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**"The Moral Biography of Wealth:
Philosophical Reflections on the Foundation of Philanthropy"**

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The Moral Biography of Wealth: Philosophical Reflections on the Foundation of Philanthropy

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Moral biography refers to the way all individuals conscientiously combine two elements in daily life: personal capacity and moral compass. Exploring the moral biography of wealth highlights the philosophical foundations of major gifts by major donors. First, the author provides several examples to elucidate his definition of moral biography. Second, he elaborates the elements of a moral biography. Third, he describes the characteristics that make one's moral biography a spiritual or religious biography. Fourth, he discusses the distinctive characteristics of a moral biography of wealth. Fifth, he suggests that implementing a process of discernment will enable development professionals to work more productively with donors. The author concludes by placing the notion of a moral biography of wealth in historical context and suggests how advancement professionals can deepen their own moral biography by working to deepen the moral biography of their donors.

Keywords: wealth; philanthropy; fundraising; moral biography; theory; care

In this essay, I discuss the meaning of a moral biography of wealth in an effort to explore the philosophical and moral foundations of major gifts by major donors. Describing the intersection of capacity and moral purpose in the life of donors in general, and wealth holders in particular, will clarify what is at stake as individuals attend to the deeper purposes and prospects of their growing discretionary income and wealth. The current and future prospects of philanthropy are abundant. By understanding the meaning and practice of moral biography, donors and fundraisers alike will be equipped to forge an even more abundant allocation of wealth to philanthropy and in a more thoughtful and rewarding manner.

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The term *moral biography* refers to the way individuals from any economic or social position conscientiously combine two elements in daily life: personal capacity and moral compass or bearing.¹ Living a moral biography is something as simple as leading a good life and something as profound as following Aristotle's teachings on choice and virtue. One specific version of a moral biography is that of wealth holders who are endowed with extraordinary material capacity and who must discern a path of character and aspiration commensurate to that extraordinary capacity and virtuous enough to counter tendencies to use that capacity carelessly or destructively. Understanding how wealth holders approach the ultimate meaning of life as a moral biography and their wealth as a tool for care of others, rather than as an impediment to care, will help fundraisers to work more closely and, ultimately, more productively with the donors they wish to bring into a collaborative relationship in the service of their institution's mission.

In the first section, I provide several examples from literature and the contemporary scene to demonstrate my definition of moral biography as the confluence of capacity and moral bearings. In the second section, I elaborate the elements of a moral biography, which I derive from Aristotle and sociologists who write about the workings of human agency. In the third section, I describe the characteristics of consciousness that, when present, make one's moral biography a spiritual or religious biography. In the fourth section, I locate the moral biography of an individual within the communal framework of the moral citizenship of care, which is the network of social relations revolving around meeting the true needs of others. In the fifth section, I discuss the aspects of capacity and moral direction that compose a moral biography of wealth. In the sixth section, I discuss how implementing a process of discernment will enable development professionals to work more deeply and productively with their donors and potential donors. In the conclusion, I place the issue of the moral biography of wealth in a larger historical context and encourage advancement professionals to deepen their own moral biography by working to deepen the moral biography of their donors.

MORAL BIOGRAPHY AS THE CONFLUENCE OF CAPACITY AND CHARACTER

At the outset, it is necessary to clarify the relation of a moral biography of the financially wealthy from that of other highly endowed individuals who can rightly be regarded as wealthy in realms other than that of financial capacity. Just as the notion of moral biography applies to all people and not just to wealth holders, so too the notion of moral biography of wealth applies to all people with substantial capacity and not just to people with material wealth. In addition to financial assets, people may possess such a substantially large pool of assets to be rendered wealthy in the realm of personal resources,

such as intellectual, artistic, psychological, and other personal skills. In addition, the pool of assets may exist in the realm of associational resources, such as networks of social connections, positions held in a firm, government, or church, as well as other types of social relations and posts that one can draw on to achieve an outcome. Each of these highly endowed individuals possesses sufficient wherewithal of one type or another to shape and not just live within the organizations and institutions of their day. For such well-endowed individuals, the common question is figuring out and living a moral biography that entails the responsibilities and rewards of great capacity and a socially consequential moral purpose. Although the article will offer insights to fundraisers and others into the moral biography of individuals who are wealthy in noneconomic terms, when I speak of the moral biogeography of wealth, I refer mainly to the moral biography of financial wealth.

Several examples from history and literature will help to clarify what I mean by a moral biography. The story of Moses as told in the Book of Exodus and of Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars* are the most detailed of these examples. Moses is born a powerless son of Hebrew slaves, yet soon becomes the adopted heir of the Pharaoh. He enjoys princely empowerment and anticipates ascendancy to the throne. But Moses gradually discovers his true bloodline, realizes that the power he wields lacks true moral compass, abdicates his right to succession, and flees to the mountains. There in the highlands, with no greater capacity than that of a stout shepherd and faithful spouse, he receives a new mandate from the Lord cloaked in the burning bush. Moses protests that he lacks the power to accomplish his mission and, besides, he stutters. The Lord promises Moses an arsenal of miraculous powers to face down the Pharaoh and says Aaron his brother will help him speak. And so it happens. Moses, imbued with the confluence of material capacity and moral purpose, breaks the resolve of the Pharaoh, parts the waters of the Red Sea, and, with moral direction becoming geographical bearing, leads his people through the desert from the clay towers of slavery to the land flowing with milk and honey. Nearing the final chapter of his gospel, Moses falters in trust and obedience, striking the rock for water twice rather than once as the Lord commanded. As punishment for this lapse in character, the Lord arrests Moses' geographical progression at the outskirts of the Promised Land.

Because of its fairy-tale simplicity and cosmic overtones, *Star Wars* also exemplifies the fundamental components of a moral biography that we similarly find in the sagas of *Superman*, *Spider-Man*, *Wonder Woman*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and the like. Luke Skywalker, the hero of the earliest three films, enters the story as a dutiful orphan farm boy with no special capacity or world-shaping aspiration other than to help his aunt and uncle tend their farm on the desert planet Tatooine. But he soon becomes caught up in the galactic confrontation between the Old Republic, led by a diminishing cadre of Jedi Knights embodying the moral aspiration of the good side of "the Force," and the Empire, led by former Jedi Darth Vader, who has

become aligned to the dark side. When Vader's troopers murder his guardians, Skywalker's familiar capacity and moral bearing are thrown into disarray, and he takes up a regime of Jedi training to assist the Republic. The more he becomes implicated in the interstellar struggle, the more Skywalker must turn to his Jedi mentors to obtain a more powerful capacity and a wiser purpose. At times, his budding powers exceed the strength of his character, imperiling himself and his companions. At other times, Skywalker's moral purpose outstrips his still-developing capacity, and he enters a fray unprepared. Eventually, Skywalker fully acquires a Jedi moral biography and, in a struggle unto death, rekindles Vader's nobler character.

The confluence of capacity and moral purpose is also the theme of Jesus' life. Each of the four Gospels tells how Jesus possessed both the physical power to work miracles and rise from the dead *and* the strength of character to resist temptations, teach and live the Sermon on the Mount, minister to his followers, and sacrifice his life. Homer's story of Odysseus returning home from the battle of Troy and Virgil's account of Aeneas establishing Rome both recount how well gods and mortals link physical and mental prowess with moral purpose and wisdom. For instance, Odysseus uses his wit to navigate the treacherous straits between Scylla and Charybdis and to avoid the seduction of the Sirens' melody. For his part, Aeneas must repeatedly recover his moral and geographic bearings to keep from dallying in Crete and being sidetracked in Carthage by his love affair with Dido.

Our contemporary world also offers examples. Mother Teresa's moral compass led her to muster the resources of companions and donors to care for those she called "the poorest of the poor." Closer to home, we hear presidential candidates recounting their lives as morality tales, telling how in the past they deployed public resources and personal skills in the service of moral purpose, and how in the future they will do so better than their opponents.

Despite the larger-than-life quality of many of the foregoing examples, they are, in the end, only heightened instances of how each of us applies resources in the service of a moral purpose—be that running a business, raising children with care, completing a college degree, buying a house, or making donations to charity. It should be noted that a moral biography is a way of life for all people, not just the financially or positionally well placed. There is, with careful examination, the ability to conclude that some purported moral biographies are in the view of others quite immoral biographies. Moreover, to say a biography is moral does not mean that all will conclude that it is moral in the sense of well-directed behavior. But every biography, including those we might evaluate as immoral, are in fact moral in the sociological sense suggested by Durkheim (e.g., 1992) in that they are normatively oriented in that they are directed not by impulse or instinct but by choices related to the array of beliefs, values, norms, and customs enforced by positive and negative social sanction.

THE ELEMENTS OF A MORAL BIOGRAPHY

In this section, I delve more deeply into the theory and concepts of moral biography, asking the reader to refer back to the previous examples, to their own experience, and to the biographies of their donors in order to capture the meaning of moral biography in its concrete expressions. My starting point for discussing the elements of a moral biography is Aristotle's philosophy of the good life. Figure 1 provides a diagram of Aristotle's thinking. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle reasons to the conclusion that the goal of life is happiness and that achieving happiness results from an ever deeper realization of the purpose of life. Happiness is what we today would call an inner apprehension that life is full and fulfilling. Such happiness is never finally achieved, because we experience an ever receding horizon of needs that pulls us away from unhappiness and toward deeper happiness. For Aristotle, we achieve greater happiness by exercising a wide array of virtues, but especially that of *phronesis*, or the virtue of making wise choices or judgments in practical affairs, as a way of properly exercising other virtues. As Aristotle says, "all virtues will be present together when the one virtue, practical judgment, is present." Practical judgment and the other virtues are always needed to "govern action." The array of virtues "makes one bring the end into action, and [practical judgment] makes one enact the things related to the end." As such, a moral biography is a life engaged in making wise choices or exercising practical judgment in line with the proximate and ultimate ends provided by virtues, especially that of wisdom, or *sophia* (2002, VI.13). Aristotle thus insists on the importance of three elements of the good life: the freedom to choose, the ends provided by virtue, and the exercise of wise judgments or practical wisdom (*phronesis*; see also VI.7) to pursue the ends. Freedom (see III.2, 3, 4) is the ability to decide with liberty among a range of alternatives what, at the minimum, is an aspect of freedom provided by wealth. Choice is the outcome of deliberation about things that could in fact be otherwise as a result of our actions. "We deliberate about things that are up to us and are matters of action." And so, choice is "the deliberate desire of things that are up to us, for having decided as a result of deliberating, we desire in accordance with our deliberation" (III.3). There can be no virtue without having the freedom for voluntary choice; there can be no true freedom without virtue, and there can be no good life, or moral biography, without the exercise of practical judgment to properly combine choice and virtue in daily life.

