While arts organisations in wealthy areas and tourist destinations may benefit from this fundraising orientation, it is significantly challenging for regional arts NGOs outside London.

Using interpretive qualitative research and drawing on practice theories (Shove et al., 2012; Schatzki, 1997; Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2014), we examine and clarify voluntary giving as an integrative practice. We conceptualise voluntary giving as integrative because it is a complex practice “found in and constitutive of [a] particular domain of social life” (Schatzki, 1996:98). It is a composite amalgamation of elements including donations of funds and/or in-kind support, a multitude of possibilities of where, how and to whom to give, the individual competencies required to perform giving, its shared representations and affinity meanings to givers and to non-givers, rules, understandings and shared norms around voluntary giving, and so on. Thus, it entails giving performances which can be socially recognised and perceived as appropriate; these performances involve emotionally-driven affinity engagements and co-construe a specific entity (i.e. voluntary giving) – all of which are defining criteria for integrative practices (Warde, 2014, 2013; Schatzki, 1996).

Ascertaining voluntary giving as an integrative practice enables us to illuminate how voluntary giving understandings, procedures and engagements interconnect, interact, and lead to specific choices and outcomes. We find that the ways in which practitioners understand giving will

shape, and be shaped by, how they give, to whom they do and do not give (i.e. causes versus arts), and the shared emotional interconnections and affinity meanings they develop regarding giving. Consequently, we highlight that giving, not giving, limited giving, long-term or one-off giving are all instantiations of voluntary giving as an integrative practice.

While we acknowledge that significant research on charitable giving and philanthropy exists (Barman, 2017; Body and Breeze, 2016; Breeze and Wiepking, 2018), such studies focus on examining distinct giving elements separately. By illuminating voluntary giving as an integrative practice, we establish how voluntary giving is generally learned, emotionally discussed, performed and encouraged in the nexus of social life, also acting as an identity referent. Further, we examine the prioritisation of cause-related organisations over non-profit arts organisations and particularly regional ones.

We make two original contributions to the sociology of voluntary giving. Firstly, we transform and broaden the scope of empirical research by conceptualising voluntary giving as an integrative practice. This allows us to unpack the distinct, selective and yet interrelated forms of cause-based and arts support. It also steers us away from research approaches to giving that examine donations to either arts or causes, to a broader empirical category of voluntary giving generally. Secondly, and building on the first contribution, we offer a lens through which to investigate and further explicate shared social processes, mechanisms and acts that traverse giving structures and individuals, co-construing and reproducing noticeable voluntary giving patterns.

## **Voluntary Giving**

Many factors shape voluntary giving preferences (Barman, 2017). Worthiness perceptions and the cultural associations of specific causes with elite tastes make some causes (e.g. cancer) more popular than others (e.g. arts and culture) (Body and Breeze, 2016; Pharoah, 2011). Meta-analysis reveals several key drivers of charitable giving (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011), which explain voluntary giving generally, but particularly ‘not giving’ to non-profit arts and culture. Potential

givers may not be aware of arts organisations' needs, and organisations' solicitation styles and frequency may also lack resonance with relevant voluntary givers (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011; Body and Breeze, 2016; Payne et al., 2014). Additionally, the costs of giving mean that voluntary giving is selective, and altruism – even if driven by self-oriented motives (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011) – may align better with cause-based than arts giving. Crowding-out effects can also occur, whereby alternative sources (e.g. public funding) can lead to low self-efficacy, as individuals perceive their small donations as irrelevant to arts organisations (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011). Nevertheless, how such factors interact through the practice of voluntary giving generally, and their relevance to giving choices, remain under-examined.

Additional research highlights that positive societal outcomes (i.e. a promotion focus) motivate giving, and framing causes through avoidance of negative outcomes (i.e. a prevention focus) leads to greater support (Bullard and Penner, 2017), which may well hinder giving to the arts. Research also focuses on reasons for and against prosocial giving, which are not always logical counterparts and can be explained by different categories of reasons (Chatzidakis et al., 2016). Further, research suggests that voluntary giving towards a specific 'genre' of NGO is often influenced by affinity identification (Pratt, 1998). This involves a perceived similarity between personal and organisational values, or personal experience and/or involvement with a cause that is relevant to one's self concept (Bennett, 2003; Pratt, 1998). Nevertheless, how affinity identification influences the practice of voluntary giving generally, and not giving to regional arts more specifically, remains underexplored.

