

Pity and Patriotism: UK Intra-national Charitable Giving

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

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Abstract

This thesis examines the discourse of intra-national charitable giving in the UK. I combine a rhetorical discourse analysis of Children in Need (CiN), a popular charity telethon for ‘disadvantaged’ British children, with that of six focus groups carried out with people who have different relationships with charities (student volunteers, a local Amnesty International group, bereavement counselling volunteers, non-charity related office workers, employees of different charities, and academics). Although the focus group discussions all included some consideration of CiN and its methods, they were primarily concerned with broader issues to do with disadvantage, fairness and, where relevant, charitable giving more generally. Boltanski’s (1999) seminal idea of ‘the politics of pity’ holds that relationships between those who suffer and those who observe their suffering are radically altered by distance. Seeing suffering people face-to-face is not the same as seeing them via the mass media because of the actions that are or are not possible in relation to them. This idea has been utilised in numerous studies of international charity, but so far no one has applied it to situations in which the viewed are in the same country as the viewers. I argue that the sort of (social, perceived) distance that may exist between citizens who live in the same country has similar consequences for their relationship as actual physical distance has. Indeed, representing others *as if* they were distant means that charity comes to be seen as the only way to relieve suffering, even though in this instance there are, in fact, many other available options. The central tension I highlight in the CiN data is that, on the one hand, British beneficiaries of charitable aid are represented as *socially* distant from the rest of the population, which makes the mediation that CiN offers seem necessary, while on the other hand their *experiential* closeness is constantly being highlighted by appealing to a particular (nostalgic) ideal of Britishness. This tension is also reflected in the focus group data: although the recipients of intra-national charitable giving are typically talked about as members of the speakers’ own in-group, there is also a lot of scepticism regarding the truthfulness and reliability of the spectacle of suffering that is presented on television screens and that does not always match up with people’s own experiences.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my dear Gran, Brenda Young (née Lloyd).

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Introduction


“The interests of all persons ought to count equally, and geographic location and citizenship make no intrinsic difference to the rights and obligations of individuals.”

Peter Singer (2005: 173)

0.1 Distant Suffering at Home

In order to introduce the key topics that will be explored in this thesis, I would like to start by sharing a small section of my data. This brief extract is taken from a telethon (a charity fundraising broadcast) called ‘Children in Need’. The clip is from the 2011 broadcast, which was aired on British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) 1 on Friday 18th November from 19:30. It represents an introduction to the first of the show’s many clips about the sorts of people who might benefit from the viewers’ donations. This first example began around 19 minutes from the start of the programme.

1	19:00		Alesha Dixon: now we really hope you enjoy the feast of entertainment laid on for you tonight (.) and we also hope (.) that at some point you’ll pick up the phone (1.0) the children <u>you</u> help will <u>never</u> be able to thank you in person (.) but we sent (.) Olly Murs (1.0) to meet some of the kids who benefit from your donations	Audience screams
2	19:05			Acoustic guitar music
3	19:12		Olly Murs: this is Ella (.) and she’s four	Acoustic guitar music
4	19:14		years old (1.5) and (.) she’s just started school like other four-year-olds (2.0) but um (1.0) things (.) are a little different for Ella	Acoustic guitar music
5	19:20		Olly Murs V/O: Ella was deprived of oxygen at birth (2.0) it left her severely disabled (.) she can’t walk (.)	Acoustic guitar music

6	19:25		or talk (1.0) she's fed through a tube in her stomach (.) and (.) she's partially-sighted	Acoustic guitar music
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What I find immediately striking when looking at this extract is the verbal and visual contrast between different parts of the show. While the first image is taken from the studio, subsequent images are from a pre-recorded package that has very different visual features. Verbally, presenter Alesha Dixon also has to manage a contrast between the 'feast of entertainment' that precedes this clip and the pity that the audience is expected to feel on hearing Ella's story. The transition between these two frames (Goffman 1974) in the show is provided with a degree of continuity by the appearance of a celebrity in both parts. Olly Murs, a British pop star, guides the viewer into a world that is hitherto unknown. In order to make Ella's world understandable to a viewer in the UK, he makes reference to the country's norm of starting school at the age of four.

All of this, as remarkable as it might seem when studied in detail, is nevertheless fairly normal in terms of Western charity appeals. The use of celebrities to introduce beneficiaries, the juxtaposition of entertainment with a serious message, the evocation of reference points for comparison with the lives of expected viewers and the selection of one child to represent the problems of many are all recognisable tropes. What is different about this clip is that it is taken from a programme based in a single, relatively small, country. Olly Murs need not state that he is referring to 'British' children in frame 4, because the shared location of donors and recipients has already been repeatedly stated. Why, then, will the children that the viewers' donations help never be able to thank them in person (frame 1)? And how is mediated charity presented as the best way to address Ella's problems, when state systems for health, education and social security, and the opportunity to meet face-to-face, exist?

0.2 Setting and rationale for studying this data

The UK regards itself as a charitable country. In the year 2011-12, 55% of the population made donations to charitable causes in a typical month, a reduction of 3% on the previous year (Dobbs et al. 2012: 4). Yet only a small percentage (17%) of private donations were made to overseas aid charities (2012: 13). While the idea of charity for many people, and certainly for many researchers, seems to be tied up in a paternalistic, imperialist narrative, in which the rich West gives to the poor East (Burman 1994: 30; Burnell 1992), this is not, in reality, what most charitable giving consists of. Furthermore, the British Government continued to fall short of its promise to give 0.7% of its GNP (Gross National Product) to Official Development Assistance overseas, as pledged at the 1970

General Assembly Resolution, and again at the G8 summit in 2008, until finally reaching it in 2013 (Booth 2013). While Britain is extensively involved in international trade and political networks, in terms of aid, its priorities appear to be within the UK, aside from meeting its obligations to these multinational fora. The decision to ring-fence the international aid budget taken by the Conservative-Liberal coalition government in 2011 was, and still is, widely criticised in the popular press (e.g. Brennan 2010; Telegraph View 2013; Brown 2015). This is in part because of the reports that have emerged of this money being ill-spent and / or syphoned off by illegitimate parties (Verweij, and Gyawali 2006). The fact that the government donates apparently large sums of money to help people elsewhere is also used to argue that it is more concerned with the welfare of these people than those within the UK (Birrell 2015, Wheeler 2015), despite evidence to the contrary. These criticisms are based on the assumption that we bear more responsibility for others who are members of the same nation as us than for those who live elsewhere. Meanwhile, other modes of action such as meeting face-to-face and giving practical help are engaged in less frequently than giving. In 2011-12, for example, only around 25% of people formally volunteered in a typical month (NCVO 2015).

This raises two concerns. The first is that there appears to be a gap between perceptions of UK aid priorities and the reality. If people believe that international needs are being disproportionately provided for, they will be less likely to take action, monetary and otherwise, themselves. The second is that charity has become a means to address problems in our society without making solutions permanent and compulsory through the state or by engaging with the needy in person. The latter concern is the basis for the two primary research questions that drive this piece of research: Why donate to a national charity? That is to say: how are UK citizens encouraged to donate to UK-based charities over other possible modes of action? And: what sort of relationship do programmes such as Children in Need suggest should occur between donors to and beneficiaries of a national charity?

This study identifies and addresses a gap in the literature on charity. I take as my subject the phenomenon of intra-, rather than international giving, and focus on the way that a charity telethon represents the relationship between donors and recipients and how this theme is reflected in focus group discussions with its actual or potential viewers. I also consider how viewing fellow British citizens as the recipients of charity affects the way that those in need elsewhere are perceived.

My work is situated within communication studies, seeking to explore how people who belong to different social groups in relation to charity (for example donors, recipients, and other disadvantaged people who lie outside of the charity's remit) are rendered more or less close to viewers. I use discourse analysis, including multimodal analysis, to examine my data, and I therefore align this work with that of other discourse analysts who explore social and political issues. I also draw upon insights from scholars in a range of other disciplines, including philosophy, psychology and media studies. I

engage with theoretical work on the idea of perceived distance and the politics of pity, principally on the work of Boltanski (1999), Chouliaraki (2005; 2006; 2013) and Bilandzic (2006).

