Generosity without borders: The interactive effect of spatial distance and donation goals on charitable giving

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A B S T R A C T

Although past research suggests that people are more likely to donate money to nearby causes to maximize their positive impact on others' lives, donations to foreign causes are growing rapidly. Incorporating both other-focused impact goals and self-focused moral goals into our conceptualization, we propose that an interplay between the accessibility of impact/moral goals and the spatial distance between donors and recipients of charitable causes (e.g., faraway vs. nearby recipients) influences charitable behaviors (e.g., donation amounts and charitable choices). Specifically, when the goal to maintain a moral self-concept (impact recipients' lives) is accessible, donors experience a more expansive conception of their moral circle (apply the "closeness-equals-impact" heuristic) and donate more money to faraway (nearby) causes. We further demonstrate that moral (impact) goals are more abstract (concrete) motivations, and their effects also emerge when priming an abstract (concrete) mindset. Five studies support these predictions while ruling out alternative interpretations.

1. Introduction

Charitable giving in the United States in 2014 was $358 billion, of which 72% ($258 billion) came from individuals (Giving USA, 2015). With the rise of globalization, geographical borders are becoming less relevant for making charitable donations. Indeed, donations toward international affairs experienced the fastest growth, at 13.2% in 2013, whereas the second-fastest sector, environment/animal welfare, saw only a growth of 8.6% during the same period (Sharf, 2014). In the United Kingdom, almost 20% of individuals donate to overseas causes, making them the fourth most popular cause—significantly ahead of donations toward education, religion, and environmental protection (Clarke, Kane, Wilding, & Bass, 2012). In addition to monetary donations, a fast-growing tendency is also observed in volunteering abroad. For example, more than 75% of American surgeons donate their time to charitable organizations, with one-third of them doing so overseas, representing the second most popular cause of volunteering (Peckham, 2015). What drives people to make donations that benefit recipients who are so spatially remote, even though the same resources could be directed toward helping those with a similar need who are spatially nearer? In this paper, we identify the conditions under which donors donate higher amounts to recipients who are located in spatially

faraway rather than nearby locations.

Previous research has identified a number of situations in which spatial distance may have a negative impact on donations. For example, common wisdom has it that greater spatial distance between people leads them to feel more disconnected and to react less positively toward each other (e.g., Latané, Liu, Nowak, Bonevento, & Zheng, 1995). According to this logic, people should feel more connected to, and thus be more sympathetic to, charity recipients who are located in proximal regions, and thus they would donate more to those charities. However, in this line of research, physical proximity to a beneficiary can be confounded with social closeness (e.g., perceived similarity between the donor and the beneficiary), which often results in more generous giving (Small, 2011). Indeed, recent research suggests that people with an interdependent focus donate more to recipients who are spatially near than to those who are spatially far when the former are perceived as in-group members but the latter are perceived as out-group members (Duclos & Barasch, 2014). Decoupling spatial and social distance effects, more recent research shows that independent of group membership, people who aim to make an impact on others would activate the closeness-equals-strength-of-effect metaphor and donate more to recipients in nearby locations to maximize impact (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017). We also refer to this metaphor as the "closeness-

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equals-impact" heuristic in our following discussions.

Although an altruistic motive of making a positive impact on improving other people's lives (i.e., "impact goal" for short; Bar-Tal & Raviv, 1982; Batson & Coke, 1981; Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017) is a key motivating factor underlying charitable behaviors, an equally important motivational reason for such behaviors is the self-focused goal on maintaining a positive and moral self-concept (i.e., "moral goal" for short; Batson, 1998; Dovidio, 1984). Incorporating both other-focused impact goals and self-focused moral goals into our conceptualization, we propose that an interplay between the accessibility of impact/moral goals and the spatial distance between donors and recipients of charitable causes (e.g., faraway vs. nearby recipients) influences charitable behaviors (e.g., donation amounts and charitable choices). Specifically, consistent with past research (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017), we propose that when an impact goal is readily accessible, people would donate more to a nearby (vs. faraway) cause because the nearby cause is more instrumental for having a stronger impact on recipients. However, veering from past research, we make the novel prediction that when a moral goal is readily accessible, people would donate more to a faraway (vs. nearby) cause because the faraway cause is more instrumental for fulfilling one's moral goals (i.e., by affirming the self as a moral person via an expanded circle of moral regard toward out-group members, Reed & Aquino, 2003). This should be particularly true for people with high self-importance of moral identity, who have a stronger urge to demonstrate their morality through their actions because those actions reinforce their belief that they possess positive moral traits (Schaumberg & Wiltermuth, 2014). In addition, by integrating our conceptualization with the literature on abstract and concrete mindsets, we further propose that moral (impact) goals are more abstract (concrete) motivations, and hence are more likely to drive donation behavior when priming an abstract (concrete) mindset, which in turn would positively (negatively) influence charitable behaviors toward faraway (vs. nearby) causes.

In the remainder of the paper, we first review the literature on spatial distance and donation behavior, as well as past research on the motivational drivers of charitable behavior and their associated construal levels to derive the hypotheses in our conceptualization. We outline our contributions to this literature, including: a) recognizing two different motivations (i.e., making an impact vs. maintaining a moral self-concept) that may drive people's donation behavior; b) establishing the differential (positive or negative) impact of spatial distance on donation amount when different motivations are activated; c) explicating the mechanism underlying the positive effect of spatial distance on donation behaviors; d) identifying people for whom the positive effect of spatial distance on donation behavior is stronger; and e) demonstrating that different construal mindsets (abstract or concrete) may activate different donation goals (moral goal or impact goal), which subsequently lead to divergent effects (positive or negative) of spatial distance on donation behaviors. After that, we report the results of five studies that support our hypotheses. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the relevance of our research, its limitations, and future research directions.

2. Conceptual overview and development of hypotheses

2.1. Spatial distance and charitable donations

Spatial closeness often promotes generosity among donors. Research shows that people are more generous when donating to causes that are spatially near than to those that are spatially far. For instance, Winterich, Mittal, and Ross (2009) found that American participants donated more money to hurricane victims in New Orleans than to tsunami victims in Indonesia. Similarly, Duclos and Barasch (2014) showed that interdependent-focused southeastern Chinese participants donated more money to earthquake survivors from Sichuan province, located in the southwest of China, than to survivors of the Haiti

earthquake. Importantly, these studies focused on investigating the impact of group membership on donation behavior and considered spatial distance as a determinant of group membership. That is, spatial closeness within geopolitical boundaries was used in these studies to operationalize in-group membership, which highlights the interrelationship between spatial and social closeness.

These past effects are consistent with the view that people have a tendency to feel socially closer (i.e., to feel similar to and share something in common with others) to others who are spatially near than to those who are spatially far. Specifically, closer spatial distance leads people to feel that they are more connected to others (Latané et al., 1995), to feel more emotionally attached to others (Williams & Bargh, 2008), and to judge targets as being more conceptually similar to each other (Casasanto, 2008). Because perceptions of social closeness positively influence charitable behavior, it is often recommended for charities to frame donation recipients as being similar and physically proximate to potential donors in order to elicit higher donation amounts from these donors (Small, 2011).

Beyond the interconnection between spatial and social closeness, recent research finds that people are more likely to donate to a spatially near cause when they focus on the impact of their donations on others and make decisions guided by a salient closeness-equals-strength-of-effect heuristic (which implies a higher impact of their contributions on nearby [vs. faraway] recipients) (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017). Specifically, Touré-Tillery and Fishbach (2017) show that people donate more to a nearby cause either when the closeness-equals-strength-of-effect metaphor is made salient by an unrelated task (e.g., using pictures of individuals throwing objects horizontally to illustrate that the greater the distance, the lesser the impact of the thrown object—-Study 1) or when the donation appeal explicitly highlights the goal of making an impact and its immediate consequences on recipients (e.g., explicit appeals such as "… now is the time to make an impact."—Study 3; "HIT FOR A CAUSE: Help improve lives in …"—Study 4; "Help improve lives in …"—Study 6). Moreover, this negative effect of spatial distance on donation was mediated by the higher perceived impact the donation would have on nearby (vs. faraway) recipients.

We propose that, in the above research, the altruistic goal to make a positive impact on other people's lives plays a key role. This altruistic motivation focuses on the needs of others, and any improvement in other people's conditions is considered to be rewarding to the donor (Batson & Coke, 1981). However, besides this other-focused motivation, past literature suggests that another key motivational driver of charitable behavior is the desire to maintain a moral self-concept (Brown & Smart, 1991; Karylowski, 1982; for reviews see Dovidio, 1984; Batson, 1998). This motivation focuses on the self and the self's moral standards, as reflected in the view that people "sometimes offer assistance primarily to reaffirm a self-image as a caring, helpful individual" (Dovidio, 1984, p. 382). We incorporate both other-focused and self-focused motivations into the theorizing of how spatial distance between donors and recipients of charitable causes (faraway vs. nearby) influences donation decisions. We elaborate on this theorizing in the next section.