Identification suggests that a person or social group can recognise another entity (e.g. an individual, group, object, or organisation) as intrinsic to their sense of self (Ashforth et al., 2008). Beliefs about the identification object, such as a cause-based or arts NGO, can become self-referential or self-defining (Pratt, 1998), at an individual or social level. This perception entails an alignment between a person's self-concept and the attributes of the identification object (Dutton et

al., 1994; Bennett, 2012), subsequently leading to a sense of affinity; a spontaneous liking based on connection and commonality (Manning and Holmes, 2014). Affinity occurs when an individual or group sees value congruence between themselves and the identification object, integrating it with their own identity (Pratt, 1998). Hence, affinity is a “feeling of liking, sympathy, and even attachment toward [an individual, group or organisation...] as a result of direct personal experience and/or normative exposure” (Oberecker et al., 2008: 26).

Affinity identification, thus, implies that identity can illuminate the meanings and emotions connected to voluntary giving, as well as those linked to ‘not giving’ and non-identification objects; a type of counter or non-affinity that may include a specific NGO or an entire sector, such as the arts. Indeed, individuals are more willing to support groups to which they perceive to belong, supporting organisations that benefit their affinity group (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988), rather than those that do not.

Consequently, affinity identification is relevant for understanding how voluntary giving manifests (Ashforth et al., 2008; Pratt, 1998). We argue that personal and group affinities positively affect voluntary giving to NGOs with values that resonate with their givers (Bennett, 2003). Apart from a few exceptions focusing on the role of personal preference on why donors give (e.g. Body and Breeze, 2016), prior research does not fully address the link between affinity and voluntary giving to the arts as part of an integrative practice. In response, we unpack how the driving elements of giving, including (non-) affinity, interact in voluntary giving practice, and what this can mean regarding limited or ‘not giving’ to regional arts NGOs. Rather than focusing on affinity towards specific arts organisations, we address affinity with the arts holistically. This is because perceived similarity and oneness between the self and the arts can be formed and enacted via personal or group experiences with the arts (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988; Oberecker et al., 2008). As meanings are elements of any social practice, we make a conceptual connection between (non-) affinity and the practice of voluntary giving through practice theories.

## **Voluntary Giving Through a Practice Theories Lens**

We suggest that practice theories can afford alternative understandings of contextualised giving action (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 1997), illuminating voluntary giving generally and ‘not giving’ to regional arts organisations within this practice. Practice theories can highlight the social, economic and cultural complexities impacting giving (Wheeler, 2012). There is no unified perspective on practice (Warde, 2014), but commonalities across theories include the idea that “knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions, and historical transformation occur within and are aspects or components of the field of practices” (Schatzki, 2001a: 11). We argue that voluntary giving practice entails “a routinized way in which...subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood” (Reckwitz, 2002: 249-250). By ‘routinised’ we do not mean habits, but rather patterns of giving (Shove et al., 2012; Magaudda, 2011).

In contrast to dispersed practices involving relatively simple kinds of action, appearing in several domains of life and requiring mainly understanding (Schatzki, 1996, Warde, 2013), we conceptualise voluntary giving as an integrative practice; that is, a set of actions in its own right (Schatzki, 1996; Warde, 2013). Voluntary giving, thus, can be understood as a nexus of sayings and doings (Schatzki, 1996), interconnected by rules, everyday understandings, and teleoaffective structures; that is, goals related to certain giving actions, the ways in which these actions may be organised and matter, and the emotions and affinity meanings of these actions (Schatzki, 2001b; Arsel and Bean, 2013).

We see voluntary giving practice as an organised nexus of practical activities and their discursive representations (Warde, 2005), encompassing the giving activities themselves, their organisation and relevance, and related (non-) affinity identification meanings. Consequently, affinity identification (Pratt, 1998) is central to establishing how practitioners attach emotional

significance to voluntary giving choices, and to how the voluntary giving practice can become the identification object itself (Tajfel, 1978). As an integrative practice, therefore, voluntary giving implies the interactions between, and inseparability of, ideas, emotions and ways of doing.

Voluntary giving can, therefore, be understood as a wider, integrative practice involving social patterns of selective giving. Hereafter, we work with Warde's (2005) three components of practice framework, including understandings, procedures and engagements. We do so for a number of reasons. Firstly, while alternative frameworks foreground the importance of material configurations (Shove et al., 2012, for example), the practice of giving requires clarifying its instantiations and its intangible, emotional elements including, as in Warde's (2005) work, understandings, procedures and engagements. Further, in building on Schatzki's (1996) work, Warde's (2005) three-component framework addresses a practice's nexus of doings and sayings with parsimony and is, therefore, well suited to our empirical aim and the nature of the practice we examine in this paper. Our focus, then, is on the arrangements of giving *understandings*, *procedures* and *engagements*. We conceptualise *voluntary giving understandings* as know-how and tacit knowledge of what to say and how to act regarding giving; *voluntary giving procedures* as explicit giving principles, rules, instructions and shared knowledge that can be articulated discursively; and *voluntary giving engagements* as emotionally-driven affinity meanings, ends and purposes regarding giving (Schau et al., 2009).

