National Giving Campaigns in the United States:

Entertainment, Empathy, and the National Peer Group

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Abstract:

This study presents a narrative history and quantitative analysis of national campaigns in the United States, and analyzes how successful campaigns provide entertainment, foster empathy, and develop a national peer group with norms and networks that encourage giving. Our historical survey found that charity telethons flourished in the 1960's and 1970's, but changes in tax regulations and competition from other networks and cable television led most of them to discontinue operations in the 1980's and 1990's. In recent years, internet and text messaging fundraising have become important, but benefit concerts continue to generate a significant percentage of total revenues. In our quantitative analyses, we found that campaigns for natural disasters raised more money than most campaigns for human-made disasters, and domestic campaigns brought more donations than international ones. Media attention, fundraising expenditures, and economic growth all correlated positively with donations, as expected, but fundraising events did not increase media coverage of disasters.

Biographical paragraphs:

Christopher J. Einolf is an Assistant Professor at DePaul University's School of Public Service. His research focuses on altruism, volunteering, and charitable giving, and he also does research on human rights and the prevention of torture. His current work on altruism examines how gender and family structure influence volunteering and giving, and how married couples make decisions about charitable donations.

Deborah M. Philbrick is a Master's student at DePaul University's School of Public Service. Her current research focuses international variation in charitable giving and volunteering behaviors. She also researches how conformity to masculine gender roles leads to behaviors that affect men's health.

Kelly E. Slay is a doctoral student studying higher education policy at the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on understanding how K-12 education reform policy influences college readiness and college-going behavior among African American and Latino students attending low-performing schools. Ms. Slay has a MS in public service management from DePaul University's School of Public Service.

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The size of the United States makes holding national campaigns difficult, and there have been fewer national campaigns in the U.S. than in the Netherlands (Wiepking and van Leeuwen, this volume) or Sweden (Vamstad and von Essen, this volume). Nevertheless, national charitable giving campaigns in the United States date back to the United States Sanitary Commission, which raised money to support soldiers' medical needs during the 1861-1865 Civil War. While there were similar national campaigns for soldiers during the two World Wars, it was not until the 1960's that national charitable campaigns began for other causes. Common formats include yearly telethons, primarily for medical charities, and benefit concerts, primarily for the victims of natural and human-made disasters. Recent years have seen the decline of annual telethons and the rise of social media, including text messaging, but televised benefit concerts continue to be popular and successful.

This study presents a historical narrative of U.S. national fundraising campaigns, and then tests hypotheses about these campaigns using quantitative data drawn from media accounts, tax filings, and nonprofits' websites. It finds that national campaigns use three general mechanisms used to inspire donations: entertainment, empathy, and the mobilization of peer groups. Charity concerts and telethons feature popular actors, comedians, and musical groups, and one reason people watch and buy tickets and recordings is their entertainment value. In this way, charity concerts, records, and films are like any other form of entertainment, with the only difference being that the profits go to charity. However, at least some participants spend money to benefit the cause, and they may do so out of feelings of empathy for victims. Charitable

campaigns give people who already feel empathy for victims an outlet for their impulse to help, and they can also inspire empathy by creating publicity for a problem that the media has not given much attention. Finally, charitable campaigns can encourage giving by accessing mobilizing social networks; when most successful, they saturate the media and create new social norms that encourage giving, in effect turning the entire country into a peer group.

Review of the literature:

This review highlights the limited research literature specifically on national campaigns, but also draws upon the general theoretical literature on reasons for charitable giving. It divides the literature into three types of causes: characteristics of the recipients of aid, charities' fundraising tactics, and the national context. Media coverage, one of the most important predictors of the success of a national campaign, generally acts as an intermediary variable between characteristics of the object of charity and actions by the charity, and also forms part of the national context.

The most important characteristic of charity recipients is the extent to which victims inspire empathy. An extensive literature in experimental psychology shows that people are more likely to help others in situations that elicit high feelings of empathy, and that that people feel more empathy when they perceive a suffering person as vulnerable, innocent, and similar to themselves. More intense suffering elicits stronger feelings of empathy, but when suffering becomes too intense, people may experience personal distress, rather than sympathy, and try to avoid the suffering person instead of trying to help (Batson, 2011; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).

Feelings of empathy may explain why disasters with a large number of victims gather more money (Feeny & Clarke, 2009), and may also explain why sudden, spectacular disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and tsunamis tend to get more assistance than slow-acting

disasters such as famines and droughts. Large disasters and sudden disasters gain more media coverage, and news pictures of suffering victims can create strong feelings of empathy among potential donors. Studies have found that media coverage correlates with donations in a general way (Feeny & Clarke, 2009; Simon, 1997), and a study of U.S. internet donations to victims of the 2004 Tsunami found that donations varied directly and immediately in response to coverage on the nightly network news or major newspapers (Brown & Minty, 2006). However, excessive media coverage may also create "compassion fatigue," defined as "a numbing of public concern toward social problems" brought on by overexposure to them (Kinnick et al., 1996:687). Like personal distress, compassion fatigue leads people to avoid suffering instead of helping.

People tend to feel more empathy for victims they perceive to be similar to themselves, and "identification theory" likewise argues that people give money to individuals and groups they identify with (Schervish & Havens, 2002). In general, people give more to domestic causes than international ones (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). A study of donations to earthquake victims in foreign countries found that people gave more money to geographically close countries than distant ones (Simon, 1997). People may also give more to culturally similar or historically associated countries. For example, an Australian study found that people gave more to victims of earthquakes in countries with democratic governments (Feeny & Clarke, 2009).