2.2. The interplay between donation goals and spatial distance for influencing donation behavior

Consistent with past research demonstrating a negative effect of spatial distance between donors and charitable recipients on donation behavior (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017), our theorizing considers that when the goal to make a positive impact on others (i.e., impact goal) is readily accessible, people would donate more money to nearby (vs. faraway) charitable causes. This occurs because spatial closeness implies greater strength of impact, and hence a nearby cause is more instrumental for fulfilling salient impact goals than a faraway one (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017). However, veering from past research, we make the novel prediction that when the goal to maintain a moral

self-concept (i.e., moral goal) is readily accessible, people would donate more money to faraway (vs. nearby) causes. We argue that this occurs because donating to a faraway (vs. nearby) cause should be more instrumental to the achievement of accessible moral goals, as such faraway donation behavior would more strongly signal the self as a moral person via an expanded circle of moral regard. A focus on self-relevant moral goals prompts people to have a more expansive conception of the people toward whom they feel obligated to exhibit moral regard by caring for their needs and welfare. Previous research conceptualizes this tendency as expanding one's circle of moral regard, and demonstrates that people who are motivated by moral concerns show interest for the needs and welfare of a larger set of social groups, rather than confining their moral behavior toward a narrow set of in-groups (e.g., family and friends; Crimston, Bain, Hornsey, & Bastian, 2016; Crimston, Hornsey, Bain, & Bastian, 2018; Reed & Aquino, 2003; Youniss & Yates, 1999). Thus, it stands to reason that the accessibility of moral goals would render a faraway (vs. nearby) charitable cause as being more instrumental for such an expansive conception of one's circle of moral regard. This prediction is grounded on the goal systems theory suggesting that a means (e.g., donating to a faraway charitable cause) would be judged to be more instrumental to a goal (e.g., expanding one's circle of moral regard to signal the self as a moral person) when implementation of the means signals greater achievement of the goal (Shah, Kruglanski, & Friedman, 2003). To summarize our theorizing, we hypothesize that:

H1. When contemplating a charitable donation, accessibility of the goal of making an impact on others (i.e., impact goal) would lead people to donate more money to recipients of nearby (vs. faraway) charitable causes; whereas accessibility of the goal of maintaining a moral self-concept (i.e., moral goal) would lead people to donate more money to recipients of faraway (vs. nearby) charitable causes.

H2. The positive effect of spatial distance on donation amount when the goal of maintaining a moral self-concept is readily accessible is mediated by the greater expansion of one's circle of moral regard when donating to a faraway (vs. nearby) cause.

One corollary of the previous discussion is that when the goal of maintaining a moral self-concept is readily accessible, the positive effect of spatial distance on donation amount should be stronger for individuals for whom such moral goals are more self-relevant. We assume that moral goals are more self-relevant for people who are chronically high in moral identity. Moral identity refers to the extent to which moral traits, goals, and behaviors are central and important to one's self-concept or self-identity (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002; Winterich, Mittal, & Aquino, 2013; Winterich et al., 2009). The self-concept of people who are high (vs. low) in moral identity is more strongly influenced by the extent to which they possess moral traits (Schaumberg & Wiltermuth, 2014). Individuals with high (vs. low) self-importance of moral identity have a stronger urge to demonstrate their morality through their actions, which reinforces their belief that they possess positive moral traits (Schaumberg & Wiltermuth, 2014). Accordingly, self-importance of moral identity is positively related to the frequency of recall of instances in which people donate time, effort, and resources to people in need (Gotowiec & van Mastrigt, 2019), to an escalation of the commitment to fund even unpromising prosocial initiatives (Schaumberg & Wiltermuth, 2014), and to an expansion of the boundaries of the in-group toward whom people feel obligated to exhibit moral regard (i.e., an expanded circle of moral regard, Reed & Aquino, 2003). It is then reasonable to expect that people higher (vs. lower) in self-relevance of moral identity would benefit more from the expanded circle of moral regard associated with donating to a faraway (vs. nearby) cause (i.e., a better signal of the self as a moral person). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H3. Self-importance of moral identity moderates the positive effect of spatial distance on donation amount. Specifically, people with high self-

importance of moral identity would donate more money to faraway (vs. nearby) causes, whereas this effect will be attenuated for individuals with low self-importance of moral identity.

2.3. Levels of abstraction of donation goals and construal mindsets

Goals are knowledge structures that can be defined at different levels of abstraction, from the most concrete and narrow (e.g., buy a meal for a beggar on the street) to the most abstract and broad motivational content (e.g., be a moral person) (Carver & Scheier, 1999; Emmons, 1992; Shah et al., 2003). Existing studies on morality typically analyze how people make decisions when a concrete, situational circumstance conflicts with abstract moral rules (Oser, 2013). Past research also suggests that moral goals are typically abstract and theoretical (Brennan, 2008) and are referred to as higher order goals (Agerström & Björklund, 2013). Moreover, moral goals are more likely to guide goal-consistent behaviors when people focus on their abstract moral identities rather than on concrete moral actions (Conway & Peetz, 2012). In addition, at the neuro-response level, it has been found that moral concepts and abstract value systems could trigger the same specific brain response (Caspers et al., 2011). In contrast to people's abstract moral goals, we argue that the goal of making a positive impact on improving other people's lives is a more concrete goal. Impact goals are "understood in terms of *concrete* forms of physical impact (i.e., the striking of one object against another)" (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017, p. 861), and based on the notion that a charitable cause provides a *concrete* way to have an impact (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017).

The above discussions suggest that, in addition to the direct activation of impact or moral goals, their accessibility may also be influenced by donors' construal level mindsets. Research on construal-level theory suggests that an abstract or a concrete mindset influences people's mental representations of events and behaviors (Liberman, Trope, & Stephan, 2007). An abstract mindset is likely to trigger more abstract representations of events and behaviors. Torelli and Kaikati (2009) found that different construal mindsets that people have also influence the motivational drivers of behaviors. For example, they observed that people who have acquired an abstract mindset are more likely to behave according to their abstract value priorities, whereas people who have acquired a concrete mindset are less likely to do so. Building on this stream of research, we propose that people's construal mindsets may make either impact goals or moral goals more readily accessible when contemplating donation decisions. Given the close correlates between abstraction and moral goals, Agerström and Björklund (2013) concluded that "… when high-level construals are employed, people should be more motivated to act in accordance with their moral ideals …" (p. 184). Accordingly, we hypothesize that when people make donation decisions, priming an abstract mindset is more likely to render their abstract moral goals accessible, which will lead to donation decisions that would enhance the achievement of their moral goals (i.e., higher donation amount to faraway causes compared to nearby ones). In contrast, priming a concrete mindset is more likely to render concrete impact goals more accessible, which will lead to donation decisions that would enhance the achievement of impact goals (i.e., higher donation amount to nearby causes compared to faraway ones). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H4. A concrete mindset will render the goal of making an impact (i.e., impact goal) accessible, which in turn leads people to donate more money to recipients of spatially nearby (vs. faraway) charitable causes; whereas an abstract mindset will render the goal of maintaining one's moral self-concept (i.e., moral goal) more accessible, which in turn leads people to donate more money to recipients of spatially faraway (vs. nearby) charitable causes.
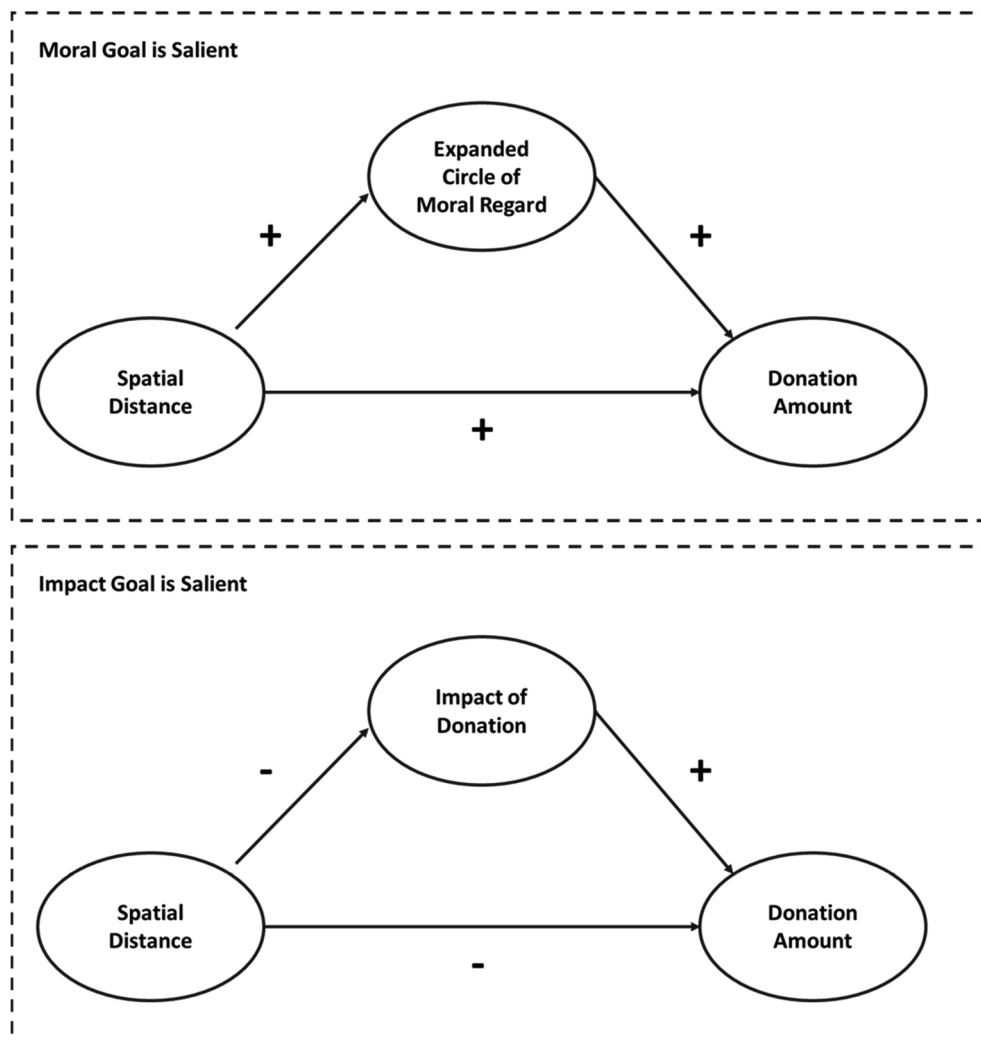
Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.