This theoretical lens, coupled with interpretive research, enables us to illuminate how voluntary giving manifests, including how its various instantiations and particularly 'not giving' to regional arts emerge. Therefore, our practice theories approach sheds new light on voluntary giving, clarifying how *understandings*, *procedures* and *engagements* come into play in fostering voluntary giving choices – through its interconnected nexus, the complexities of the giving field (Wheeler, 2012), its enabling and disabling mechanisms, its affinity meanings, and social patterns (Everts et al., 2011). By using practice theories as a lens to further understand voluntary giving as an

integrative practice, we examine how voluntary giving is broadly learned, shared, undertaken, emotionally experienced and advanced in social life. We, thus, investigate how elements of giving, incorporating affinity identification, might intersect and interact, and what this means for regional arts NGOs.

## **Methodology**

We followed an interpretive research approach, gaining depth of insight on participants' qualitative experiences and subjectively construed meanings around their voluntary giving understandings, procedures and engagements (Warde, 2005). This standpoint facilitated interpretation of emotional and experiential aspects of the practice, generating insights that were extrapolated to theoretical propositions (Jamali et al., 2009; Lincoln and Guba, 1996). Interpretive research enabled nuanced understandings of voluntary giving as an integrative practice, helping to clarify the range of instantiations and elements that constitute giving as a practice, and how these elements intersect, interconnect and interact.

We deployed in-depth interviews, which remain important and adaptable tools in qualitative research (Patton, 1990). The interviews allowed for depth of insight into what can be a sensitive topic. Based on our understanding of the range of actions constituting voluntary giving, we sought out individuals who had, in the past year, given to charitable causes or the arts at least once, gone to a museum, art gallery and/or other art or cultural venues, and shown diverse levels of affinity with the arts and crafts. Each participant had to meet all of these criteria to participate in our study. This meant that most participants were middle-class individuals, and the meanings, experiences, tastes and sensibilities expressed through their narratives reflect their backgrounds.

We posted a first call for participants on the website of a West Midlands crafts development organisation, with whom the lead author has volunteered for a number of years. Our call for participants was also circulated through the organisation's e-newsletters, social media and their stall at a craft fair in May 2017. We recruited six participants through this first call, with two interviews

taking place via Skype and four face-to-face. Sixteen additional participants were recruited through a research panel, following the same recruitment criteria as those of the first participation call. We carried out all of these interviews face-to-face. We present participants' profiles in Table 1.

[Table 1 Here]

A total of 22 individuals took part in the research (14 female, 8 male), allowing us enough latitude to examine and extrapolate the nuanced interconnections and interactions among understandings, procedures and engagements in voluntary giving. It also enabled us to clarify the range of actions involved in this integrative practice. While determining tacit knowledge from interview responses can be a challenging task, this knowledge manifested as giving competences in our fieldwork discussions. The final interviews no longer generated new insights, indicating a satisfactory number of interviews for the study.

We followed relevant research ethics guidance for social research and employed a semi-structured discussion guide, probing views and attitudes on the value of contemporary arts and crafts, attitudes towards voluntary giving generally, how participants give and why, as well as the key drivers, enablers and/or inhibitors of giving to cause-based versus arts organisations. Questions remained flexible so that participants could discuss the research topics in their own terms. Interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 45 and 90 minutes each. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and yielded just over 198,000 words of textual data.

The analytical process was guided by a thematic approach (Kara, 2016), involving iterative reading of transcripts; data coding on NVivo 10 to illuminate patterns; developing and refining analytical categories and emerging themes; and writing up (Braun and Clarke, 2006). We sought interpretive quality by considering the study's practice-oriented approach and its contributions, comparing and discussing interpretations with an independent researcher, respecting participants' meanings, and providing emic evidence (i.e. participants' quotes) of our emerging interpretations (Pratt, 2009). The themes are organised around the tripartite elements of the voluntary giving

practice including understandings, procedures and engagements. We represent our themes visually in the illustrative framework depicted in Figure 1.

[Figure 1 Here]

In our voluntary giving framework (Figure 1), we extend the practice elements by acknowledging the significance of the giving field (Everts et al., 2011; Warde, 2014), which shapes, and is shaped by, shared knowledge and competencies in voluntary giving choices. Figure 1 also illustrates an ongoing, co-constitutive interrelationship between the examined elements of voluntary giving and the giving field, with the dotted lines representing these traversing interrelationships. In the findings, we explain the dynamics of these practice elements by deploying the meanings and experiences of voluntary givers.

