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'The deserving'; moral reasoning and ideological dilemmas in public responses to humanitarian appeals.

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Abstract:	<p>This paper investigates everyday moral reasoning in relation to donations and prosocial behaviour in a humanitarian context. The discursive analysis focuses on the principles of deservingness which members of the public use to decide who to help and under what conditions.</p> <p>The paper discusses three repertoires of deservingness: 'Seeing a difference', 'Waiting in queues' and 'Something for nothing' to illustrate participants' dilemmatic reasoning and to examine how the position of 'being deserving' is negotiated in humanitarian crises.</p> <p>Discursive analyses of these dilemmatic repertoires of deservingness identify the cultural and ideological resources behind these constructions and show how humanitarianism intersects and clashes with other ideologies and value systems.</p> <p>The data suggest that a neoliberal ideology, which endorses self-gratification and materialistic and individualistic ethics, and cultural assimilation of helper and receiver play important roles in decisions about humanitarian helping.</p> <p>The paper argues for the need for psychological research to engage more actively with the dilemmas involved in the moral reasoning related to humanitarianism and to contextualize decisions about giving and helping within the socio-cultural and ideological landscape in which the helper operates.</p>	

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**'The deserving'; moral reasoning and ideological dilemmas in
public responses to humanitarian appeals.**

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Introduction

Reports of humanitarian crises and appeals for help appear almost daily in the media. Humanitarianism refers to the impartial, independent and neutral provision of relief to those in immediate danger of harm (Barnett, 2005:724). More broadly, humanitarianism refers to the extension of kindness, benevolence, and sympathy to all human beings.

As a concept, humanitarianism has evolved historically, but universality has remained a common theme. It involves no distinction on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, caste, age, religion, ability, or nationality. In this sense, any human being in need is deserving of help. These universal principles are promoted daily through humanitarian communications and appeals, combined with the implied moral imperative to respond and to act. At the same time, concern has been expressed about an emerging 'privatism' in current utilitarian forms of humanitarianism which, underpinned by neoliberal¹ principles, conceives of solidarity as 'free choice' (Chouliaraki, 2013).

It appears that the humanitarian field is politically, historically and morally fraught (Barnett, 2005; Calhoun, 2010), and public responses to humanitarian crises seem complex and inconsistent. For example, there is a puzzling unevenness in public donations

¹ Neoliberalism has been defined broadly as generalization of the market logic beyond the sphere of commercial exchange (Chourialaki, 2013:180), through which the moral primacy of 'public good' is replaced by prioritization of the individual and his/her gratification.

to humanitarian crises (Zagefka et al., 2011), and a lack of consistency in relation to the gravity of the damage and the cost to human life. The UK Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) received a total of £200 million in response to its appeal for the tsunami in South East Asia, which contrasts starkly with the £13.6 million received for the Darfur Crisis since 24 May, 2007. The 2004 tsunami killed 200,000 people and left 600,000 homeless; the conflict in Darfur left 1.5 million people reliant on humanitarian aid (Zagefka and James, 2015:168). Zagefka et al. (2011) attribute this to different reactions following natural versus humanly-caused events. However, this does not account for the difference in responses to natural disasters in different parts of the world. For example, US citizens donated 25% less to victims of the 2004 tsunami in South East Asia than to those affected by hurricane Katrina, which killed about 1,600 people. According to Singer (2009), this reaction is based on parochialism: we are more likely to respond emotionally and give to those that are closer or similar to us.

In the UK, the revenue derived from private donors is relatively stable, but fewer people now commit to humanitarian assistance through a direct debit than in the past (Darnton and Kirk, 2011). In addition, the relationship between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their publics appears to be in crisis (Author et al., 2014). There is considerable evidence also that private donors tend to respond more generously to rapid onset natural disasters than to chronic and conflict-related crises (Author et al., 2014; Stirk, 2015b; Zagefka, 2011). Many major recipients of humanitarian assistance are characterized as being in complex crises, and in countries suffering conflict with very limited capacity to deal with disasters (Stirk, 2015b).

The limited research on public responses to humanitarian crises provides inconclusive and contradictory findings. In the context of a growing humanitarian financing gap (Stirk, 2015b), in which the number, scale and severity of humanitarian crises are outstripping resources (Stirk, 2015a), more information on and the ability to make more sense of public responses to humanitarian crises are becoming increasingly urgent. Despite more than 40 years of research on prosocial behaviour (see Dovidio et al., 2006 for a review), only a small number of psychology researchers have studied prosocial behaviour in response to humanitarian crisis.