Currently, there are broadly two strands of literature about the presentation of beneficiaries in charity campaigns. The first, generally in the field of business studies or psychology, seeks to understand how campaigns should be designed in order to maximise their success at securing donations. The second, which encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, sociology and communication studies, seeks to examine the broader social implications of representing a group of people in a certain way. The present study falls into the latter category.

Like private sector businesses, charities seek to get as much financial revenue from advertising as possible, while minimising how much is spent on it (Callen 1994: 217). Increasing income to charities is often assumed to be directly correlated with increasing outputs, although this is not always the case (1994: 215). The value of work that fulfils this aim therefore promises to likewise increase outcomes. Due to their well-established relationships with a variety of stakeholders, as well as their ability to respond more reflexively to emerging problems than state organisations are able to, charities are often best placed to help members of the most vulnerable groups in society (Schmid 2013: 308). Helping charities to do any part their work (including fundraising) more efficiently therefore becomes an attractive opportunity for researchers seeking to engage with and give back to their communities (Hughes and Kitson 2012: 739). Such research is extremely valuable. However, applied research with charities, as with any sector of society, should also be complemented by critical work that examines the broader assumptions that lie behind a particular way of addressing social problems.

For example, critical work has revealed a number of important drawbacks of persuading people to engage primarily by donating money rather than lobbying governments for institutional changes or doing voluntary work. Giving money obscures the individuality of donors, recipients, and the nature of the acts they are taking part in (Boltanski 1999: 18; Mason 2011). Displaying care via the donation of money reasserts the superiority of a capitalist system (Berg 2005, Seu 2010) and awards a greater degree of power to those who have more money, and thus gives the rich the power to set the aid agenda. The suitability of potential donors as decision-makers about which causes should get most support has, understandably, been questioned. Researchers have pointed out the disproportionate amount of support that some causes receive (Richey and Ponte 2008). The number of people affected by an illness, for example, does not correspond to the amount of financial support that is awarded to charities for its sufferers (2008: 715). And this form of action privileges situations that demand an immediate response, such as natural disasters and wars, over more chronic problems of infrastructure, for example (Polman 2011). The aim of creating communication that appeals to a wide audience of potential donors is also sometimes at odds with the overall aims of a charity. For example,

Vestergaard (2008: 490) notes that a 2004 Amnesty International appeal succeeds in encouraging a response only by making viewers concerned with potential threats to their own human rights and therefore fails to evoke the concern for others that might ultimately lead to a more widespread interest in human rights. Similarly, Eayrs and Ellis (1990: 349) found that adverts for MENCAP were more likely to elicit donations when they did not ‘illustrate people with a mental handicap as having the same rights, value and capability as non-handicapped persons’.

With so much to question about the system in which charities are forced to operate, there is clearly a need to shed light on some of the assumptions surrounding charitable giving in the UK from a critical distance. However, it should be noted that while work that questions the role of charities is useful, research that concludes by criticising both individual charities and charitable giving in general is already plentiful both in academia and the public domain, and can sometimes encourage a nihilistic attitude toward giving by critiquing without offering an alternative. For example, ‘Intelligent Giving’ and later ‘New Philanthropy Capital’ are organisations which set out to help donors make informed decisions about where to direct their money, based on factors such as how much of a charity’s money is spent on administration. Although such information is aimed at redirecting rather than discouraging donations, this is not how such information often reaches the public. For example, evidence from Intelligent Giving’s 2006 report on Children in Need was cited in newspaper articles that urged readers to boycott the charity (Kelly 2006). Encouraging cynicism towards charitable giving in the absence of a clear alternative is liable to make people disengage from these issues altogether.

This thesis addresses the way that charitable giving is talked about and represented, rather than assessing its effectiveness. While its representation of donors and beneficiaries will be critically discussed, it is not my intention to discourage donations to Children in Need. Other solutions that might be sought, such as political ones, can, and in my opinion should, be explored in tandem with giving. I now introduce my data, before turning to the key theoretical idea I engage with in my analysis.

0.3 Data set 1: Children in Need

BBC Children in Need (henceforth CiN) is Britain’s only yearly telethon, and the only telethon to raise money exclusively for British citizens. In 2011, it raised just over £26 million (BBC 2011). The show is broadcast on a Friday night in mid-late November every year, and represents the culmination of a series of fundraising efforts carried out both by members of the public and by the presenters of some of the BBC’s other television and radio programmes. It consists of a series of entertainment items, often featuring news presenters and other celebrities from the BBC, such as actors from its popular soaps, as well as pop stars. These items are interspersed with reports about the fundraising

activities that have been carried out by celebrities, youth groups, schools and businesses and with clips about the sorts of individuals and organisations that are likely to benefit from donations. These organisations include breakfast clubs for poorer children, youth clubs, and centres in which children and their families receive specialist support with medical conditions. Viewers pledge money to the organisation throughout the night by phone, text and online, and the total pledged is announced throughout the programme. Once the money has been raised, organisations who share the remit of ‘supporting disadvantaged children and young people in the UK’ (Children in Need 2013) may apply for grants from the fund in order to carry out such projects.

Even for people who do not watch CiN there are several ways in which they might be made aware of it. The show is advertised on other television and radio channels across the BBC, as well as in print and online television guides. The charity is also sponsored by over 30 high-profile businesses, such as Lloyds bank, Boots pharmacy, Asda supermarkets, British Telecom, Debenhams department stores and Greggs bakery. Workers in these organisations also often carry out fundraising events and sell special products for the charity in stores. After the telethon, reports about its success, particularly in relation to other years, appear in a wide range of national newspapers. CiN thus plays a significant role in producing, as well as potentially replicating, the discourse of UK-based charitable giving.

0.4 Data set 2: Focus Groups

My approach to carrying out focus groups is the second way in which the present study differs from previous literature on the topic of charitable giving (the first being the use of mass media data on an intra-national charity). Unlike in many other such studies and studies on discourse around social issues in general, I combine an analysis of focus group data with that of a media text without asking participants in the former to view the latter. While focus groups are used by a range of scholars looking at charity discourse, and even at charity media (e.g. Burgoyne, Young & Walker 2005; Hoijer 2004; Seu 2010), combining any form of audience research with the analysis of media texts is rare.

Studies that do consider reception of media texts naturally request that participants view the text in question. However, my focus is not on how CiN is interpreted, but on the possible similarities and / or differences between how this programme represents issues of inequality and how they are discussed in the society more broadly. The focus group participants were therefore not requested to watch the programme, and I also did not ask them explicitly about the programme until late on in the discussions (after at least the first half hour, in an hour-long session). This unusual approach also feeds into debates about the extent to which audiences and publics can be considered to be the same thing (e.g. Richardson, Parry and Corner 2013: 102-104). While mass and new media increasingly challenge and blur the traditional boundaries between the producers of programmes and their

audiences (2013: 105), the decision not to engage remains equally important. Following Richardson (1994), Atkinson et al. (2012) and Henderson (2014), I selected groups which had different roles in relation to charities, including two groups which had no direct connection to charities at all), rather than selecting groups based on demographic features. The groups were: current or recent student volunteers at Cardiff University (henceforth 'Students'); office workers in a small depot in Cardiff (henceforth 'Office'); members of Cardiff Amnesty International ('Amnesty'); people who were in paid employment with different registered charities based in Cardiff ('Charities'); volunteers for 'Pembrokeshire Cruse', who provide bereavement counselling for adults ('Counselling'); academics employed at Cardiff University ('Academics'). All of these groups were based in South Wales. Although this limits the extent to which results can be generalised to other areas of Britain, I chose to use groups based in only one constituent country because this meant that differences between the groups were more likely to result from their different experiences of charity, rather than from geographical variations. It was my intention to garner diverse responses to the issues in question. As I will discuss in more depth in my methodology (chapter 2), this data is examined as a supplement to the CiN data, and analytic chapters are accordingly structured by discussing the themes as they appear in CiN before examining how they appear in the focus group data.