3. Overview of studies

Our theoretical framework is summarized in Fig. 1. Five studies were conducted to provide empirical evidence for the hypotheses derived in this research. Study 1 tested the basic predictions in hypothesis 1 that making accessible the goal of making an impact on others would lead people to donate more money to recipients of spatially nearby (vs. faraway) charitable causes; whereas the opposite is true when making accessible the goal of maintaining a moral self-concept. We used a distance manipulation in which the locations of donors (California) and recipients (New York or San Francisco) were within the same country. It also ruled out the possibility that the effect of spatial distance is driven by unequal economic conditions and, thus, differences in need between recipients from both locations. Studies 2 and 3 focused on the mechanism underlying the positive effect of accessible moral goals on donations to faraway (vs. nearby) causes. This was done by demonstrating that the positive effect of distance on donation behavior is stronger for individuals with high self-importance of moral identity (i.e., the moderating role of self-importance of moral identity, hypothesis 3), as well as by uncovering the mediating role of the expansion of one's circle of moral regard (i.e., mediating effect, hypothesis 2). Study 2 used charitable causes located in two different, yet comparable, countries (i.e., the United Kingdom vs. Canada) to manipulate spatial distance; whereas Study 3 used the same location of a charitable cause (i.e., Honduras), but framed the same location as closer or distant by

means of written and pictorial descriptions of the location (adapted from Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017). Studies 4a and 4b provided additional evidence for the interplay between the type of salient goal (moral vs. impact goals) and spatial distance on donation behavior by manipulating construal mindsets. In addition, we demonstrated the hypothesized effects on both donation amount (Study 4a) and choice between faraway and nearby charitable locations (Study 4b). Specifically, in Study 4a we primed an abstract (vs. concrete) mindset to activate high-level, moral goals (vs. low-level, impact goals), and observed the subsequent effect on people's donation amount to faraway (vs. nearby) causes. We also included a no mindset control group in the design. Finally, Study 4b manipulated construal mindsets (abstract vs. concrete) and donation goals (moral goals vs. impact goals) orthogonally. Because our theory argues that the influence of construal mindsets on donation to faraway versus nearby causes is associated with the activation of different donation goals, we show that activating an alternative donation goal (e.g., impact goal) following the induction of a mindset (e.g., abstract mindset) may attenuate the mindset effect on donations.

4. Study 1

The main objective of this study was to test the basic prediction in hypothesis 1 that the accessible goals that people have when making donation decisions affect the direction of spatial distance's impact on

donation amount. More specifically, we aimed to demonstrate that when the goal of making an impact on others' wellbeing is activated, people would donate more money to recipients of a spatially nearby (vs. faraway) charitable cause. However, when the goal of maintaining one's moral self-concept is activated, the effect of spatial distance reverses, so that people would donate more money to recipients of a spatially faraway (vs. nearby) charitable cause.

4.1. Method

4.1.1. Participants, design, and procedures

Four hundred and thirty-one members of Amazon's Mechanical Turk living in California were recruited (average age = 35.2 years, 50.0% male). Participants were informed that they would complete a survey on charitable donations and were randomly assigned into one of six conditions in a 3 (donation goal prime: impact, moral, control) × 2 (spatial distance: nearby, faraway) between-subjects design. All participants were shown a charitable cause named "Heart for the Homeless," with a focus on providng food, clothing, and shelter information to the homeless. To manipulate different donation goals, participants in both the impact goal and moral goal conditions read a comment embedded in the donation plea that was made by someone who supported this cause. In the *impact goal* condition, the comment presented to participants emphasized the importance of donating to make an impact (i.e., "I give to the Heart for the Homeless because I know that my donation will make a difference in someone's life"); whereas in the *moral goal* condition, the comment presented to participants emphasized the importance of maintaining a moral self-concept (e.g., "I give to the Heart for the Homeless because I believe that it is my moral goal to help others"). Participants in the *control* condition read the same donation plea without any goal activation comment. To manipulate spatial distance, participants in the spatially *nearby* condition read that the beneficiaries of the charitable cause were homeless people in San Francisco, whereas participants in the spatially *faraway* condition read that the beneficiaries were homeless in New York City (see Online Appendix A for the stimuli). We chose San Francisco and New York City because they are comparable cities in terms of their relative size of homeless population (Office of Community Planning and Development, 2016) and their consumer price index (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). After reading the donation appeal, participants were told that the charitable organization was currently raising funds and they could make an actual donation if they desired. To make the donation decision consequential, we informed participants that they would be entered into a raffle with a prize of $50 USD and asked them to indicate how much they would donate to this cause if they won the prize (adopted from Freeman, Aquino, & McFerran, 2009; Kaikati, Torelli, Winterich, & Rodas, 2017). They used a sliding scale to choose any amount (in increments of $1) between $0 and $50. Then, in order to confirm that the donation goal manipulations worked as intended, participants indicated the impact they expected their donation would make to the cause ("How much impact do you expect to make with your donation to this cause?" 1 = small impact, 7 = big impact) and the extent to which they thought about their moral responsibility when considering this donation ("How much do you feel it's your moral responsibility to help out with this cause?" 1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal). After that, participants responded to manipulation check questions in order to confirm that the distance manipulation worked as intended ("How faraway are the recipients of this charity?" 1 = very close, 7 = very faraway). Finally, participants answered demographic questions (e.g., gender, age, and ethnicity) and rated the economic environment of the city (bad/good, poor/rich, undesirable/desirable, unaffordable/affordable, unfavorable/favorable; α = 0.81) using a 7-point scale (higher numbers indicate more positive evaluation).

4.2. Results

4.2.1. Donation goal manipulation checks

To assess whether the donation goal manipulation was effective, we first submitted the measure of impact to an ANOVA with donation goal (control, impact, moral) as a fixed factor. Results revealed a significant effect of donation goal, $F(2,428) = 3.14$, $p = .04$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.01$. As expected, planned contrast analyses revealed that participants in the impact goal condition expected their donations to make a greater impact to the cause ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.93$) than participants in the control ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.77$) and in the moral goal ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.79$) conditions combined, $F(1,428) = 6.10$, $p = .01$ $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.01$. The latter two conditions did not differ from each other. We then submitted the measure of morality to an ANOVA with donation goal (control, impact, moral) as a fixed factor. Results did not reveal a significant effect of donation goal, $F(2,428) = 2.17$, $p = .12$. However, planned contrast analyses revealed that participants in the moral goal condition felt more strongly that it was their moral responsibility to help this cause ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.75$) than participants in the impact goal condition ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.84$, $F(1,428) = 4.28$, $p = .04$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.01$). There were no significant differences between the control condition ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.78$) and the other conditions.

4.2.2. Distance manipulation checks

To assess whether the spatial distance manipulation was effective, we first submitted the perceived spatial distance to beneficiaries of the cause to an ANOVA with distance (nearby vs. faraway) as a fixed factor. As expected, participants perceived that donation recipients in New York City were farther away than recipients residing in San Francisco, $M_{Faraway} = 5.42$, SD = 1.56; $M_{Nearby} = 4.06$, SD = 1.64), $F(1,429) = 77.70, p < .001$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.15$. Finally, participants in both spatial distance conditions perceived both cities to have similar economic environments (α = 0.81, $M_{Faraway} = 4.16$, $SD = 1.23$; $M_{Nearby} = 4.20$, $SD = 1.28$, *ns*).

4.2.3. Donation amount

Donation amounts were submitted to an ANOVA with donation goal (impact, moral, control) and spatial distance between participants and recipients (nearby vs. faraway) as fixed factors. The results yielded a significant 2-way interaction between donation goal and spatial distance condition, $F(2,425) = 6.55$, $p = .002$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.03$. The main effects of donation goal manipulation and spatial distance were not significant (*Fs* < 2, *ns*). Next, we tested the simple effect of spatial distance within each goal condition. As expected, when impact goals were activated, participants donated more money to the nearby cause (i.e., homeless in San Francisco, $M_{Nearby} = \$23.23$, $SD = 15.85$; see Fig. 2) than to the faraway cause (i.e., homeless in New York City, $M_{Faraway} = \$17.83$, $SD = 14.29$, $F(1,425) = 4.20$, $p = .04$,
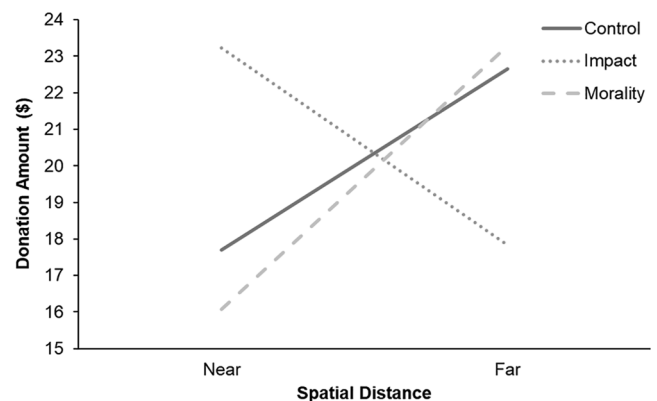

Fig. 2. Donation amount as a function of donation goal and spatial distance (study 1).