A review of the existing research identifies three sets of characteristics which influence people's willingness to help: the victim's blamelessness, the victim's proactivity, and the similarity between victim and helper. There is ample evidence that the perceived innocence of the victim is important for determining prosocial behaviour and that it is easier to persuade the public to help 'innocent' victims compared to those who can be blamed for their misfortune (e.g. Betancourt, 1990; Campbell et al., 2001; Jackson & Esses, 1997; Piliavin et al., 1969; Stroebe and Stroebe, 1996; Weiner, 1993). The theory of 'belief in a just world' (Hafer and Begue, 2005; Lerner, 1980; Lerner and Simmons, 1966) suggests that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get, and that such belief is actively promoted by devaluing or attributing culpability to victims (e.g. Anderson, 1992; Connors and Heaven, 1990; Kristiansen and Giulletti, 1990; Lerner, 1997; Montada, 1998) and adopting a psychological distance from the victim (Hafer, 2000; Hafer and Begue, 2005; Hafer et al., 2005).

When there is a perception of similarity and an identifiable victim can be transformed into a cause, donors are more generous and more compassionate (Bartels and Burnett, 2011; Kogut & Ritov, 2005; Slovic, 2007; Small et al., 2007). Identifiable victims are considered

more familiar (Jenni and Loewenstein, 1997) and the perception of similarity to the victim has been shown to influence caring behaviour (Wayment, 2004). Indeed, there is evidence that intergroup bias and group and national membership influence behaviour (van Leeuwen & Tauber, 2011), and that a bystander is more likely to offer help in an emergency situation if the victim is perceived to belong to the same social stratum as the perceiver (Levine et al., 2005; Levine and Thompson, 2004; Reicher et al., 2006).

There is evidence also that people are more inclined to help those who are proactive in helping themselves following a disaster (Zagefka et al., 2011), apathy from the victim feeds victim blame, and the perception that the victims making positive efforts to improve their situation increases the willingness to help (Stroebe and Stroebe, 1996).

The findings from these studies are contradictory, inconsistent and insufficient to address the complexities of humanitarian helping. For example, Zagefka and Brown (2008) find a common bias towards victims of humanly-caused disasters, who are perceived as less proactive in helping themselves and, also, implicated in their own suffering, which reinforces the 'just world' hypothesis. However, Sun et al. (2013) and Zagefka et al. (2011) find that although perceiving the victim as blameless increases the concern of helpers, their perceived competence reduces the drive to help.

Overall, although little is known about why people are more inclined to help some victims of humanitarian crises than others, extant research points to a complex relation between being deserving of help and prosocial behaviour. There is an urgent need for further research (Zagefka and James, 2015), in particular, on how the characteristics of the needy influence helping behaviour. The literature suggests, but does not pursue in depth, that people's perceptions and responses are mediated by their belief systems and ideas of

fairness, and influenced by socio-historical and ideological constructs of who and how deserving are the victims. Cross-cultural studies have recognized that history and cultural stereotypes affect decisions about helping victims of humanitarian crises (Andringhetto et al., 2014; Bain et al., 2009, 2014; Sun et al., 2014), but psychological research is scarce and fragmented and leaves many questions unanswered. With a few notable exceptions (Reicher et al., 2006; Stevenson and Manning, 2010), the existing research is mostly quantitative, laboratory-based and inductive. Specifically, we need to know more about how the factors influencing prosocial behaviour fit within people's broader understanding of humanitarianism, their responses and reactions to humanitarian information, and the cultural, political and ideological resources informing these reactions. Capturing these dimensions in a study of prosocial behaviour requires a discursive approach.

This paper contributes to prosocial research by addressing these issues. The discursive analysis discusses in detail the principles through which focus group participants debated who is deserving of help (or not) in the context of humanitarian crises.

METHODS

Analytic approach

Our enquiry focuses on the social preconditions for moral reasoning and decisionmaking, revealed in commonsense or ideology. That is, it investigates the aspects of socially shared beliefs that give rise to individuals' dilemmatic and inherently contradictory thinking (Billig et al., 1988). The conceptual framework of ideological dilemmas provides

an in depth understanding of the complex and contradictory commonsense principles currently applied in Britain, and their multiple, often colliding, ideologies. It allows examination of how the universalist principles underpinning humanitarianism, intersect and clash with neoliberal and other contrasting commonsense notions of morality and fairness. It focuses on how “the processes of cultural and ideological histories flow through the minds of the subjects” (Billig et al., 1988:2) to capture how ideology is mapped onto individual consciousness (Ibid: 6-7).

Within this framework, ideologies are understood as multi-layered, complex, unstable, situated within and influenced by, historically relevant contexts with which they interact in complex and contradictory ways (Towns and Adams, 2009:737). Dilemmas, which are deeply imbedded in culture and expressed through language, occur through commonsense notions of value, community and suitable ways of behaving that are socially and culturally imbedded and that are often conflicting and contradictory (Towns & Adams, 2008:738).