0.5 Charity and the politics of pity and distance

One of the key theoretical concepts in the critical study of charity communication is what has been referred to as 'the politics of pity' (Boltanski 1999). This idea brings together a number of strands of thought about how we relate, or fail to relate, to people whose suffering we witness via media channels rather than face-to-face. It takes as its starting-point the idea that when presented with images of distress we are not generally called upon to assess the usefulness of a particular project, or the role of beneficiaries, but to respond emotionally. In the regime of pity, we are led to believe that if we stop to consider other options for addressing a given problem, we will run the risk of failing to respond adequately to the crisis that is presented now (Boltanski 1999: 5). Pity has been a popular way of framing the study of charitable giving in recent years (Balaji 2011; Littler 2008; Boltanski 1999; Chouliaraki e.g. 2006; Vestergaard 2008), although it has been suggested that it no longer applies in the context of some new adverts for international charities, which employ the technique of calling on the viewer to imagine herself in different contexts, rather than to respond to the suffering of other people (Chouliaraki 2013).

Boltanski makes a number of assertions about how sufferers are represented in the mass media that chime with how they are both selected and presented in CiN. Like the politics of pity suggests, CiN's beneficiaries appear blameless and in need of nurturance (1999: 107). They are also presented as groups, who are often represented by individuals (1999: 5-6). The action it suggests that viewers

should take (donation) is presented as being too urgent to allow for critical reflection, and the transformation that occurs in beneficiary vignettes for the most part appears emotional rather than material.

The most notable point of difference between CiN and the politics of pity is that the latter is tied up with ideas about viewers' distance from those who are suffering, whereas both CiN's viewers and its beneficiaries live within a relatively small country. Boltanski's (1999: 5) pity is predicated on the idea that giving at a distance necessitates mediation in order to convey sufferers' anguish to others. However, he also states that this distance need not be physical, but could be social in nature (1999:5). In other words, this 'distance' could be metaphorical rather than literal and thus could certainly exist within a country as well as between continents. Yet the title of the work in which he outlined his theory is 'Distant Suffering', and this term is primarily interpreted in the literal sense. For example, scholars have applied the theory of pity to Flemish and Dutch Haiti relief telethons (Driessens, Joye and Biltreyst: 2012), Danish and British adverts for Amnesty International (Vestergaard: 2008; Seu: 2010), and celebrities' involvement in international aid appeals (Littler: 2008). I will argue that the theory needs considerable development in order for it to be applicable to intra-national settings.

0.6 Accounting

The analysis takes as its starting-point the idea that people and organisations involved in charitable giving are engaged in a process of accounting for the actions they carry out and the positions they take up in relation to others. This idea, which forms the basis of Rhetorical Discourse Analysis, has generally been used in health communication settings (Arribas-Ayllon, Sarangi and Clarke 2013), but also seems particularly apposite to the research into charity discourses, in which a moral dimension is ever-present (Hattori 2003; Allahyari 2000; Norris 2012). I pioneer the use of this method in analysing charity data and, in particular, media representations (so far it has been applied only to talk produced in medical settings, such as doctor-patient interactions). In CiN, I presuppose that there is an attempt to account for donation requests, both in terms of justifying the request for money in itself, and in the selection of particular beneficiaries over others. Different justifications appear at different points during the show. One of the justifications involves the idea of reciprocity: the show provides entertainment and asks for something in return. Another justification, as I discuss in chapter 5, is based on the needs of beneficiaries, which are highlighted by contrasting their situations with those of the idealised audience member.

In the focus group discussions, I also interpret participants' talk as attempts to account for their responses or lack of responses to particular representations of inequality and need. This analytical lens is aimed at conferring an understanding not only of the standpoints of particular individuals or

organisations, but also at indicating the society's ideas about what is important and normal (Arribas-Ayllon et al. 2013: 59). In other words, different societies or social groups will determine what counts as an adequate justification, and individuals will choose which of these to utilise. For example, in one of the focus groups I will be studying one participant uses a metaphorical reference to Darwinian evolution to justify her standpoint that British citizens should not give international aid. Such metaphors are used to describe a range of phenomena, such as competition in industry (Morgan 1995) and technological development (Businaro 1983). Reference to evolution can be interpreted as an indicator of Western society's tendency to value a scientific discourse.

To reiterate, my primary research questions are: Why donate to a national charity? And: what sort of relationship do programmes such as CiN suggest should occur between donors to and beneficiaries of a national charity?

0.7 Structure of the thesis

The first chapter is the literature review, in which I give a brief overview of the history of charity and welfare provision in the UK, indicate the pressures on charities in the current political and economic climate, and review the literature on mediated charity and the giving of monetary gifts. I also outline psychological research on the role of empathy in philanthropy. I end the chapter by identifying four key themes across all of this literature: emotional responses, monetary donation, visibility and the role of group-based identities in deciding whom to help.

In the second chapter, I explain the use of each of my two sources of data as well as the decision to combine them. I give details about focus group recruitment, settings, incentives and questions. I also consider the ethical issues involved in a study using data from live participants. I describe my transcription decisions and examine the method of analysis I have chosen (Rhetorical Discourse Analysis) in more detail.

The third chapter complements the literature review. It is concerned with developing a framework with which to analyse my data. I identify the concept of pity as a key idea in the critical study of charity discourse. In Boltanski's (1999) highly influential writing about pity, he is mainly concerned with viewing suffering from a distance, the emotionalisation of responses to it, and the act of donating. This theory therefore unites the key themes identified in the literature review. As I indicated above, I contend that Boltanski's pity leaves the relationship between pity and non-physical distance unclear. Reviewing literature on different types of distance, and in particular on the work of Bilandzic (2006) I decide to focus on the following types of closeness / distance between CiN's beneficiaries and its potential viewers:

- Social closeness / distance, defined as the degree to which contact between members of different groups is encouraged or minimised by them occupying the same or different places at the same or different times
- Experiential closeness / distance, defined as the degree to which viewers of suffering are encouraged to see themselves as similar to or different from sufferers
- Representational closeness / distance, defined as the degree to which viewers are encouraged to see the suffering of others as real and as something that they are able to respond to in practice

The four analytic chapters (4-7) set out to examine each of these four types of distance in turn. In the first analytic chapter (chapter 4), I examine social distance in the data. I explore how in CiN, groups of people with different roles in relation to the charity (givers, beneficiaries, celebrity supporters) are represented in physically separate places. I then explore what the focus group discussions reveal about investment in the idea of social distance between different groups in the UK in general. In the second analytic chapter, I explore the concept of experiential distance in relation to viewers' and beneficiaries' shared national identity. I examine how a sense of shared national identity is both emphasised and to some extent produced in CiN. I argue that this emphasis on building a sense of national identity goes beyond the attempt to minimise experiential distance and instead appears to be a separate project in the show. I examine the use of war discourse in CiN and how, in the focus group data, Darwinian evolution is appropriated and developed as a way of accounting for prioritising compatriots' needs over those of others.

In chapters 6 and 7, I consider different aspects of my idea of representational distance. Chapter 6 explores the extent to which sufferers in Britain are depicted as 'real', drawing on literature around the idea of the spectacle (Debord 2002 [1967]). I consider the portrayal of beneficiaries in terms of visual modality (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). I argue that the representational distance between sufferers and viewers is to some extent minimised in CiN because the places that viewers are encouraged to picture themselves being in (fundraising places) have a similar degree of modality to the places occupied by the charity's potential beneficiaries, which means that sufferers' lives are imbued with a similar sense of reality to those of viewers. This sense of closeness is enhanced by the fact that viewers are encouraged to respond emotionally to what they see. However, I argue that representational closeness is counteracted by the juxtaposition of these emotional scenes with those of celebration. The focus group data reveal an interesting interaction between the visibility and perceived reality of suffering. In particular, participants describe media representations as less real than the suffering that they personally witness or hear about through their social networks and which, they argue, goes underreported in the mass media.

In chapter 7, I draw on Barthes' (2009 [1972]) concept of myth to explore the mode of action suggested in CiN. I argue that the giving of money has come to be understood and enacted as a marker of social good in itself and is thus imbued with an additional level of meaning. I conclude that the pre-existing link between money and the actions facilitated by it has been replaced with a belief that to fundraise *is* to do these actions. In both CiN and the focus groups, it appears that fundraising has come to be seen as an end in itself.