$\eta_{\text{partial}}^2 = 0.01$). However, the effect of distance on donation reversed when moral goals were activated, with participants donating more to the faraway cause (i.e., homeless in New York City, $M_{\text{Faraway}} = \$23.28$, $SD = 14.89$) than to the nearby cause (homeless in San Francisco, $M_{\text{Nearby}} = \$16.07$, $SD = 15.46$), $F(1,425) = 7.58$, $p = .01$, $\eta_{\text{partial}}^2 = 0.02$). Interestingly, the pattern of results for participants in the control condition (i.e., no goal was activated) was similar to the pattern of results for participants in the moral goal condition, although the effect was only marginal. Specifically, participants in the control condition donated more to the faraway cause (i.e., homeless in New York City, $M_{\text{Faraway}} = \$22.66$, $SD = 16.75$) than to the nearby cause (homeless in San Francisco, $M_{\text{Nearby}} = \$17.71$, $SD = 16.76$), $F(1,425) = 3.60$, $p = .06$, $\eta_{\text{partial}}^2 = 0.01$).

Additional planned contrast analyses tested the simple effect of goal activation in each spatial distance condition. The results revealed that in the nearby condition, participants primed with the goal of making an impact on others donated more to the nearby cause ($M = 23.23$) than those primed with a moral goal ($M = 16.07$) and those in the control condition ($M = 17.71$) combined, $F(1,427) = 7.93$, $p = .005$, $\eta_{\text{partial}}^2 = 0.02$; the latter two conditions did not differ from each other, $F < 1$, *ns*. However, as expected, this pattern reverses in the faraway condition. Specifically, participants primed with an impact goal donated less ($M = 17.83$) to the faraway cause than those primed with a moral goal ($M = 23.28$) and those in the control condition ($M = 22.66$) combined, $F(1,427) = 5.03$, $p = .03$, $\eta_{\text{partial}}^2 = 0.01$; the latter two conditions did not differ from each other, $F < 1$, *ns*.

4.3. Discussion

Study 1 provided evidence that different donation goals interacted with the spatial distance between donors and recipients to influence donation amount. Activating the goal of making an impact on others made participants donate more money to homeless people in a nearby city than to those in a faraway city. In contrast, activating the goal of maintaining a moral self-concept made participants donate more money to homeless people in a faraway city than to those in a nearby city. Interestingly, we observed that participants in the control goal conditions displayed a similar pattern of results (albeit weaker) to those participants in the moral goal conditions. Although we did not have specific predictions regarding the effects of spatial distance in this baseline condition, we discuss possible explanations of these results in the General Discussion section.

Study 1 also ruled out the alternative explanation that the spatial distance effect on donation amount might be driven by different economic conditions, and thus different needs of recipients in different locations. Indeed, across both spatial distance conditions, participants perceived the economic environment in New York City and in San Francisco similarly, and thus recipients in both cities should be equally in need of help. To further rule out the possibility that the observed effects were driven by participants' idiosyncratic beliefs about the two cities, the next study manipulated distance using two countries as the location of charitable recipients.

5. Study 2

Study 2 was designed to assess the role of self-importance of moral identity in moderating the positive influence of spatial distance on donation behavior (hypothesis 3). Because people with high (vs. low) self-importance of moral identity care more about their moral self-concept, and thus have chronically accessible goals to maintain their moral self-concept (Reed & Aquino, 2003), we predict that they are more likely to donate more to faraway (vs. nearby) causes. In contrast, the effects would be attenuated among participants for whom being moral is less self-relevant (i.e., those who have low self-importance of moral identity), as they would be less motivated to affirm their morality. To demonstrate the robustness of the proposed effects, we

manipulated spatial distance using charitable causes located in two different, yet comparable countries (the United Kingdom and Canada).

5.1. Method

5.1.1. Participants, design, and procedures

One hundred and twenty-one staff members and students from a Midwestern university took part in the study (37.5% male, average age = 24.63 years) in exchange for \$8 cash payment. Participants were told that the study was on charitable donations. They were randomly assigned into one of two conditions in which they read about "Cancer Care", a charitable cause aimed at helping cancer patients. In one condition the cause targeted cancer patients in Canada (spatially nearby condition), whereas in the other condition it targeted cancer patients in the United Kingdom (spatially faraway condition; see Online Appendix B for the stimuli). Participants were then told that we were raising funds for the cause they had just read about. To make the donation decisions consequential, we first informed participants that they would be entered into a raffle with a cash prize of \$50 USD. Participants then indicated how much money they would like to donate if they won the cash prize. They used a sliding scale to indicate an amount between \$0 and \$50 (in increments of \$1). Participants then responded to the Self-Importance of Moral Identity scale (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Specifically, participants saw nine moral traits (e.g., caring, compassionate, generous) and indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with thirteen statements regarding those moral traits (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree; e.g., "It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics"). Then, participants responded to a 4-item scale measuring their sympathy toward the cause (4-item measure, e.g., "How sympathetic did you feel while reading the description of the cause?" 1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal, adapted from Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007), the perceived need of the recipients ("In how much need are the recipients of this cause?" 1 = no need at all, 7 = great need), as well as social closeness (measured by a 4-item scale, e.g., "To what extent do you feel socially connected with the recipients of this charitable organization?" 1 = not connected at all, 7 = highly connected; see Online Appendix B for all items). After that, participants responded to manipulation check questions in order to confirm that the distance manipulation worked as intended ("How faraway are the recipients of this charity?" 1 = very close, 7 = very faraway). Finally, participants answered demographic questions such as gender, age, and ethnicity.[2]

5.2. Results

5.2.1. Manipulation checks

We first assessed whether the spatial distance manipulation was effective. As expected, participants perceived that donation recipients residing in the United Kingdom were farther away than recipients residing in Canada ($M_{\text{Faraway}} = 5.62$, SD = 1.17; $M_{\text{Nearby}} = 4.49$, SD = 1.43), $F(1,119) = 22.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{\text{partial}}^2 = 0.16$. Second, we confirmed that the spatial distance manipulation did not influence perceived social closeness between participants and donation recipients. Specifically, the average of the four social closeness items ($\alpha = 0.73$) did not differ between the two conditions ($M_{\text{Faraway}} = 3.25$, SD = 0.97; $M_{\text{Nearby}} = 3.43$, SD = 1.29; *ns*). Moreover, the social closeness mean was significantly below the midpoint of the scale, $M_{\text{diff}} = -0.66$, $t(120) = -6.38$, $p < .001$, indicating that participants did not feel socially close to the recipients. Finally, participants in both conditions perceived that recipients were equally needy of support ($M_{\text{Faraway}} = 5.53$, SD = 1.26; $M_{\text{Nearby}} = 5.41$, SD = 1.26; *ns*) and felt similar levels of sympathy ($\alpha = 0.81$) toward recipients ($M_{\text{Faraway}} = 4.55$, SD = 1.11; $M_{\text{Nearby}} = 4.33$, SD = 1.16, *ns*).

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[2] Participants responded to some additional questions not used in the analyses. See Online Appendix B for details on these measures.

5.2.2. Moderating role of self-importance of moral identity

To assess the moderating role of self-importance of moral identity, we regressed donation amount on spatial distance between participants and recipients (dummy-coded, nearby = 0, faraway = 1), self-importance of moral identity (α = 0.83, mean-centered), and the spatial distance × moral identity interaction. We observed a significant effect of self-importance of moral identity (β = 7.65, $t(1\,1\,7)$ = 3.40, p = .001), a marginally significant main effect of spatial distance (β = 4.07, $t(1\,1\,7)$ = 1.78, p = .08), and, more importantly, a significant effect of the spatial distance × moral identity interaction (β = 14.84, $t(1\,1\,7)$ = 3.30, p = .001) on donation amount. Next, we conducted a floodlight analysis to identify the regions of moral identity values in which greater spatial distance increased donation amount (Spiller, Fitzsimons, Lynch, & McClelland, 2013). We followed the Johnson–Neyman technique for identifying regions in the range of the moderator variable in which the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable *is* and *is not* significant (Hayes & Matthes, 2009). The Johnson–Neyman point for $p < .05$ (t = 1.98) for the self-importance of moral identity moderator occurs at a value of 3.92, right around the mean of 3.88 (see Fig. 3). Consistent with our prediction in hypothesis 3, this indicates that greater spatial distance results in significantly higher donation amounts for participants with ratings of self-importance of moral identity above 3.92.

5.3. Discussion

Results from study 2 provide support for our predictions in hypothesis 3. The positive effect of spatial distance on donation was more evident among people with medium to high levels of self-importance of moral identity, whereas the effect was attenuated among those low in self-importance of moral identity. More specifically, a floodlight analysis showed that the positive effect of spatial distance on donation behavior only occurred among people who scored above the 50th percentile on the self-importance of moral identity scale. These results suggest that people donate more to faraway (vs. nearby) causes when a moral identity is more self-relevant. We argue that this is the case because the faraway (vs. nearby) cause is more instrumental for the achievement of chronically-accessible moral goals, as donating to such faraway donation would more strongly signal the self as a moral person via an expanded circle of moral regard (i.e., a more expansive conception of the people toward whom one feels obligated to exhibit moral regard, Reed & Aquino, 2003). We directly investigated this underlying process in the next study.