Experimental research has found that people are more likely to help victims who do not seem responsible for their problems, and studies of actual donation behavior find that disasters with human causes receive less assistance than problems with natural causes (Bennett & Kottasz, 2000; Zagefka et al., 2011). Psychologists have identified "just world" thinking as one reason for this (Miller, 1977). That is, many people believe that the world is fair, and think that people get what they deserve. Since they perceive victims of war to be partially responsible for their fate,

they are less likely to help them than victims of natural disasters, who most people perceive as blameless. However, a recent study found that people who perceived Hurricane Katrina to be a human-made disaster gave more money to victims than those who considered it a natural disaster. Those who saw the floods as a human-made disaster blamed government actors, suggesting that when people are well-informed about the circumstances of a human-made disaster they place blame on the people truly responsible for it, not the victims (Marjanovic et al., 2011).

The second type of causal variable is the actions and fundraising strategies of the charity. Charities can inspire giving by generating media coverage, encouraging empathy, reassuring donors that their money will be well spent, and mobilizing social networks so that current donors encourage others to give as well. Charities use telethons and benefit concerts to draw attention to a problem, and the concert and telethon can themselves become news items, generating further coverage for victims. Local chapters of national campaigns can use peer norms and prestige rewards to increase donations. A study of the 1980 Cerebral Palsy telethon found that donations were higher during locally broadcast segments than national segments, and when the telethon announced the amounts of pledges and the names of donors (Silverman et al., 1983).

Media attention can work against charities, however, as negative news reports can discourage donations if they lead people to doubt the charity's honesty or effectiveness. People donate less if they perceive the agency to be poorly run or corrupt, or think the distribution of aid is unequal and unfair to victims (Bennett & Kottasz, 2000). An experiment in which students were asked to donate money to Katrina-related charities found that students in Minnesota gave more money than students in Texas. The authors speculated that negative local news coverage of

scandals in the distribution of aid, and crime committed by Katrina refugees in Texas, explained the lower donations from the Texas residents (Eckel et al., 2007).

Charities can inspire giving in national campaigns through the use of social networks, encouraging current donors to recruit others. Much research in sociology shows that social norms and networks play a strong role in charitable giving, and that charities can use social networks to raise more money (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). The power of social networks seems to explain the recent success of text messaging in raising money for relief after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, but there has so far been only one academic study of the use of social media in relation to natural disaster charities, and this article focuses on public relations, not fundraising (Smith, 2010).

National campaigns can also promote social norms that encourage giving. While research suggests social norms are most effective in motivating behavior in small groups, where people know one another personally and care about their reputation with one another (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011), successful national campaigns can turn the entire country into a peer group. Extensive media coverage can also create a new social norm to support a charitable cause where no norm previously existed. For example, there were probably few Americans in 1984 who even knew where Ethiopia was, but by 1986 most Americans would be ashamed to admit publicly that they had not given any money to help victims of the Ethiopian famine. Celebrity fundraising appeals may help with this norm propagation, although little empirical research has tested this assumption directly. While there is a growing interest in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, most studies have examined endorsements of commercial products, not charitable causes (Cronley et al. 1999; Stafford et al. 2002; Freiden 1984). People feel like they know celebrities personally, so hearing a celebrity advocate for a cause can have the same emotional effect as hearing a friend advocate for it. People notice celebrity endorsements, and can identify

charitable causes that celebrities promote (Samman et al. 2009), but a study of public service announcements found that audiences responded favorably both to celebrity spokespersons and to victims (Toncar et al. 2007). Finally, extensive publicity can cause donations to reach a tipping point. When a substantial minority or a majority of the U.S. population gives money to a cause, any individual who has not yet donated may feel that all of their friends already have, and may feel that they should conform and donate.

Three aspects of the national context can affect the success of national charitable campaigns: the economy, tax incentives, and the nature of the news media. Levels of overall charitable giving fluctuate with changes in the level of economic growth (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011), and one would expect the state of the economy to also affect the success of national fundraising campaigns. Tax incentives can affect giving, and the United States Congress passed laws to encourage donations after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina of 2005, and the 2010 Haiti earthquake. No study has evaluated the actual effect of these laws, but a study by the Congressional Research Service (Sherlock, 2010) estimates that the benefit in increased charitable donations is likely to be small, and not worth the reduction in tax revenue.

Finally, changes in the structure of the news and entertainment media may affect the success of charitable campaigns. When national charitable telethons began in the 1960's, there were only three broadcast networks, no cable television, and no internet, so telethons had little competition for peoples' attention. Before the internet, the evening news formed most peoples' source of information, along with the local newspaper. While the rise of the internet, cell phones, texting, and social media have made it easier for charities to ask for money (Smith, 2010), the increase in news and entertainment sources has made it more difficult for a single charitable campaign to dominate the nation's attention.

Historical Narrative:

The first national giving campaigns in the United States benefitted charities to assist soldiers, and the earliest national giving campaign was that of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War (1861-5). The Sanitary Commission held a series of fundraising events across the Union areas of the United States, including subscription drives, collections of in-kind donations of food and bandages, and "Sanitary Fairs," where people sold homemade goods to raise money. While communications technology in the nineteenth century did not allow for simultaneous national fundraising events, the Sanitary Commission held similar events in series as part of a coordinated national strategy. In 1863 and 1864, the Sanitary Commission held very large fundraising fairs in Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Boston, New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, and Albany, raising over three million dollars (Stillé, 1868).