In the concluding chapter, I draw together ideas about how the different types of closeness / distance considered in the analytic chapters give differing impressions about the level of interaction between sufferers and viewers in both data sets. I revisit the research questions posed in the literature review, drawing together the findings from chapters 4-7. I suggest that CiN proposes a relationship between its viewers and its beneficiaries that can only take place through the charity itself. At the same time, it also encourages its viewers to prioritise its own beneficiaries over those of other charities - particularly those with an international focus.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

As indicated in the introduction, this thesis is concerned with studying the discourse of charity in the UK. In the current chapter, I present a range of research that will inform my study in terms of the knowledge that can be built upon and the questions that have not yet been fully answered. I begin by considering literature on the agents involved in organising and promoting giving, such as charities and the state. I provide a broad historical overview of the role of different providers of poor relief in the UK. I then address the particular pressures on charities working within the UK at present, before considering the role that charity media events have played and might play in shaping attitudes towards disadvantaged others. In the final part, I explore psychological studies that have sought to understand who gives, why, and under what circumstances, paying particular attention to the role of reason and / or emotion in motivating giving. In each of the areas of research I explore, there is a tension between practical research, which suggests solutions to present problems, and critical research, which points out the possibly harmful longer-term outcomes of current approaches.

1.1 History: the state and charity welfare provision in the UK

In this section, I begin by considering ideas about what constitutes charity from as far back as the Middle Ages. I then provide a broadly chronological overview of major laws on and debates about who to help, and how, since this time. Within the scope of this study it is not practical to examine all aspects of charity. This brief examination therefore focuses on provision for the poor, in terms of both wealth and health. I also consider other agencies that are or have been involved in preventing or minimising ‘disadvantage’ to some members of society, including the historical role of the state in promoting and enforcing poor relief. Indeed, much of the literature suggests that charitable poor relief in Britain has always been in dialogue with state policies, even when the role of the state was limited to law-making. On the one hand, this research reveals a number of interesting differences between past and present practices of and views about giving. On the other hand, it also indicates that a surprising number of concerns that preoccupy present givers and would-be givers have been shared by those engaged in debates about these issues in the past.

Organizations can register as charities in the UK based on a variety of objectives. Historically, the term ‘charity’ has encompassed a similarly broad range of aims. In ‘The Vision of Piers Plowman’, a 14th century narrative poem, the following list is given in reference to the causes that money should be donated to:

repair hospitals,
help sick people,

mend bad roads,
build up bridges that had been broken down,
help maidens to marry or make them nuns,
find food for prisoners and poor people,
put scholars to school or to some other craft,
help religious orders, and ameliorate rents or taxes.

(Jordan, 2013: 112)

Whilst most of these aims seem to be in keeping with those of at least some present charities, one example of a practice that was classed as charity in the Middle Ages that seems to be at odds with modern understandings is the contribution of poorer members of society to grand endeavours, such as the building of cathedrals (Vroom 2010). Current conceptions of charity usually involve the wealthier helping the poorer, leading to the criticism that it tends to divide donors and recipients (Boltanski 1999: 4). However, the fact that all levels of a society were once encouraged to contribute to shared projects like this demonstrate that, at some points in history, charitable projects have unified rather than divided communities.

Another form of community-uniting charity, which Bennett (1992: 23) suggests has been underrepresented in historical accounts of aid, are fundraising events. Events called ‘help-ales’, ‘scot-ales’ or ‘bid-ales’, recorded as early as 1000, were drinking festivals at which money was raised for a particular person or cause. At these events, donors often included those who were also likely to face or have faced hardship at some point in their lives (1992: 20). Such events provide evidence that, in the past, giving occurred not only by those who were in a wealthier social bracket to the poor, or (as above) from all levels of society to a shared endeavour, but also between poorer members of society. This has two important consequences for present debates about charity. Firstly, the fact that charitable giving in British society took place within social groups provides a further basis for questioning what has been seen as the necessarily divisive relationship between donors and recipients (Boltanski 1999: 4). Secondly, evidence of such events suggests that charity is not inherently a capitalist or neoliberal way of dealing with the problems in a society (as argued by, for example, Livingstone 2013).

Evidence of early organised giving is also documented in religious texts. Giving has long been channelled through Christian churches, which, like many other religions, recommended or imposed the giving of alms (Brown 2012). The request for money was and still is often represented in terms of a spiritual duty within faiths (Kraefess 2005: 328). The historical link between charity and religion is well-documented. While some argue that organised religion started the trend for charitable behaviour, others believe that both religion and pro-sociality emerge from a common origin, namely the need to

unite and regulate behaviour in large societies (e.g. Norenzayan and Shariff 2008; Henrich et al. 2010).

In the Middle Ages in Britain, poor relief was primarily a church matter, into which kings intervened only in a limited capacity, for example by ruling that a certain proportion of church collections be distributed to the poor (Leonard 1900: 3). Remarkably, the earliest such law relating to poor relief was to limit rather than to promote charitable giving. In the wake of the Black Death (1348-9), giving to the poor was prohibited in order to maximise employment at a time of scarcity of labourers (Leonard 1900: 3). Voluntary giving was seen as a threat to the wider national good when it provided an income without work in return. By contrast, in 1535-6, Henry VIII ordered that alms be regularly collected and redistributed to the poor. There was, however, a substantial gap between laws and enforcement during and beyond the Middle Ages. Henry VIII's instructions were not implemented until around 40 years later, in the reign of Elizabeth I (Leonard 1900: 2). Elizabeth's Privy Council endeavoured to enforce the poor laws, but the justices of the peace (local officials) failed to execute them. This changed under the reign of Charles I (1625 – 1649), when the justices of the peace were regularly made to hold special meetings on the subject, and reports were sent back to the Privy Council (Leonard 1900, ix).

Concerns that charitable giving might be detrimental to the wider good resurfaced in the 18th century, when a range of texts and organisations set out to limit giving in the belief that it would encourage a reliance on hand-outs (Ryan 2000: 689). Philanthropy was described as a lazy and squeamish reaction to witnessing the suffering of others, and rationality was advocated over emotion. Charities set out to professionalise giving, investigating the needy to identify the genuinely destitute among what were assumed to be a multitude of fakes, who not only diverted money that might be better spent but disrupted the presumed hierarchy between donors and recipients (Ryan 2000: 692).

The much-cited Victorian (1837 – 1901) distinction between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor differentiated between those who could be assimilated into a morally demanding society and those who could or would not. These standards were almost impossible to meet, as it was insisted, for example, that the deserving would not make their wants known to others, and therefore those who were seen begging were presumed to be undeserving (Ryan 2000: 690). In one of the most popular novels of the time, Dickens' *Bleak House* (1853), charity, especially towards those outside of Britain, was ridiculed in the characters of Mrs Jellyby and her daughter. These women were cautionary characters, exemplifying how attempting to solve the problems of others through poorly thought-through charity could lead to the neglect of those directly in your care. In keeping with the idea that charity should be sparingly and judiciously given, the Charity Organisation Society (COS) was

founded in 1869 to 'supervise the issue of the financial and material supplies provided by the upper classes as rationally as possible' and to 'avoid anarchical and useless charity' (Gente 2002: 257).

Victorian (1837-1901) liberal ideology supported the unregulated play of the market and resisted any state intervention on behalf of the poor. The Edwardian (1901-10) era saw major challenges to this ideology, and public thinking began to accommodate increasingly socialist ideals (Gente, 2002: 255-261). Initially, however, the idea that the state might take on responsibility for its citizens was widely opposed. It was still asserted by politicians that the problems of the poor were partly moral in character, and they argued that what was required to improve their situation was 'cooperation, spontaneous and whole-hearted, of the community at large' (Parliamentary Papers 1909, as cited in Gente 2002: 261), rather than an organised system of poverty relief. The so-called 'radical liberals' pushed for convergence between local philanthropic bodies and national public systems of help. The COS, set up under the previous system, initially resisted this move. However, it seems that their member charities played a key role in popularising the idea of helping others that the state was now ready and willing to take up (Gente 2002). Developments in both charity and government provision went hand-in-hand as part of broader ideological changes. In the 1910s, the COS was made responsible for carrying out the practical work of wealth redistribution that the government wanted to enforce (2002: 265). This changed the nature of its member charities considerably. Early philanthropy had encouraged a deferential attitude to donors and reinforced individualistic ideals, but charitable bodies now had a new role, increasingly being asked to cooperate with, and accommodate to, the national systems of poor relief (2002: 256). However, they were also able to point out, and to provide for, shortcomings in state provision. Thus, charities worked to support and improve upon the state system (Ryan 2002: 265).