Figure 2 is my elaboration of what I have culled from Aristotle. It represents the fruit of some of my research and draws on the work of several social scientists whose work on agency I find valuable (e.g., Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Giddens, 1984; Sewell, 1992). Starting at the top of the figure, a moral biography is the perpetual migration of a choosing agent from genesis to tele-sis, from history to aspiration. Genesis is the starting condition within which we act. It refers to both the ultimate and more immediate origins of the world

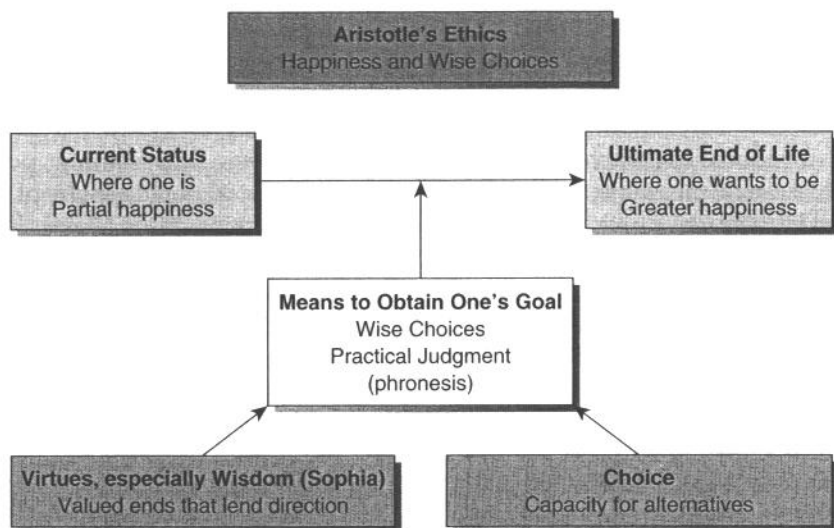


Figure 1. Aristotle's Ethics

and our personal life. Genesis is the set of metaphysical, social, and personal conditions within which agency transpires. It is the chosen and unchosen past that constitutes the given circumstances of our lives. These include the constraints, resources, knowledge, feelings, and values within which all our choices are made. These initial conditions do not decide our choices in the narrow sense of determinism. But they are what we have to work with, for example, a happy or homeless childhood, a prospering or failing business, a confident or hesitant personality, and so forth.

Telesis is the destiny of outcomes toward which we aspire. It can be an intermediate goal situated within the context of an ultimate goal or it can be the ultimate goal of life. As the end we wish to achieve or the destiny we wish to shape, telesis is related to the possibilities, aspirations, needs, desires, and interests we are drawn to achieve. For Aristotle, the ultimate end is participation in sophia (wisdom), which is learned by contemplation of ultimate reality, a contemplation that at its deepest, leads to a realization of our existence being seated within and destined toward participation in the community and ultimately to unity with wisdom as the ultimate arrangement of the cosmos. As the end, sophia and the happiness accruing to those partaking in it is not to be confused with phronesis (which is wise or practical judgments about properly aligning means to the end of sophia).

The choices we have made in the past naturally shape the conditions our agency has to work with at any time. In contrast, aspirations—although ultimately limited by the reality around us and by our ability to imagine and achieve alternatives—are the allies of freedom that invite us to transcend

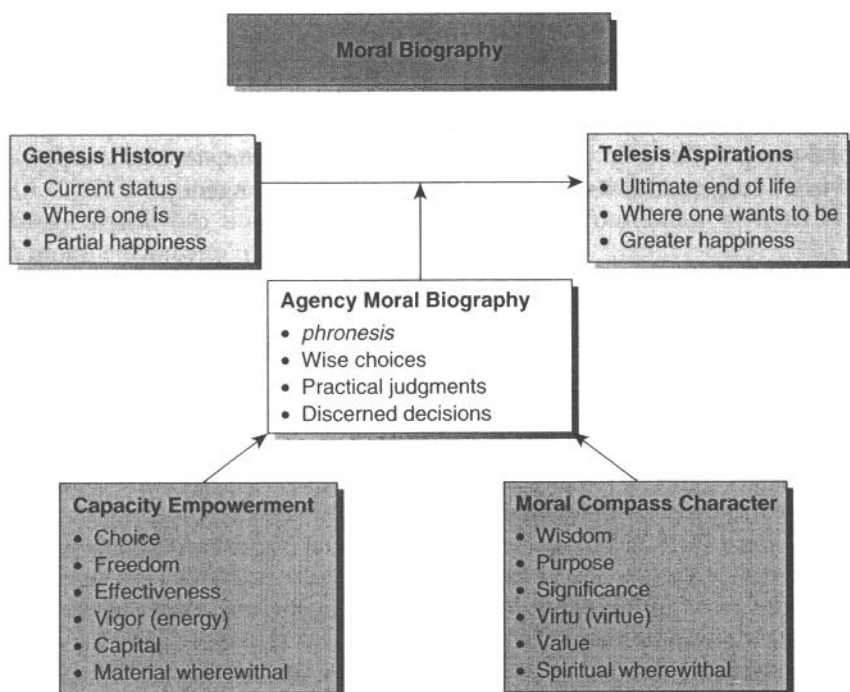


Figure 2. Moral Biography

and transform the conditions of the past and to apprehend and pursue our ultimate end. Genesis is about the conditions we receive, telesis is about the consequences we strive to create.

If genesis concerns what is in the past and telesis concerns what can be in the future, agency is about what we are doing in the present to close the gap between history and aspiration. Agency derives from the Latin *agere*, meaning to do or to act. Agency is the enactment of choice, both about weighty issues and everyday matters. It is carried out in the environment of conditions with which we are faced. But it is oriented toward transcending those conditions in the light of the needs, desires, and objectives that motivate our choices. As such, a moral biography is the sequence of acts of agency or wise choices we make in the context of where we have come from and where we want to go.

Moving down and through Figure 2, we come to the discussion of capacity and moral compass. Because I have already said a lot about this, I will be brief. I use a variety of terms to describe capacity and moral compass in order to capture other dimensions of the factors that animate agency. Each dimension of capacity listed in the left-hand box can be paired with any dimension of moral compass listed in the right-hand box, and vice versa. In addition to

speaking about a moral biography as the intersection of capacity and moral compass or empowerment and character, we can describe it as the crossroad of freedom and purpose, effectiveness and significance, energy and strength of character, capital and value, and material wherewithal and spiritual wherewithal. Identifying our own terms for the confluence of capacity and moral compass, both in general and in particular circumstances, is a path to self-knowledge and is itself an important act of moral agency.

SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY

Before leaving the topic of historical conditions and achievable aspirations, I want to discuss what makes a moral biography a spiritual biography. Thus far, I have not distinguished between the adjectives *moral* and *spiritual*. And although I do not want to make too much of the distinction, I have learned from my personal interviews with individuals from across the economic spectrum how readily and explicitly they speak about the spiritual dimension of their lives.

A spiritual biography exists when the capacity and moral compass of a moral biography derive more explicitly from one's ultimate origin and seeks to advance one's ultimate purpose. An ultimate purpose, explains Aristotle, is that self-determined end that people identify as their fundamental goal of life. It is that end, says Aristotle (2002, I.2.1., I.7), which through a successive sequence of testing turns out to be that purpose that serves no additional purpose. An important goal may be to obtain an education or buy a house. But in both cases, I can identify a deeper goal such as happiness that education and owning a house serve in turn. A simple further distinction is to define a religious biography as one that considers the ultimate genesis and teleosis of one's life to be connected to what Rudolf Otto (1923) calls the *numinous*, a being or force to which we bow our head in a relationship of worship. Those who consider their ultimate end to be akin to Maslow's notion of self-actualization or Heidegger's participation in Being would be likely to define their moral biography as spiritual. Those whose ultimate end is to enter into the unity of love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self, as Aquinas puts it, would be likely to understand their moral biography as religious.

MORAL BIOGRAPHY AND THE MORAL CITIZENSHIP OF CARE

If a moral biography is the confluence in daily practice of capacity and moral compass, the next question concerns the content of a moral biography when it is being lived in relation to philanthropy and contributes to the generation of a voluntary network of mutual assistance that I call the moral citizenship of care.

For Aristotle, the essence of philanthropy is to be found in friendship love or *philia*, which, in turn is the basis for community. *Philia* is first encountered

in the family where family members learn to love others as they love themselves. Friends become "a sort of other selves" (2002, VIII.12). A person is "related to a friend as he is to himself (since the friend is another self)" (IX.4). The upshot is that "Every sort of friendship, then, is in a community." It extends beyond the family to companions, fellow citizens, and so forth, wherever the relationship is extended toward "something good and superior" (VIII.12). It is for this reason that I have now come to refer to philanthropy as strategic friendship, and strategic friendship as the foundation of what I call the moral citizenship of care.²

No moral biography exists in isolation. The capacities and purposes that get executed through wise judgments are developed in connection with others and affect the community. There is an organic link between what is personal and what is social and cultural. To the extent a moral biography is intentional in the realm of friendship and extends into philanthropy, it is conjoined to and constitutive of what I call a moral citizenship of care. A moral biography of wealth, of course, is insinuated in economic and political citizenship. The intersection of capacity and purpose occurs in the conduct of all practical affairs. When philanthropy is one of those practical affairs, the focus of the moral purpose and aspiration takes on a distinctive teleology. In commercial and political relations, the goal to achieve "something good and superior" may be actively present. But it is subordinated to market relations wherein the provision of goods and services to meet the needs of others occurs only to the extent others voice their needs through dollars for purchases in the commercial realm and campaign contributions and votes in the political realm.