6. Study 3

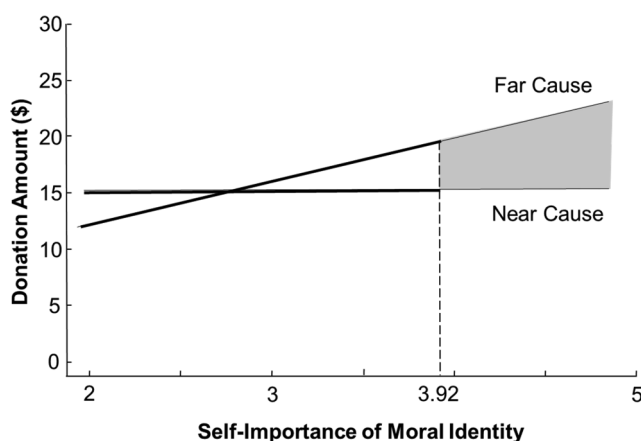Study 3 was designed to directly assess the extent to which donating

Fig. 3. Regression lines with Johnson–Neyman point (study 2).

to a faraway (vs. nearby) cause is a stronger signal of a moral self via an expanded circle of moral regard, which underlies the positive effect of spatial distance on donation behavior. We did so by adopting a study design similar to that in study 2, but additionally measuring the mediator of expansion of participants' circle of moral regard (i.e., their perceptions that they have expanded the line that embraces people worthy of moral considerations to include outgroup members in faraway locations). For this purpose, we created a measure aimed to capture the expansion of one's circle of moral regard. In addition, this study adopted a more controlled manipulation of physical distance, by framing the same location as closer or distant by using different written and pictorial descriptions of the location (adapted from Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017). This manipulation minimizes potential confounds associated with idiosyncrasies of different locations.

6.1. Method

6.1.1. Participants, design, and procedures

One hundred and ninety-one members of Amazon's Mechanical Turk living in a specific Midwestern state in the U.S. were recruited for this study (average age = 36.22 years, 53.9% male). Participants were informed that they would complete a survey on charitable donations. They were then randomly assigned into one of two conditions (spatial distance: nearby vs. faraway). All participants were shown a donation plea from World Vision aiming to help poor children in Honduras. The donation plea included a map with a red arrow indicating the location of Honduras. We manipulated perceptions of distance through the verbiage used to describe Honduras, as well as through the imagery in the map. In the *nearby* condition, Honduras was described as nearby and "one of the poorest countries in America." The map was zoomed-in to only show the U.S., Mexico, and Central America, with a red arrow pointing at Honduras. In the *faraway* condition, Honduras was described as faraway and "one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere". The map was zoomed-out to show the entire American continent, with a red arrow pointing at Honduras (see Online Appendix C for the stimuli). After reading about the donation appeal, participants were told that the charitable organization was currently raising funds and that they could make an actual donation if they desired. Similar to past studies, we informed participants that they would be entered into a raffle with a prize of $50 USD, and asked them to indicate how much they would donate to this cause if they won the prize. They used a sliding scale to choose any amount (in increments of $1) between $0 and $50. Participants then indicated the extent to which their donation allowed them to expand their circle of moral regard ("This donation makes me feel like I'm expanding my moral influence," "I feel like I increased how moral I am with this donation," 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). In addition, participants responded to the same Self-Importance of Moral Identity measure used in study 2 (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Afterwards, participants assessed the spatial distance between them and Honduras ("How faraway is Honduras from where you live?" 1 = very close, 7 = very faraway), which served as a manipulation check. They also responded to the same measure of perceived need (1 item) used in study 2. Finally, participants answered demographic questions.

6.2. Results and discussion

6.2.1. Manipulation checks

To assess whether the spatial distance manipulation worked as intended, we submitted the perceived spatial distance between participants and the beneficiaries of the cause to an ANOVA with spatial distance (nearby vs. faraway) as a fixed factor. As intended, participants in the spatially faraway condition perceived Honduras to be farther away than those in the spatially nearby condition did, M_{Faraway} = 5.44, SD = 1.32; M_{Nearby} = 4.96, SD = 1.56; $F(1,189)$ = 5.37, p = .02, η_{partial}^2 = 0.03. We conducted a similar analysis with perceived need as

the dependent variable and found that the distance manipulations did not affect this variable, $M_{Faraway}$ = 6.22, SD = 0.99; M_{Nearby} = 5.97, SD = 1.25), $F(1,189)$ = 2.38, *n.s.*

6.2.2. Donation amount

We regressed donation amount on spatial distance (dummy-coded, nearby = 0, faraway = 1), self-importance of moral identity (α = 0.88, mean-centered), and the spatial distance × self-importance of moral identity interaction. Consistent with findings in Study 2, we observed a significant effect of self-importance of moral identity (β = 4.20, t (1 8 7) = 2.55, $p < .02$), and, more importantly, a significant effect of the spatial distance × self-importance of moral identity interaction (β = 11.77, $t(1 8 7)$ = 3.58, $p < .001$) on donation amount. To further explore these effects, we conducted a floodlight analysis to identify the regions of moral identity in which faraway spatial distance increased donation amount (Spiller et al., 2013). We followed the Johnson–Neyman technique for identifying regions in the range of the moderator variable in which the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable *is* and *is not* significant (Hayes & Matthes, 2009). The Johnson–Neyman points for $p < .05$ (t = 1.97) for the self-importance of moral identity moderator occurred at values of 2.74 and 3.72 (the mean of the self-importance of moral identity measure was 3.53). These results indicated that for all values of self-importance of moral identity below 2.74, the nearby cause resulted in higher donation amounts, whereas the faraway cause resulted in significantly higher donation amounts for all values of self-importance of moral identity above 3.72 (see Fig. 4).

6.2.3. Moderated mediation analysis

We conducted second stage and direct effect moderated mediation analyses. Using the model 8 of the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013) for SPSS, we examined whether self-importance of moral identity moderated the effect of spatial distance on donation amount via the mediating path of expanded circle of moral regard in the second stage (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Hayes, 2013). The independent variable was spatial distance condition (faraway = 1; nearby = 0), the second stage moderator was self-importance of moral identity (continuous variable), the mediator was the expanded circle of moral regard (r = 0.77), and the dependent variable was the donation amount. The bootstrapping analysis (5,000 resamples) showed that an expanded circle of moral regard mediated the effects of the two-way interaction between spatial distance and self-importance of moral identity on donation amount. The mean indirect effect excluded zero (a × b = 2.87, SE = 1.24, 95% C.I. = 0.51 to 5.39). More specifically, spatial distance affected perceptions of the expansion of one's circle of moral regard, which consequently positively influenced donation amount for those who were chronically concerned with maintaining a moral self-concept

Fig. 4. Regression lines with Johnson–Neyman points (study 3).

(i.e., those high on self-importance of moral identity, or in the 84th percentile of this measure); whereas for those low on self-importance of moral identity (i.e., 16th percentile) the effect was negative.

Results from Study 3 demonstrate the process underlying the positive effect of spatial distance on donation behavior when the goal of maintaining a moral self-concept is readily accessible (hypotheses 2 and 3). Participants with high self-importance of moral identity (i.e., those with chronic accessibility of moral goals) donated more money to the faraway (vs. nearby) cause because they perceived that this donation expanded their circle of moral regard. In contrast, this effect was attenuated among participants with lower self-importance of moral identity, and even reversed among participants with very low self-importance of moral identity (16th percentile). This study also ruled out an alternative account based on confounds with different locations, as participants donated to the same location that was manipulated to be perceived as faraway or nearby.

In combination, results from studies 2 and 3 provide strong evidence for the proposed mechanism driving people with chronically accessible moral goals to donate more money to faraway (vs. nearby) causes. In the next two studies, we investigate an important antecedent (i.e., construal mindsets) that influences the activation of moral or impact goals in driving donation decisions. In addition to using donation amount as the key dependent variable (in Study 4a), we measured participants' choice between a faraway cause and a nearby cause in one of the studies (Study 4b) to generalize our findings to multiple behavioral measures.

7. Study 4A

Study 4a was designed to test hypothesis 4. We manipulated construal mindsets (abstract, concrete, or control) and assessed their influence on donation decisions regarding faraway or nearby charitable causes.