Gente (2002) argues that it was the need for an able British army that forced the government into finally recognising and addressing the literally crippling poverty that many Britons were enduring. Of those who enlisted for the Boer Wars (1880–1881 and 1899–1902), only one third was declared fit for service (2002: 259). The impact of this situation on Britain's former image of superiority was, Gente argues, a driving-force for social change. Later, the First World War (1914-1919) would see rising parliamentary support for social welfare programs that would increase social stability and assimilate fractious groups that might otherwise threaten the war effort (2002: 262). It appears, therefore, that the state's willingness to set up systems of poor relief was directly linked to wider concerns about the nation's operation as a whole. Similarly, it has been argued that non-governmental charitable giving around this time was also partially motivated by a sense of national pride. When different national groups came into contact, for example as immigrants to America, they vied to be seen as successful.

In order to present this image, it was necessary for these groups to look after their members and to prevent them from begging (Ryan 2000: 267). Attention to the effects of poverty on society or the nation as a whole, rather than simply concern for the poor themselves, echoes earlier British history, in which interest in providing for the poor was driven at least partly by the desire to eliminate beggars, who presented a threat to other members of the society (Leonard 1900: 12). Leonard (1900:12) states that ‘the poor laws themselves were at least partly police measures’. These concerns, although they might be recognised as selfish, were an effective force for social change.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a more collective ethos emerged, which replaced the earlier ideologies of commodification and individualism (Clarke, Smith and Vidler, 2005: 168). Market forces were increasingly recognised as unstable and it was seen as important to ensure collective protection (2005: 168). When Atlee’s Labour government was voted in in 1945, the welfare state was vastly expanded, including the founding of the National Health Service in 1948. Charities who had been involved in providing financial support for the needy were somewhat cut back, but continued their activities in areas not prioritised by the state. Their role was thus to complement state provisions (Taylor 2004).

In more recent years, however, this expansion in state provision has been reversed. During the 1960s and 70s, public dissatisfaction with the welfare state grew. The Conservative Party, under Margaret Thatcher, won the general election in 1979, and began to retrench public services (Pierson 1994). Robson (1989: 149) notes how, as part of broader ideologically-driven changes, overall tax rates were reduced by the Conservative government, while charitable giving was encouraged by the introduction of tax breaks. Meanwhile, people were being encouraged, both rhetorically and through concrete changes to policy, to move away from their birthplaces to find work (Ginsburg 1989). This separation from networks of extended families enhanced a growing culture of individualism. It has been argued that in the absence of traditional ways of defining oneself, spending patterns, including giving, became increasingly important as compensatory symbols of identity (Belk 1984). During these years (from 1979 to 1990), the relationship between voluntary agencies and government was fundamentally changed again (Bills and Harris 1992). The UK government, along with those of many other Western countries, increasingly employed private (both for profit and non-profit) companies to provide services for its citizens (Billis 1993, Schmid 2003). In some areas, this meant that voluntary agencies had to compete with private companies in order to secure contracts (Chesterman and Fisher 2009). This resulted in a change of culture within the charitable sector (Palmer and Randall 2005: 46). An increase in voluntary agencies’ budgets, supplemented by the government, was accompanied by demands to target state-specified groups and to live up to increased scrutiny. Their work less frequently involved ‘self-help, community development, or campaigning work’ and increasingly included ‘the management of funded projects or the direct provision of services’ (Billis and Harris

1992: 214). On the one hand, this involvement of charities in the provision of services was welcomed by charities and scholars because non-governmental organisations were able to respond more reflexively to the needs of clients than government agencies (Schmid, 2003: 308). It has also meant that charities were able to secure long-term funding for their activities (Carmel and Harlock 2008: 161). On the other hand, for the charities themselves, having to act within a remit defined by governments severely impeded their ability to respond to other demands (2008: 164). While the retrenchment of public services during the Conservative years might have been 'incremental rather than revolutionary' (Pierson 1995: 173), its progress since then, as I detail below, has been unhalted.

Charities are often seen as being in tension with the state on the one hand (Fyfe 2005) and with businesses on the other (Staples 2004). Since the New Labour government (1997-2010), charities have increasingly been employed under contracts to provide services that were formerly state-operated (Clarke et al. 2005: 251). Even though the voluntary sector could still be considered a 'junior partner' to the state in the provision of welfare services during this time (2005: 251), this gap has lessened since then. These changes were also part of a broader ideological shift, which placed the responsibility for social problems again on the shoulders of private individuals and voluntary groups, rather than on the state (Billis and Harris 1992: 215). More broadly, public services have been (re)commodified and citizens redefined as consumers, for example in New Labour's introduction of the 'choice agenda' for public services including schools and hospitals (Jordan 2005). This tendency to see citizens as consumers has been extended since the election of the Conservative / Liberal Democrat coalition in May 2010, and the Conservative government in May 2015. A close working relationship between NGOs and governments has in many cases brought about a crisis of identity for the former, as the independence of their aims and accountability structures are compromised (Edwards and Hulme 1996; Najam 2000; Young 2006).

Reviewing the history of charitable giving in Britain reveals some similarities and some stark contrasts between age-old concerns and current ones. This brief historical exploration has highlighted an ongoing interest in the place that reason and / or emotion has in deciding whether and how to donate. In the Victorian era, wealthy individuals were encouraged to decide the fates of others based on their personal preferences, but overly sentimental approaches to giving were discouraged. Over a range of historical periods, different group-based identities, including national identities, have motivated charitable actions. Whether maintenance of the poor was a matter of helping fellow members of one's own community, as in the case of help-ales, or a means of protecting national interests in the case of wars, looking after disadvantaged others has often been linked to the need to survive as a group. Anxieties over the reliability of representations of suffering appears to predate the use of the mass media to encourage giving, in that such concerns were central in deciding whether to assist beggars, and which agencies could be best trusted with one's money. Current debates over

wealth redistribution are often couched in terms of an opposition between the socialist solution of the welfare state and the once liberal, now conservative, suggestion that such actions should be voluntary, often involving donations to charities (Levy 2002; Harris 2005). However, this review suggests that they have sometimes worked in tandem. Furthermore, while scholars such as Kapoor (2012) argue that current forms of charity fail to result in the genuine and sustainable redistribution of wealth - because they operate under the same logic of promotion and consumption as other businesses and are controlled by the unaccountable elites of the capitalist system - historical research suggests that charity can and has operate(d) under very different conditions.

The literature examined above is also united by a shared, though not always openly articulated, notion of what charity is. In all of the forms of charitable giving discussed above, two elements are present: firstly, what is offered is in the form of money; secondly, this money is distributed by some form of mediator. While this is not true in the case of giving money, food or clothes to beggars, the charitable organisations that set out to prevent the duplication of help to some recipients and the absence of it to others did so by mediating between the givers and the beneficiaries. In the case of help-ales, the money was transferred between members of the community at close range, but the crucial difference between this type of charitable action and simply giving money between friends is the involvement of a mediating collector and distributor of money. Of course, this review was focused on charity giving rather than volunteering, and the volunteering that formed a central part of these organisations is therefore omitted. However, it is worth noting that charity, understood in this way, has important consequences for the relationship between different social groups in that it introduces a form of distance. On the other hand, this brief review has also indicated that charity is not always divisive but is potentially socially cohesive, bringing communities together for a shared cause, whether that be a mutual friend or the building of a cathedral.

Literature on the history of charitable giving thus provides an informative counter-point to present debates around charitable giving. In the following section, I examine research on the current conditions for charities operating in the UK, before considering the role of charity events.