During the First World War, the American Red Cross took on the role previously filled by the Sanitary Commission, and raised $100 million in 1917 and $175 million in 1918 through a series of national campaigns (Bremner, 1960; Zunz, 2012). When the United States entered the Second World War, the major charities involved in supporting soldiers combined efforts to form the United Service Organization for National Defense (USO), and the federal government created a War Relief Control Board to directly regulate and control war charities. The Board scheduled the national fund appeals of major charities to prevent competition, monitored charities' finances, and closed down those that consumed too high a percentage of donations in overhead costs. In 1943, the National War Fund combined the appeals of the USO and other war-related charities with local community chest fundraising drives, to the benefit of both parties (Bremner, 1960; Zunz, 2012).

The first local telethon began in Chicago in 1950 to raise money for cerebral palsy research and treatment, and later grew into the national United Cerebral Palsy telethon. The first national telethon was the Muscular Dystrophy Association telethon, which began in 1966. Other national telethons include the Easter Seals telethon for children and adults with disabilities, the March of Dimes telethon for birth defects, the "Lou Rawls Parade of Stars" telethon for the United Negro College Fund, and the United Cerebral Palsy telethon, a national telethon that grew out of the earlier Chicago event. National telethons combined entertainment with appeals to empathy, and one of the most important methods of inspiring empathy was the "poster child," children who suffer from the charity-specific disease and serve as spokespersons for the telethon.

In addition to these recurring national campaigns, there have been many one-time telethons and benefit concerts. The first national benefit concert was the Concert for Bangladesh, organized by George Harrison for the relief of refugees in Bangladesh after its war of independence from Pakistan. Other major benefit concerts include Live Aid for Ethiopian famine relief in 1985, several concerts to raise money for victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a concert for the 2004 Asian Tsunami, two concerts for victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and two concerts for victims of the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Farm Aid and Idol Gives Back started as single concerts but became recurring events.

The first big charity concert, the Concert for Bangladesh, took place in Madison Square Garden in New York. George Harrison organized the concert, which also featured Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr, Bob Dylan, and other rock performers, as well as the classical Indian musician Ravi Shankar. The concert appealed to empathy for the suffering people of Bangladesh, but it mostly raised money through its entertainment value, as it brought together a number of very popular

musicians who had not previously performed on the same stage.[1] The concert itself raised about $250,000, and a record album and concert movie raised more, but a series of scandals and tax disputes delayed disbursement of most of the money for years.[2] Several other charities tried to organize similar concerts in the mid-1970's, but none succeeded.[3]

In January of 1979, UNICEF held a concert in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations in New York. Performers donated not only their time but also the rights to one of their popular songs, so that the long-term royalties formed an endowment for UNICEF. The concert was broadcast nationally on NBC, and received positive reviews. It raised about $1 million at the time for UNICEF, and millions more in royalties since then.[4]

The next major charity music event was the 1985 Live Aid concert, with the single "We Are the World" and the album of the same name. As the music reviewer for the New York Times commented, one could hear the tune being whistled and hummed everywhere, creating a wordless social norm and reinforcing the idea that everyone in the United States was involved in this fundraising effort (Palmer 1985). The concert, featuring many popular rock and pop performers, was the first truly worldwide fundraising event, beamed live to ninety countries and sent via tape to fifty more.[5] The concert and album raised $45 million in the United States and $245 million worldwide.[6]

The success of Live Aid and "We Are the World" spawned a number of imitators, all directed towards African famine relief, including Latin Aid, Gospel Aid, Fashion Aid, and a

[1] *New York Times* January 5, January 9, and March 24, 1972; *Chicago Tribune* March 2, March 26, and March 30, 1972.
[2] *New York Times* June 2, 1985.
[3] *New York Times* August 17 and August 31, 1972, and June 19, 1974.
[4] *New York Times* December 5, 1978, and January 10, 1979.
[5] *Washington Post* July 13, 1985.
[6] *New York Times* March 10, 1986.

heavy metal fundraiser called "Hear'n Aid."[7] A group of comedians put on a stand-up comedy concert called "Comic Relief," which raised $4 million to help American homeless people.[8] Country and rock musicians organized "Farm Aid" to raise money for American family farmers, which was in many ways an even more unlikely cause than the Ethiopian famine. While the issue was a domestic one, it was a slow-progressing problem with human causes, and received little media attention. The managers of Farm Aid portrayed family farmers as symbolically important to American identity, hard-working and independent people struggling heroically to survive in the face of impersonal economic forces. Farm Aid raised $9 million in its first year, but only $1.3 in its second, and about $1 million per year since then.

The organizers of We Are the World attempted two follow up projects in 1986, an international "Sport Aid" fundraising race to fight world hunger,[9] and "Hands Across America" to benefit homeless people in the United States. Hands Across America asked people to pay $10 to take a place in a line of linked hands that would stretch from Los Angeles to New York City. Despite heavy publicity, organizers did not recruit enough people in enough places to actually form a chain across the country. Instead, they created a series of local chains, which joined hands on the same day and sang songs, including "Hands Across America," a song styled after "We Are the World." The project raised only $32 million, far short of its $100 million goal, and the organizers spent $17 million of this on administrative costs.[10] The relative failure of Hands Across America may have discouraged others from attempting national fundraising events, as it was the last major event in the United States for over a decade.