In the philanthropic realm of strategic friendship and the moral citizenship of care, the telos of the moral biography is oriented directly to the well-being of the other as a friend (even at a distance). A friend, says Aristotle, is "someone who wishes for and does good things . . . for the sake of the other person, or who wants the friend to be and to live for the friend's own sake" (2002, XI.4). The moral vision that directs philanthropy is the recognition that "life is difficult for one who is alone," and that "a human being is meant for a city and is such a nature as to live with others" that "it is necessary for a happy person to have friends" because happiness is an activity that requires contact with others. The content of that contact is the mutual benefit of friendship, which when extended to broader horizons of kinship, time, and space, makes strangers into friends. "A friend, who is another self," says Aristotle, "supplies what someone is incapable of supplying by himself," and, conversely, "the excellent person will need people for him to benefit" (IX. 9).

The moral compass of a moral biography, then, is one that is inherently communal and attends directly, rather than through the market, to the needs of others. Such a moral biography is the building block of the moral citizenship of care, that array of intersecting relationships of care by which individuals respond to the needs of others not through commercial or political markets but directly, because of the tie of *philia*, or friendship love, that one wishes to carry out effectively and strategically.

THE MORAL BIOGRAPHY OF WEALTH

Thus far, I have spoken about moral biography in general and its communal dimension of strategic friendship. I now want to discuss what is different about capacity and moral purpose in a moral biography of wealth. Put simply, the difference is that wealth holders enjoy a substantially elevated level of material capacity and must discern a commensurately consequential moral purpose. They have the capacity to produce, and not just enter into alternatives, and a moral compass of great expectations, aspirations, and responsibilities. To be clear, financial wealth was not the capacity that Moses or Skywalker mobilized, and financial wealth is not the only capacity that wealth holders muster in pursuing their purposes. Nevertheless, great wealth is a capacity that allows for great expectations and the realization of them. Consequently, wealth holders, when they so choose, are in their world-shaping ability more akin to the Moses of the Exodus than the Moses of the highlands, to Luke Skywalker the Jedi Knight than Skywalker the orphan farmhand.

The most telling implication of exploring the moral biography of wealth today is that there is a *potential* inner connection between the horizons of wealth and moral life. The growing material capacity that is creating more wealth holders is accompanied by new challenges and opportunities for character and character formation. In his 1930 essay, "The Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren," John Maynard Keynes wrote about the growth in financial wealth and its implications for the growth in spiritual wealth. According to Keynes (1930/1933),

the *economic problem* [of scarcity] may be solved, or at least within sight of solution, within a hundred years. This means that the economic problem is not—if we look into the future—the *permanent problem of the human race*. (p. 366)

"I look forward," he continues,

to the greatest change which has ever occurred in the material environment of life for human beings in the aggregate. . . . Indeed, it has already begun. The course of affairs will simply be that there will be ever larger and larger classes and groups of people from whom problems of economic necessity have been practically removed. (p. 372)

The consequence of lifting economic necessity will be that

for the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem—how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure, which science and compound interest will have won for him, to live wisely and agreeably and well. (p. 367)

We can see that Keynes forecasts both an unprecedented material horizon and the cultural consequences that flow from it. The economic possibilities he charts become the foundation for new spiritual possibilities. I will discuss each in turn. But like Keynes, I will spend more time on the latter, for we are only at the dawn of the spiritual and cultural transformation Keynes envisioned, and so most wealth holders know more about the economic than the spiritual prospects of their wealth.

GROWTH IN CAPACITY

From 1950 through the third quarter of 2004, the annual real rate of growth in wealth has been 3.31%, despite that nine recessions occurred over this period. In 1985, when I first began my research on wealth and philanthropy, the big news was that the day had arrived when the United States had 1 million millionaires. Today there are more than 8 million households with a net worth of \$1 million or more in today's dollars and more than 5 million households controlling for inflation since 1985. In the 2004 edition of the *Forbes* 400 richest Americans, 312 are billionaires, and it now takes a net worth of \$675 million to make the list. My colleague, John Havens, calculates from the Federal Reserve Survey of Consumer Finances that of the 106.5 million households in the United States, 436,000 households had net worth of \$10 million or more in 2001. Of these, about 7,000 households had net worth of \$100 million or more, 16,500 households had net worth of \$50 million to \$100 million, and 412,100 had net worth of \$10 million to \$50 million. Even from 1998 through 2003—a period that included the recent recession, 9/11, the bursting of the technology bubble, and the general stock market decline—private wealth in the nation has still grown at a real average annual rate of 2.6%.

Other indicators of the burgeoning of wealth come from Havens and my wealth-transfer projections. We estimate that in 2002 dollars, an unprecedented \$45 trillion to \$150 trillion in wealth transfer just from estates of final decedents will occur over the next five decades and that this will produce between \$7 trillion and \$27 trillion in charitable bequests. In a separate projection for the same period, we estimate that lifetime giving will provide an additional \$15 trillion to \$28 trillion in charitable contributions. Taken together, charitable bequests and lifetime giving will range from \$22 trillion to \$55 trillion, with between 52% and 65% of this amount being contributed by households with \$1 million or more in net worth. Given the 3.31% real annual rate of growth in wealth between 1950 and the third quarter of 2004, there is every reason to expect that the actual wealth transfer and amount of total charitable giving will be closer to the upper estimates (based on 4% annual real growth in wealth) than the lower ones (based on 2% real growth).

HYPERAGENCY

These national trends in growth in wealth and the ability to contribute substantial amounts to charity indicate that not only are there more wealth holders with greater net worth, but that a growing proportion of them have sufficiently solved their personal "economic problem" so as to make major gifts to charity. In regard to a moral biography of wealth, the foregoing statistics are important because they indicate the growing capacity of wealth holders to make choices. On every dimension of capacity listed in Figure 2, the possession of material wealth offers the opportunity for hyperagency. Wealth holders have a broader array of choices, alternatives, capital, energy, and effectiveness at their disposal. Such capacity provides wealth holders with the opportunity not only to be agents but what I call hyperagents (see Schervish, 1997; Schervish, Coutsoukis, & Lewis, 1994).

Hyperagency refers to the institution-building capacity of wealth holders. Most people spend their lives as agents living within the established workings of the organizational environments in which they find themselves. Hyperagents too spend a good part of their lives as agents in this sense. But when and where they desire to do so, they are capable of forming rather than just working within institutional settings. Although not all hyperagents are wealth holders, all wealth holders are hyperagents, at least in the material realm. They can apply their material resources to shape the tangible world.

Hyperagents, then, are world builders. Whereas most of us are agents who attempt to find the best place for ourselves within existing situations, hyperagents, when they choose, are founders of the institutional framework within which they and others will work. What takes a social, political, or philanthropic movement for agents to accomplish, hyperagents can accomplish relatively single-handedly. They can design their houses from the ground up, create the jobs and businesses within which they work, tailor-make their clothes and vacations, endow their children, and create new foundations, new philanthropic enterprises, and new directions for existing charities. When we speak about today's donors being entrepreneurial or venture philanthropists (see Schervish, O'Herlihy, & Havens, 2001), we are pointing to their capacity and disposition to shape and not just participate in the goals and accomplishments of the causes and charities they fund. Whereas most of us participate as supporters of charitable enterprises, wealth holders, when they choose to do so, are producers of them.

THE MORAL COMPASS OF WEALTH

Hyperagency is more than simply a world-building capacity. It is also a psychological orientation of moral compass. In regard to the *telesis* of aspiration, wealth holders harbor great expectations, view them as legitimate, and possess the confidence to achieve them. The question is how liberation from economic necessity changes the nature of wealth holders' great expectations.

In addition to charting emerging economic possibilities, Keynes (1930/1933) describes the transformation in moral compass that economic security will evoke. "When the accumulation of wealth is no longer of high social importance, there will be great changes in the code of morals," he predicts. "We shall be able to rid ourselves of the many pseudo-moral principles . . . by which we have exalted some of the most distasteful of human qualities into the position of the highest virtues" (p. 369).

Although Keynes (1930/1933) argues that a change in material environment will spawn a sea change in spiritual consciousness, he does not condemn as lacking moral compass those who continue to focus on generating wealth. For "the time for all this is not yet" (p. 372). Still, he does insist that great wealth offers opportunities for a broader and deeper horizon of aspirations and responsibilities. Until Moses received the capacity to defeat the Pharaoh, part the Red Sea, and provide manna from the skies, the aspiration to return to the land flowing with milk and honey was not a workable dream. Only with release from the pressing demands of slavery was there the freedom of time and resources for the Israelites "to live wisely and agreeably and well." So too for today's wealth holders. Although the greatest service of many will continue to be through business and investment, there is a new dimension of moral compass that Keynes says can transform the moral biography of wealth holders. This will occur when the accumulation of additional wealth ceases to be a primary objective for an individual and wealth becomes an instrument, a tool to accomplish other ends. It is Keynes's aspiration that

the love of money as a possession—as distinguished from the love of money as a means to the enjoyments and realities of life—will be recognized for what it is, a somewhat disgusting morbidity, one of those semi-criminal, semi-pathological propensities which one hands over with a shudder to the specialists in mental disease. (p. 369)

When individuals are in the accumulation phase of their life, making money, although seldom the ultimate end of life, is usually a high-priority intermediate end. When individuals reach a level of subjectively defined financial security, there is the potential for a shift in moral compass whereby the accumulation of wealth ceases to be an end and becomes more fully a means to achieve other ends. Such ends may be retirement, providing an inheritance, pursuing a hobby, or enjoying more leisure. But Keynes (1930/1933) suggests an additional prospect, namely, a change in "the nature of one's duty to one's neighbour. For it will remain reasonable to be economically purposive for others after it has ceased to be reasonable for oneself" (p. 372). The shift of wealth from an end to a means, then, is arguably the most significant transformation of capacity and character for individuals who have solved or are close to solving the economic problem.