1.2 Conditions for charities in the UK in 2011

It is difficult to get an accurate picture of the current conditions that charities in the UK operate under, not least because what counts as charity is hard to determine. While the current legal definition put ‘the prevention or relief of poverty’ first in its list of possible ‘charitable purposes’ (Charities Act 2011), the list also includes less obvious charitable aims: ‘the advancement of education; the advancement of religion; [...] the advancement of amateur sport; [...] the promotion of the efficiency of the armed forces of the Crown or of the efficiency of the police, fire and rescue services or

ambulance services'. In both its range and its foci, this list echoes the one included in 'The Vision of Piers Plowman' in the 14th century. Given this diversity of what might be considered to constitute charitable practice, it is useful to look at the relationships between charities and other organizations in order to generate an impression of what charities are and are not, and to gain an idea of the particular pressures that they face at this time.

Studies within many disciplines have pointed to a changing relationship between business corporations and charities in recent years. On the one hand, businesses are increasingly called upon to display their altruism, in order to meet the requirements of consumers and shareholders (Saiia, Carroll and Buuchholtz 2003; Bakan 2004). On the other hand, giving by corporations is increasingly targeted at achieving both successful outcomes for beneficiaries and at enhancing these businesses' own position within the marketplace. Two key terms introduced by Post and Waddock (1995) refer to these different targets in corporate giving: 'philanthropic strategy' is used to refer to the practice of ensuring that giving is orderly and that the aims of the giving are met; 'strategic philanthropy' is used to refer to the requirement that giving should improve the position of the corporation in the marketplace. The latter is facilitated by 'corporate giving managers' whose remit is specifically to direct donations in a way that increases share prices (Saiia et al. 2003; Gautier and Pache, 2013). Some researchers as well as business leaders interpret strategic philanthropy as unproblematic, 'socially responsible business practice' (Saiia et al. 2003: 186), which sets up 'symbiotic' and 'win-win' relationships between corporations and the communities they operate in. However, the benefits of corporate giving appear to apply only to those who are within a position to affect the corporation by buying stocks or products. In this way, its benefits to society must always be limited. Nevertheless, research indicates that considerable time and money is being invested in strategic philanthropy.

While businesses are showing increasing interest in charitable giving, charities are also becoming more business-like. The multiplying number of charities in recent years has led to increased competition between, and commercialisation of, charitable organisations (Cottle and Nolan 2007: 865). This means that there is increased pressure to put across an image that will appeal to as many people and private companies as possible. Balabanis, Stables and Phillips (1997) used questionnaires to examine UK charities' market-orientation. They found that charities' orientation towards donors' needs and preferences had increased over the previous five years. In other words, these charities were progressively shaping what they did in response to what they thought donors and potential donors wanted, in the same way that businesses design their products and services to meet the demands of their customers. Research also suggests that charities are increasingly professionalising their communications strategies (Cottle and Nolan 2007, Boycoff and Goodman 2009, Goodman 2010) and

their products (Richley and Ponte 2008). Under such conditions, charities are less likely to engage in campaigns aimed at challenging existing attitudes (Vestergaard 2008).

However, the attempt to analyse charities from an economic point of view has pointed to a number of peculiarities in the relationship between consumers and producers in these organisations when compared with businesses. Unlike other private organisations providing public services, in the case of charities, the demand for goods is not increased by the ultimate consumers (beneficiaries) but by donors. There is a tacit agreement between donors and charities that more giving will provide an improved quality and level of these goods to end users (Callen 1994: 216), but in reality this output is radically altered by a number of other factors, such as the input of volunteers, for example. There is also much evidence to suggest that when funding to given charities is increased by bodies such as governments, the amount of private donations given to these charities is not lessened, or ‘crowded out’ (Callen 1994: 225). So, for example, if the government took over the provision of some of a given charity’s services, this would not necessarily result in the charity gaining less money from individuals. Donors cannot, therefore, be seen as filling funding gaps left by governments, for example. Rather than being exclusively interested in the provision of goods and services, they are also motivated by values and emotions. This is something I explore further in section 1.4.

As well as the recent changes in the relationship between charities and both the public and private sectors detailed above, legal constraints on what counts as a charity have also altered the remit of charities in ways that curtail their activities. The 2006 Charities Act specified that charities could not pursue political goals. This excludes not only working on behalf of political parties but also campaigning for any changes to the UK law (Malik 2008). More recently, on October 9th 2013, despite fierce opposition, MPs narrowly voted in favour of the Lobbying Law, which stops all organisations, including charities, from carrying out campaign work in the run-up to elections. UK-based charities are thus barred from being political during these times. This means that the health and welfare structures provided by the government cannot be explicitly criticised, which restricts charities’ potential to complement and enhance welfare provision that they have had at other times.

For charities that are independent from government contracts, some of these problems do not exist. Nevertheless, all charities are required to meet legal criteria, and they are under pressure to respond to the shifting demands of donors and to adapt to an increasingly competitive ‘marketplace’. One of the key ways in which charities can compete effectively is to better understand how people are motivated to give and to adapt their communication accordingly. In section 1.4, I present an overview of some of the key findings in research on charitable giving, and charitable acts more generally, within the field of psychology. For now, I consider a particular form of giving that has become increasingly popular for charities seeking to generate donations and awareness: mediated charity events.

1.3 Charity events: mediation and money

As suggested in section 1.1, charity events have been taking place in different forms throughout history. Since the ‘help-ales’ of the 1000s, people have come together to carry out fundraising activities that seem to have little to do with the problems they seek to address. In the twentieth century, charity events that appeared more like those carried out today began to take place. Designated regular fundraising event days, such as British Red Cross’ annual ‘Our Day’, started in 1915 to raise money for the WW1 war effort (British Red Cross: 1918). Sporting events became increasingly popular from the 1990s onwards (Higgins and Lauzon 2003: 365). Events involving celebrities and / or the mass media have also become prevalent. Many cite the 1971 ‘Concert for Bangladesh’ as the first of a new genre of charity event (e.g. Einolf, Philbrick and Slay 2013: 246, van Leeuwen, et al. 2013: 226). The show’s scale was unprecedented and, in its video recorded format, the event was made available to view worldwide. Although smaller fundraising media events had been taking place in America since 1950 (Einolf et al. 2013: 246), this international event, along with the even bigger ‘Live Aid’ telethon for victims of the Ethiopian famine in 1985, has been cited as changing the nature of reactions to charity. In particular, these events made giving part of a media spectacle, where the outpouring of public emotion was encouraged (Cohen 2001: 179).

Charity media events have become a particularly important site for the mediation and mediatisation of giving. Mediation can be defined as the mass media becoming the primary channel through which communication occurs between parties, such as between charities, or political institutions, and the public (Strömbäck 2008: 231). Mass media channels stand between the author and the audience, mediating between them. Mediatisation, by contrast, refers to the process of social or political activities increasingly acquiring characteristics associated with mass media (2008: 232). In other words, ‘media logic’, in relation to the organisation and presentation of material, comes to dominate the way in which information is both presented and interpreted (Altheide and Snow 1979: 10, Strömbäck 2008: 233). For example, ‘sound bites’ replace in-depth analysis (Cottle and Nolan 2007: 866), and images of suffering others are replaced with those of celebrities (Goodman 2010). There is evidence to suggest that both terms can be applied to aspects of charities’ communication. Charities’ donors and recipients gain knowledge and awareness of each other primarily through the media (mediation). It has also been argued that ‘media logic’ has come to dictate some of the activities of charities (mediatisation). For example, Cottle and Nolan (2007: 863-4) carried out a series of interviews with communications managers and media officers who worked in world-leading aid NGOs. They documented how, in order to attract much-needed funds in an increasingly competitive market, humanitarian organisations were adapting their practices and communications in order to

facilitate press coverage, sometimes at the cost of compromising their broader missions, such as promoting global humanitarianism.