The commonsense quality of lived ideology is captured in analyses of ‘interpretative repertoires’ (Wetherell and Potter, 1988, 1992), the building blocks speakers use to construct factual versions of reality, make evaluations and perform particular actions. They are also social resources used by the speaker to justify particular versions of events (Edley, 2001), to excuse or to validate his/her own behaviour, to fend off criticism or otherwise allow maintenance of a credible stance in an interaction (Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Since interpretative repertoires are part of any community’s sense of understanding, they convey a sense of familiarity and everyday recognition. Hence, they appear obvious, and what ‘everybody knows’, rather than an individual, personal opinion (Edley, 2001).

The discursive analysis looks also at how speakers take up certain positions in relation to others in order for their actions to be understood and make sense as social acts (Tan and Moghaddam, 1995). Positioning is always relational and takes place in the context of the social realm (Harre' and Moghaddam, 2003) within which what we say and do is shaped / restricted / enabled by the rights and duties we are assigned according to our particular social context of interaction. In line with this, in the present analysis, discourse is understood as situated within both local and broader socio-cultural contexts. Locally, data are situated within a research project exploring public responses to humanitarian communications and, within that context, individual extracts are situated in the sequential environment (Potter and Hepburn, 2008) of a focus group discussion. Data also are situated more broadly through participants' positioning in relation to socio-cultural norms of prosocial behaviour and social responsibility, and normative demands from what has been described as the 'humanitarian imaginary' (Calhoun, 2010). Within this micro/macro socio-cultural landscape, participants engage dialogically in ideological dilemmas, assume more or less stable positions, and use hierarchical categorizations to argue who is deserving of more or less help, and to justify their own practices in the humanitarian context, thereby illustrating how discourse and practice are intertwined.

The Study

The extracts discussed below come from the first phase of data collection within a three-year interdisciplinary research project on public responses to humanitarian communication.² This nationwide study sought to examine, amongst other things, how

² For further information on the project phases see: Author xxx. The project received ethical approval from xxxx

the UK public relates to distant suffering, and how it understands and reacts to humanitarian communication. The key research questions for the first phase of the project were: What are the moral responses and reactions evoked in audiences by humanitarian communications? What sociocultural scripts do people use to make sense of humanitarian communications? And what are the ideological, emotional and biographical underpinnings of these responses?

The data discussed here come from 20 focus groups involving members of the UK public (n=182). Participants were recruited by an independent market research company and were invited to take part in a discussion on "Small world: attitudes towards and perceptions of what goes on around us in the world". Groups were selected to be representative of ages, genders, socio-economic classes, sexual orientations and family formations. Each of the focus group participants was given a folder containing a selection of communications from 11 collaborating NGOs;³ they were asked to focus on their thoughts and feelings in response to the communications. They were asked to share responses with the group and were encouraged to develop the discussion as if in a natural setting. The interviewers (the author and a research assistant) asked questions, only when necessary and opportune to maintain the flow of interactions, on previous exposure to similar communications and consequent actions; how they perceived the content of the message; their thoughts and emotions in reaction to the appeals; their sense of personal responsibility and ability to help; and the motivations for responding proactively.

Data were analysed thematically and discursively. Thematic analysis was used to map

³ ActionAid, Amnesty International, Disasters and Emergency Committee (DEC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Oxfam, PLAN UK, Save the Children, UNICEF. The communications were randomly ordered in the packs to avoid bias.

the themes that emerged from the focus groups. Discursive analysis was applied to create typologies of the discursive, ideologically laden repertoires and moral scripts informing audiences' moral responses.

The issue of deservingness discussed in this paper emerged unprompted in the focus group discussions and featured as a regular component of participants' moral reasoning about humanitarian helping, which was pervasively dilemmatic. The extracts discussed here were selected on the basis of their salience and exemplification of the dilemmatic discussion around deservingness.

Analysis and Discussion

What follows is a discussion of three repertoires constructing the position of deserving on the basis of different principles.

1. 'Seeing a difference' is a repertoire of effectiveness and self-efficacy, which positions beneficiaries as deserving because of evidence that they made good use of previous help.
2. 'Waiting in queues' is a repertoire of respect which constructs deservingness on the basis of cultural similarities between beneficiary and benefactor.
3. 'Something for nothing' is a neoliberal repertoire constructed around the principle that receiving something should be conditional on the beneficiary having earned it, having worked for it.

In identifying and analysing these repertoires particular attention is paid to the images evoked and the metaphors used by participants. These are used to instantiate 'the way one talks on this sort of occasion' (Davies and Harre', 2001:265) which, with or without

the speaker's awareness, both assumes and invokes particular ways of being and of moral commitment.