DISCERNING A MORAL BIOGRAPHY

Because it is not easy to decipher the moral compass that will guide their great capacity so that it contributes to the moral citizenship of care, we hear much from wealth holders about the turmoil, worry, and dilemmas they face in regard to how their riches shape the moral biographies of themselves, their children, and those they affect in business and in philanthropy. Acquiring great wealth, it turns out, is the beginning, not the end, of a moral biography of wealth. As a result, there is a growing need for a process of conscientious self-reflection by which wealth holders discern how to complement the growth in their material quantity of choice with a commensurate growth in the spiritual quality of choice. Wealth holders who have achieved or are approaching financial security do not need to own more money but to discern the moral compass that will direct the deployment of their wealth to engage in the moral citizenship of care.

Of course, individuals and their families can carry out this process of clarification informally and without the assistance of others. But most wealth holders will benefit from engaging in what I call an extended archeological conversation with their trusted advisors, including development professionals. Such conversation follows the principle that archeology precedes architecture, that self-discovery comes before defining and implementing a financial or estate plan. In an archeological conversation, advisors and fundraisers serve as counselors in order to help wealth holders uncover the ideas, emotions, and activities that shaped their moral biography in the past and identify the moral bearings and purposes that they wish to advance now and into the future. It offers the opportunity to examine the major turning points in life, the people and circumstances that shaped them, the hurts and happinesses that ensued, and an agenda for the future. In an archeological conversation, wealth holders discern their capacities, clarify their moral purposes, and combine the two in a way that creates a moral biography of wealth for themselves, their children, and others for whom they care. When this process of discernment is carried out with no hidden agendas and with the purpose of helping wealth holders uncover their true aspirations, a deeper commitment to philanthropy invariably ensues.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this article, I have emphasized several themes. The dramatic growth in wealth has spawned unprecedented freedom, material choice, and capacity. It has also generated unique spiritual horizons of moral purpose for a growing number of wealth holders. As a result, the overriding question facing most wealth holders today is how to fulfill their need for making wiser choices to forge a deeper moral biography.

The distinctive trait of wealth holders in all eras is that they enjoy the fullest range of choice in determining and fulfilling who they want to become and what they want to do for themselves, their families, and the

world around them. Today, increasing numbers of individuals are approaching, achieving, or even exceeding their financial goals with respect to the provision for their material needs, and doing so at younger and younger ages. A level of affluence that heretofore was the province of a scattering of rulers, generals, merchants, industrialists, and financiers has come to characterize whole cultures. For the first time in history, the question of how to align broad material capacity of choice with spiritual capacity of character has been placed before so many of a nation's people.

There is, of course, nothing in world-building hyperagency that requires virtue and wisdom. Today's pharaohs of financial skullduggery and totalitarianism demonstrate that well enough. An expanded quantity of choice does not guarantee that there will be a finer quality of choice. But quantity of choice always prompts the question about the moral purpose of a moral biography that is released from economic constraint. Making free and wise choices about wealth allocation for the deeper purposes of life, especially for philanthropy, is now and will become ever increasingly the prominent feature of financial morality and personal fulfillment for high net worth individuals. My hope¹ is that clarifying the meaning of a moral biography will help fundraisers to understand their donors better and to help their donors chart a path of greater happiness for themselves, their families, and others in the world about whom they care. For the primary need of wealth holders today is the noble need of every person, namely, to clarify and pursue their moral biography, especially the aspect of moral aspirations, in the quest for effectiveness and significance. Understanding the components of moral biography as capacity and moral compass, working with donors to freely and intelligently discern their capacity and moral compass, and offering opportunities that fulfill donors' desire simultaneously to increase their own happiness and the happiness of others is the sterling new vocation and, indeed, moral biography of development and advancement professionals. Those who address philanthropy are always first addressing moral biography.

Notes

1. I use the terms *moral compass*, *moral bearing*, and *moral direction* interchangeably, along with the terms *aspiration* and *character* to emphasize the dimension of moral biography that charts, mobilizes, motivates, and provides direction to how individuals activate their capacities to achieve a goal.

2. See Schervish and Havens (2002) and Schervish (2005) for an elaboration of the notion of the moral citizenship of care.

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5 CHAPTER

How to Think Through Using Resources That Exceed My Personal Needs?

Paul Schervish

The point of the essays in this book is to help you think through a variety of topics for yourself related to wealth. But what does it mean to “think through” these things? How have the wisest and most thoughtful people – past and present – thought through important matters in their lives? They have used a   process known as *discernment*. My goal here is to share with you a sketch of this process so that you can apply it yourself.

Why Discernment?

Currently, there are two trends affecting wealth holders that suggest an increase in the need for discernment. The first is the significant growth in the number of wealth holders and the magnitude of their wealth. The second is the desire of wealth holders to allocate their wealth in a way that is as effective and personally fulfilling as the process of accumulating it. Knowledge of the process of discerned decision-making is the key ingredient missing from many current efforts to enrich the quantity and quality of decisions about your allocation of wealth.

Wealth Holders Today

Increasing numbers of wealth holders are achieving and exceeding their financial goals of providing for the material needs for themselves and their families, and doing so at younger and younger ages. This phenomenon raises a significant question for wealth holders: how to allocate the growing financial resources that exceed their material needs. The major attribute of such “redundant” wealth is that it offers a greater range of choice, and the potential to be unlimited, creative, and purposeful.

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No doubt, it matters much to you that the quality of your wealth-allocation decisions be conscientious. Discernment is a method by which you can figure out the wisest uses of your time, talent, and treasure, and implement your decisions in a competent manner. You are at the center of the questions you ask and the answers you seek.

Three alternatives suggest themselves as valuable destinies for your wealth. The first is to increase consumption. But when your family's material needs have been satisfied, further increasing your standard of living may not be a significant goal. The second is to increase financial or business investment, which is certainly one potential outcome.

The third is distribution to heirs and philanthropy. This option provides the opportunity to create outcomes that are of a different and perhaps more fulfilling order than those in the world of commerce.

Your Need for Discernment

Figuring out the most fruitful allocation of financial resources can feel like a daunting responsibility. A leading question for those with an exceptional level of assets is this: *How will you use your wealth as a means to deeper purposes, once raising your standard of living is no longer of high importance?*

Answering this question well requires a method of discernment. Discernment is not just thinking seriously about an idea. It is a process that leads to a   *decision* to do or not do something. It combines both thinking and feeling and allows you to choose the most inspiring option among the wide range facing you today.

Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, formulated discernment in a teachable and accessible way. His rules for discernment are laid out in his retreat manual, *Spiritual Exercises*. For Ignatius, discernment involves clarifying your preferences, making decisions about them, and implementing them. It is a matter of dispositions, decisions, and deeds.


Discernment differs from other ways of figuring things out. It encourages you to take the time and effort to figure out what most connects you (and your truest self) to your relationships – from family, to work, to people around the globe. Discernment leads you to dig beneath the surface of your everyday thinking to find those choices that bring you joy and that you can do.

Abundance of Choice

There are many people – including perhaps your children, business partners, clergy, charities, financial advisors, and attorneys – who may have a plan for you and your resources. They are not necessarily misleading you or being self-centered, and you can certainly heed their input. But discernment places the reflection (and decisions) about what to do firmly in

your court. This, according to Ignatius, is not an insurmountable burden.



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Discovering through discernment can be liberating and fulfilling. In fact, you can put aside what others – party politics, advisors, fundraisers, or guilt – tell you to do. Discernment helps you sift through your resources and purposes to see what they are, and then to do what you find most inspiring. It transforms the burden of uncertainty, dissatisfaction, confusion, and hopes into heartfelt decisions. This sifting process can sometimes be thorny because you can confuse outside obligation for inspiration. As Ignatius recounts from his own experience, imposed duty brings sinking feelings, resentments, and regrets. Recall those times when you were mulling a decision about allocating assets to or from your lifestyle, children, business, or philanthropy. The hard part is not figuring out options; it's deciding among them. In addition to your own pursuit of opportunities, there are many groups seeking to put options in front of you, and your wealth adds to your abundance of choice. And here is where the elements of discernment come in to help with your deliberations.

Personal Example

Many of us pray, meditate, or ruminate in order to make decisions. The best spiritual instruction I ever received in regard to deciding what theology school to attend came from a wise Jesuit. He told me that discernment was not actually waiting for a voice from God to tell me which school (among three good choices) to attend. He recommended, instead, that I seek a peaceful connection to God. Then – in the middle of that experience of connection – then, I should choose the school *I felt I most wanted to attend*. Follow the inspiration.


Discernment Breaks into the Silence of Wise Choices

Discernment is a way for you to break into the hidden silences in your heart about what to do, and to boldly address what the Second Vatican Council calls the “joys, hopes, hurts, and anxieties” of life.

How to break into the silence? Discernment involves attending to both thoughts and feelings. It requires clear thinking, of course, but also entails monitoring your feelings about how your previous decisions worked out and what you want for the future. One technique Ignatius recommends is to list and evaluate the pros and cons of a particular decision. He suggests that you picture actually making that decision, with all the pros and cons. You then wait to see whether the inspiration (or “consolation,” as he calls it) from that choice endures or evaporates over time. Sometimes a discerned decision comes about by actually experimenting with – and not just envisioning – a choice so you can see how it will work and what you feel about it. Sometimes the most authentic decision is that you are not yet ready to make a decision.

How do you decide among the many choices you have? How, for example, do you choose between giving to improve education for inner city kids, funding research to benefit cancer patients, or allocating more to your investments



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or children? I suggest that you think about (meditate on/dwell on) familiar experiences that, since your childhood, have defined what is important to you and others, and in that process you see what rises to your attention.