## **Findings**

### *The Voluntary Giving Field*

A critical factor affecting voluntary giving to the arts negatively is how the sector has been funded, historically, in Britain. Funding has come from wealthy philanthropists (Moody and Breeze, 2016), but since 1948 the UK arts sector has relied mainly upon public funding from ACE (ACE, 2019). However, ACE now requires its portfolio organisations to diversify their fundraising strategies, requesting evidence of fundraising actions and outcomes in their funding applications. This highlights the potential for dissonance between how arts organisations actually fund their operations and public expectations regarding funding sources. This might differ in countries where the arts are still strongly supported by public funds (e.g. Germany, France and Greece) or where such expectations were never normalised (e.g. US).

These relatively new ACE fundraising requirements seem logical because the UK has a strong culture of voluntary giving. In 2016, individual giving to charities totalled £9.7 billion, despite Brexit (CAF, 2017). Nevertheless, collective goodwill tends to be directed at human, animal and environmental welfare needs rather than the arts. While individuals, Trusts and Foundations have

increased their voluntary giving to British arts and culture over the past three years, data suggest that individuals favour the largest, London-based visual arts organisations over their regional counterparts (MTM, 2017).

Additionally, British NGOs in the arts sector now strive to fundraise not only from high net-worth philanthropists, but increasingly from the general public. While arts organisations rooted in wealthy UK districts and tourist destinations may benefit from such a fundraising orientation, this represents a significant challenge for regional arts NGOs outside London. These factors, as summarised in Figure 1 (see *Voluntary Giving Field*), impact voluntary giving understandings, procedures and engagements.

### *Voluntary Giving Understandings*

Voluntary givers' know-how and sayings in the form of discursive representations (Warde, 2005; Arsel and Bean, 2013) centre on regular giving to cause-related charities (CAF, 2017), addressing human, animal and environmental welfare needs. Know-how of voluntary giving to the arts is scarce (MTM, 2017), and participants highlight government responsibility discursively by criticising the increased responsabilisation of individuals for systemic issues:

*“I think that if Government advocates the big society idea, the Government simply shuts the responsibility, and it's all very well to have charities and have people who feel it's important, especially people who have means, to donate money to various organisations, but I think that first and foremost it should be the Government's responsibility to make sure that these organisations function and exist and are not threatened and don't disappear” (Dianne).*

While Dianne's quote may seem to imply a denial of personal responsibility for non-profit organisations generally, and the view that giving can be a marker of social inequality, her 'doings' and embodied competencies (as discussed throughout her interview) represent her strong support of many NGOs, including the arts.

Unsurprisingly, participants did not understand arts organisations as bodies needing support:

*“I probably wouldn't jump to the conclusion or first think, oh, they will be a non-profit [needing support]. I would probably see it more as, umm, perhaps somehow linked to government or something like that, or establishment” (Amanda).*

As illustrated in Amanda's quote, participants' tacit knowledge entails the assumption that the British government is still fully funding the arts. Participants also seem confused:

*“I'm using the [arts venue] Wi-Fi for free, we use their café and we buy coffee, but... When you think about it, is it fair that you sit there all day and perhaps spend £20... Because I don't, I wouldn't know which spaces were and weren't funded” (Mila).*

Mila's quote illustrates confused understanding of which arts organisations are for profit and which ones are publicly funded – and many participants find it difficult to articulate a distinction between the two. As prominent galleries and museums own “*expensive artwork*,” some participants do not see how such organisations might need their limited financial support or how their small donations could make a difference. Contemporary arts and crafts are often understood as either aligned with elite tastes (Body and Breeze, 2016) or, conversely, a part of the commons. In our participants' sayings, arts NGOs can be perceived as “*middle class*”, and “*a bit niche*.” These understandings work against voluntary giving to regional arts organisations and are aggravated by crowding-out effects (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011):

*“Because [they] get funding from the Big Lottery Fund and stuff like that to create something, I feel like you wouldn't really then think to give money to arts” (Ella).*

Ella's quote illustrates crowding-out effects, as alternative funding sources (i.e. Lottery) lead potential donors to understand their donations as unnecessary. While cause-based charities can also be funded by Lottery schemes, Ella's quote shows that it is the arts that suffer the effects of tacit crowding-out understandings the most. These understandings then enable routinisation (Reckwitz, 2002) of giving to cause-related rather than arts NGOs.

Consequently, voluntary giving understandings, including know-how and tacit knowledge of what and how to say and act (Schau et al., 2009), influence giving choices in the voluntary giving field (see *Understandings* in Figure 1), in favour of causes.