Mediatisation can be driven by the desire to make charity media more effective. For example, Eckel, Grossman and Milano (2007) found that there can be an ‘overloading’ effect, in the sense that viewers become less responsive when given too much information. Charities have responded to such research by making their communication more user-friendly. Adopting such an approach, however, can have wider consequences, as it is sometimes at odds with achieving broader social change. Goodman (2010: 105) argues that the Fair Trade movement has become less challenging and transgressive as it has become more market-savvy. He observes that limiting the amount of information that consumers are given on packaging, while making products more appealing, also obscures the relationships between producers and consumers that the movement initially set out to expose (2010: 105). This is a central dilemma for many social and political movements. While working within the capitalist system may provide the fastest route to achievable success, it also plays into a system that is hampered by existing inequalities.

For many scholars, the depictions of poverty used in charity events represent a similar triumph of pragmatism over idealism. Indeed these events were seen by some as a backwards step in the battle for long-term equality. As Cohen (2001: 178-9) puts it:

Fund-raisers belonged to the old charity discourse of “pragmatic amorality” – patronizing, ethnocentric, fatalistic (poverty just happens, like natural disasters). They were “merchants of misery” who would use any images to grab attention and shame audiences into giving money. By contrast, educationalists talked about empowerment, structural causation, political change and social justice.

Criticism of what has been dubbed ‘consumer aid’ in events like Live Aid has become widespread (Cohen 2001: 180). The involvement of celebrities and the mass media in such events, it is argued, signalled the de-politicisation of action on suffering. This is because these celebrities tend not to engage long-term in, or provide structural solutions to, problematic situations, and because, in shows where they are present, broader political issues are often side-lined in favour of emotional responses and positivity (Driessens et al. 2012: 721). However, the politically-divisive miners’ strikes of the 1980s gained financial support using a similar format, by persuading popular musicians to play benefit gigs and release fundraising songs and albums (Tranmer 2012: 82). This suggests that it is the added element of mediation, rather than the use of entertainment or celebrities per se, that is linked to depoliticised responses to suffering (perhaps driven by a desire to appeal to a wider audience).

Another aspect of charity media events that has been identified as problematic by some theorists is their request for action in the form of donating money. On the one hand, asking for financial contributions to a cause has the advantage of giving viewers a clear form of action to take. Boltanski (1999: 153) argues that it is this orientation towards action that separates the depiction of real events from those of fictional events, because, while one might watch a representation of suffering and respond emotionally whether the representation is real or not, it is only when real situations are represented, for example in charity events, that viewers are usually called upon to respond, for example by giving money. Collecting donations, rather than requesting other forms of help, allows charities to decide how best to channel resources, because money can be used to purchase a range of goods and services for beneficiaries. Charities are well placed to make such decisions because they often have well-established relationships with the communities they seek to help (Seu 2010). Many researchers, however, have noted the shortcomings of appeals that garner only monetary support. Unlike giving time, giving money is more often prompted by acute situations such as natural disasters and wars than by chronic problems (Polman 2011). It has been associated with the will to find a quick fix, which is unsuitable for more wide-ranging problems (Driessens et al. 2012).

The act of giving can also be seen as donor-oriented in a number of ways. Perhaps the most transparent way that donors benefit from making donations is the avoidance of tax by charitable givers (Robson 1989). As discussed above, many businesses are also engaged in straightforwardly self-oriented giving via the well-established practice of ‘strategic philanthropy’, in which donations to charities are made only in ways that will improve their own position in the market-place (Saiia, Carroll and Buuchholtz 2003). Businesses can enhance the position of their stakeholders by broadcasting their support for charity events in ways that enhance their image, while failing to adopt truly socially responsible practices (Devinney 2009). It is certainly the case that apparently generous donations can mask the conditions which are sometimes attached to them. For example, the Canadian government’s promise to match the donations its citizens made to disaster relief charities in the wake of Haiti’s 2010 earthquake appeared generous, but made little difference to the earthquake survivors themselves, as the money was used to cancel some of Haiti’s world debt rather than for relief efforts (Mason 2011). It is important not to undermine the very great work that has been done by charities receiving donations or underemphasize the complexities of seeking an alternative. However, it should be noted that there are compelling reasons to look for complementary ways of helping others.

The way that charities communicate to donors in these media fundraising events has also been interpreted as being giver- rather than beneficiary- focused. Tester (2001: 123) argues that the common practice of showing the figure raised at fundraising events prompts a sense of competition between the current fundraising efforts and those of previous years or of other charities. This preoccupation with fundraising success as opposed to outcomes for beneficiaries is part of a

problematic separation between the money raised and its uses. Others have argued that, when we donate to others, we assert our individual or cultural superiority over those we assist (Berg 2005; Mason 2011). This is partly because gifts that are not reciprocated are understood as resulting in a loss of status for the recipient in many societies (Mauss 1990; Belk 1984; Berg 2005). Mauss uses 'potlatch' ceremonies performed between indigenous tribes of the Northwest Coast of Canada as an example. At these gift-giving feasts, when one group or individual gives something to another, the second group or individual is expected to reciprocate at least in kind. In the event that this does not happen, the first group is rewarded and the second punished by being awarded differing levels of status in relation to each other. In any society, Mauss argues, the apparently free gift is therefore never truly free; either it is returned, or the recipient must accept his inferiority in relation to the giver. This rule has also been assumed to apply in state-wide charity exchanges, so that when capitalist countries give money to countries with different political systems, it can be interpreted as a way to display the pre-eminence of a capitalist system (Berg 2005; Seu 2010). It is worth noting, however, that this conception is tied up with the assumption that the individual bears some responsibility for his or her conditions. If reliance on help was not seen as a personal failure, the inability to give in return would not have implications for the status of the recipient.

A further criticism that has been levelled at charities' use of monetary gifts is that they impersonalise both the donor and the recipient and therefore do nothing to encourage a better understanding of each other (Boltanski 1999: 18). This view is part of a wider theory of charity that suggests that it minimises real interactions between donors and recipients and circumvents the possibility for political change. I suggested in the historical overview that this boundary-creating aspect of charity is a feature of modern, rather than necessarily of all, giving. It is however, an important aspect of charity in the twenty-first century. Boltanski (1999) explores this issue extensively. As I explore in section 1.5, his theory has been used in research on the discourse of charity, but only in the context of international charities. Whether charity telethons contribute to the distancing of donors from beneficiaries, or simply reflect it by taking as their subject socially (and often physically) distant groups, is a question that remains unanswered.

1.4 The psychology of charity: why give and to whom?

In this part of the literature review, I summarise some of the key research on charitable giving within Psychology. I present some important areas of debate and highlight influential studies as potentially relevant to the present research. Many psychologists have designed studies aimed at maximising the success of appeals by charities in terms of the number of donors and the amount donated. Early examples include Cialdini and Schroeder's (1976) experiment which found that, when asking people to contribute to a charitable cause, saying that 'even a penny would help' resulted in more people

contributing, as objections based on the cost to them of donating were lessened. The work of providing a thorough overview of all of the existing findings in relation to who gives and under what circumstances has been undertaken by Bekkers and Wiepking (2010 and 2011). Based on an extensive literature review, they identify eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving: '(1) awareness of need; (2) solicitation; (3) costs and benefits; (4) altruism; (5) reputation; (6) psychological benefits; (7) values; (8) efficacy' (2010). They identify typical donors as having:

affiliation with a religion (especially Judaism and Protestantism), stronger religious involvement, a higher age, a higher level of education, income and wealth, home ownership, a better subjective financial position, being married, having children, having a paid job, higher cognitive ability, having prosocial personality characteristics such as empathy, and growing up with parents with higher education, income, religiosity, and volunteering activity (2011: 6).

In the present review, I focus on research about the ethical dimension of charity and the features of charity communication that are most likely to produce successful outcomes.

In a seminal laboratory study, Small and Loewenstein (2003) found that participants were more likely to compensate others who they had been told had lost money in the past than they were to give to others who they had been told would lose money in the future. Further, in a field study, they found that 'people contributed more to a charity when [informed that] their contributions would benefit a family that had already been selected from a list than when told that the family would be selected from the same list' (2003: 5). This has been dubbed the 'identified victim effect'. A shortcoming of this study is that, in each of these cases, people might think that a future event might not happen (even when told it is certain), whereas events that have happened are definite. However, Small and Loewenstein's findings are supported by the other studies that have found that identifying information has increased the likelihood of giving. For example, Kogut and Ritov (2005) asked students to contribute to a cause for children with life-threatening diseases. Some were given information about an individual child and others about a group of children. Participants who were informed about a single victim reported significantly higher levels of distress than those who were informed about a group. Strikingly, participants also gave more money to single victims than they did to groups (2005: 164). This suggests that if charities single out individuals as case studies, they are likely to garner more financial support (2005: 157).