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[7] *New York Times*, April 21 and October 25, 1985.
[8] Rojas, Aurelio. "'Comic Relief' Check Given to Health Care Project." *United Press International*, September 10, 1986.
[9] Nguyen, J. T. "Worldwide 'race against time' kicked off at the U.N." *United Press International*, May 25, 1986.
[10] *Associated Press* August 23, 1986, and May 24 and 25, 1987.

The 1980's and 1990's also saw the cancellation of the March of Dimes, United Cerebral Palsy, and Easter Seals telethons. At the time of cancellation, each of these telethons was doing well, with an average yearly increase in donations during the last three years of the telethon of 15.8% for the March of Dimes, 3.5% for United Cerebral Palsy, and 2.4% for Easter Seals, adjusted for inflation. However, changes in federal tax policy in the mid-1980's reduced the tax incentives for stations to donate airtime, and stations increased the rates they charged, so that charities had to spend about fifty percent of telethon revenues on fundraising costs. Cable television and new broadcast networks competed with the telethons for viewers, reducing the number of potential donors.[11]

In 1999, British organizers attempted "NetAid," a charity concert held in London, Geneva, and New Jersey and broadcast internationally through the internet. Despite slow and overloaded internet connections and poor quality video footage, the concert raised $1.7 million, which NetAid granted to organizations working in Africa and Kosovo.[12] Cisco Systems, an internet development company based in California, sponsored the event, and spent $20 million over the next eight years on the NetAid organization, whose mission was to harness the power of the internet for charitable purposes. By 2007, the organization only had $3 million left in its accounts, having spent the rest on administrative costs and raising little in the way of new income. NetAid closed down that year by merging with the non-profit organization Mercy Corps.[13]

The first decade of the twenty-first century saw a return to one-time television concerts to benefit victims of disasters, coupled with increasing use of the internet and text messaging to

[11] Belkin, Lisa. "Telethons are fading as their costs increase." *New York Times*, August 3, 1987.
[12] *Chicago Tribune*, October 10, 1999; Nicole Wallace, "Netaid Awards $1.7 Million for Projects in Africa, Kosovo." *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, February 24, 2000, p. 37.
[13] Ryckman, Pamela. 2007. "A Merger of Convenience." *Financial Times*, November 27, 2000.

solicit donations. Two televised concerts to benefit victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks raised $185 million, a concert for the victims of the 2004 South Asian Tsunami raised $18.3 million, [14] and four concerts for victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 raised $110 million. A telethon to help victims of the 2010 British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico failed, raising only $1.8 million.

The Haiti earthquake of 2010 brought the Hope for Haiti Now telethon and concert, which raised $61 million. What was most striking about the response to the Haiti earthquake was the role of text messaging, for the first time playing a major role in a national charitable campaign. On January 14, just two days after the Haiti earthquake, the American Red Cross reported that it had raised $3 million from text messaging, nearly a third of the money it had raised by that time.[15] By February 7, the Red Cross had raised $37 million from text messaging, and $644 million from all sources. By contrast, the Red Cross only collected $200,000 from text messaging during the second half of 2008, when there were no major disasters.

Text messaging seems particularly useful for large charities raising money through many small donations, in response to a well-publicized disaster. In these situations, many people want to help right away but want to make sure their money will be used well. A household name like the Red Cross reassures donors that their money will be spent honestly and wisely, without the donors having to do any research. A survey of text donors to Haiti found that three quarters made their donations the same day they heard about the campaign, and over half admitted that they had been following news about the quake "not too closely" or "not at all" (Smith 2012:2). Ironically, while text donations are instant, the money does not get to the charity right away, as phone companies wait up to ninety days for the donors to pay their phone bills before forwarding the

[14] *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 22, 2005.
[15] Stanglin, Douglas. 2010. "Text fundraising proves valuable tool as Red Cross takes in $3M for Haiti." *USA Today*, January 18, 2010.

donation to the charity. Phone companies sped up the donation process for the Red Cross after the Haiti earthquake, but not for other charities.

Other innovations include a fundraising campaign by Zynga, a social network gaming company, which raised $1.5 million by selling "virtual goods" in its games.[16] While popular social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter represent a potential source of money for national campaigns, few nonprofits earn much money from these sources, and only one reported raising more than $1 million in social network donations during 2010. Online giving through websites is an important source of giving, however, and raised $148 million in 2010 for relief efforts related to the Haiti earthquake. Text donations may be increasing in importance, as a survey of text donors to the Haiti earthquake found that slightly more than half of the respondents had later given money to other causes, including the 2010 British Petroleum oil spill, the 2011 tsunami and earthquake in Japan, and charities helping victims of tornadoes in the United States in 2011 (Smith, 2012).

Theories and hypotheses:

In addition to recounting a historical narrative of U.S. national campaigns, this paper uses quantitative data on the amount of money raised by different campaigns to test theories about giving. These can be divided into theories about characteristics of the recipients of aid, campaign strategies, and the national context.

Characteristics of the recipients: If empathy is one of the primary motivations of giving to national campaigns, we would expect some recipients of charity to receive more money because they inspire more empathy than others. As people feel more empathy for innocent victims than for people who seem responsible for their fate, natural disasters should raise more money than

[16] Hameed, B. 2011. Zynga's Haiti fundraising efforts tops $1.5 million. *Social Times* on-line journal, January 21, 2010. Accessed January 2012 at http://socialtimes.com/zynga-haiti_b1736.

human-made ones. An exception to this rule exists, however, when the victims are fellow-citizens, targeted by external enemies. Campaigns to support a country's own war effort or help domestic victims of terrorist attacks should raise at least as much money as campaigns to help victims of natural disasters. People feel more empathy for victims with whom they identify, so domestic causes should raise more money than international ones.