### *Practice Procedures in Voluntary Giving*

Our participants' voluntary giving 'doings' (Wheeler, 2012; Arsel and Bean, 2013; Magaudda, 2011) are procedurally guided and socially shared by co-workers, friends and family. Positive voluntary giving procedures manifest through direct fundraising appeals, offering palatable, explicit messages and instructions through word-of-mouth and in the office. Richard elaborates:

*"...At work, at the moment, we've got a chosen charity which is Alzheimer's, so there's a lot of direct fundraising around that... I've given quite a bit of money to that" (Richard).*

In Richard's interview, he adds that fundraising appeals at work provide explicit explanations of the needs of health-related charities (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011), and instructions on how to give. However, explicit instructions about voluntary giving can also be negative:

*"...Feeling pressurised by family... I think there's nothing worse, and there has been a bit of bad press around people who are pressured into donating" (Amanda).*

Amanda illustrates the social pressures of giving (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011; Body and Breeze, 2016), believing that voluntary giving should not entail pressured persuasion. Our analysis also indicates that self-imposed rules, and instructions on how to perform voluntary giving, play an essential role in voluntary giving practice (Schau et al., 2009). These 'rules' then manifest in, and help clarify, the range of participants' actions in voluntary giving practice, including giving between £100 and £500 annually to charities, where voluntary giving includes support to a number of NGOs selectively and simultaneously, using a combination of payment methods. Even single donations are considered part of the overall voluntary giving practice, because practitioners make one-off donations to several charities, often demonstrating a long-term commitment to voluntary giving generally. They also participate in office giving schemes through direct debit; shop from, and give

to, charity shops; and participate in, and organise, fundraising events and activities including dinners, baking, running and selling crafts. Paula explains:

*“We're doing a little arty thing with my friends, so we donated to Water Aid and then made some prints as part of the project... I was interested in doing it because everybody else is into running, and I am not” (Paula).*

For Paula, making art to sell at fundraising events represents a practical and creative way to express her support. But despite her inherent interest in crafts, in this instance her support is still directed at a cause-based organisation rather than the arts. Nevertheless, our participants demonstrate shared knowledge of the fundraising procedures that arts organisations deploy in Britain, expressing preferences around what appeals to them (e.g. workshops, ‘meet the artist’ events, art viewings, fundraising auctions, purchasing crafts and seeing the art-making process).

Shared knowledge of how to successfully perform voluntary giving to the arts (Shove and Walker, 2010) is also influenced by whether arts organisations provide clear instructions (Schau et al., 2009), including where and how to give (e.g. donations to cultural venues and museums via venue-based donation boxes):

*“I try to donate when I visit an art gallery or a space while I am there, so that's the biggest part of what I do, in terms of giving back” (Alice).*

Alice’s quote exemplifies the routinised way of giving to the arts, usually leading to low levels of giving (Figure 1). That participants support arts organisations in this way is unsurprising because well-established cultural venues and museums usually place donation boxes in high-visibility areas, influencing shared voluntary giving principles. Yet, it is the smaller, regional arts organisations without venues – and, hence, without donation boxes – that are more likely to need voluntary support.

Marketing communications' 'instructions' on the needs of NGOs, trust built around NGO's accountability reporting, and positive messages of impact (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011) also contribute to participants' rules on how to give and to which organisations:

*"I think actually Oxfam did it once... And they said £5 a month will buy you this and it told you where the money was going, and I think you felt a lot more, wow, so just £5 I can change somebody's life, so I think it's correct marketing and correct communication and transparency and a lot of charities affect your view and affect your opinion and will make you more likely to donate..."* (Ella).

In Ella's quote, it becomes evident that Oxfam's marketing communications including explicit instructions (Schau et al., 2009) on how much to give and how one's support can "*change somebody's life*," provided this participant with confidence and trust in the organisation (Bekkers, 2003). Further, our data suggest that participants perceive arts NGOs as failing to provide effective rules and instructions on how to perform voluntary giving. If arts organisations are considered for voluntary giving at all, it is the organisations with public-facing venues that receive a small share of such limited giving.

These explicit giving principles, rules, instructions and shared knowledge, which participants articulate discursively, as illustrated in Figure 1 (see *Procedures*), guide the range of actions and instantiations that constitute voluntary giving.

### *Practice Engagements and Voluntary Giving*

Emotionally-driven affinity meanings are intrinsic to practice engagements. In giving to cause-based organisations, affinity identification emerges through normative influences and affective associations between people and causes that are close:

*"One of my friends' dad had prostate cancer, so when something like that happens and then they try and raise money, yes, I think it just kind of brings it home a little bit, so you're more likely to give to that kind of thing"* (Richard).