There are several such life experiences you might reflect on during a discernment exercise – empathy, gratitude, altering circumstances, and happiness. Empathy arises from identification with those whom you feel are like members of your family – and spreads over time to those who are not related to you by blood. For instance, you might think about providing for the education of your nieces and nephews, contributing to families who have suffered from a natural disaster, and helping your religious congregation.

A second experience from childhood that may surface during your discernment exercise is gratitude or “a desire to give back,” as people often put it. You become conscious of the unearned advantages, good breaks, luck, and grace that have come your way, prompting you to bequeath such benefits to others.

This may lead you to provide scholarships for the kids in the now inner-city school that provided you a step up in life, or to contribute to the hospital that treated your child for autism or cancer.

A third experience is your history of “wanting to make a difference,” by changing your personal life and things around you. As you grew up, you strove to expand your freedom at home and in school. As an adult, you chose careers, created businesses, and built a family. As you know, this ability to shape the world (and not just take what life hands you) is especially available to those with   exceptional financial capacity. This might stimulate you to change the workings of an educational system, provide your alma mater with a research center, start another business, or provide extraordinary opportunities to your children.


A fourth lifetime experience connected to discernment is the quest for the fulfillment or happiness. Unlike the previous three experiences, the quest for happiness doesn't usually suggest new people or causes to focus on. Rather, it enables you to trust and confirm your decisions. Growth in happiness occurs when you close the gap between where you are and where you want to be, while helping others to do the same. In fact, a key measure of a discerned decision is whether you feel that it provides greater joy and fulfillment to you and others at the same time.

Liberty and Inspiration

Discernment allows decisions to be self-discovered in an environment of liberty and inspiration, and allows those decisions to be more wholeheartedly embraced, pursued, and sustained. *Liberty* is the freedom from unfounded

assumptions, fears, and anxieties. It also includes what Ignatius calls “indifference.” This indifference in no way means being blasé. Indifference is technical term. It means that before you make a decision, you develop a sense of humility that puts aside the internalized pressures that can constrict your openness to all the possible solutions.



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Inspiration is the array of desires and aspirations that lead you to make choices and commitments. Ignatius says that the will of God is found in what inspires you, not guilt or other externally imposed obligations. Every financial decision requires an objective assessment about whether you have enough money to do what you want. But a discerned allocation also yields a subjective appraisal about how inspiring the things are that you want to accomplish. You will know that you have made a discerned decision about wealth allocation when the distributions you make result from your personal inspiration and not just from your objective amount of wealth.

Examples of Family Discernment

Let's look at some examples of discernment. The names and other narrative details have been altered for confidentiality reasons. Louis and Marie Alexander discerned it was time to reduce their ownership of several Texas construction companies headquartered in Houston. Over a business career of 50 years, Louis founded separate home, office, and road construction companies. For a while, Louis had been feeling that he would be happier if he could reduce his work hours, liquidate his operating companies, and concentrate on transferring wealth to children and philanthropy.

Last year, Louis retired from actively running his businesses and sold the last of his holdings. The question then facing him was how to use his liquidated



wealth of about \$150 million for family and philanthropy. Up to this point, Louis and Marie's discernment process was informal and implicit, but it did follow the principles of liberty and inspiration. They had already carried out some modest transfers to children for lifestyle and the education of grandchildren. In addition, they had been involved for decades in several philanthropic causes, in line with the general norms for entrepreneurs of their wealth and stature in Houston.

Louis and Marie initiated a formal process of decision-making to put their wealth in motion. Their wealth had become a “burden” in the way that Ignatius speaks of it – an unease you too may have experienced. They had a sense of restlessness about what to do with their wealth and questions about how much additional money to give to philanthropic organizations and their adult children.

They were also wondering when to tell them about it and when to distribute it.

In search of practical solutions to their concerns, we undertook “biograph

ical conversations” with Louis and Marie, then with their children, and finally with the entire family. These conversations are open-ended interviews prompting individuals to think back to the key people and experiences that have made them who they are today, and to think forward to what they want to be and do in the future. The facilitated conversations permitted the Alexander family members to discover and enunciate for themselves what was most important.



We first turned to how much money the children would receive. Currently, the Alexanders give each child and grandchild the full amount of tax-excluded



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gifts each year, and they pay college tuition and expenses for each grandchild. But they have limited the amount of future trusts and inheritances to a total of \$5 million. Louis and Marie felt that this amount was enough to provide their children and grandchildren with many good opportunities.

Louis and Marie also started to think about their capacity and desires for philanthropy. The question for them was whether they wanted to ratchet up gifts to their current recipients or to focus their charitable giving on a few organizations. They had for many years each contributed large gifts for research at the two hospitals that had treated both Marie’s mother and Louis for cancer. They were proud of these gifts. Their energy and animation about cancer research increased to such an extent that it invited the question of whether they wanted to do something extraordinary for this particular cause. The Alexanders spent only a brief time ruminating before deciding to contribute \$125 million, to be split between their two preferred hospitals for cancer centers bearing their name. Louis and Marie said that this process had helped them pinpoint something that makes them happier than anything else they’ve ever done with their money.


But there were complications. The children, knowing their parents’ net worth and the amount of the donations, felt somewhat slighted, and raised this with their parents. The children were not being greedy. Still, many people mistake money for love. The children perceived that their parents had not appreciated the good uses to which they would put additional capital. A modest,   but not threatening, disagreement ensued. The children felt scorned, whereas Louis and Marie lamented that their children had shown an unbecoming sense of entitlement. The children felt that their parents seemed to show more pride, enjoyment, and confidence in their philanthropy than in them. None of this broke the relationship with their parents. They celebrate holidays together and remain grateful for the benefits they have received. Still, they hope that more money will be set aside for them down the road.

The lesson here is that discernment that leads one family to conscientious decisions does not always or inevitably work for everyone.

Another family had a more positive outcome. The father is a religious and reflective person who quietly aligns himself in all things to what he calls

the “Divine Presence.” He dedicated his wealth to prison ministry, inner-city schools, universities, and providing healthcare (equal to his own) to all his employees. He had regular conversations with his married children and watched how they built their families. He concluded that his children “are better parents than I was and they are already more philanthropic than I was at their age.” He was pleased to pay for educational expenses for his children. And each year he provided the maximum tax excluded gifts for all his children, spouses, and grandchildren.



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For him, freedom of choice is the practical advantage of wealth and the most profound gift of God. He trusted his kids to “make wise choices” and decided to leave them as much wealth as possible. He asked his children whether they would like him to add more money to his foundation and hand it over to them to run. They answered in the affirmative, even though that meant they would receive proportionately less in bequests.

Choose Advisors Who Coach Your Discernment

Many charitable organizations, fundraisers, community foundations, financial institutions, and independent financial advisors have also realized the need for a process of conscientious discernment. These intermediaries are recognizing an opportunity to provide new sources of value to clients and donors. Some explicitly differentiate themselves by offering specific services to help you allocate your wealth in a more self-reflective and self-chosen manner. When engaging such helpful services, remember that you and your discernment must remain at the center of every decision-making process about how you want to devote your wealth to family and philanthropy.


Discernment as Mindful Introspection

In the end, you will do most of your discernment in the quiet of your heart, in discussions with your family, and in your own investigation of what you want to   allocate and to whom. Remember, discernment is a procedure of self-discovery that clarifies your financial goals – for self, family, and philanthropy – quantifies those goals, and devises plans to reach these goals and implement them. Over time and through experimentation and experience, you will build your aptitude for discernment and become your own best teacher. Your regular use of the elements of discernment will create an effective pattern for making decisions. Developing the habit of discernment will generate a set of dispositions, decisions, and deeds that are more spiritually fulfilling, emotionally engaging, and practically effective.

Today, many people are exceeding their own financial goals for consumption, and doing so at younger and younger ages. But that raises compelling questions about both the number of choices families have but also the quality of those choices. It's a matter of creating a worthwhile legacy. In the root sense of the Latin *legatus* (or “ambassador”), in leaving a legacy, you are not so much leaving purposes and wealth behind; you are sending them forward.

Ultimately, discernment is a spiritual exercise. It is a method of guiding heartfelt and useful decisions by asking yourself the deepest questions with liberty and inspiration. For those seeking better decisions, more fulfillment, and a renewed sense of peace, I heartily recommend this journey.



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Questions for Further Reflection

In adopting discernment as a method to make decisions about your wealth, you should find your own answers to these foundational questions:

What are you inspired to do with your financial and personal capacities

- That meets the true needs of others and yourself?
- That brings you joy and happiness?
- That you can do well through gifts to family and philanthropy?
 - And that enables you to identify with the fate of others, express gratitude for blessings, and achieve deeper effectiveness and significance for yourself and others?

Additional Resources

Paul G. Schervish and Keith Whitaker, *Wealth and the Will of God: Discerning the Use of Riches in the Service of Ultimate Purpose* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010). See especially “Introduction: Moral Biography” and Chapter 3, “Ignatius: All Things Ordered to Service of God.”

Paul G. Schervish, “Religious Discernment of Philanthropic Decisions in the Age of Affluence,” in *Religious Giving: For Love of God*, ed. David H. Smith (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 125–146.

Biography

Paul G. Schervish is professor emeritus of sociology and retired founder and director of the Center on Wealth and Philanthropy at Boston College. He has served as distinguished visiting professor at the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy and as Fulbright Professor of Philanthropy at University College, Cork, Ireland. He has been selected five times to the *NonProfit Times* “Power and Influence Top 50.” He received the 2013 Distinguished Career Award from the

section on Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity of the American Sociological Association. Schervish is the author of *Gospels of Wealth: How the Rich Portray Their Lives* and coauthor with Keith Whitaker of *Wealth and the Will of God*. With John Havens, he is the author of the 1998 report *Millionaires and the Millennium*, which predicted the now-well-known \$41 trillion wealth transfer. Projections from their revised wealth transfer model were published in the 2014 report, *Great Expectations: A New Model and Metric for the Continuing Wealth Transfer*.