One would expect, therefore, that campaigns for natural disasters would raise more money than campaigns for human-made disasters, with the exception of campaigns to help domestic victims of terrorism or war. One would expect also that domestic campaigns will raise more money than international campaigns. Unfortunately, there have not been enough national campaigns in U.S. history to test these theories formally, as the total population of national campaigns for disaster victims is too small for effective statistical analysis. We present data on giving to different types of disaster campaigns so that readers can compare the U.S. experience with that of the other countries in the symposium.

Campaign strategies: One of the main reasons a national fundraising campaign works is that through national efforts a nonprofit or group of nonprofits can generate empathy by bringing public attention to a problem. In the case of many disasters, news coverage of the disaster itself does much of this work for them. However, some disasters occur in remote parts of the world, and slow disasters, such as droughts, wars, and famines, are less likely to grab headlines than sudden ones such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and hurricanes. To solicit donations for these causes, non-profits must create headlines through media events, using celebrities, entertainers, and other strategies to make their fundraiser newsworthy.

H1: Media attention will correlate positively with donations.

H2: National fundraising events will increase the amount of media attention a disaster receives.

Characteristics of the national context: Finally, the national context for fundraising has changed over time, and this national context may affect the success of campaigns independent of the nature of the cause or the activities of the fundraising organization. While it is not possible to make a quantitative test of the effects of tax policies with the data available, it is possible to test the effect of the economic and media context. First, giving levels may fluctuate from year to year in parallel with the economy, with people giving more money in economic growth years than in recessions. Second, the change in the media from a concentrated mass media dominated by newspapers and the three main television networks to a diffuse media dominated by the internet and social networking technology may have affected the value of publicity generating events. As the news media has become more diffuse, charity events may have become less important, as people hear about disasters from many different news sources, and charities can raise money through social media and the internet instead of televised concerts and telethons. In other words, the role of national campaign events in generating a national peer group may have declined, as more diffuse media and the internet create many other ways for people to reach out to their social networks to inspire giving. There were too few cases to test this hypothesis statistically, but we present descriptive data in this paper on the percentage of funds raised through national media events since the year 2000.

H3: Campaigns will raise more money in years with positive GDP growth than in years with flat or negative GDP growth.

Methods:

We first used primary and secondary sources research, particularly newspaper research and information taken from nonprofits' websites, to construct a list of national campaigns and to write the narrative history of national giving campaigns presented in this paper. We used many different sources to construct our list of national campaigns: academic histories of charitable giving and fundraising (Bremner 1690; Zunz 2012); internet searches for keywords such as "benefit concert," "telethon," and "fundraising campaign"; searches for similar keywords in historical newspaper archives, including the New York *Times*, the Chicago *Tribune*, and the Washington *Post*; searches in the Lexis/Nexis database of newspapers; and searches in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. Articles about one campaign would sometimes refer to similar campaigns, and we discovered some campaigns in this way. We used the definition of national campaigns established in the introduction to this symposium, as a campaign that nearly every person in the country would be aware of, to rule out some campaigns that did not reach a truly national audience. While we cannot be perfectly certain that we found all national campaigns in U.S. history, the fact that a campaign must be highly publicized to qualify as truly national means that a truly national campaign should have shown up in at least one of these sources. We can be confident, therefore, that our list of national campaigns is a complete or nearly complete list.

We then acquired quantitative data on the amount of money raised by each campaign, the quantity and quality of newspaper and television coverage, and the state of the national economy. Since recurring annual telethons differ greatly from single event fundraisers, we analyzed these two types of fundraisers separately. We did not take a sample of single event fundraisers or yearly telethons, but analyzed the entire population of nineteen single event fundraisers and all of the yearly telethons for which we could acquire accurate multi-year data.

With single event fundraisers, we compared the amount raised by events to assist with natural and human made disasters, foreign and U.S. disasters, and disasters in countries close to or distant from the United States. As there were only nineteen single event national fundraisers, for thirteen causes, in the history of U.S. fundraising campaigns, the population size is too small for statistical analysis. We compared the amounts raised by campaigns of each type, but could not formally test hypotheses using statistical significance tests.

To measure media attention, we made keyword searches of the New York *Times* and the Associated Press wire service. We chose these two news sources as they are popular and influential news media that reach a national audience, and are therefore a reasonable indicator of total media coverage. We searched both three months and one year following the date of the disaster, and made separate counts of news stories referring to the disaster itself and news stories referring to the fundraising event. We then correlated the dollar amount raised with the quantity of media attention given to both the event and the disaster itself, using Pearson's R, to test Hypothesis 1, and we examined whether media coverage increased around the time of an event to test Hypothesis 2.

To measure the effect of the national economic context, we calculated the level of GDP growth from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. We then used Pearson's R to correlate changes in the amount raised by recurring events with changes in the growth rate of the economy (Hypothesis 3). We measured the role of diffuse news media and internet and text donations by comparing the percentage raised for a disaster through concerts and telethons with the total amount raised from all sources.

Findings:

Table 1 shows the money collected from nineteen one-time fundraising events for thirteen causes from 1971 to 2010, and reports amounts in both contemporary and 2010 dollars. These nineteen events are the complete population of national fundraising events, not a sample. While Farm Aid was a recurring event, we included the first event, which received extensive publicity and is therefore similar to Live Aid in its scope. Campaigns in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina, and the Haitian earthquake had more than one benefit event, so we added together the amount raised by all events.