In Richard's case, knowing a potential beneficiary is an additional reason to give (Polonsky et al., 2002), as it *"brings it home."*

Participants with high personal affinity with the arts (Pratt, 1998) also articulate their emotionally-driven ends and purposes (Schau et al., 2009; Warde, 2005), linked to supporting regional arts. This group of givers includes female participants especially (Holmes, 2015), but not exclusively, who discuss having developed affinity with the arts through childhood play, hobbies, formal and informal education, normative influences and professionally. Diane's affinity identification connects closely with her professional involvement with the arts sector:

*"I teach at the University as a Teaching Fellow... But I also consider myself a composer... So essentially, yes, a job involved in art, either making art, or teaching some form or art"* (Dianne).

Dianne's quote illustrates that discursive meanings around affinity reflect the extent to which participants recognise art activities and organisations as being similar to their sense of self (Ashforth et al., 2008; Pratt, 1998). These meanings shed light on participants' emotionally-driven ends and purposes regarding voluntary giving to arts organisations. Further, Charlotte describes how her affinity identification with crafts is shaped by, and shapes, her experience with sewing and embroidery (Oberecker et al., 2008):

*"...When I started talking to the lady who approached me about crafts, I immediately thought sewing, embroidery... I've sewn ever since I was a kid, on and off, more sometimes than others. As a young child, I used to make embroidery for my Auntie (...) and I coloured things on my mother's sewing machine. I think my Great Grandmother was a tailor and my mother grew up sewing, so I grew up sewing and I do embroidery"* (Charlotte).

Charlotte's narrative implies an emotional attachment to crafts because of her intergenerational exposure to embroidery. When approached for fundraising purposes by a local crafts NGO, Charlotte instantly recalled experiences of sewing as a child. Essentially, Charlotte and other participants express that they value specific causes and particular types of arts (Bennett, 2003).

These preferences then lead to emotionally-driven, voluntary giving goals due to their personal connection with such causes and arts. Our participants also articulate the emotions implicated in voluntary giving to the arts, referring to the hedonic benefits they derive from their visits to arts and cultural venues:

*“When I go, it's free to get in, you make a donation... I got a lot out of it myself, so I feel that I should put some back, so I always donate... If there's four of us, I would put five pound each in, you know, I feel I've given, and I've earned the right... I would rather feel that I had contributed than feel guilty after the event if those things closed” (Martin).*

The engagement Martin feels with arts organisations and cultural venues rests on the intrinsic benefits he derives, as he *“got a lot out of it.”* Martin sees an emotionally-charged purpose to his giving, where his generosity is both a type of gratitude and nostalgia for having studied art. It is also a guilt-preventing means of *‘paying it forward’* – a concept that adds to existing literature on voluntary giving drivers. Like other participants, his emotions, thus, affect his personal commitment, understandings and procedures (Schau et al., 2009), regarding voluntary giving to the arts.

Other participants’ emotionally-driven ends and purposes linked to voluntary giving to the arts include helping to maintain heritage sites, supporting local artists’ spaces, supporting emerging artists, helping friends who are artists, and supporting those who are fundraising for, or through, the arts. Here, teleoaffective structures (Schatzki, 2001b), including ordered goals and emotions, are implicated in the practice of voluntary giving including helping those who are close, as having a personal connection to a particular artist or art form plays a significant role in giving to the arts:

*“It was specifically friends that we have that were artistic directors or managers of that particular organisation. I think that specifically made us... So, we would probably be more inclined to give money to music organisations, small music organisation that, for example, struggle on their money, and they are our friends, and we know that we could help” (Dianne).*

Dianne's quote illustrates that having a sense of responsibility towards friends drives her giving ends and, thus, action. Dianne feels personally accountable to the local community and its arts ecology, recognising the need to contribute to its sustenance and prosperity as her goal. Similarly, Alice articulates:

*"Sometimes there's a huge distance between you and artists... But the people that you know... are like actual artists who live, and work and they need funding to operate and continue producing art, you feel more connected in a way"* (Alice).

Thus, Alice's quote exemplifies a sense of emotional connection between participants and art beneficiaries, leading to support which manifests as both voluntary giving and purchases (Polonsky et al., 2002). Nick considers buying handmade items, rather than just giving, an equally important goal when supporting the arts:

*"I would give [artists] money through buying some of their work, albeit, a print or a piece of their art. I like to take something back and have that, rather than just give money away"* (Nick).

For Nick and many other participants, the act of buying handmade prints and other art works is more meaningful than making monetary donations to the arts (Liu and Aaker, 2008), which hinders donations.

Consequently, voluntary giving involves a set of actions, and the emotionally-driven affinity meanings associated with these actions' ends and goals (Arsel and Bean, 2013; Schau et al., 2009), where affinity identification meanings are intrinsic to giving engagements. These points are illustrated in Figure 1 (see *Engagements*). While many participants value specific cause-based organisations over supporting the arts (Body and Breeze, 2016; Pharoah, 2011), some of the driving goals can be seen as similar, including helping friends and family, having a sense of responsibility, and the 'feel good factor' associated with giving (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011).