The discursive analysis illustrates the dilemmatic nature of the participants' everyday moral reasoning; that decisions pertaining to humanitarian helping overwhelmingly were conditional on the contingent characteristics of the beneficiaries and their behaviour, and were negotiated on the basis of ideological and socio-cultural principles of fairness, which otherwise are not explicitly or intrinsically connected to humanitarianism. Thus, these repertoires were argumentatively in opposition to the universalism proposed by NGO communications and by a minority of participants who believed that help should be given "wherever it is needed"⁴

'Seeing a difference being made'

Otto's comments are illustrative of this repertoire and were made in a focus group held in Wales with ABC1 men aged between 56 and 65 years.⁵ Otto's comments followed a suggestion from Orlando that probably people donated to the Japanese tsunami because the technology allowed us to see the devastation as it happened; if they had had more time to consider they may not have donated as much. Orlando concluded that:⁶ "(...) sort of the immediate gut reaction to something you see live on TV. You can sense the tragedy"

⁴ For reasons of brevity, this universalist repertoire is not discussed in detail here.

⁵ Focus group participants were given pseudonyms whose initial letter indicated the sequencing of the groups, e.g. names in group 1 started with A, in group 2 with B, and so on.

⁶ See transcription conventions.

Otto But initially they [the Japanese] refused help whereas in Africa there's been the bowl where you just can't fill it. This is the sad fact of the reality I think. Africa has had billions of pounds and they're still nowhere near, and yet in Japan, they're going forward. They're even building, you know, and you think (.) I don't know. I don't know the answer to be honest but, you know, what is it? There is something... People, a lot are willing to do that and others, as you said about India, Q<no, we do it ourselves>Q.

Interviewer Do you think you'd be more likely to give to a cause where you feel as though it wasn't in the category of the endless bowl but it was...?

Otto Yes.

This repertoire constructs 'deservingness' on the basis of two principles. The first principle of deservingness contrasts those who ask repeatedly for help with those who refuse help. This binary appears in the opening sentence which compares the selfsufficient (they refused help) with the endlessly needy (the bowl where you just can't fill it). The stake inoculation that follows (this is the sad fact of the reality), presents the difference between Japan and Africa as a fact, not as Otto's opinion. The inoculation is strengthened by the qualifier 'sad', which implies that however much he/we might wish things were different, this is how they are, warranting Otto's neutrality and ability to present a balanced view of the situation.

The phrase "Africa's bowl where you just can't fill it" provides further support for this and represents the second principle of deservingness, which is based on proactivity and proof of effectiveness. In this context the deserving status is allocated to those who are dynamic in their response and progress through the help received. These individuals are

contrasted with those who are stuck and on whom help is wasted, articulated through the metaphor of a journey or trajectory. The undeserving group is defined as those who are “still nowhere near”, although near to what is unclear; the idea of a journey or progress towards a target is implied. It is this unspecified, but commonly assumed target that the undeserving nations are still nowhere near reaching, which suggests persistent behaviours.

The repeated use – and in quick succession – of “you know, and you think (.) I don’t know. I don’t know the answer to be honest, but”, which immediately follow, indicate hesitation, dilemma and potential conflict. The pause is particularly significant. Otto is building up to a causal explanation of why Japan is going forward and even building; he attempts to manufacture consent by using you know, implying that he is voicing what any ordinary person would think; then he stops, as if to suggest that what might be thought cannot be said. This is followed by repetition of I don’t know, disavowing what he is about to say, and then a classic disclaimer, I don’t know the answer to be honest, but... The added qualifier to be honest seems to be a pre-emptive move in the face of potential accusation. This applies also to the rhetorical “what is it? [t]here is something”, followed immediately by active voicing of “No, we do it ourselves”, which suggests even more strongly that Otto is working very hard to establish the factuality of his account.

This begs the question of what it is that Otto is so keen to avoid being seen as doing. It would seem that Otto has returned to the first binary, now spelled out even more clearly as a differentiation between those who refuse help and are self-sufficient, and “a lot (who) are willing to do that”. Again, what “a lot are willing to do” is not defined, but the reference to willingness is crucial. Whilst initially Africa was referred to as an inanimate object (a begging bowl), it is now attributed agency, and the powerful

metaphor of “the bowl that you just can’t fill” acquires a more layered meaning. The initial formulation seemed to suggest endless need, but in the context of the attribution of agency it reads more as endless taking. So, here, deservingness is constructed as both doing something with the help received, and also as not taking it at all.

This deserving group includes those who “are going forward” , are moving on and are dynamic, while the undeserving group is constructed implicitly as stuck and static. The Japanese are admired in this categorization because they are ‘even building’, thus, further supporting the claim that deserving victims are energetic and proactive in dealing with disaster situations.