7.1. Method

7.1.1. Participants, design, and procedures

Three hundred and five members of Amazon's Mechanical Turk living in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States (New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania states) were recruited (average age = 36.2 years, 47.4% male). Participants were randomly assigned into one of six conditions in a 3 (construal mindset: control, concrete, abstract) × 2 (spatial distance: nearby, faraway) between-subjects design. Participants in the concrete and abstract conditions were informed that they would complete two unrelated tasks as part of the survey: one on narratives and the other on charitable donations. First, we activated concrete or abstract mindsets by giving participants six sentences describing a person performing an activity and asking them to indicate either how (concrete mindset condition) or why (abstract mindset condition) the person would perform the described activity (see Online Appendix D for manipulations and measures; Liberman, Trope, McCrea, & Sherman, 2007). Next, participants worked on a charitable donation task. Participants in the control condition only completed the donation task. The donation scenarios were similar to those used in the control conditions of study 1. However, in this study, the nearby location was New York City (instead of San Francisco) and the faraway location was San Francisco (instead of New York City). We did so to rule out the possibility that the effects observed in study 1 were driven by idiosyncrasies of the cities used in our stimuli (see Online Appendix D for the stimuli). After reading about the donation appeal, participants were told that the charitable organization was currently raising funds and that they could make an actual donation if they desired. To make the donation decisions consequential, we informed participants that they would be entered into a raffle with a prize of $50 USD and asked them to indicate how much they would donate to this cause if they won the prize. They used a sliding scale to choose any amount (in increments of
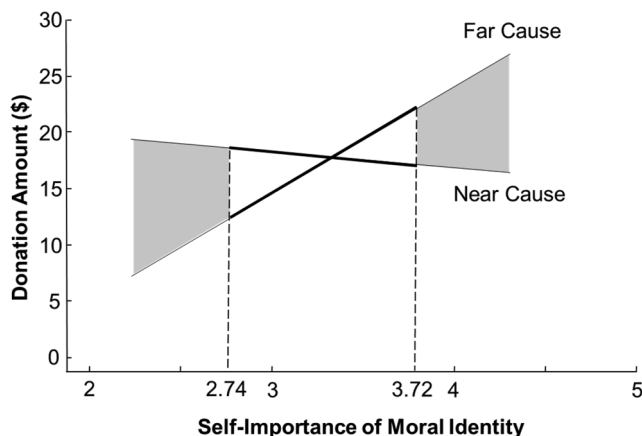
$1) between \$0 and \$50. Then, participants responded to a 4-item scale measuring their sympathy toward the cause (4-item measure, e.g., "How sympathetic did you feel while reading the description of the cause?" $1 = $ not at all, $7 = $ a great deal, adapted from Small et al., 2007), as well as how feasible they believed it was to help recipients by donating to this cause ("How feasible or practical is it to help by donating to this cause?" $1 = $ not feasible at all, $7 = $ very feasible). They also rated the perceived need of the recipients ("In how much need are the recipients of this cause?" $1 = $ no need at all, $7 = $ great need). After that, participants responded to manipulation check questions in order to confirm that the distance manipulation worked as intended ("How far away are the recipients of this charity?" $1 = $ very close, $7 = $ very far away) and that distance manipulation did not influence perceived social closeness (measured by a 4-item scale as used in Study 2, e.g., "To what extent do you feel socially connected with the recipients of this charitable organization?" $1 = $ not connected at all, $7 = $ highly connected). Finally, participants rated the economic environment of the city (bad/good, poor/rich, undesirable/desirable, unaffordable/affordable, unfavorable/favorable) using a 7-point scale (higher numbers indicate more positive evaluation), and answered demographic questions (e.g., gender, age, and ethnicity).

7.2. Results

7.2.1. Manipulation checks

We first assessed whether the spatial distance manipulation was effective. As expected, participants perceived that donation recipients in San Francisco were farther away than recipients in New York City ($M_{Faraway} = 5.60$, SD $= 1.42$; $M_{Nearby} = 3.79$, SD $= 1.68$), $F(1,303) = 103.18$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.25$. Second, we confirmed that the spatial distance manipulation did not influence the perceived social closeness ($\alpha = 0.91$) between participants and donation recipients ($M_{Faraway} = 3.51$, SD $= 1.53$; $M_{Nearby} = 3.45$, SD $= 1.48$; ns). Additionally, the social closeness mean was significantly below the midpoint of the scale, $M_{diff} = -0.52$, $t(3\ 0\ 4) = -6.06$, $p < .001$, indicating that participants did not feel socially close to donation recipients. Third, participants in both spatial distance conditions perceived that recipients were equally needy of support ($M_{Faraway} = 5.84$, SD $= 1.27$; $M_{Nearby} = 5.95$, SD $= 1.22$; ns) and felt equal levels of sympathy ($\alpha = 0.84$) toward recipients ($M_{Faraway} = 4.65$, SD $= 1.35$; $M_{Nearby} = 4.72$, SD $= 1.40$; ns). There weren't any differences either in terms of how feasible participants believed it was to help by donating to the nearby or faraway causes ($M_{Faraway} = 5.00$, SD $= 1.67$; $M_{Nearby} = 5.27$, SD $= 1.59$; ns). Finally, participants in both spatial distance conditions perceived both cities to have similar economic environments ($\alpha = 0.81$, $M_{Faraway} = 4.36$, SD $= 1.15$; $M_{Nearby} = 4.15$, SD $= 1.20$; ns).

7.2.2. Donation amount

Donation amounts were submitted to an ANOVA with mindset manipulation (control, abstract, concrete) and spatial distance between participants and recipients (nearby vs. faraway) as fixed factors. The means are presented in Fig. 5. The results yielded a significant 2-way interaction between mindset manipulations and spatial distance conditions, $F(2,299) = 5.63$, $p = .004$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.04$. The main effects of mindset manipulation and spatial distance were not significant ($Fs < 2$, ns). We then tested the simple effect of spatial distance within each mindset condition. Confirming our predictions, in the concrete mindset condition, participants donated more to the nearby cause (i.e., homeless in New York City, $M_{Nearby} = \$20.42$, SD $= 14.96$) than to the faraway cause (homeless in San Francisco, $M_{Faraway} = \$14.04$, SD $= 14.19$), $F(1,299) = 4.33$, $p = .04$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.01$). However, the effect of distance on donation reversed in the abstract mindset condition, with participants donating more to the faraway cause (i.e., homeless in San Francisco, $M_{Farway} = \$21.22$, SD $= 18.50$) than to the nearby cause (i.e., homeless in New York City, $M_{Nearby} = \$15.04$, SD $= 15.75$), F

Fig. 5. Donation amount as a function of construal level and spatial distance (study 4A).

$(1,299) = 4.19$, $p = .04$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.01$. In addition, the pattern of results in the control condition was similar to that in the abstract condition. Specifically, participants in the control condition indicated higher donation amounts to the faraway cause (i.e., homeless in San Francisco, $M_{Faraway} = \$21.49$, SD $= 14.75$) than to the nearby cause (homeless in New York City, $M_{Nearby} = \$15.33$, SD $= 13.35$), $F(1,299) = 4.12$, $p = .04$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.01$.

We conducted additional planned contrasts to assess the mindset effect in each spatial distance condition. The results showed that in the nearby condition, participants primed with a concrete mindset donated *more* ($M = 20.42$) than those in the abstract mindset condition ($M = 15.04$) and those in the control condition combined ($M = 15.33$), $F(1,301) = 3.88$, $p = .05$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.01$; the latter two conditions did not differ from each other, $F < 1$, ns. However, in the faraway condition, participants primed with a concrete mindset donated *less* ($M = 14.04$) than those in the abstract mindset condition ($M = 21.22$) and control condition ($M_{control} = 21.49$) combined, $F(1,301) = 7.87$, $p = .005$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = 0.03$; the latter two conditions did not differ from each other, $F < 1$, ns.

7.3. Discussion

Study 4a provided additional evidence for our theorizing. Participants primed with an abstract mindset donated more money to homeless people in a faraway city than to those in a nearby city, presumably because such abstract mindset activated abstract moral goals. In contrast, participants primed with a concrete mindset donated more money to homeless people in a nearby city than to those in a faraway city, presumably because such concrete mindset activated concrete impact goals.

By controlling for a variety of potential confounding factors, Study 4a also rules out several plausible alternative accounts relating to perceptions of social closeness/group similarity, differences in perceived need, feasibility to help recipients, or sympathy toward the recipients. Similar to results in study 1, we found that participants who were not primed with any particular mindset (i.e., those in the control mindset condition) displayed a similar pattern of results to those participants primed with an abstract mindset. We discuss this finding in the General Discussion section. One limitation of this study is that we did not measure the goals that were active and directing donation decisions. The next study (Study 4b) addresses this issue by manipulating impact goal or moral goal after priming an abstract or concrete mindset. We aim to show that when an alternative donation goal is made accessible after inducing a given mindset, the predicted mindset effect on donation behavior would be attenuated.

8. Study 4B

Study 4b was designed to provide evidence for our argument that construal mindsets (abstract vs. concrete) influence donation behavior via the activation of moral or impact goals. Following a procedure similar to that used in study 4a, we either primed participants with an abstract mindset or a concrete mindset. However, in this study we also made accessible impact goals or abstract goals using a procedure similar to that used in study 1 (i.e., via verbiage in the donation appeal). In addition, instead of assessing donation amount toward donation causes with different spatial distance (faraway vs. nearby), we presented all participants with a choice between two locations (one is faraway and the other is nearby) of the same charity. Participants' likelihood of choosing to donate to the faraway location serves as the dependent variable. Thus, the design of the study was a 2 (construal mindset: concrete vs. abstract) × 2 (donation goal: impact goal vs. moral goal) between-subjects design.