## **Conclusions and Implications**

Our research illuminates how voluntary giving understandings, procedures and engagements interrelate and interact, coming together in particular ways that lead to specific giving choices and outcomes. By shedding light on voluntary giving as an integrative practice encompassing both cause-based and arts support – while distinguishing between these two sets of actions – focus is placed upon giving understandings, processes, affinity meanings and the complex circumstances traversing the giving field (Wheeler, 2012; Everts et al., 2011), which Figure 1 illustrates.

We establish that practitioners' understandings of voluntary giving tend to shape, and be shaped by, principles on how participants give, to whom they do and do not give (i.e. causes versus arts, respectively), and the emotional affinity meanings they develop around voluntary giving. We also show how voluntary giving is learned, emotionally addressed, encouraged and enacted in social life, highlighting and untangling the role of affinity identification as an engagement meaning within this integrative practice. Further, we determine that giving mainly to causes, no or limited giving to arts, as well as long-term or one-off giving, emerge as instantiations of voluntary giving as an integrative practice.

In this work, we establish voluntary givers as carriers of the giving practice, rather than the sole architects of their diverse giving actions. They perform voluntary giving according to shared understandings of what actions are socially acceptable, their affinity identification (Bennett, 2003; Pratt, 1998) or non-identification (in cases of no or limited giving), and subjective understandings of how to successfully perform this practice. This means that giving choices are embedded in the prevailing organisation of the overall giving practice (Schatzki, 2001b), and what individuals perceive as 'normal giving' within their social lives (Shove and Walker, 2010). What also becomes clear is that social, emotional, historical and economic factors affect these understandings, procedures and engagements in ways that work against giving to the arts.

We make two original contributions to the sociology of voluntary giving. First, we transform and broaden the boundaries of empirical research, by conceptualising voluntary giving as an integrative practice involving distinct, selective and yet interconnected types of cause-based and arts support. Consequently, we move beyond either/or approaches to giving that investigate donations to either arts or causes, to a broader empirical category of voluntary giving generally. Second, we offer a lens through which we can explain and determine shared social processes, mechanisms and acts that traverse giving structures and individuals, and which co-create and reproduce voluntary giving patterns.

Our research speaks to, and builds on, relevant extant literature. It does so by showing how the different elements of voluntary giving come into play in the practice field, fostering voluntary giving understandings, procedures and engagements that challenge the UK arts sector, particularly regionally.

As the UK government reduces its arts sector funding, there will be an increasing need to communicate private funding needs openly to the British public. Our findings suggest that encouraging voluntary giving to regional arts NGOs requires a sector-wide communication effort to debunk crowding-out effects (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011), and elitist *understandings* associated with the arts. This effort will need to make it publicly clear how society can benefit from accessibility to the arts, while normalising and routinising small donations to arts-based organisations and projects. Given participants' *understandings* of voluntary giving, this communication effort will then lead to a giving field where givers can start considering arts organisations within their evoked set of beneficiaries, particularly regionally. ACE and the Crafts Council are well placed to lead such initiatives, and strategic alliances across the sector may also enable strong communication campaigns aimed at changing tacit public understandings of voluntary giving to the arts.

A practice perspective enables the possibility of fostering increased voluntary giving to the arts through the social embeddedness of giving. Our findings show that regional arts organisations' giving solicitation styles lack resonance with potential voluntary givers (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011; Body and Breeze, 2016; Payne et al., 2014). Thus, regional arts organisations in Britain must become more proficient at practice *procedures*. This includes offering clearer mechanisms for, and instructions on, how giving can be performed, and overt communications regarding resonant, tangible and emotional benefits of voluntary giving to the arts.

Practitioners' portfolio thinking around giving provides British arts organisations with the opportunity to acquire a share of voluntary givers' pockets. However, relationships must be cultivated by means of improved audience journey touch-points, to convert voluntary giving in the long-term. In line with practitioners' *rules and principles* regarding how to give, arts organisations must make it easier for these individuals to give through direct debit or on a one-off basis. An additional pay-it-forward strategy might be to encourage networks of artists to run fundraising activities with regional arts organisations or on their behalf (e.g. art sales parties, workshops).

Further, accountability and transparency regarding how donations are used in the arts sector is essential for attracting voluntary funds. One way to achieve this is to direct all voluntary giving to specific arts projects from the outset, explaining and communicating clearly to givers where public funding goes versus where voluntary giving is invested. This will also reduce the negative impacts of crowding-out effects currently hindering voluntary giving to British arts. Additionally, arts organisations willing to communicate their social engagement projects are likely to attract voluntary funding, appealing to a broader group of givers and their cause-driven affinities.