Otto’s account displays an intriguing and paradoxical logic according to which Japan is deserving precisely because it refused help, but Otto’s position is neither unusual nor idiosyncratic. According to the DEC, the UK public insisted on donating to Japan despite Japan’s stated refusal to accept aid. However, the hesitations, disclaimers and false starts might point also to stake inoculation to avoid potential accusation that Otto’s views of Africa are prejudicial and stereotypical. This is discussed in more detail in the Conclusion.

‘Waiting in queues for water’

This repertoire is exemplified by Raina⁷’s account which was part of a discussion about the need to see the effectiveness of help and self-help, but it introduces a different principle of deservingness based on cultural assimilation demonstrated by the beneficiary

⁷ Group R took place in Glasgow with C1C2 women aged 26-35 years.

adhering to the giver's norms of conduct. The Japanese are again positioned as deserving, this time because they are stoic and civilized in the face of disaster.

Raina I take my hat off to the Japanese people. I just think what a humble (.) I mean, how they've managed to do that? because I have watched that, where you've seen (.), you know, you're watching, like, the Haiti thing, and obviously Katrina as well, and that is in America, where you would think such a rich, rich country would be able to do it, and I mean, it's amazing what the Japanese have done to it, and how, even after it, days after, they were queuing properly, they were (.), you know, and for me, you know, if anything again God forbid were to happen, I would be more than willing to give them whatever they [need], you know, money.

Interviewer So you (.), because you sense that they respond more effectively, or efficiently to the crisis, and so, you would want to give more, as opposed to other places where you feel as though they're unlike (.) they don't use the money 'as well' [Interviewer mimes quotation marks]

Raina To me, it just came across as, oh, their culture, and everything about them, I just really found them to be (.) I don't even think you would get that in this country, you know, the waiting in queues for water, helping people getting out, you know, yes, if anything happened, then you would think, yes [I would give], because you know your money's going to help them.

This is a repertoire of respect, captured by the idiom "I take my hat off to". The first part of the extract from Raina continues the comparison between Japan, Haiti and the UK,

introduced by Reba. Raina starts with a rhetorical question “how have they managed to do that?” In answering this she manages her accountability by positioning herself as a witness (Wooffitt, 1992). She says “because I have watched that” and later she repeats “you’re watching”. This grants her view authority, authenticity and objectivity: what she is referring to is not a second-hand account or her personal interpretation, but something that anybody can see. She then compares the responses to the natural disasters in Japan, Haiti and America. Up to this point she seems to be elaborating on the principle of effectiveness and self-help, but what she defines as ‘amazing’ has nothing to do with building and effective response. Japanese are amazing because “days after [the tsunami] they were queuing properly”.

Although acknowledging their proactivity and self-efficacy, in this repertoire the Japanese victims are deserving because they show humility and maintain polite behaviour in the face of chaos. The interviewer misinterprets this and mistakes her comment as referring to proof of effectiveness. Raina corrects her using the particle ‘oh’, thus establishing her epistemic authority over the interviewer (Potter and Hepburn, 2008; Heritage and Raymond, 2005). It is in this second part of her intervention that Raina returns to queuing and spells out clearly the connection between Japanese cultural habits and British national identity.

Considering that this was a British focus group the example given as deserving of admiration, approval and, ultimately, help – the capacity to queue properly following an earthquake – is rife with cultural significance. The British excel at and pride themselves on their queuing, and the capacity to queue is part of British identity. Not only do the

Japanese display cultural traits similar to British ones, according to Raina they are even better than the British.

The existence of socio-cultural similarities between the UK and Japan has been commented on previously. Both are island nations situated at the edge of large continents and have overcome physical distance to play important roles in history, technological development and cultural influence. In this context, the socio-cultural similarities between Japan and Britain position both as civil societies that help themselves, refuse to beg and are proud of their self-sufficiency and self-efficacy. It is these characteristics that make Japan deserving and that would motivate Raina to make future donations and provide help.

This is not a repertoire of need following devastation, which would apply to all those suffering from the effects of natural disasters – Japan, USA, Haiti, Africa. Rather, it is about cultural mirroring and identification. The overarching and effusive respect and admiration this generates is captured by the metaphorical colloquialism “I take my hat off to”. Raina's concluding words “if anything again God forbid, were to happen, I would be more than willing to give them whatever they (needed)”, demonstrate empathy mediated through identification and cultural assimilation.

‘Something for nothing’

This neoliberal repertoire bases deservingness on the principle that receiving something should be conditional on the beneficiary having earned it, and that the individual and his/her gratification should be prioritized over the moral primacy of ‘public good’ (Chouliaraki, 2013:180). In line with these neoliberal principles, the rhetorical work

performed by Nelson and Neville in the following extracts positions the self as the most deserving receiver.