Existing theories state that innocent victims generate more empathy predict that natural disasters should raise more money than human-made disasters. While there were too few cases for statistical hypothesis testing, the available evidence partially supports this hypothesis. The second and third highest fundraisers were the concerts for Hurricane Katrina in 2005 ($125.0 million, in 2010 dollars) and the Live Aid concerts for African famine relief in 1985 ($92.4 million), and the fifth highest was the 2005 Tsunami Aid concert ($20.8 million). The most successful fundraisers were those for the September 11 attacks ($251.3 million). While this was a human-made disaster, it was a special one, as it involved an attack on the U.S. The September 11 campaign thus seems similar to the highly successful national campaigns of the Civil War and the two World Wars. Two other human-made disasters, not involving an attack on the U.S., had the least successful fundraisers, the 2010 CNN Gulf Oil Spill telethon ($1.7 million) and the 1971 Concert for Bangladesh ($1.3 million).

The theory that identification with the victim promotes empathy led us to expect that domestic campaigns would raise more money than international ones, and the limited data available support this theory. People donated more money to Katrina ($125.0 million), a domestic natural disaster, than to foreign natural disasters like the 2005 Asian tsunami ($20.8

million) or the 1985 Ethiopian famine ($92.4 million). People donated more money to long-term economic difficulties in the U.S. through Farm Aid ($18.5 million), Hands Across America ($63.3 million), and Comic Relief ($7.9 million), than they donated to long-term economic problems overseas through NetAid ($2.2 million) and the 1979 UNICEF concert ($3.2 million).

[Table 1 here]

Our first formal hypothesis predicted that media attention, either generated by the disaster itself or relating to the fundraising event specifically, would predict giving. We quantified the number of stories about each disaster and fundraising event in the New York Times and the Associated Press wire services, using word searches on the Lexis/Nexis Academic newspaper database (Table 2). We found that media coverage of the fundraising event during the first three months after the disaster's occurrence correlated with the amount given at Pearson's $R = .604$ ($p = .049$), but media coverage of the disaster itself correlated with giving at only $R = .298$ ($p = .374$). We were unable to test whether fundraising events caused a significant increase in media coverage (Hypothesis Two), because for most disasters the fundraising event occurred within a few weeks of the disaster itself, when media coverage of the disaster was high anyway. Only for the CNN Gulf Oil Spill telethon, which was held ten weeks after the first reports of the spill, was there an increase in media coverage clearly associated with the fundraising event.

[Table 2 here]

Our third hypothesis, that multi-year campaigns would raise more money in good economic times, received strong support from our data. We could only find ten or more consecutive years of data for three charity telethons, the Muscular Dystrophy Association telethon (1981-2010), the Easter Seals telethon (1982-1995), and the Children's Miracle Network telethon (1983-2003). For these three campaigns, changes in the state of the economy

as measured by changes in real Gross Domestic Product correlated with changes in income at R = .471 (p = .01), R = .476 (p = .085), and R = .580 (p = .007), respectively. Telethons also provide further evidence that high fundraising costs do not discourage donors. While the March of Dimes, United Cerebral Palsy, and Easter Seals all discontinued their telethons due to high costs, donors continued to give money despite the high costs, giving an increasing amount of money each year until the telethons were canceled.

Finally, we expected that the rise of internet and text message fundraising would make major events like concerts and telethons less necessary. This difference would be particularly noticeable in the case of natural disaster fundraising, as these disasters create their own publicity through news accounts. Recent news accounts of disasters often include information about where people can donate money to help, and on-line news sources often include hyperlinks, so that people only have to click their mouse to connect to a charity fundraising site. Accordingly, we hypothesized that funds raised from concerts would be a decreasing proportion of the total amount raised from all sources. Since internet and text fundraising are recent phenomena, we did not have enough cases to formally test this hypothesis, as there have only been four disasters since the year 2000, when internet fundraising began to become commonplace. The national fundraising events after the September 11, 2001 attacks raised $203 million, 9.2% of the total of $2.2 billion raised that year for victims of the attacks. In 2005, the concert for the Asian tsunami raised $18.3 million, only 1.0% of the $1.8 billion raised in all,[17] and the concerts for Hurricane Katrina victims raised $110 million, or 3.4% of the $3.2 billion raised in all.[18] In 2010, however,

[17] Suzanne Perry. 2007. "Donations to Victims of 2004 Asian Tsunamis Topped $3 Billion." *Chronicle of Philanthropy* 19(6):28. A survey of large charities found that they raised $1.8 billion, while a national survey using random sampling methods (the Center on Philanthropy Panel Study) estimated the total given to all charities at $3.16 billion. Since the estimates of funds raised for other disaster relief campaigns are taken from surveys of major charities, we used the $1.8 billion estimate to keep methods consistent across campaigns.

[18] Leah Kerkman. 2005. "Three Large Charities End Solicitations for Katrina Relief as Total Tops $3 Billion." *Chronicle of Philanthropy* 18(9):50.

the amount raised by events for Haiti was $61 million, or 3.8% of the total of $1.6 billion raised that year. It is too early to tell whether the importance of national fundraising events is declining, but to date they still play an important role.

