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Social and Economic Characteristics of Financial and Blood Donors in Germany

by Eckhard Priller and Jürgen Schupp

Surveys of the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) have shown that Germans donated around 5.3 billion euros in 2009—right in the middle of the financial and economic crisis. The type and amount of donations made is well documented in Germany. However, until recently, there was very little information available on the identity of Germans who share their income with people in need. A new survey in the long-term SOEP study has now made it possible to collect this information systematically for the first time and to investigate questions such as: Which social groups do people who make donations belong to? Does a high income increase the willingness to donate money? Do education and age play a role? Do people who are happy donate more? Do the same motives apply for giving money as, for example, giving blood? In order to find answers to these questions, existing data sources on the Germans' willingness to give were analyzed, verified and matched with SOEP data for the first time. The results are conclusive: Women donate more than men, older people more than younger people. This only applies to donating money, however. As regards giving blood, social and financial differences are of much less importance. Here almost all social groups and classes donate as much—albeit much less frequently. While almost 40 percent of all Germans donated money in 2009, only seven percent gave blood.

Donating as a Form of Prosocial Action

A donation is a voluntary and unremunerated transfer of money, services or other things for charitable purposes. Since the donor does not receive anything equivalent in return for this action, donating is normally referred to in the social sciences as a specific form of prosocial action as opposed to purely selfish actions.¹ In economic theory, the prevalent belief for many years was that human beings are only interested in their own well-being and always behave selfishly. In this simple economic textbook model, prosocial behavior seems to be irrational.²

Several surveys, studies and experiments³ have now proven, however, that the majority of the population is prepared to take colleagues and other people into consideration, to offer them support and to help them. A growing number of studies also show that prosocial behavior has greater benefits not only for the individual⁴ but also for general social development.⁵

¹ For an overview, see Jörg Rössel, "Spenden und prosoziales Handeln," Adloff, Frank et al., eds., *Prosoziales Verhalten—Spenden in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*. (Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius, 2010), 213-224.

² However, economists have also been dealing increasingly systematically with the "economy of giving" and the "market of donations" for some time now. See James Andreoni, "Philanthropy," Serge-Christophe Kolm and Jean Mercier Ythier, eds., *Handbook of the Economics of Giving, Altruism and Reciprocity*, Vol. 2, (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006), 1202-1269 and John A. List, "The Market for Charitable Giving," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 25(2), (2011): 157-180.

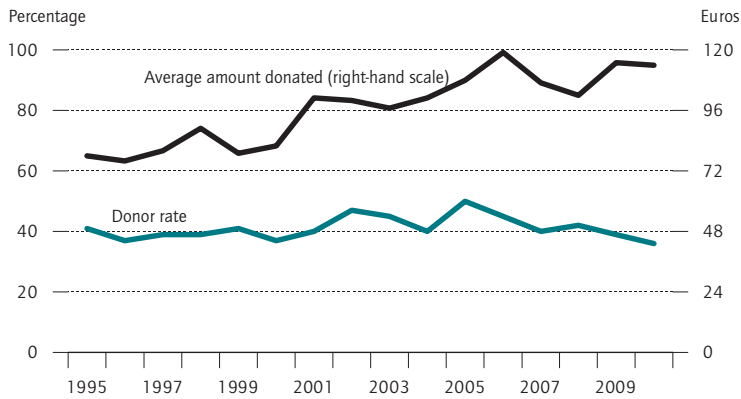
³ See Ernst Fehr and Urs Fischbacher "The Nature of Human Altruism," *Nature*, Vol. 425, (2003): 785-791.

⁴ Psychologists in particular focus on the question whether helping and donating ultimately frequently results from selfish motives; for an overview, see Kai J. Jonas, "Psychologische Determinanten des Spendenverhaltens," Adloff, Frank et al., eds., *Prosoziales Verhalten—Spenden in interdisziplinärer Perspektive* (Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius, 2010), 193-212.

⁵ See Martin A. Nowak, "Five Rules for the Evolution of Cooperation," *Science*, Vol. 314, (2006): 1560-1563.