Schervish serves as a consultant for individuals and families, and as a speaker at forums of wealth holders, financial professionals, and fundraisers. He received a bachelor's degree in classical and comparative literature from the University of Detroit, a Master's in sociology from Northwestern University, a Master of Divinity from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, and a PhD in sociology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.



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Hyperagency and High-Tech Donors: A New Theory of the New Philanthropists

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Hyperagency and High-Tech Donors: A New Theory of the New Philanthropists

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Social Welfare Research Institute
November 14, 2003

Social action . . . may be oriented to the past,
present, or expected future behavior of others.”
-Max Weber (Economy and Society, p. 22)

In this paper I develop the theoretical concept of hyperagency and apply it to interpret the philanthropy of high-tech donors in particular, and wealthy donors in general. Over the past two decades, there has been a substantial rekindling of interest in the notion of agency as a conceptual tool for understanding the practices of individuals as both constrained by their circumstances and transformative of them (Giddens 1984; Sewell 1992; Emirbayer and Mische 1998). This emphasis on individual practice has grown in part from efforts by Marxists and non-Marxists alike to counter structuralist analyses that have focused on charting the positions to which individuals are distributed in the social structure and on the patterns of relations determined by the roles, norms, and interests associated with these positions, such as the class positions (Wright 1997; Wood 1995). The resultant focus on agency and the actual practice of agents as making relatively free choices, albeit within given conditions, has a natural affinity with theories of individual philanthropy which emphasize the voluntary and potentially transformative efforts of individuals on the world in which they live.

Our research on wealth and philanthropy over the past twenty years has in large part revolved around determining the distinctive quality or class trait that distinguishes

the empowerment of wealth holders in realms of business and politics, as well as life-style and philanthropy (Schervish et. al 1994; Schervish 1997). Our finding is that at least in the material realm, the class trait of wealth holders is hyperagency, which I define as the array of dispositions and capacities that enable individuals to relatively single-handedly produce the social outcomes they desire, as well as the conditions within which they and others exercise their agency. If agency is the capacity to make choices largely within the rules and resources that are socially given, hyperagency is the capacity to be a creator or producer of those rules and resources. If agents are *finders* of the most desirable or fitting place for themselves within a limited range of possibilities, hyperagents are *founders* of those possibilities for themselves, as well as for others. What takes the aid of a social, political, religious, or philanthropic movement for agents to achieve, can be achieved by hyperagents pretty much single-handedly.

Although to this point I have developed and employed a rudimentary notion of hyperagency in our studies on wealth and philanthropy, I have not systematically connected it to the theoretical literature on agency or used it as the fundamental explanatory concept for an extended study of giving patterns by wealth holders. It is my intention to take up each of these issues in this paper. In the first section of the paper, I draw on the sociological literature to identify those aspects of the theory of agency in so far as they are relevant to elaborating a general understanding of hyperagency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Alexander 1992; Archer 1982; Coleman 1990; Turner 1994). In the second section I elaborate the meaning of hyperagency as a distinctive kind of agency with specific dispositions and capacities. In the third section, I use this developed notion of hyperagency as the principal interpretative concept for analyzing the dispositions and

practices that high-tech donors manifest in business and philanthropy. In the conclusion, I indicate the implications of the research for the understanding of hyperagency, the new philanthropists, the new horizons of philanthropy in general, and of fundraising.

In developing and demonstrating the workings of hyperagency, I draw on the findings from *the 2001 High-Tech Donors Study*, which was carried out by the Boston College Social Welfare Research Institute, January through March 2001 (Schervish et. al 2001). The leading questions of the research revolved around discerning: first, the relationship between how high-tech wealth holders accumulate their money in business and how they allocate it to philanthropy; second, the range of personal, business, and philanthropic issues that surround high-tech wealth and philanthropy; third, the implications of the findings for understanding and improving the trajectory of the philanthropy carried out by high-tech donors; and fourth, the application of what I would learn to further our understanding of the emerging problems and prospects of philanthropy in general. The research was conducted on behalf of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (formerly the National Society of Fund Raising Executives); and was initiated and funded by Dr. Robert B. Pamplin, Jr., President and CEO of the R.B. Pamplin Corporation in Portland, Oregon.

Sociological Considerations of Agency

In this paper prepared for presentation at the ARNOVA conference I review only briefly some of the major directions in the literature on agency and will move rather directly to the synthesis of my positive theory of agency and hyperagency.

Significant strides have been made in transcending the social structure/human agency antimony by figures such as Bourdieu (1984) and especially by Giddens (1979, 1984) in his conception of the "duality of structure," and by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) in their comprehensive recasting of the For Giddens in his theory of structuration, social structure has only a "virtual" existence, existing only at moments in time and space when embodied by individual agents endowed with a relatively high degree of reflexive self-consciousness. On the other hand, agency cannot take place without the rules and resources of structure which both enable and constrain individual and collective agency. According to Giddens, structure is dual because it is both the medium and outcome of agency. Structuration theory embraces this notion of duality in order to accentuate the creative and transformative potential of human agency in relation to institutional existence. For Giddens, agency is thus the purposeful practice of individual actors that occurs in the context of acknowledged and unacknowledged conditions and produces intended and unintended consequences. Agency is the strategic practice of individuals in which they exercise power or capacity to accomplish transformative reproduction. In other words, agency is the practice of individuals that begins in given structural conditions and results in transformative reproduction of structural outcomes. Giddens's insists on the notion of transformative reproduction in order to denote that it is impossible for an act of agency to simply reproduce the past since every action is unique in time and space and environment. At the same time, no act of agency can ever be completely

transformative, since any change remains organically connected to its origins in time and space.

A second significant contribution to understanding agency is that of Emirbayer and Mische (1998) who provide what they call a *chordal triad* of agency focusing on the past, present, and future—not unlike Giddens’s triad of structural conditions, agency, and structural outcomes. Emirbayer and Mische define agency “as *the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments—the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations*” (authors’ emphasis) (p. 970).

The first aspect of the chordal triad is the iterational element which relates to how agents relate to the past: “It refers to *the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time*” (authors’ emphasis) (p. 971). The second aspect is the projective element, akin to Giddens’s notion of strategic conduct oriented toward creating the future: “Projectivity encompasses *the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors’ hopes, fears, and desires for the future*” p. 971). Finally, the aspect of agency that relates to the present is the practical evaluative element: *the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations*” (authors’ emphasis) (p. 971).

I agree with Emirbayer and Mische that of the three elements, the most neglected has been the projective element. Both Giddens's work and others have tended to speak more about, even if not theoretically privileging, the aspects of social structure that condition agency. They stress how agents within the medium of structure reproduce that structure; or, in other words, how the structure serves as a set of constraints and enablements that limit and empower the voluntaristic instrumentality of agents. The transformative or formative aspects of agency are not absent from the theory, but those aspects are not as emphasized as the rules and resources of structure that precede and condition agency.

Drawing on Giddens and Emirbayer and Mische, my understanding of agency is that it is the array of strategic practices by which an actor closes the gap between the past and the future. For me starting point for a broader synthetic understanding philanthropy as agency resides in Aristotle's broad discussion of the relation of choice and virtue in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1999). Aristotle says that the goal of life is happiness and implies that happiness is achieved by closing the gap between where one is and where one wants to be. This gap is closed by making choices which are, at their normative best, what he would consider to be permeated with an educated wisdom serving as the basis for wise choices. Agency, then, is the set of practices that implement the possible choices facing agents and that constitute a perpetual migration from genesis to teleosis, from history to aspiration. Wise choices, insists Aristotle, require both the freedom to act voluntarily and the virtue of wisdom. There can be no virtue without freedom; and no true freedom without virtue. Without capacity there is no possibility of choice, just as without virtue there is no possibility of directing capacity. Making wise choices is thus the practice of

moral agency, the combination of capacity and character or moral compass. Notice, that here I do not give any particular content to what constitutes wisdom or a wise choice. But if wisdom is understood as a sensitized or conscientious normative orientation, the term is akin to what Emile Durkheim means by *morally* oriented behavior which he and others at the dawn of sociology derived from the Latin *mores* meaning the customs, traditions, or value-laden normative currents that provide the frameworks and aspirations for agency.

In my schema, then, agency is the implementation of practical-evaluative choices in the light of iterational conditions and directed toward a projectivity of aspiration. In a word, agency revolves around genesis, teleology, and choice—what Emirbayer and Mische call routine, purpose, and judgment (p. 963). In regard to the past, agency is situated within the conditions comprised of normative and existential frameworks of thinking, feeling, and acting; and comprised of human and material resources (Giddens, 1984; Sewell 1992). In turn, agency is directed toward accomplishing one's normative and utopian frameworks; and toward creating new distributions or orders of human and material resources. Agency is the realm of human causal practice of choice that draws on genetic or starting conditions (personal and social) of capacity and moral foundation in order to generate teleological outcomes (personal and social) of capacity and moral aspiration.

Hyperagency

I have already indicated that most work on agency revolves around issues of the past rather than to the future—what Emirbayer and Mische say is the domain in which social actors “construct changing images of where they think they are going, where they want to go, and how they can get there from where they are at present” (p. 984). This is exceptionally important because of the theoretical bias against seeing how even wealth holders and other endowed or capacitated actors are engaged in builders of a new dispensation. For instance, Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner in their books *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* and *The Sovereign Individuals of Capitalism* argue that there is a relative autonomy of discourse and ideology from economic practice. In the terms of Emirbayer and Mische, Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner would say that despite any internal or external discourse individuals may express in regard to where they are and where they want to go, the constraints of economic structure, in particular advanced capitalism, soundly limit the possibility of actually creating alternative futures. In particular, they claim that there is no necessary connection between the ideology of individualism, on the one hand, and the actual workings of capitalism and the characteristics of economic subjects who work within it. In essence, in their second book they argue that the increasingly bureaucratic nature of advanced capitalism contradicts the ideological discourse of individualism and individual efficaciousness that maintains that empowered autonomous individuals are able to personify themselves through purposive social practices. They conclude that even though a vision of sovereign individualism dominates the ideology of western capitalism, no such individualism exists in either the dominant or subordinate classes.