Nelson⁸: I mean everyone always wants something more. Like, there's always something you want so I mean I was thinking like before, to be honest, I was looking at eBay and some stuff I want and I was thinking I wish I could just have it', like not have to think about [it] like footballers, for example, they can have literally anything they want and I mean it's all well and good saying Q<donate £2 a month>Q but I'd rather save that little bit just so I can go and get something I want and even when I get that there's something else I want. There's always going to be something everyone wants.

Interviewer: Do you think we are greedy then? Is that what you're saying?

Nelson: No, I wouldn't say we're greedy. It's just that everyone would (.) well people that want something have to work hard. I work hard so (.) and I want to have these luxuries but that's why I work hard. If I didn't want all these luxuries then I wouldn't work hard, do you see what I mean? I think everyone's different but it all boils down to money at the end of the day.

The discussion then moved on to advertising, subliminal messages and brainwashing.

The interviewer brought it back to humanitarianism by asking participants if they thought we ought to help others. It is in this context that Neville returned to the contrast between giving to charities and buying something for oneself.

Neville: If that's what you've earned your money for, you've gone out and worked hard enough and that's something that you've set your mind on, a goal, you've

⁸ Nelson and Neville were part of a group of C1C2 males in Nottingham aged 18-25 years

given yourself a goal, I want to get an iPod, it costs £200 I will work and save my money to get what I desire. If you can do that then you should do it happily. It's not someone else's choice to say, Q< no, with that money that you've just raised you should go and give it to somebody else>Q. At the end of the day why is that person telling you this, do you know what I mean? Whoever's telling you to go and give £200 here, £200 there, it's coming off TV. It's coming off internet, everything.

Both speakers' accounts are openly self-centred, brimming with materialistic considerations, and in opposition to the altruistic stance advocated by NGOs. Nelson manages his accountability through stake inoculation. He starts and then returns to the statement "everyone always wants something more" which is presented as a self-evident fact. His characterization of humans as intrinsically and endlessly desiring subjects, warrants Nelson's insatiable yearnings as normal and universal, and pre-empts potential criticism of his choice not to give £2 a month to charity so that he could buy more 'stuff'. The action orientation of Nelson's speech is identifiable in the shift from personal to general: "There's something else **I** want" is followed by "there is always going to be something **everyone** wants" whereby his own personal stance is transformed into a factual statement about universal human nature. This shift is essential to enable Nelson to manage his own accountability. The principle underpinning this repertoire is spelled out by Nelson in his counter-argumentation with the interviewer: it is OK to want things but one has to work hard for them; that is, it is wrong to get something for nothing.

Some of these features are present also in Neville's intervention when he returns to the motif of being told that he should give his money to charity. However, Nelson reframes

consumerist desires in psychological terms as giving “yourself a goal”, and elaborates on the implicit moral condemnation expressed through active voicing. The ideological dilemma between universalist humanitarian and individualistic neoliberal principles is evidenced here in his defensiveness of his statement that “It’s not someone else’s choice to say ‘no, with that money that you’ve just raised you should go and give it to somebody else’”, which suggests that, like Nelson, the action orientation of Neville’s account is to counter the perceived condemnation of his behaviour from humanitarian and societal norms of altruism.

In Neville’s contribution also, the deserving position is constructed through a neoliberal discourse, which values individual enterprise and personal gratification, mixed with the therapeutic regime of self-management, self-governance, ‘responsibilization’ and agency. Thus Neville’s account mixes principles of work ethics with psychological ideas of ‘self-realization’, through which hard work, saving and buying an i-pod are construed as self-enhancing ‘goal setting’. The morality imbued in this construction, driven by what Marcuse would call ‘repressive needs’, is key to the oppositional stance towards those who try to argue that he should donate his hard-earned £200 to charity. The liberal principle of the individual’s right to choose is pivotal in this counterargument

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis presented here corroborates and confirms that, in the context of humanitarian crises, evidence of the effectiveness of help received (Arumi et al., 2005; Bekkers and Wiepkin, 2011; Smith and McSweeney, 2007), perceived similarity with the victim, the victim's innocence (Cikara et al., 2011; Levine et al., 2005; Reicher et al.,

2006), and the degree to which victims are perceived to be helping themselves, are determining factors in the decision to help or not (Zagefka et al., 2011).

There was a consensus in the group that concrete evidence that aid had been used effectively and evidence of victims' willingness to help themselves were crucial for achieving a positive response from the British public; this was illustrated in 'seeing a difference' and 'waiting in queues' repertoires. In this latter, the perceived similarity between British participants and Japanese victims determined deservingness and fostered a willingness to help in the public. These findings concur with extant research that the moral principle that one should help those who help themselves is important for deciding who is deserving of help (Zagefka et al., 2010). Also, we can see the influence of a belief in a just-world principle: it is morally right to help those who have not caused their own plight (such as victims of natural disasters) and those who try actively to help themselves (such as the Japanese). Self-inflicted helplessness is judged negatively and deters potential donors.