Figure 1

Change in the Donor Rate and the Amount Donated in Germany



Database: Emnid-Spendenmonitor 1995 to 2010.

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Willingness to donate is consistently high in Germany.

Table 1

Donor Rates, Average Amounts and Volume of Donations in Germany, 2009

	Donation rate	No. of donors	Amount donated	Volume of donations
	In percent	In 1,000s of persons	In euros per donor	In billion euros
Total	39.6	26 555	201	5.3
Lower estimate ¹	38.0	25 223	178	4.5
Higher estimate ¹	41.0	27 215	224	6.1

¹ With a statistical error of one percent probability of error. Source: SOEP V27 (in advance).

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Almost 40 percent of adults donated a total of over five billion euros in 2009.

Donations in Germany—Data Availability

Various surveys on the subject of donating have been carried out in Germany. They vary with respect to availability, significance and reliability, as well as quality of data.⁶ Due to the different types of surveys and classifi-

⁶ See Eckhard Priller and Jana Sommerfeld "Spenden und ihre Erfassung in Deutschland," Eckhard Priller and Jana Sommerfeld, eds., *Spenden in Deutschland. Analysen, Konzepte, Perspektiven.* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2010), 5-74.

cations, however, many data sets from survey research are only comparable to a very limited extent.⁷

What most surveys have in common is that they concentrate on recording financial donations for charitable organizations, taking into consideration individual donation activities and amount donated but very few social characteristics of the donor. Sometimes, in addition to financial donations, material and other types of donations are also surveyed.⁸ Although the databases of the German Central Institute for Social Issues (DZI)⁹ allow us to carry out a variety of analyses on the amounts donated to recognized organizations bearing the institute's label, it is virtually impossible to draw any conclusions about the donors and their social structure on this basis.

Donation Survey in the SOEP

In the long-term SOEP study, with data collected by DIW Berlin in cooperation with the social research institute TNS Infratest Sozialforschung, 40 percent of German citizens stated that they had donated money in 2009. This is almost identical to the donation monitor Emnid-Spendenmonitor¹⁰ recording the average of the past 15 years¹¹ (see Fig. 1). Exceptions in the Emnid-Monitor are the years 2002/2003 and 2005/2006, when the willingness among the population to donate was higher because of the Elbe flooding and the tsunami catastrophe, respectively.

Taking the per capita donations of 200 euros per year observed in the SOEP as a basis for a realistic average value for an extrapolation, the total population gave a total volume of donations of around 5.3 billion euros¹² for 2009 (see Table 1). Hence, the SOEP results show that the amount donated and national volumes of donations are considerably higher than the figures given by the Emnid-Spendenmonitor. The latter indicates an

⁷ For more details, see Eckhard Priller and Jürgen Schupp: "Empirische Sondierung," Frank Adloff et al., eds., *Prosoziales Verhalten—Spenden in interdisziplinärer Perspektive.* (Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius, 2010), 41-63.

⁸ Such as the subject of organ donation, which it was not possible to consider in the main 2010 SOEP survey due to time constraints; see also Mohn, Carel und Jürgen Schupp "Organspenden—ökonomisch betrachtet," *Der Tagesspiegel*, August 29, 2010.

⁹ This organization also publishes information on around 250 organizations that bear the DZI label.

¹⁰ See http://www.tns-infratest.com/branchen_und_maerkte/socialmarketing.asp for information on the donation monitor.

¹¹ See Priller and Schupp, "Empirische Sondierung."

¹² The lower estimate is 4.5 billion euros due to statistical random errors in the SOEP sample and the upper estimated value 6.1 billion euros.