In contrast, I argue that the wealth holders sovereign individuals capable of incarnating their aspirations and expectations into actual practices and organizational forms. In fact all individuals as Giddens (1984) insists are in certain circumstances and under certain conditions capable of shaping outcomes through agency—especially when amalgamate in social, cultural, and political movements.

While recognizing that all individuals are not equally capable of a socially or culturally formative agency, I do maintain that certain individuals, those imbued with a certain material and psychological capacity, are clearly able to shape alternative futures not just for themselves but for others as well. These particularly endowed agents capable of implementing their projectivity are what I call hyperagents. Although not all hyperagents need be wealth holders (for instance, saints and poets, as Wilder reminds us in *Our Town*), all wealth holders are, when and where they choose, capable of exercising lesser or greater degrees of hyperagency. Wealth holders are uniquely endowed with material resources and cognitive dispositions that enable them, both as a group and as individuals, to fashion outcomes they desire to effect. Wealth grants a special capacity for *empowerment*. Whereas all individuals exercise agency, the distinctive class trait of *hyperagency* is the capacity to establish rather than merely receive the social matrix within which they live. The wealthy construct a worldly realm of *principality* in time and space and an inner domain of *individuality*. As such, hyperagency is distinctive moral identity in addition to sustaining a formative practice.

Hyperagency is privileged position in the process of structuration, as Giddens puts the process by which agents are situated within structural conditions and via agency carry out reproductive transformation of those conditions. Hyperagents, in contrast to agents

are not only have greater command over the frameworks and resources comprising the structural conditions but also over shaping the frameworks and resources that comprise the structural outcomes. It is not that hyperagent can single-handedly and completely transform the entire world around them. But that they can and do carry out the transformative moment of structuration as a matter of course in their daily practices of business, family, consumption, politics, and philanthropy,

Elements of Hyperagency—Realms of Capacity and Moral Compass

In *Gospels of Wealth* (Schervish, Coutsoukis, and Lewis, 1994), I described three inter-related components of the capacities that constitute the genetic resources which hyperagents draw on in exercising their productive agency. These are

- (1) psychological empowerment—the disposition of great expectations, the legitimacy of those expectations, and the confidence to achieve them;
- (2) spatial empowerment—the capacity to establish a protective wall from intrusion and to extend one’s influence geographically beyond one’s immediate personal presence; and
- (3) temporal empowerment—the ability to reshape the past, forge the present, and bind the future.

Clearly, such capacity does not guarantee that hyperagents will make wise productive decisions and generate an offspring of benefit for themselves and others. It does, however, guarantee that such individuals will possess a broad horizon of choice, that their choices will have the capacity to fashion the choices of others, and that their agency will advance or impede the teleetic ends of themselves and others.

In addition to exercising the foregoing resources, productive agency brings to bear normative and existential frameworks that direct the use of their resources. In *Gospels of Wealth* (1994), I also described three inter-related aspects of normative orientation that come into play to order hyperagents' productive empowerment :

- (1) the daily exercise of what is conceived to be virtue or strength of character that directs how hyperagents work with the opportunities and obstacles of the hand that life has dealt them;
- (2) the special exercise of character that is required to face tests of moral fiber that occur as individuals move through formative life-course transitions from one social status and personal identity to another; and
- (3) the impulse to make the big and small events of biography a redemptive process of life, death, and rebirth in the quest for healing, learning, forgiveness, and union.

The quotidian exercise of virtue, dutiful commitment during transitions, and the quest for transformation are the aspects of moral orientation, when married to psychological, spatial, and temporal empowerment, comprise the *general framework* of meaning and practice of agency—and when exercised in a institutionally formative manner, in a productive rather than participative effort, they constitute the meaning and practice of hyperagency.

Hyperagency and High-Tech Donors

I now turn to explaining the underlying material and dispositional capacity of effectiveness—what I call *hyperagency*—that undergirds the hyperagent-animated character of high-tech donors, which they garner from their commercial dealings and translate to their philanthropy. When coupled to the dynamics of gratitude, identification and association, world-building does not stop at the doors to their homes or their businesses, but extends to all their involvements including, for those who choose, politics, community, religion, and philanthropy. The wealthy are by dint of personality no more egoistically myopic or socially responsible than anyone else. Great expectations and grand aspirations occupy people across the financial spectrum. What is different for wealth holders is that they can be more legitimately confident about actualizing their expectations and aspirations because they are able to directly effect the fulfillment of their desires. A retired Hewlett-Packard executive (all identifying information has been changed) voices the kind of can-do productive disposition that psychological empowerment affords:

I think for young high-tech entrepreneurs getting involved in a start-up it's the excitement of being able to work in a small, agile, nimble place that can sort of say, hey, let's go do something in kind of a swat team way and go see it done because that had been their professional experience. . . . So these people's professional experiences, hey you get together a group of twenty to forty people, you see some product that needs to be done, you go off and make it, it's on the shelf two years later, you've had this huge impact, and I think that that's, that is the mentality that they bring to philanthropy as well.

That high-tech donors are hyperagents in philanthropy does not mean that they always and everywhere conceive of or achieve major innovative interventions. It does mean that they tend to think more about doing so, and partake more in actualizing them, as the retired co-founder of an internet communications company says. “I’m a big believer now that your visions and your goals can happen if you actually take time to think about what you want them to be. I’m a big believer in writing them down and they tend to become reality because you start taking the steps to get there.”

Hyperagents act in philanthropy with two defining aspects of entrepreneurship. First they identify a creative idea: they discern an area of output for which demand outstrips supply. Second, entrepreneurs actively affect the rate of return on their investment by directly commanding production. The distinctive class trait of the high-tech donors is their ability to bring into being, not just support, particular charitable projects. Hyperagency in the field of philanthropy assigns financial resources to fashioning major outcomes. When exercising this capacity, high-tech donors are *producers* rather than supporters of philanthropy, underwriters rather than just contributors. Finding neglected social niches where needs are great and resources scarce is precisely the explicit strategy of many respondents whom we interviewed. This attitude of identifying and accomplishing an aspiration through their own efforts is evinced by virtually all high-tech donors. One West Coast former Hewlett-Packard executive talks about how “inspiring” it was to salvage a conservation initiative which had fallen through. “All these people who had been working on it were so despondent,”

he says speaking about the organization of individual who had attempted to buy up some forest land. But armed with the psychological empowerment of great expectations and the material wherewithal to create a temporal-spatial principality, this hyperagent had a plan and a capacity to achieve it the non hyperagents found hard to believe. “Well why don’t we just try to go raise this money privately,” he told them; “and they said, ‘look, nobody’s ever raised \$13 million for private land, for a land conservation effort before and we did it in like three months’” without success. But for him possible and rewarding: “It was just very empowering and motivating to see how basically overnight we could protect such a huge area, protect the lynx population, and so forth; it was pretty inspiring.”

Furthermore, this philanthropy turnaround specialist ascribes his fundraising success to his own ability to get things done and to enlist other hyperagent who share that disposition. He and all those he enlisted to secure the needed \$13 million, he says, “all come from a business that was this really empowering business where you could go decide to do something, and two years later there will be some product that will be used in every company in the world. . . . [These] people sort of believe that ‘oh, well I can just go out and do something and then at the end this will essentially be sort of a product.’ They don’t have this feeling of change takes a long time.” And this extends to philanthropy as well. “So when you go to these people and say, ‘give us your money and at the end of a year or two, you will have personally, along with a hundred other people, helped protect these 25,000 acres and the lynx population, and you’ll have done something, and essentially there will have been a product that you will have produced,’

they get that instantly. There wasn't any hesitancy about it – they said 'cool, that's what I'll do.'

In common parlance we regularly speak of donors and major donors. Distinguishing between supporters and producers of philanthropy is a more functional distinction. Each philanthropic enterprise pursues resources in order to produce outcomes in response to social needs and interests. Most individuals respond to appeals for contributions in a manner similar to the way a consumer responds to the products or services of a business. They are just one person among a far larger pool of actors. They do not individually have enough buying power to have a firm create a product for them; nor do they single-handedly have enough giving power to be create or re direct the charitable enterprise to which they contribute. Only as a group acting formally or informally in concert, can everyday contributors fashion the fate or mission of a charitable enterprise. Because it is the accumulated support of many individuals, rather than of any particular single individual, that determines the existence and direction of a venture, individuals with only modest resources are at most joint or collateral producers.

It is a different story altogether when high-tech donors contribute a sizable enough gift to actually shape the agenda of a charity or nonprofit institution. In this instance, the contributor may be termed a direct producer or architect. Such direct production, of course, cuts two ways, and so it is always important to discern the conditions under which philanthropic hyperagency produces care rather than control, as we will discuss later.

The extreme case of direct production in philanthropy is the personal founding of an original philanthropic organization or project. We heard several instances of how

high-tech donors either have or plan to create a private or working foundation. One respondent has begun to work on elevating teachers' salaries by providing the money to do so in one school, in the hope that the positive effect will spillover as pressure on surrounding schools to do likewise. Another respondent explains that his dream sometime in the next five years is to endow a foundation that will supply the funds to raise teachers' salaries in the inner city of his hometown where he attended school in a more advantageous time. Less formally, another high-tech donor produced the philanthropic outcome by financially "adopting" a niece with Downs' syndrome. And still another provides substantial enough gifts to all his and his wife's siblings to provide a level of financial security that will liberate them to make choices in their lives based on a desire for significance rather than on a need for income. Whether formally or informally, at a distance or close to home, it is the possibility and practice of "making a difference" that undergirds the determination and dominion of high-tech philanthropists. Such hyperagency infuses all the philanthropic endeavors of high-tech donors, but it shows up in particular in three forms of what we call intercessional philanthropy.