Nevertheless, due to voluntary giving *engagements* in the form of emotional, affinity-driven ends and purposes (Schau et al., 2009), we suggest it would be unrealistic for UK government funders to expect small, regional arts organisations to raise significant funds from the general public in the short-term, particularly for organisations without a public-facing venue. This is because the

donation box is still the preferred procedure for giving to the arts. Nevertheless, donation boxes alongside resonant messages can still be used by small arts organisations where permission is granted by their hosting venues or in exhibitions taking place within public spaces.

Voluntary givers emotionally connect with people and their stories, and with organisations with which they have an affinity. Our findings illustrate that affinity identification (Ashforth et al., 2008; Pratt, 1998) affects how practitioners make sense of all their giving goals. However, this affinity only directs giving to arts organisations when participants have a significant emotional connection with the arts. Therefore, voluntary giving is a fundraising challenge for arts NGOs, as the majority of voluntary giving *engagements*, in the form of emotionally-driven ends and purposes (Schau et al., 2009), are historically and socially connected to causes rather than the arts. Relatedly, raising awareness about artists' stories, and of what and how they create what they make, may generate the necessary people-based connection and affinity meanings that drive giving to the arts.

Social impact is another important goal of voluntary giving practice. Therefore, British arts organisations can start showing the tangible impacts of donations. Stories highlighting the importance of 'paying it forward,' and the intrinsic emotional benefits everyone derives from appreciating and making art, may also yield positive results, particularly in fundraising events. More importantly, while 'reasons against' (Chatzidakis et al., 2016) might be seen as barriers to successfully engage with givers for arts fundraising purposes, some of them can be turned into opportunities. Fundamentally, British arts organisations must believe in the need to ask for individual voluntary giving and actively ask for it, as full dependence on government funding is no longer possible.

Future research could examine varied demographics of givers or different types of arts organisations within this practice field. Given the long history of female involvement in philanthropic causes (Einolf, 2011; Taniguchi, 2006), and women's affinity with crafts (Holmes, 2015), future studies can also investigate how gender influences voluntary giving, as well as how

gender roles affect practitioners' understandings, procedures and engagements with arts organisations. Indeed, this is an evolving research area, given the changing nature of arts funding in Britain.

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## Tables

*Table 1: Participants' Profiles*

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Affinity with arts and crafts (e.g. studied arts, craft enthusiast)
1	Jessica	Female	47	Interested in all crafts, would consider herself very into all crafts.
2	Amanda	Female	29	Always interested in crafts. Mum was a dress maker so was around it growing up and always had a general interest.
3	Lilly	Female	33	Studied arts at university. It's good to be aware of arts and crafts having had children.
4	Charlotte	Female	44	Studied art at school. Not very good at arts but loves sewing and embroidery. Wishes she was better at it.
5	Ella	Female	29	Really into design. Husband is a builder so they do houses up. Studied art at school. Really into it. Mum made her do craft in school.
6	Charles	Male	26	Into crafts. Has been to lots of places as a tourist and likes to go to different places.
7	Samuel	Male	43	His wife has a handmade jewellery business and he helps with that. Also has a general interest in crafts.
8	Fabio	Male	45	Crafts enthusiast. He loves arts and his daughter does art so is passionate about pushing his daughter.
9	Peter	Male	40	Depends on the nature of the craft. Really likes historic art and has been to football exhibitions. Interested in what other people can make. Makes craft with the kids as well.
10	Martin	Male	51	Studied art, likes to draw and is into different types of crafts.
11	Richard	Male	31	Not into crafts but likes museums and sports events.
12	Sophia	Female	51	Likes to go to arts and crafts fairs to support her community.
13	Sarah	Female	35	Has a small child so likes to go to craft fairs with them.
14	Nathan	Male	47	Likes to go to National Trust places with his child and visit different places with them to keep them occupied.
15	Jill	Female	37	Did not like art at school but realised she has a hidden interest in arts and crafts when she had children.
16	Elaine	Female	43	Makes cards as a hobby and bags as presents for people.
17	Nick	Male	43	Studied ceramics in school. Paints, visits museums and art galleries regularly.
18	Giulia	Female	44	Studied art at university and is a textile artist.
19	Alice	Female	27	Practices photography and printing, attends craft fairs and supports independent artists.
20	Paula	Female	55	Makes crafts, enjoys going to see art exhibitions and craft fairs.
21	Dianne	Female	48	Is a musician, grew up with crafts and shops handmade.
22	Mila	Female	46	Trained as a graphic designer, goes to exhibitions and makes art.

## Figures

*Figure 1: An Illustration of Voluntary Giving as an Integrative Practice*