Box

On Measuring Donations in the SOEP

Within the framework of the long-term German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP), data on the social and economic situation of private households in Germany have been collected since 1984 for West Germany and since 1990 for the former East Germany. The survey is conducted annually by the survey institute TNS Infratest Sozialforschung in Munich on behalf of DIW Berlin.¹

In the survey year 2010, following extensive preliminary studies,² a focus on consumer and saving behavior was introduced. This module also includes questions about donating money and giving blood in the SOEP for the first time.³

This allows us, inter alia, to make differentiated observations according to earnings and demographic factors, which has only been possible to a certain extent with other studies on the subject of donating.⁴ Including data on blood donation behavior means the evaluation is not only restricted to financial donations. It makes it possible to investigate whether there is a general distinction between donation behavior in an area other than that of monetary donations. The contribution focuses on the indicators willingness to donate, financial amount donated per donor and their correlation to socio-structural characteristics of the donors. The analyses included data on 16,963 adults from 9,600 households, surveyed in spring 2010.⁵ They were asked: *And now a question about your donations. We understand donations here as giving*

money for social, church, cultural, community, and charitable aims, without receiving any direct compensation in return. These donations can be large sums of money but also smaller sums, for example, the change one puts into a collection box. We also count church offerings. Did you donate money last year, in 2009 – not counting membership fees?

The possible responses are Yes or No.

Those who responded Yes were asked a supplementary question: *How high was the total sum of money that you donated last year?*

Then, two questions about giving blood were asked: *There are also donations of a non-financial nature, for example, blood donations. Have you donated blood in the last 10 years?*

The possible responses are Yes or No.

Those who responded Yes were asked a supplementary question: *Did you donate blood at least once last year, that is, in 2009?*

As regards the multivariate analyses, the simultaneous estimation of various factors impacting on donation behavior was carried out using logistic regression models. Robust standard error estimates were calculated (according to Huber-White) with households as clusters. The influence of the explanatory variables is reflected in the coefficients presented as marginal effects.⁶ These can be interpreted as changes in percentage points. For example, the gender effect of -0.025 indicates that, controlling for all other influences, willingness to donate among men is around two percentage points lower than for women (the relevant reference group is in brackets). However, the age effect of 0.006 is to be interpreted as meaning that willingness to donate increases by 0.6 percentage points with each additional (marginal) year.

¹ The SOEP is part of the research infrastructure in Germany and is funded at national and regional level under the auspices of the Leibniz Association (WGL). See Gert G. Wagner, Joachim R. Frick, and Jürgen Schupp, "The German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) – Scope, Evolution and Enhancement," *Schmollers Jahrbuch*, Vol. 127(1), (2007), 139-169.

² See also Simon Huber, Nico A. Siegel and Andreas Stocker, *SOEP Testerhebung 2009: Methodenbericht* (Munich: 2010).

³ See questions 120 and 121 in the individual questionnaire: www.diw.de/documents/dokumentenarchiv/17/diw_01.c.369781.de/soepfrabo_personen_2010.pdf.

⁴ For more details, see Eckhard Priller and Jürgen Schupp, "Empirische Sondierung," Frank Adloff et al. eds., *Prosoziales Verhalten – Spenden in interdisziplinärer Perspektive* (Stuttgart: 2010), 41-63.

⁵ For details about the field work, see Simon Huber, Agnes Jänsch, and Nico A. Siegel, *SOEP 2010. Methodenbericht zum Befragungsjahr 2010* (Munich: 2011).

⁶ For the statistical basis of marginal probability effects, see Scott J. Long and Jeremy Freese, *Regression Model for Categorical Dependent Variables Using Stata* (Texas: 2006).

average value of 115 euros for 2009, and a total volume of donations for Germany of 2.6 billion euros.

On the basis of the continuous household budget surveys of the official statistics, however, a national total volume of donations of between 3.3 and 4.5 billion euros¹³ was established for the years from 1999 to 2007.

¹³ For the continuous household budget surveys, see Federal Statistical Office 2011: Series 15, (Issue) No. 1.