However, the repertoires discussed display a complex and intricate mode of reasoning, which highlights that these factors are not fixed and static, do not operate in isolation and are used flexibly and rhetorically to discursively construct hierarchies of deservingness. With the exception of a few studies, which highlight the importance of the plasticity and flexibility of self-other categorization in prosocial dynamics (Levine et al., 2002, 2005; Reicher et al., 2006; Stevenson and Manning, 2010), current research overlooks the flexible, dynamic and contradictory nature of people's everyday moral reasoning in relation to humanitarian crises.

Our findings contribute to the prosocial literature by addressing this lacuna. The data point to the multi-layered and complex nature of people's moral responses to humanitarian information. They show also that these factors do not operate in isolation, but rather act as tools in a socially shared cultural 'tool-kit' (Burr, 2003), which allows the British public to reason morally about, and respond to, humanitarian issues. In the process of identifying and clarifying who is and who is not deserving of their help, the focus group participants illustrated the dilemmatic nature of these decisions and the crucial role of the socio-cultural landscape, which constitutes the context for these decisions. The plasticity and flexibility of the categories of deservingness was further illustrated by how participants challenged familiar geopolitical attributions. For example, deservingness in the repertoires did not always map onto the division between the developed global North and the developing global South. Indeed, in repertoire two the superpowers – Japan and the USA – are polar opposites.

This complexity requires situated analyses, able to engage with the data in the local context of the focus groups as well as in the wider context of the ideological resources drawn on by participants. The multi-faceted and ideologically dilemmatic nature of the repertoires of deservingness call for discursive analyses that take account of the fluidity and flexibility of the repertoires and their action orientation. The analysis in this paper suggests that the dilemma around whether to give or not, which tends to dominate much of helping research (Sargeant, 1999) and humanitarian debates (Darnton and Kirk, 2010), is secondary to the establishment of hierarchies of deservingness, exemplified by the 'waiting in queues' repertoire, where giving and helping are not questioned. Rather, as the analysis shows, in the local context of the focus groups, the rhetorical work centred

on establishing the reasonableness of the conditions under which some deserve to receive help (or material goods) and some do not.

The role played by the categories of deservingness has important implications for humanitarianism since, in effect, it challenges and undermines the universalist principles of humanitarianism which, by definition, reject the conditionality of helping. These principles were spelt out in one of the communications from Médecins Sans Frontières, which was included in the participants' packs and which portrays medical personnel assisting a small child. The caption lists the possible nationalities of the child, followed by the word 'Human' and the caption 'Donate without discrimination', which testifies that humanitarian helping is unconditional and an intrinsic moral right for anyone in need. Put simply, all human beings are deserving of humanitarian help.

In opposition to this, the common feature of the otherwise different repertoires, is that all argue that helping and receiving should be conditional on the receivers' characteristics, and contingent on their behaviour and what they have done to earn that help.

The moral principles invoked in this argument are used flexibly across different repertoires. For example, the repertoires 'seeing a difference' and 'something for nothing' differ in their content and in who is deemed deserving. Yet, in both cases, deservingness hinges on having to earn the help or the material goods.

Similarly, Japan is presented as an exemplar of deservingness in two of the repertoires, but for different reasons: self-efficacy and self-sufficiency in repertoire 1 (seeing a difference), and by reason of cultural similarity in repertoire 2 (waiting in queues).

However, in both cases, what is argued or implied is that Japan is deserving because it is like Britain - culturally, behaviourally and morally. In short, Japan is part of the 'ingroup' and its otherness is eliminated.

In this sense, Japan is contrasted starkly with the quintessentially Other, Africa, which, in the first repertoire, is positioned as undeserving. Humanitarian and International Development NGOs are well acquainted with this persistent negative perception among the British public of Africa as a 'bottomless pit', whose problems are considered internal, self-generated and intractable (Darnton and Kirk, 2011). The view of Africa as problematic is enduring and public perception seems not to have changed since the 'Live Aid' initiatives. This view comes through clearly in the first repertoire with reference to the 'bowl you can't fill' over time', albeit accompanied by some reluctance and perhaps unspoken recognition of the prejudice underlying this view.

These examples served to illustrate how the principles of deservingness are locally and geopolitically contextual, mediated discursively by ideology, and constructed through available cultural resources. These characteristics are exemplified in repertoire 3 'Something for nothing' where humanitarian practice is reduced to money donation. It positions beneficiaries as getting something for nothing in contrast with the self, who has worked hard to earn that money and, thus, is the most deserving. This self-centred, transactional model (Darnton and Kirk, 2011) is in complete opposition to other-centred and universalist, humanitarian principles.

