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LOVING CULTURAL HERITAGE. PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL GIVING AND PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

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Loving Cultural Heritage
Private individual giving and prosocial behavior

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse patterns of private individual giving to Cultural Heritage institutions in Italy. Based on the emerging economic literature on pro-social behavior, we carried out a Contingent Valuation survey to assess individuals' willingness to donate to museums and heritage organizations according to different conditions and set of incentives. Our findings reveal that intrinsic motivations and accountability of the recipient institutions may be more effective drivers for eliciting charitable giving than the usually proposed fiscal incentives. The results provide avenues for future empirical research and policy suggestions for fund raising cultural institutions.

JEL Codes: D11, D12, H4, Z1

Keywords, Charitable Giving, Cultural Heritage, Contingent Valuation, Pro-social Behavior

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the motivations behind individual giving for cultural heritage. Even if donations for culture generally rank low in the priorities of donors, they represent a crucial funding source in a context of general decrease of availability of resources to arts and culture. Hence, from a policy viewpoint, it becomes essential to find out the incentives and contexts that stimulate private giving.

Yet, in the last decades the cultural policy agenda has mainly focused on tax policy. Lowering the price of giving follows a rational economic logic that assumes a negative relation between the monetary cost of giving and the supply of charitable acts by individuals.

However, even economists have begun in the last decades to recognize and study the determinants of prosocial behavior other than the pure monetary and price incentives (i.e. Titmuss, 1974; Andreoni, 1988; Rose-Ackerman, 1996; Frey, 1997; Frey and Oberholzer-Gee, 1997; Benabou and Tirole, 2006). Pro-social motivations, such as altruism, moral codes of conduct and civic responsibility, may represent driving forces for engaging in the voluntarily contribution of collective goods. At the same time,