Table 2

Money and Blood Donations in Germany in 2009 According to Socio-Economic Characteristics

	Donor rate	Donor rate	Gave blood	Gave blood in the few years before 2009
	In percent	In euros per donor	In percent	
Total	39,6	201	6,7	6,7
Western Germany	41,3	213	6,3	6,3
Eastern Germany	32,4	136	8,4	8,2
Men	38,2	245	7,0	6,8
Women	40,9	162	6,4	6,5
German nationality	40,1	202	6,9	6,7
Non-German nationality	28,1	179	2,3	6,1
Aged 18 to 34	25,0	98	11,7	10,3
Aged 35 to 49	39,0	197	7,8	8,8
Aged 50 to 64	42,4	194	6,0	4,7
Aged 65 to 79	51,5	255	1,6	3,2
Aged 80 or over	50,5	266	0,0	0,6
No school-leaving certificate	33,8	144	4,4	4,6
Other qualification	35,8	146	7,3	6,9
Abitur	42,4	161	14,7	12,0
Degree	57,6	347	6,5	8,0
In full-time employment	38,2	215	9,3	8,8
Employed part-time, low level of pay	43,3	144	8,2	7,6
Not in employment	43,1	219	3,4	4,1
Registered unemployed	16,0	85	5,5	5,6
Donated blood in 2009	46,2	134	100	-
Donated blood in the last ten years	42,5	143	-	100
Donated money in 2009	100	201	7,8	7,2

Source: SOEP V27 (in advance).

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Willingness of pensioners or graduates to donate money is over 50 percent. Willingness to give blood is much lower.

The data from the income tax statistics summarize all assessed donations and tax deductible membership fees in Germany. For the period 2001–2007, an average value of 155 euros per year and tax-paying donor was recorded.¹⁴ The volume of donations and contributions offset against tax in the same period amounted to 3.4 to 4.5 billion euros. Therefore, the estimate of the overall volume of donations on the basis of the SOEP is comparatively close to the figure from the tax statistics.

Nevertheless, the results of the EMNID-Spendenmonitor, the continuous household budget surveys, and the annual income tax statistics only provide information about individual parts of the overall range of donations. Income tax statistics in particular cannot record certain types of donations and donors, for instance, because not all donors pay income tax or because the donations offset against tax are definitely lower than the actual donations made. Some of the voluntary contributions are made without donation receipts (for example, money given to beggars or cash donations made on the street), while others are probably not claimed against tax. The SOEP, on the other hand, covers the full spectrum of the population and types of donations.

Who gives what? Donors According to Region, Gender, Age, and Education

Overall, according to the SOEP survey, a significant proportion of the population of Germany make donations. There are, however, regional differences: While around 41 percent of West Germans gave 213 euros on average in 2009, only a third of East Germans donated money. On average, the amount donated in the East was also considerably lower at 136 euros. As far as giving blood is concerned, on the other hand, the East Germans are better represented: here, eight percent are donors, whereas in the West the figure is six percent (see Table 2). One reason for this may be the former practice in the GDR, where giving blood was an integral part of occupational health, and is therefore more of a matter of course than in West Germany.

There are also considerable differences in the donation behavior of men and women: The SOEP study shows that a slightly higher proportion of women in Germany give money. While 41 percent of women made financial donations, only 38 percent of men indicated having done so. This distribution between the two sexes is of-

¹⁴ For details on the different data sources, see Jana Sommerfeld und Rolf Sommerfeld "Spendenanalysen," German Central Institute for Social Issues, ed., Spendenbericht Deutschland 2010. Daten und Analysen zum Spendenverhalten in Deutschland. (Berlin: DZI, 2010), 23–92.

ten attributed to the longer average life expectancy of women, since older people give to charity more frequently than younger people.

As far as giving blood is concerned, however, no striking gender-specific differences were observed. Seven percent of men and women alike indicated they had given blood either in the previous year or in the past ten years.

Both the proportion of people donating to charity and the amount donated increase with age, while the willingness to give blood decreases with age. It is particularly rare for people between the ages of 18 and 34 to donate money. Only one in four people in this age group donate and the average amount donated is a comparatively low 100 euros. Many people apparently only begin to give money to charity in middle age. The willingness to donate then increases to over 50 percent in age groups over 65 years.