Discussion:

Entertainment, empathy, and the creation of a national peer group have been the foundation of successful national campaigns from the nineteenth century onward. Starting with the celebrity-studded telethons of the 1960's and the Concert for Bangladesh in 1971, charity fundraising events have offered viewers entertainment in exchange for their contributions. We did not test whether the amount or quality of entertainment offered by an event correlates with donations, but it is notable that offering entertainment is a nearly universal feature of national campaigns. In regards to empathy, there was evidence that disasters likely to cause stronger feelings of empathy (domestic and natural disasters) inspired more donations, although the number of cases was insufficient for rigorous testing. Media attention to the victims of disasters motivates donations by inspiring empathy among viewers, and media attention correlated significantly with donations. Creating a national peer group through media events may be more difficult today than in the past due to the declining importance of traditional media, but again there were not enough cases to test this theory. National campaign events continue to be important sources of revenue, despite the rise of internet and text fundraising, but it is too early to say whether these events will remain important as internet and text fundraising become more common. On the positive side, social media technology makes it possible to mobilize small scale social networks to raise funds on a national scale. Ironically, the biggest charities benefit most from this person to person technology, as people want reassurance that their donations will go to a good cause and tend to give to well-known organizations they trust.

Peoples' tendency to send text donations to the American Red Cross and other large organizations was one of the few examples of donor concerns about accountability having much effect on donation behavior. Lack of interest among donors probably results from the fact that the media does little to hold fundraisers accountable, so donors do not hear about charity mismanagement of funds unless it is truly scandalous. For each of the events studied in this paper, media coverage was extensive before the event and just after it, with lots of reports on the goals of the fundraiser, the nature of the problem, and the quality of the performance at the charity event. After the event, media coverage dropped off nearly to zero, and few reporters followed up to examine how the money was spent. An exception to this rule is the scandal over the American Red Cross's diversion of donations after the attacks of September 11, 2001, which led the organization to change its leadership and policies but did not shake public confidence in the long run.

Future research should examine how national fundraising events can maximize donor response by achieving the correct balance of entertainment value, empathy-inducing coverage of victims, and the use of celebrity endorsements and appeals to create social norms. Future research should also look into the value of celebrity endorsements, as fundraisers seem to assume that celebrity endorsements help raise money, but little empirical research addresses whether endorsements work, or what kind of endorsements are most effective. The failure of the news media to cover fundraisers after the event gives donors little information on accountability, so even those donors interested in holding charities accountable have few effective ways of doing so. Additional research could examine the extent to which charity watchdog sites can fill this gap, or the extent to which academics could collaborate with journalists to encourage more media attention to charitable accountability.

A final avenue for future research would be a critical analysis of the value of national campaigns. Texting ten dollars to help Haitian earthquake victims makes the donor feel good, and provides some limited assistance, but does nothing to address the larger issues of global poverty and inequality. By raising money for single disasters, national campaigns imply that the status quo is acceptable, and that charity is needed only to help people return to their normal state. Are feel-good concerts and telethons actually contributing to the problem of global inequality by reassuring the residents of wealthy nations that nominal gestures are all that is needed?

One exception to the feel-good message of most national campaigns was the "Live Eight" concert of 2005, timed to coincide with the Group of Eight summit meeting that year. Live Eight's organizers decided to use a concert not to raise money, but to raise awareness of global poverty, and to pressure the G-8 countries to adopt more generous trade, aid, and loan forgiveness policies towards Africa. Like the Live Aid concerts of 1985, this was a British effort but received a wide audience in the United States; we did not include it in our analysis because it was not a fundraising event. Most people probably viewed the concert because of its entertainment value, but the music was interspersed with public service announcements, "as slickly produced as any political advertising," that balanced "grim statistics with promises of solutions" (Pareles, 2005). Organizers got 30 million viewers to text their names to a petition asking the Group of Eight countries to forgive African debt, and the G8 ended their meeting with a pledge to double their assistance to Africa from $25 billion in 2005 to $50 billion by 2010. Once the event ended, however, the media and general public stopped paying attention to the issue, and by 2010 the G8 countries delivered only 61% of what they promised (ONE, 2010).

For practitioners, this article shows that the traditional mix of entertainment, empathy, and social norms brought by the nationally broadcast charity concert remains a strong fundraising method. People have attempted more participatory events, such as Hands Across America and Sport Aid, but low participation and high expenses have made these less effective. People have also attempted to use social media to raise funds on a national level, but so far only text messaging has succeeded. Despite many attempts, few organizations have been able to raise much money through Facebook and Twitter, but the possibility remains that some entrepreneur will find a way to do this successfully. Also intriguing is Zynga's successful use of social media games to raise money for the survivors of the Haiti earthquake. Social media games create on-line virtual communities, and are therefore useful places to mobilize social norms and networks to encourage giving. Other types of on-line communities may also be a good place to raise money during a national campaign.

The national fundraising campaigns of the last forty years have demonstrated how broadcast media can use empathy, entertainment, and peer networks to raise money for a single cause. These campaigns have helped cure diseases and provide relief for disaster victims, but have done little to address the root causes of poverty and inequality. Some campaigns may even perpetuate inequality by assuring citizens of wealthy countries that all they need to do to fight global poverty is make a small donation to help disaster victims, not change their personal consumption habits or alter government policy. Even the Live Eight concert, which tried to raise awareness of global inequality, gave people an easy way to assuage their guilt by asking them to text their name to a petition, and assigned primary responsibility for action to the political leaders of the Group of Eight countries. Nonprofits have already taken on the challenge of adapting national campaign strategies to a new media environment. They should now take on the more

difficult challenge of turning national campaigns into a force not just for short-term charity, but for lasting and meaningful change.