It might seem surprising that the speakers in repertoire 3 showed no attempt to tone down their statements, despite the context of a project on humanitarianism. However, their stance seems to be consistent with current UK beliefs about fairness and helping.

For example, the findings from a recent study on public attitudes to fairness (O'Brien, 2011) show a strong attachment among the UK public to ideas focused on meritocracy and reciprocity, and a view that fairness equates with getting what you deserve:

"[p]eople's idea of fairness is strongly reciprocal – something for something" (O'Brien, 2011:1). It would seem that people in the UK believe that help should be directed to those who are trying hard and doing the right thing, the principles underpinning the 'seeing a difference' repertoire. These ideas are reflected also in the last UK

Conservative government's neoliberal policies: for example, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer promised that, through his reforms of the welfare state, "no-one will get something for nothing"⁹. More recently, the then Home Secretary, now Prime Minister, argued for application of a 'compassion quota' when dealing with refugees' demands, adding that "there are people who need our help and there are people who are abusing our goodwill – and I know which side I'm on"¹⁰. Hence, although hospitality is considered a part of the national identity and a source of pride in Britain, it only applies to the 'right' kind of immigrants, to those defined as genuine, deserving refugees as distinct from the undeserving, bogus asylum seekers and economic migrants (Gibson, 2007). In the current political climate, the focus group participants' stance might seem legitimate. It is illustrative of how ideologies are situated within and influenced by historically relevant contexts, with which people interact in complex and contradictory ways; it is illustrative of how commonsense notions of value, community and appropriate ways of behaving are socially and culturally embedded and, often, are conflicting and contradictory (Towns and Adams, 2009: 737).

⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-24327890>

¹⁰ <http://press.conservatives.com/post/130940020830/theresa-may-speech-a-beacon-of-hope>

We have shown how decisions about monetary donation and humanitarian helping, overwhelmingly are conditional on the contingent characteristics and behaviour of those in need. There is no evidence of moral imperatives, which apply universally. Rather, reactions and moral actions are negotiated through pervasive socio-cultural practices and ideologies, and personally-meaningful everyday moralities. Of particular relevance are individualistic self-oriented rather than Other-oriented tendencies, the prioritization of individual gratification versus the greater good (particularly in the 'something for nothing' repertoire), the valuing of the work ethic and enterprise, and an overarching focus on materialist values and material responses.

Chouliaraki (2013) laments the rising cultural narcissism and current utilitarian forms of humanitarianism. Others warn of the development, across Western societies, of narratives of growing selfishness and loss of morality and commitment (Scuzzarello et al., 2009). Our findings reflect these concerns: selfishness and self-centredness in repertoire 3, narcissism of cultural mirroring in repertoire 2 and the stubborn persistence of characterizations of the developing South as perennially demanding and eternal taking in repertoire 1.

However, these geopolitical considerations rarely figure in social psychological investigations into prosocial behaviour and, undeniably, run counter to mainstream psychology's attempts to remain neutral and focus on the individual. Indeed, mainstream social psychology has been criticized for portraying altruism as aspect of individual consciousness, which does not allow for a moral understanding of prosocial behaviour (Wyschogrod, 2002). Similarly, Sober (2002), critiquing the existing prosocial literature, questioned whether the popularity of a purely egoistic image of the human self is

determined by a culture of individualism and competition rather than being due to the compelling force of the findings.

To disregard ideological and geopolitical factors in the study of prosocial behaviour in relation to humanitarian crises, can, at best, provide only a limited and fragmented picture of what is happening, and overlooks the broader patterns and dynamics influencing people's responses to humanitarian crises. For example, although the Christian principle - of helping strangers with no expectation of a reward, personified by the biblical figure of the good Samaritan - has been found to be foundational and, enduringly, the most desired model for NGOs actions, this principle does not go uncontested, but intersects with and is resisted through other self-focused principles (Author et al., 2015). In this shifting, complex and ambivalent socio-cultural landscape it is impossible to identify simple formulas. Rather, humanitarian appeals and communications present the public with complex ideological dilemmas. Thus, although in agreement with much of the current research which highlights the role of intergroup dynamics, social categorization and just-world theory, our findings demonstrate the ways that these factors are contextual, that they are ideologically negotiated and interact dynamically. Discursive analyses, treating the focus group participants' statements as rehearsals of commonsense ideologies, allow us to see that moral responses and actions regarding humanitarian help are always locally and sociohistorically contextual. They highlight the need for prosocial behaviour research to engage more actively with the dilemmatic nature of moral decisions, particularly in relation to humanitarian crises.

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Appendix A: Transcriptions conventions:

(.) Untimed pauses

(...) Omitted material

[] explanatory material

Q<>Q

reported speech/active voicing

Full stops, question marks and commas:

added to improve readability and reproduce, as much as possible, how the intonation of the speech was heard in transcription.