The reasons for the significant effect of age on donation behavior have not been examined closely to date. Some explanations in generation research are based on the assumption that people of the same age tend towards similar behavior since they have gone through the same or similar experiences in childhood (e.g., war, solidarity experienced in the event of poverty and disasters).¹⁵ Older people's greater willingness to donate is instead frequently attributed to their higher level of assets and hence overall positive economic situation, as well as a higher level of satisfaction with their own income.

As regards giving blood, the donation trend is reversed: Younger people demonstrate this prosocial behavior most frequently, while there is a dramatic decline in the proportion of donors from the age of 50, which can also be attributed to the growing health restrictions preventing them from being able to give blood.

Academics Give More Money But Not More Blood

The higher the level of education, the more frequently money is donated. The most generous are those with a university or vocational degree. Almost 60 percent of respondents in this group make financial donations. For persons with no or only basic qualifications, the donor rate is much lower: At around a third, the proportion of donors is only almost half as high. As regards giving blood, however, there is no academic ef-

fect. Here, academics only account for the average donor rate of 7 percent.

Unemployed People Give Blood, But Less Money

Whether or not people have a job is another factor that influences their willingness to donate. Unemployed people donate money less frequently than persons in employment. There is no evidence to date that the result is affected by the amount of unemployment benefit received: Overall, only 16 percent of unemployed people donate money. The donor rate for this group is therefore significantly lower than for the total population, which is at around 40 percent.

Conversely, other people who are not gainfully employed, including in particular those who have reached retirement age, not only have the highest donor rate at 43 percent, but with average donations of 219 euros, they also donate the highest amounts.

As regards giving blood, the unemployed showed no significantly different behavior: With an average donor rate of six percent (both for 2009 and for the past ten years), they donated approximately as frequently as the total population.

A Third of the Volume of Money Given to Charity in 2009 is Donated by the Top Ten Percent of Income Earners

As expected, income has a long-term impact on donation behavior. A higher level of prosperity should make it possible for someone to give a greater share of his or her income and assets to other people or projects, without having to go without or having financial difficulties. Consequently, it is easier for those with a high income to provide financial support to charity, and, accordingly, the level of generosity increases in line with a stronger economic position.¹⁶ Furthermore, progressive taxation means higher incentives for donation activities for those with a higher income. All available empirical surveys confirm that, as expected, the proportion of donors rises with increasing income¹⁷ and the SOEP data also support this finding. Thus, data from the SOEP

¹⁵ See Judith Nichols, *Global Demographics. Fund-Raising for a New World* (Chicago: Bonus Books, 1995)

¹⁶ See also Christopher Jencks, "Who Gives What?" Walter W. Powell, ed., *The Nonprofit Sector—A Research Handbook* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 321–339.

¹⁷ See, for example, Willy Schneider, *Die Akquisition von Spenden als eine Herausforderung für das Marketing*. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996), 109ff.

Table 3

Indicators on Donating Money According to Income Structure¹

	Donor rate	Amount donated per donor ²	Donation volume	Proportion of income donated
	In percent	In euros	In million euros	In percent
Top decile	60.5	456	1 940	0.57
9th decile	49.7	211	731	0.35
8th decile	46.7	197	616	0.36
7th decile	44.7	152	453	0.31
6th decile	42.5	112	307	0.23
5th decile	37.6	135	332	0.28
4th decile	32.6	188	402	0.38
3rd decile	31.8	117	233	0.25
2nd decile	26.2	101	159	0.20
Bottom decile	20.4	71	94	0.13
Total	39.6	201	5 265	0.36

¹ Decentiles of the equivalence-weighted monthly household net income in 2010.

² Average sum of money donated in 2009.

Source: SOEP V27 (in advance).

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The top ten percent of income earners contribute over a third of the total volume of donations.

confirm the statement already made elsewhere¹⁸ that lower income groups donate a lower percentage of their income than those in upper income groups.