Recall that we proposed that priming an abstract (concrete) mindset would facilitate the accessibility of abstract moral goals (concrete impact goals), which in turn would have a positive (negative) effect on the likelihood to donate to a faraway (vs. nearby) cause. We anticipated to replicate these effects in the conditions in which the primed mindset and the primed goal's level of abstractness were congruent. That is, participants would be more likely to choose to donate to the faraway (vs. nearby) cause when an abstract mindset is primed and moral goals are made salient (congruity between a salient abstract donation goal and an accessible abstract mindset), compared to the condition in which a concrete mindset is primed and impact goals are made salient (congruity between a salient concrete donation goal and an accessible concrete mindset). However, attesting to the importance in our framework of accessible donation goals, the effects should be attenuated (and possibly reversed) in the incongruent conditions. That is, when an abstract mindset is primed, participants would be *less* likely to choose to donate to the faraway (vs. nearby) cause when impact goals are made salient (incongruity between a salient concrete donation goal and an accessible abstract mindset) compared to when moral goals are made salient (congruent condition). Similarly, when a concrete mindset is primed, participants would be *more* likely to choose donating to the faraway (vs. nearby) cause when moral goals are made salient (incongruity between a salient abstract donation goal and an accessible concrete mindset) compared to when impact goals are made salient (congruent condition). These effects would emerge because the salient impact (moral) goal interferes with the accessible abstract (concrete) mindset, which in turn would attenuate the effect of the primed abstract (concrete) mindset on the choice of a faraway (vs. nearby) donation. This would provide further evidence for our framework in which donation goals play a key role in linking the influence of construal mindsets on preference for faraway charitable causes.

8.1. Method

8.1.1. Participants, design, and procedures

Two hundred and seventy-seven undergraduate participants from a Midwestern university took part in the study (54.5% male, average age = 19.87) for partial course credit. Participants were randomly assigned into one of four conditions with a 2 (construal mindset: concrete vs. abstract) × 2 (donation goal: impact goal vs. moral goal) between-subjects design. Participants were informed that they would complete two ostensibly unrelated tasks as part of the survey: one on narratives and the other on charitable donations. First, we manipulated different construal mindsets in the same way as in study 4a. Next, participants worked on a charitable donation task where they read about a similar charitable cause used in study 2 (Cancer Care). We manipulated donation goals by inserting verbiage in the donation plea made by a supporter of the cause that emphasized the importance of donating to the cause for either making an impact or achieving one's moral goals. After reading

about the donation plea, participants were told that Cancer Care operates in two countries, the United Kingdom and Canada (the order in which the two countries appeared was randomized). Then, we asked participants to choose to which location they would make a donation if they were to donate money to this organization (see Online Appendix E for the stimuli and measures). After that, to control for potential confounds, we asked participants some questions about their ties to Canada and the United Kingdom, as well as any direct or indirect experience they have had with cancer (see Online Appendix E for all items). Finally, participants answered demographic questions.

8.2. Results and discussion

8.2.1. Donation choice

We conducted a binary logistic regression to examine participants' likelihood of choosing the faraway cause (0 = nearby, 1 = faraway) with construal mindset (concrete vs. abstract), donation goal (impact vs. moral), and their interaction as predictors. Additionally, we included the control variables (i.e., the responses to the questions on participants' ties to Canada and the United Kingdom, as well as their experience with cancer) as covariates. The interaction was significant (Wald $\chi^2 = 3.70$, $p = .05$). None of the other variables emerged as significant predictors. The choice likehood in each condition was summarized in Fig. 6.. Because our theory proposes that an abstract mindset would activate a moral goal and a concrete mindset would activate a concrete goal, making salient the same goals in the congruent conditions would simply reinforce the goal made accessible by the corresponding mindset prime. Thus, as expected, planned contrasts confirmed that participants in the abstract mindset/moral goal condition were more likely to choose to donate to the faraway cause than those in the concrete mindset/impact goal condition ($M_{Abstract/moral\_goal} = 34\%$ vs. $M_{Concrete/impact\_goal} = 9\%$; $\chi^2(1) = 15.33$, $p < .01$). In addition, attesting to the role of accessible goals, we found that in the abstract mindset condition, making an impact goal salient (vs. making a moral goal salient) decreased participants' likelihood of choosing the faraway cause ($M_{Abstract/impact\_goal} = 5\%$ vs. $M_{Abstract/moral\_goal} = 34\%$; $\chi^2(1) = 18.59$, $p < .001$). Similarly, in the concrete mindset condition, making a moral goal salient (vs. making an impact goal salient) marginally increased the likelihood of choosing the faraway cause ($M_{Concrete/moral\_goal} = 18\%$ vs. $M_{Concrete/impact\_goal} = 9\%$; $\chi^2(1) = 3.44$, $p = .06$).
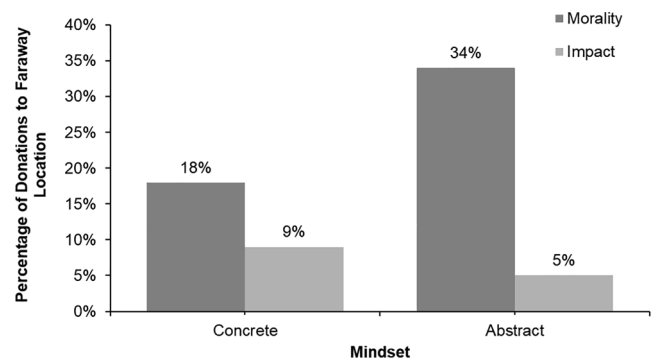

Fig. 6. Percentage of donations to faraway location as a function of construal level and motivation to donate (study 4B).

Results from this study provide further evidence for hypothesis 4 by demonstrating that accessible donation goals interacted with construal mindset primes to influence choice of donating to the faraway charity location. The effects of the primed mindset were attenuated when goals with an incongruent level of abstraction were made readily accessible. This finding highlights the importance of the accessible goal for determining donation behavior.

9. General discussion

In this research, we demonstrated that spatial distance between donors and recipients interacted with people's donation goals to influence their donation behavior. By distinguishing between impact goals and moral goals when making donations, we show that a focus on the goal of making an impact (i.e., impact goal) on beneficiaries leads people to follow the closeness-equals-impact heuristic and hence to donate more money to nearby (vs. faraway) charitable causes. This negative effect of spatial distance on charitable donations is consistent with previous findings in the literature (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017), and emerged not only when the goal of making an impact was made salient (study 1), but also when it was activated upon priming a concrete mindset (study 4a) and when both a concrete mindset and impact goals were made accessible simultaneously (study 4b). This attests to the low-level construal of impact goals in driving donation behavior toward nearby (vs. faraway) causes. In contrast, we also found that making donations while focusing on the goal of maintaining a moral self-concept (i.e., moral goal) triggers a more expansive conception of the people toward whom one feels obligated to exhibit moral regard, which in turn results in higher donation amount to faraway (vs. nearby) causes. This positive effect of spatial distance on donation behavior emerged not only when the goal of maintaining a moral self-concept was made salient (study 1), but also when it was activated upon priming an abstract mindset (study 4a) and when both an abstract mindset and moral goals were made accessible simultaneously (study 4b). This attests to the high-level construal of moral goals in driving donation behavior toward faraway (vs. nearby) causes. We also found that this positive effect was more evident among people with high self-importance of moral identity and was attenuated or even reversed among people with low self-importance of moral identity (studies 2 and 3). We also proposed and tested the underlying mechanism of expanded circle of moral regard (study 3). Different studies also ruled out the alternative explanations that the effect of spatial distance on donations is driven by unequal economic conditions between recipients from different locations (studies 1 and 4a), differences in need (studies 2, 3, and 4a), perceived social closeness/group membership between donors and recipients (studies 2 and 4a), donors' sympathy toward recipients (studies 2 and 4a), feasibility of helping recipients (study 4a), their connections to the locations where recipients resided (study 4b), and their experience related to the charitable cause (study 4b). The interactive effect of accessible goal and spatial distance on donation behavior was very robust and emerged using different behavioral measures (donation amount in studies 1 – 4a and donation choice in study 4b), different donor populations (American members of Amazon's Mechanical Turk and American university students and staff members), different types of recipients (homeless people in the United States, poor children in developing countries, and cancer patients in developed countries), and different manipulations of spatial distance (within donors' home country, in foreign countries, or perceptions of distance using the same location).

9.1. Theoretical contributions and future research

By investigating the nuanced effects of spatial distance and donation goals on charitable behaviors, our findings make several contributions to research on donation behavior, construal-level theory, and moral identity. First, building upon past research that has documented the *negative* effect of spatial distance on likelihood to donate when people are driven by the closeness-equals-strength-of-effect metaphor (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017), we show that this effect may occur when donation decisions are driven by the goal to make an impact. More importantly, we show that when donations are driven by a desire to maintain a moral self-concept, spatial distance has a *positive* effect on donation behavior. Furthermore, we demonstrate that moral goals are abstract and are more likely to drive donation decisions when donors

acquire an abstract mindset. In contrast, impact goals are concrete and are more likely to drive donation decisions when donors acquire a concrete mindset. Importantly, in our studies, we focused on recipients that were out-group members, and validated that charitable recipients were indeed perceived as out-group members across conditions, which helps to decouple the effect of spatial distance from that of social distance given the tendency for the two distances to be positively related (i.e., people in nearby locations are perceived to be socially closer than people in faraway ones, Duclos & Barasch, 2014; Winterich et al., 2009).

Second, our research underscores the importance of incorporating both other-focused impact goals and self-focused moral goals for modeling the effects of spatial distance on donation behavior. Our findings demonstrate the interactive effect between the accessibility of impact/moral goals and the spatial distance between donors and recipients of charitable causes (e.g., faraway vs. nearby recipients) on charitable behaviors (e.g., charitable choices and donation amounts). We also illuminate on the psychological process underlying the positive effect of spatial distance on donation behavior when moral goals are salient. This occurs because a faraway charitable cause is more instrumental for affirming the self as a moral person via an expanded circle of moral regard toward out-group members (Reed & Aquino, 2003). Furthermore, our findings demonstrate that this positive effect is particularly true for people with high self-importance of moral identity, for whom there is a higher need to take actions to affirm their morality.