Varieties of Intercessional Philanthropy

Strictly speaking, "venture capital," the term that spawned the analogous "venture philanthropy," denotes the more or less active dedication of an investor's money and expertise and sometimes direct involvement to propel an entrepreneurial activity initiated by someone else. But as the term has come to be associated with philanthropy it refers to a range of approaches that are in fact more widespread and multifaceted than what is strictly parallel to venture capital in the business world. We find that much of what is

regularly included within the category of venture philanthropy is more accurately called managerial philanthropy or entrepreneurial philanthropy.

Managerial philanthropy is the contribution of organizational expertise without the contribution of financial resources to elevate the effectiveness of a charitable organization. One example is the respondent, whose wealth is mainly tied up in a Silicon Valley Internet start-up. She contributes some money but much *managerial* expertise to her alma mater, Stanford University, to help with fundraising and to develop better fundraising methods. A more extensive statement of this managerial strategy is provided by a former software entrepreneur:

What I felt was my greatest strength is the managerial side. I can manage people, I understand how people work, I don't try to categorize them all the same and I understand the differences. Pure entrepreneurs are typically pretty horrible managers because they want everything to happen in five seconds, they don't understand why everything can't be done in thirty seconds. Why isn't everybody as smart, if you will, why doesn't everybody see it like them, and then they just want to put their foot right on the accelerator and go as fast as they can. And I have some of those tendencies, but I have the ability to know that there's a brake as well and I know when to use it.

Entrepreneurial philanthropy is the joint contribution of both human and financial capital of a wealth holder to inaugurate either a new charitable enterprise or a new

component within an existing charity. For instance, there is the Austin high-tech entrepreneur who expends the majority of his philanthropic dollars and time overseeing his *entrepreneurial* start-up of a charity dedicated to overcoming the digital divide facing urban youth. A fuller example is offered by a self-described social entrepreneur who is starting his own charity:

To me an entrepreneur and a social entrepreneur is someone who looks at something that doesn't exist and says why can't it exist, as opposed to someone who looks at something and says that can't happen. An entrepreneur to me is someone who is willing to create something from nothing, who is willing to go in and get your hands dirty, and make change happen and instigate change, and create new ideas or institutions or organizations, and get a return on that investment of time and energy and effort made. The social return is measured perhaps in community capital or human capital or social capital. It just happens not to be measured in financial capital, but it is still the same entrepreneurial instincts and drive which happens to be focused on the social sector.

In my view, *venture* philanthropy is that “middle” form that infuses managerial advice and financial resources into a philanthropic effort, but does not interject the hands-on daily direction that is the hallmark of an entrepreneur. Here I place the Boston software entrepreneur, who has started his own family foundation, but nonetheless also contributes both money and skills to help others get a charity off the ground by assisting with goal definition, planning, and advice about how to leverage funding. A former

software entrepreneur who retired and started his own family foundation provides an example of this middle path of venture philanthropy:

There are certainly a lot of techniques and ways of thinking about problems that I have the benefit of from my background that I have discussed with a number of nonprofit organizations. You'd be surprised at the things and ways of making decisions, thinking about problems and ways of planning strategy and things that someone like myself would take for granted. A lot of people in these organizations have never had to think about things that way. So a little advice or insight for how the entrepreneurs approach problems actually goes a long way and helps them quite a bit. I'll give you an example. I am working with a woman who is starting up a new 501 (c)(3), a new organization. I am making an exception because I am actually going to join her board and help her bootstrap that whole thing. A lot of it has to do with how much I think my assistance can be leveraged. If it's a situation where I can get in there for an hour a week or over the phone or something like that, have a large impact in helping somebody, it's attractive to me. It's sort of the work/reward ratio. Also what we've done is set up a program with her where we are putting up half of her start-up funding as a matching grant. So that is another example of the entrepreneurial thing. If we put in as a matching grant, you may be able to use that as leverage when you go to other organizations and say, look, this Family Foundation is putting in for half, we need to get the other half and can we count on you. So that's helpful.

In the course of the interviews we discovered so many additional examples of donors pursuing each of these forms that we conclude that carrying out one or more of these intercessional philanthropic strategies is a leading characteristic of high-tech donors. We also conclude that in order to accurately portray what high-tech donors are doing, the conceptual framework for speaking about them needs to be expanded beyond the term “venture philanthropy” so as to highlight the important differences from managerial and entrepreneurial philanthropy. The three approaches are similar in that each entails a practice of organizational leadership and a disposition focused on improving effectiveness. But in order to understand more accurately what high-tech donors are actually doing, and in order to better alert them to the variety of intercessional strategies they may wish to pursue, it is necessary to recognize the differences among managerial, venture, and entrepreneurial philanthropy. Indeed, the future of so-called venture philanthropy or, better of venture philanthropists engaged in various venture partner organizations, is more likely to revolve around entrepreneurial philanthropy to the extent these high-tech donors solidify their wealth, garner more time to pursue their philanthropic purposes, and discover the causes and people on behalf of which they desire to exert their hyperagency.

Conclusion

This paper has addressed with a new theoretical grounding and application our central finding from almost 20 years of studying wealth holders, namely that the distinctive class

trait of wealth holders is their self-formation and history-making capacity of hyperagency. For sure, not every hyperagent is wealthy. Some financially undistinguished folk make history by virtue of being profound, creative, or spiritual. But in the material realm, including charitable contributions, every wealth holder is at least a potential hyperagent. Hyperagency refers to the enhanced capacity of wealthy individuals to establish or control substantially the conditions under which they and others carry out their agency. For most individuals, agency is limited to choosing among and acting within the constraints of those situations in which they find themselves. As monarchs of agency, the wealthy can circumscribe such constraints and, for good or for ill, create for themselves a world more of their own design. As everyday agents, most of us strive to *find* the best possible place to live or job to hold within a given field of possibilities. As hyperagents, wealth holders—when they choose to do so—can *found* a broad array of the field of possibilities within which they and others will live and work. Whether inherited or earned, the possession of substantial financial wherewithal provides a range of material choice and a corresponding moral disposition of great expectations which set them apart from other agents in society. If the social meaning of money in general is agency in general, the social meaning of wealth is hyperagency.

In one of his more famous statements, Marx said “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. For Marx something new was possible in his day—the first truly revolutionary break with the past history of class society. It did not happen, of course, as he

envisioned; but part of what he said it would take to shape history is exactly what characterizes hyperagents. That is, those who are “occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before” must be able to do more than “anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language.” They who seek to formatively shape history “cannot take its poetry from the past but only from the future.” Agents are often condemned to conjure the future in thought and word but not to accomplish its content. Hyperagents are different; for them “the content goes beyond the phrase” (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*).

Hyperagents, it turns out, do “make history” for themselves and others. As a social practice of individuals, hyperagency refers to the enhanced capacity of wealthy individuals to exercise effective control over conditions under which they will engage in social action, and additionally, to set the boundaries for the history-making potential of less empowered individuals. High-tech donors are an identifiable contemporary group of Hyperagents; but not everything about them and their philanthropy is as new as many people imply.

On a personal level, they join all wealthy donors in feeling a mixture of guilt and gratitude about their good fortune; are mobilized by the full range of charitable motivations from prestige to identification with the fate of others to wanting to make a difference, and must be vigilant about using special capacity for care rather than dominion.

Also not novel among high-tech donors, but common to many wealthy philanthropists, currently and in the past, is the application of business principles to philanthropy. Although the language in which high-tech donors characterize their

philanthropy is somewhat distinctive, the fact that they often pursue intercessional philanthropy is not unique. We have documented venture philanthropy as early as 1986 as a long-standing approach of many philanthropists, including inheritors of old money and entrepreneurs working in the old economy. Moreover, venture philanthropy is not the only or necessarily primary intercessional strategy; managerial and entrepreneurial philanthropy are in fact equally, if not more prominent. In fact, we found that high-tech donors pursue the whole range of strategies as all wealth holders—from simply writing a check to the United Way, to adopting relatives, to brokering donations, to contributing to the organizations whose services they and their families use, such as religious congregations, schools, and museums.

Despite these continuities with other contemporary wealth holders and philanthropists from the past, there are several distinctive traits of high-tech philanthropy today. Their business experience is different from those of small business owners, the professionals, the inherited wealthy, and the shrewd investor. Their formative experiences in the New Economy coupled to their generally young age and velocity of ascent to wealth mark them and their philanthropy with a particular set of concerns, attitudes, hopes and snares. We found that as a group, they are explicitly and consistently entrepreneurial hyperagents. They tend to expect and encourage nonprofits to pursue, as a path to achieve their service goals, the business goals of efficiency, strategic thinking, innovation, risk-taking, good management, accountability, measurable goals, and growth in scale. They have confidence in being able to seek out, attack and alleviate social and organizational problems. They are universally imbued with an optimistic, energetic, and problem-solving mentality. They generally believe that education and development of human capital provide the best solutions to society's problems.

Of course their self assurance, can-do attitude, and relative inexperience can lead them at times to be arrogant and presumptuous. However, we found only very occasional evidence of such conceit. With only two exceptions, the respondents were patient and

forthcoming in their interviews, and overwhelmingly concerned to educate themselves about the needs they might address, and how best to work with others to meet those needs. In tone and practice they were certainly determined, but also experimental in the sense of being seriously concerned about finding the most helpful way to apply their business skills which seemed for the moment to be their best contribution; to consciously figure out and construct a philanthropic identity; to come to terms with affluence, and with the balance of family, business and philanthropy; and to seek out opportunities for self-reflection, association, and identification in order to be most effective in their philanthropy.

Never before, we conclude, have so many wealth holders, with such an entrepreneurial experience, at such a young age, with such great wealth, and with so much future time, and in so many arenas been this consciously intercessional, and purposefully self-reflective about their philanthropy. Still, none of this means that they will necessarily be of great service with their philanthropy, because the very same hyperagency that offers a great potential for creating substantial benefit also has the potential for heavy-handed intrusion. The two-edged sword of being intercessional can result, as we said, in both a formidable contribution of care as well as an overbearing assertion of domination.

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