Empirical studies in the US have found that there is a U-shaped curve showing the correlation between income and amount contributed.¹⁹ With increasing income, the percentage of money donated drops. Only when people jump to a significantly higher income bracket does it increase again. The situation is different in Germany²⁰ where, according to the SOEP data, those in the lowest income decile donate proportionally the least in this income group, 0.13 percent of their average annual income, while the volume of donations increases to 0.20 percent of net annual income in the second lowest income decile. After a further rise in the two following income deciles, the proportion of donations falls in the fifth and sixth income deciles but increases again after the seventh decile. The upper income decile has by far the highest share at 0.57 percent. The volume of dona-

¹⁸ See Helmut K. Anheier, "Ehrenamtlichkeit und Spendenverhalten in Deutschland, Frankreich und den USA," Helmut K. Anheier et al., eds., *Der Dritte Sektor in Deutschland. Organisationen zwischen Staat und Markt im gesellschaftlichen Wandel* (Berlin: Edition Sigma, 1997), 197-209.

¹⁹ See Anheier "Ehrenamtlichkeit und Spendenverhalten," 207.

²⁰ It must of course be noted for international comparisons that church tax is not normally included in the volume of donations in Germany. List, "Market for Charitable Giving," 167 states that particularly in the lower income groups in the US, donations for churches dominate.

tions made by this income group amounts to approximately 2 billion euros—around a third of the total volume of money donated in 2009. Further analyses would be required in order to establish what separate role the comparatively high tax incentives for donations has to play in this.

The Combined Effect of the Various Factors

So as to obtain a better picture of which population groups actually give money or blood, and what factors interact, the influence of several factors on donation behavior is examined (see the multivariate analyses in the box for details). The results illustrate (Table 4) that all factors included in the model have proven to be significant for donating money, but that giving money may be determined by social characteristics to a greater extent than is the case with giving blood.

The average probability of adults donating money rises by 0.6 percentage points per year of their life, while for giving blood it falls by around the same percentage. For adults from West Germany, it is almost 10 percentage points higher than for persons from East Germany, while the probability of donating blood in the last ten years is around 4 percentage points lower for West Germans than for East Germans. However, foreign nationals donate both money and blood significantly less frequently.

For academics, the average probability of donating money is around 12 percentage points higher than for the reference group of people with a basic school-leaving certificate. On the other hand, we identify no academic effect with regard to the probability of giving blood.

With regard to position in the income structure, the differences shown in Table 3 are also confirmed through multivariate testing. Thus, in the lowest income decile, the average probability of giving blood is around 11 percentage points lower than in the reference group of the middle income deciles. In this lowest income decile, a tendency to donate blood significantly less frequently is observed as well. While in the upper income decile the probability of donating money is significantly higher, by almost 10 percentage points, than for the middle income level, we did not establish this for blood donors, however.

Blood Donors Also Give Money More Often

Finally, it was examined whether there is a direct correlation between giving blood and money.²¹ The investigation resulted in a positive correlation in both estimation models. Blood donors give money 9 percent more frequently and financial donors give blood around 5 percent more frequently.

Personality Traits and Happiness Also Correlate with Donations

Finally, it was also investigated in the SOEP whether people donate in order to pass on their own experiences. Here, positive reciprocity denotes a tendency to reciprocate enjoyable experiences in a positive way. Negative reciprocity, on the other hand, indicates a tendency to reciprocate negative experiences.²² The multivariate estimation results show that willingness to donate falls with increasing negative reciprocity. The higher the positive reciprocity, however, the higher the willingness to donate money.

Positive reciprocity also increases willingness to give blood by a few percentage points, whereas, surprisingly, no significant correlation between negative reciprocity and donating blood is observed. Apparently, the tendency to retaliate against negative experiences is not expressed through a deliberate refusal to give blood.

As demonstrated above, income has an important effect on donation behavior. The decisive factor here is not only absolute income but personal satisfaction with it. If income satisfaction increases by one unit, the tendency to give money also increases by two percentage points.