Interestingly, our findings in the studies including control conditions in which we did not prime impact or moral goals explicitly (via verbiage in the donation appeal) or indirectly (via mindset activation) suggested that participants in these conditions behaved similarly as those primed with moral goals (study 1) or with an abstract mindset (study 4a). Although we did not make specific predictions regarding the directional effects of spatial distance on donation behavior in these no-goal conditions, we speculate that participants might have behaved as those driven by moral goals for several reasons. First, these findings are consistent with the view that when an action can be identified at both a higher and a lower level, there is a tendency to embrace a higher-level identity (Vallacher & Wegner, 1989; Wegner, Vallacher, Macomber, Wood, & Arps, 1984). This seems particularly likely to be the case in our studies, given that charitable recipients were clearly out-group members that were socially distant (as per manipulation check results), and hence unlikely to elicit the social closeness that might prompt to focus on having a positive impact on them (which is a more concrete construal, based on our results in studies 4a and 4b). In addition, the reliance on independent-focused North American participants in our studies might have promoted an abstract representation of events in the control conditions, in view of the documented tendency for such participants to spontaneously adopt an abstract representation of events (i.e., a high-level construal, Spassova & Lee, 2013). These arguments would help to explain why participants in the control conditions might have focused on their abstract moral goals for their donation decision (i.e., high-level construal of the donation appeal), and hence donated more to faraway (vs. nearby) causes. Furthermore, it is important to note that this effect seems counterintuitive because, in reality, more people donate to nearby causes than to faraway ones (e.g., Clarke et al., 2012). However, as discussed earlier, spatial distance tends to be confounded with social closeness, and perceptions of social closeness positively influence charitable behavior (Small, 2011). Future research should investigate the nuances surrounding the spatial distance effect in our control conditions, disentangled from social distance.

Although our theoretical framework focused both on the closeness-equals-strength-of-effect metaphor (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017) and the instrumentality of faraway donations for affirming the self as a moral person via an expanded circle of moral regard toward out-group members (Reed & Aquino, 2003), another approach to investigating the effects of spatial distance on donation would be to focus on the construal-level triggered by spatial distance. According to the Construal-

Level Theory (CLT), spatial distance is an important dimension of psychological distance, such that increasing the reported spatial distance of a given event enhances the tendency to activate a high-level construal of this event (Fujita, Trope, Liberman, & Levin-Sagi, 2006; Henderson & Wakslak, 2010). Based on this, we might argue that people donating to a faraway (vs. nearby) cause would be more likely to construe the donation behavior at a high-level of abstraction, and hence focus on moral goals that are relevant for the situation (Torelli & Kaikati, 2010). In turn, this would result in a positive effect of spatial distance on donation behavior. This interpretation is consistent with our findings, and further reinforces the importance in our framework of considering the level of abstractness of donation goals for modeling the link between spatial distance and donation behavior. However, our theorizing is more nuanced in that we recognize that donation goals can be made salient within the donation appeal itself (as in our studies, see also Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017; Small, 2011), and hence interact with the construal-level triggered by accessible mindsets. Indeed, we demonstrate in Study 4b that a salient impact goal interferes with an accessible abstract mindset and dampens the effect of a high-level construal on the likelihood to donate to a faraway (vs. nearby) cause. Thus, although predictions made by a matching of construal level (i.e., an abstract mindset matches the high level of construal of faraway charitable cause; whereas a concrete mindset matches the low level of construal of a nearby charitable cause) is consistent with our results in study 4a, we go beyond a matching-based prediction to account for how salient goals interact with accessible construal mindsets to determine the effect of spatial distance on donation behavior (study 4b). Thus, our framework highlights the flexibility in the valence of psychological distance's impact (see Liberman, Trope, & Wakslak, 2007 for a discussion). For instance, whereas greater social distance reduces positivity (e.g., outgroups are evaluated less favorably than in-groups), greater temporal distance typically enhances positivity (the distant future is typically viewed more positively) (Liberman et al., 2007). Our findings suggest that, in a charitable donation context, spatial distance between donors and recipients might reduce or enhance positivity depending on the donation goal that is salient (i.e., impact or moral goals). Furthermore, the process by which accessible impact or moral goals drive charitable behavior are quite distinct. When the goal to make an impact is salient, the closeness-equals-impact heuristic is a more relevant driver of behavior; whereas when the goal of maintaining a moral self-concept is accessible, the expansive circle of moral regard associated with a faraway cause becomes more relevant. As a result, spatial distance can have divergent effects (negative vs. positive) on donation behavior. Further investigation of the factors that moderate the impact of spatial distance on the construal of events seems a fruitful area for research.

Our findings also contribute to research on moral identity by demonstrating the novel finding that self-importance of moral identity interacts with the spatial distance of a charitable cause to influence donation behavior. Previous research on the relationship between moral identity and donation has shown that moral identity may have a main effect on volunteering and donation (Aquino & Reed, 2002), and may interact with gender identity and recipients' group membership for predicting donation amounts (Winterich et al., 2009). Our findings add to this line of research by showing how people with moderate and high self-importance of moral identity donate to faraway causes as a way to expand the boundaries toward whom they feel obligated to exhibit moral regard.

9.2. Managerial implications and future research

The findings in this research help to uncover the reasons why people increasingly donate to charitable causes located abroad. Given the size and the fast growth of charitable support to organizations that benefit recipients that are far away from donors (i.e., abroad), this research provides important implications for organizations on how to increase the efficacy of their marketing initiatives. In particular, our findings suggest that highlighting the spatial distance between potential donors and charitable recipients in faraway locations could be an effective strategy to increase donations. However, for the positive effect of distance on donations to emerge, the charitable appeal should abstain from highlighting the concrete impact of the donation on recipients, and focus instead on the expansion of donors' boundaries of moral regard and on the instrumentality of a faraway donation for affirming the self as a moral person. We believe that this recommendation could help many charitable organizations focusing on helping people in faraway locations, because the tendency of most charitable organizations, both international and domestic, is to emphasize the impact donations will have on beneficiaries. For example, World Vision International, a global humanitarian organization tackling poverty, uses the tagline "Amazing Opportunity to Change a Child's Life" in their donation appeal ads, while Children International's tagline is "Double Your Impact."

The findings here have implications not only for international charities but also for local charities. Perceptions of spatial distance can be manipulated. Past research suggests that perceptions of distance can be altered by the presence of geopolitical borders, even though these borders are often arbitrary. For instance, citizens of Nevada were more upset than were citizens of California about the choice of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository because it was within the Nevada borders even though it was actually closer to many Californian cities than to those in Nevada (Galak, Kruger, & Rozin, 2007). People can also associate northbound (southbound) travel with uphill (downhill) travel. As a result, they perceive the same objective distance to be longer when traveling northbound (vs. southbound) (Nelson & Simmons, 2009). Thus, marketers of local charitable causes might benefit from heightening perceptions of spatial distance by emphasizing within-country geopolitical boundaries (e.g., a different state or region), as well as by highlighting the relative location of the beneficiaries (e.g., northbound, if this is the case). These possibilities provide rich avenues for future research.

Furthermore, our research could also have implications for for-profit organizations engaging in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Many large organizations are global and choose international charitable organizations to partner with, so that their social impact is aligned with their practices and beliefs. For example, General Mills, a consumer-packaged goods company headquartered in Minnesota, USA, partners with Feed My Starving Children, a non-profit whose volunteers put together nutritious meals that are sent to starving children in developing nations. Not only does this type of initiative have a social impact, it can also have a positive impact on employees of the organization. Past research has shown that employees tend to have positive attitudes toward their organization when it engages in CSR (e.g., Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007), and that CSR increases employee's organizational identification (e.g., Farooq, Rupp, & Farooq, 2017). As such, most companies share their CSR initiatives with their employees and often invite them to be part of them by volunteering, and past research has shown that the relationship between CSR and volunteering is stronger among employees high in moral identity (Rupp, Shao, Thornton, & Skarlicki, 2013). Our findings suggest that companies with CSR initiatives that help recipients in faraway locations could benefit by focusing their communications on the higher-level goals that such initiatives are accomplishing (e.g., affirming their moral stance in society) instead of just their impact. Doing so might result in higher employee involvement with the charitable cause and higher employee satisfaction (particularly so for employees high in self-importance of moral identity). Further exploring these issues seems to be worthy of future research.

Although our theorizing emphasizes the self-focus of the goal to maintain a moral self-concept, something that aligns with the private nature of the donation decisions in our studies, the fact that the positive effect of spatial distance on donation behavior is stronger among individuals high in self-importance of moral identity raises the possibility

that the effects could also emerge in public settings. Past research suggests that people high in self-importance of moral identity can be concerned with their public image as a moral person (Aquino & Reed, 2002). The stronger signal of morality, via an expanded circle of moral regard, associated with a faraway donation might not only be instrumental for self-perceptions, but also to how others perceive the self. If so, people might donate to faraway causes in public settings to signal that they are more moral than others. Further investigating a potential social comparison effect in public settings seems to be a fruitful area for research.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Alison Jing Xu: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing. **Maria A. Rodas:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing. **Carlos J. Torelli:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - review & editing.

Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2020.01.007.

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