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Table 1: Money raised by one-time events, in contemporary and 2010 millions of dollars:

Year	Cause	Amount (millions)	Amount (2010 millions)	Type	Event name	Organizational Beneficiary
2001	September 11 terrorist attacks (3 concerts)	$203.0	$251.3	Terrorist attack on US	America: A Tribute to Heroes United We Stand: What More Can I Give? The Concert for New York City	United Way American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Pentagon Relief Fund, Rewards for Justice Fund Robin Hood Foundation
2005	Hurricane Katrina (4 concerts)	110.0	125.0	Natural disaster – US	Shelter from the Storm: A Concert for the Gulf Coast S.O.S. (Saving Ourselves): The B.E.T. Relief Telethon	American Red Cross, Salvation Army American Red Cross American Red Cross, Salvation Army, America's Second Harvest

					ReAct Now: Music + Relief Concert A Concert for Hurricane Relief	American Red Cross
1985	African famine	45.0	92.4	Natural disaster - Foreign	Live Aid	USA for Africa
2008	Poverty (US)	76.0	78.1	Ongoing poverty – US	Idol Gives Back	Charity Projects Entertainment Fund
1986	Poverty (US)	32.0	63.3	Ongoing poverty – US	Hands Across America	USA for Africa
2010	Haiti earthquake (2 concerts)	61.0	61.0	Natural disaster – foreign	Hope for Haiti Now B.E.T. Saving OurSelves (S.O.S.)/Help for Haiti Benefit Concert	Clinton Bush Haiti Fund, UN World Food Program, Oxfam, Red Cross, UNICEF, others Yele Haiti, CARE, Project MediShare, Children's Safe Drinking Water
2005	South Asian	18.3	20.8	Natural disaster –	Tsunami Aid: A Concert	American Red Cross International

	Tsunami			Foreign	of Hope	Response Fund
1985	Relief for family farms (US)	9.0	18.5	Ongoing poverty – US	Farm Aid	Farm Aid
1986	Homeless people (US)	4.0	7.9	Ongoing poverty – US	Comic Relief	Health Care for the Homeless
1979	Child poverty (international)	1.0	3.2	Ongoing poverty – foreign	A Gift of Song	UNICEF
1999	Poverty (international)	1.7	2.2	Ongoing poverty – foreign	NetAid Concert	NetAid
2010	CNN Gulf Oil Spill	1.7	1.7	Human disaster – US	Larry King's Gulf Telethon	United Way, National Wildlife Federation, Nature Conservancy
1971	Bangladesh war and famine	0.3	1.3	Human disaster – foreign	Concert for Bangladesh	George Harrison Fund for UNICEF

Table 2: Media hits and key words for campaigns and their causes

Name of campaign	Cause	3 Months After		1 Year After		Key Word-Cause	Key Word-Campaign
		Cause	Campaign	Cause	Campaign		
The Concert for Bangladesh	Bangladesh Independence	2	0	113	2	Bangladesh and war	"concert for Bangladesh"
A Gift of Song: Music for UNICEF Concert	Child Hunger	0	0	0	0	child and poverty and hunger	"gift of song" and UNICEF and concert
Live Aid	Ethiopian Famine	30	42	76	65	Ethiopia and famine	"live aid" and concert
The Concert for New York City	9/11	111	10	881	13	"9/11" and attack	"Concert for New York"
America: A Tribute to Heroes	9/11	111	4	881	7	"9/11" and attack	"tribute to heroes" and concert

United we Stand: What More Can I Give	9/11	111	5	881	8	"9/11" and attack	"united we stand" and concert
Tsunami Aid: A Concert of Hope	2004 Tsunami	69	3	86	3	2004 and tsunami and Indian Ocean	tsunami aid and concert of hope
Country Reaches Out: An Opry Benefit for the American Red Cross	Hurricane Katrina	2093	1	<3000	4	hurricane and Katrina	opry and benefit and Katrina
A Concert for Hurricane Relief	Hurricane Katrina	2093	3	<3000	3	hurricane and Katrina	"concert for hurricane relief"
Shelter from the Storm: A Concert for the Gulf Coast	Hurricane Katrina	2093	3	<3000	5	hurricane and Katrina	"shelter from the storm" and concert
MTV/VH1/CMT ReAct Now Hurricane Katrina Relief Concert	Hurricane Katrina	2093	1	<3000	1	hurricane and Katrina	"ReAct Now" and concert
CNN Gulf Oil Spill Telethon	Gulf Oil Spill	522	1	838	1	"oil spill" and "Gulf of Mexico"	CNN and oil spill and telethon

BET Saving OurSelves (S.O.S.)	Haiti Earthquake	381	2	621	2	Haiti and earthquake	"help for Haiti" and SOS
Hope for Haiti Now Telethon: A Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief	Haiti Earthquake	381	9	621	10	Haiti and earthquake	"hope for Haiti now" and telethon
Farm Aid	Family Farmers in U.S.	134	0	631	0	family and farmers and America	farm aid and concert
Nashville Country Telethon	Tennessee Floods	19	2	45	1	Tennessee and floods	Nashville country and telethon or concert
Hands Across America	Poverty and Homelessness	34	26	128	38	poverty and homelessness and America	"hands across America"

Note: The time windows used to measure media hits (New York Times articles) start from the day that disaster happened and then from the day that the charitable event occurred. For ongoing disasters, such as general poverty and homelessness, the window for the disaster began at the same time as the charitable event.