As a final indicator, the perception of happiness was also included in the model:²³ People who “felt happy” in the

Table 4

Determinants of Donation Behavior

	Donated money ¹ in 2009	Gave blood ² in the past ten years
Sex (women)	-0.025***	0.006
Age (in years)	0.006***	-0.004***
Nationality (German)	-0.092***	-0.066***
Region (Eastern Germany)	0.084***	-0.039***
Education (other school)		
Junior high school	-0.073***	-0.003
Abitur	0.051***	0.057***
Degree	0.121***	0.008
Employment status (not employed)		
Employed full-time	0.005	0.047***
Employed part-time, low level of pay	0.058***	0.057***
Registered unemployed	-0.058***	0.045**
Position in income structure (5th and 6th deciles)		
Bottom decile	-0.114***	-0.034**
2nd decile	-0.062***	-0.013
3rd decile	-0.036**	-0.005
4th decile	-0.024*	-0.028*
7th decile	0.042**	-0.005
8th decile	0.042***	0.010
9th decile	0.042***	0.001
Top decile	0.090***	-0.003
Gave blood (did not give blood in the past ten years)	0.086***	-
Donated money (did not donate any money)	-	0.051***
Negative reciprocity	-0.043***	0.004
Positive reciprocity	0.032***	0.009***
Satisfaction with personal income	0.017***	0.001
Frequency of “feeling happy” in the last four weeks	0.013***	0.017***
Observations	16 225	16 225
Log pseudolikelihood	-9 741	-6 068
Wald chi ²	1 951	854
Pseudo R ²	0.119	0.074

Marginal probability effects with robust standard errors (Households 2010). Results of a logit estimation with 0/1 dummies. * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001.

1 Dependent variable: donated money in 2009 (yes/no)

2 Dependent variable: donated blood in the last ten years (yes/no).

Source: SOEP V27 (in advance).

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A degree and high income increase the probability of donating money to the largest extent. Income has virtually no influence on giving blood.

21 The SOEP data do not allow us to see the time line showing which of the two donation activities was performed first or second.

22 On this concept, see Jürgen Schupp and Gert G. Wagner, “Ein Vierteljahrhundert Sozio-oekonomisches Panel (SOEP): Die Bedeutung der Verhaltenswissenschaften für eine sozial- und wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Längsschnittstudie,” B. Mayer and H.-J. Kornadt, eds., Soziokulturelle und interdisziplinäre Perspektiven der Psychologie (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010), 239-272 and on use in economic models, Thomas Dohmen, Armin Falk, David Huffman, and Uwe Sunde. “Homo Reciprocans: Survey Evidence on Behavioural Outcomes,” The Economic Journal, Vol. 119 (2009) (536), 592-612.

23 A global survey (Gallup World Poll) showed that a positive correlation between donating money to charity and general satisfaction was identified in 122 of 136 countries; see Lara B. Aknin, Gillian M. Sandstrom, Elizabeth W. Dunn, and Michael I. Norton, “Investing in Others: Prosocial Spending for (Pro) Social Change,” Robert Biswas-Diener, ed., Positive Psychology as Social Change (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 222.

past four weeks gave both money and blood between one and two percentage points more frequently.

This proves impressively that donations are by no means solely motivated by material concerns but are also shaped by various value decisions and subjective dispositions.²⁴

Conclusion

The inclusion of donation-related issues as part of the topic “Consumption and Saving” in the 2010 SOEP study means that there is now, for the first time, a broad potential for analysis to investigate donation behavior in Germany. Data on multi-layered social and economic characteristics in particular, collected at the individual and household levels, provide the opportunity to fundamentally expand the potential to analyze the subject of donations and gain valuable insights into social mechanisms at work on donation behavior, also from the perspective of non-profit organizations.

The initial results impressively confirm that available income determines both willingness to give money and the amount donated. Income does not play any role as far as giving blood is concerned, however.

For the first time, there is documentary evidence to show that personality traits and positive emotions (happiness) are also significant in terms of willingness to donate money. As regards giving blood, on the other hand, no striking income or education effects were proven.

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24 Further in-depth analyses would be required to establish whether, for example, indicators on frequency of going to church and religion used in earlier survey waves but not included in this report also provide a significant explanation.



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