While seeing people as members of a group rather than as individuals might make giving less likely, being made aware that people who are suffering belong to the same group as you has the opposite effect. Levine and Thompson (2004) found that activating different forms of locality-based identity impacts upon the likelihood of donating to those who have suffered from a natural disaster. They asked participants to donate to victims of (fictional) hurricanes located either within or outside

Europe, after making either European or British identities salient. Participants whose European (rather than British) identity had been made salient were more likely to give to the disaster which occurred in Europe than in South America (2004: 237). Those in the British-identity salience condition were not significantly more likely to give to either European or South American disasters (2004: 238). It is worth noting, however, that Levine and Thompson's findings are not limited to national identities. Therefore, even when an identity that is made salient is not particularly strongly felt otherwise (such as 'European-ness', rather than 'Britishness') this shared identity can still affect people's willingness to help others (2004: 241). Other studies have also suggested that the extent to which presentations highlight similarity between viewers and sufferers also affects whether the former are more or less likely to empathise with the latter (Batson et al. 1997). If this is the case, then presentations that could invoke feelings of similarity, for example by making reference to shared humanity, might also be successful. Encouraging people to see themselves as citizens of the world, for example, might make them more likely to give internationally. However, it remains the case that intra-national giving is the norm in practice in both the UK and US. UK giving is primarily to UK-recipient charities (Charities Aid Foundation 2012), and giving by US citizens is higher to US-beneficiary charities than to charities elsewhere for both natural and manmade disasters (Einolf, Philbrick and Slay, 2013: 253). This bias in giving is not, however, reflected in much of the research on charitable giving, perhaps because its starting-point is often the idea that donating to people in other countries is the ultimate altruistic act, as its positive consequences, if there are any, are untraceable. Whatever the reason, this is a notable gap in the literature that is worth addressing in the present research.

While the above research suggests that the norm is in-group giving, which is expected to benefit the self in some way, much attention has been focused on addressing whether 'pure' (non-egoistic) altruism exists. A range of studies have been designed to answer this question, often looking at a range of helping behaviours, such as giving assistance to someone who appears to be unwell in the street, as well as giving money to people who are described and / or pictured. Notably, studies on assisting people who are seen in person often seek to explain 'failure to respond' to needy others, while giving to charities is more often put forward as behaviour that needs to be accounted for. Milinski, Semmann and Krambeck (2002), for example, view people donating to 'poor people outside the social group' as 'an evolutionary puzzle' (2002: 881) and attempt to explain it in their research. Factors explaining the 'failure' to respond in person include the phenomenon 'diffusion of responsibility' (Darley and Latané 1968), whereby observers fail to respond when they are aware of other bystanders because their sense of personal responsibility for the situation is diminished. Milgram (1970) argued that 'cognitive overload' explained the reduced level of response from people in cities compared with those in quieter places. In other words, people have to pay less attention to what's going on around them, including cries for help, in order to function in this environment. Other

factors that influence helping behaviour are whether the problems appear a) clear or ambiguous and b) serious or non-serious (Clark and Word 1972).

While the above studies go some way towards accounting for why people fail to help those in front of them, studies on mediated giving have revealed some reasons for helping more distant others. Milinski et al. (2002) explored the idea that donors might reap rewards from their own generosity to others at a later date, for example by gaining a reputation of being socially reliable. They used a computerised game in which players were given the opportunity of giving money to other players (which would cost the donor less than the recipient gained in monetary terms), or to a charitable organisation (UNICEF). If the latter happened, this information would appear to other members. After the 16th round of this game, participants were given the opportunity to select a fellow player for a position of delegate at the student council. Findings suggested that there were financial benefits to giving to other group members, because participants who did this were more likely to receive money from other players. Players who donated to UNICEF were more likely to receive nominations for the student council. Milinski et al. (2002: 882) conclude that charity donors gain a good reputation from acts of giving, and people who are generous to members of their social group secure the help of others later on. As in any experimental research with people, the study suffers from a number of external validity problems, such as the lack of real consequences for players of being generous as the money was not theirs, and the experiment's reliance on charity being made public, which it often is not. However, it does point to a number of positive consequences for people of giving publicly or of displaying their generosity.

Other researchers have approached the question of why we give to mediated others by focusing on aspects of givers' personalities. Harper et al. (1990) asked 89 participants to rate their beliefs about the world on Lerner's (1980) 'Just World Scale'. Participants also rated their level of agreement with different statements about the causes of Third World Poverty. They found that there was a significant correlation between belief in a just world and blaming the poor for Third World poverty. In other words, people who thought that the world was fair thought that the poor were therefore responsible for their own conditions. This indicates that making people more compassionate about the suffering of others might involve challenging their broader beliefs about how the world works. Conversely, attempting to elicit sympathy from people without challenging the idea that people are responsible for their own fate is unlikely to be successful.

Beliefs about both donors and potential recipients are, however, only one part of the picture. The scientific study of charitable giving has both led and been led by the idea that emotions, as well as thoughts, have the ability to instigate giving. The link between representations of suffering and emotion was initially posited by Coke, Batson and McDavis (1978), who suggested that the desire to

help a person in need is prompted by taking that person's perspective and the subsequent arousal of empathetic feelings. This is called the empathy-altruism hypothesis. A person's feelings of empathy are seen as what causes his or her altruistic action, whether or not this action also results in a 'side effect' of a positive impact on his or her own feelings (e.g. Batson et al. 1989). Although the idea that emotional responses are linked to giving behaviours has been widely accepted, the nature of the specific emotional state that is responsible for prompting altruism has been contested.

Empathy has been defined as an emotion in which the pain of the other is imaginatively shared (Dymond 1949: 127). It is contrasted with *sympathy*, in which the other's emotion is recognised, but responded to with a separate emotion, such as pity (Keen 2006: 209). Empathy is also contrasted with *identification*, an idea originating in psychoanalysis, in which a person models himself after another. I examine these key concepts in more detail in order to develop my own framework for understanding data about intra-national charity in chapter 3.

In the literature about charitable giving, these distinctions have been seen as very important. Many have argued that negative or self-centred emotions are more predictive of altruistic behaviours than empathy is. Cialdini et al. (1987) argue that altruistic acts serve only to relieve people of the negative feelings evoked when they empathise with others. They found that helping behaviour was more strongly predicted by levels of sadness reported by participants than by their reported feelings of empathy (1987: 749). When they convinced participants that because of a drug they could take, their negative mood would not be changed by helping others, these participants did not help others, despite being empathetically aroused. This alternative to the empathy-altruism hypothesis is called the negative-state relief model. According to this view, people give because charity campaigns upset them and they want to feel better, not because they emotionally connect with the people they see. If this was true, then it would benefit charities to make viewers feel upset by what they saw, rather than (or as well as) to encourage them to empathise with the people depicted in their campaigns.

The negative-state relief model was contradicted by Shaw, Batson and Todd (1994), who found that participants actively sought to avoid empathy-inducing situations that might lead them to be motivated to help. In other words, they avoided giving by avoiding feeling empathy. This response was most likely when participants were made aware that, after hearing an appeal, they would be given the opportunity to provide costly help than when they were unaware that they would be asked to help, or when they were aware that they would be asked for help but that the amount requested would be small. This suggests that empathy and helping are directly linked, rather than being mediated through feelings of personal sadness. More recently, however, Kogut and Ritov (2005: 164) found that reported ratings of distress were positively correlated with a willingness to contribute money for a child / children's medical treatment, but ratings of empathy were not. Their interpretation of this

finding was that, whereas there is social pressure to express empathy, which might mediate between the emotional arousal felt and what is reported, expressions of distress reflect emotional arousal more accurately (2005: 162). Cialdini et al. (1987) see this difference as reflecting two comorbid but distinct feelings, only one of which (distress) affects helping behaviour.

Regardless of the nature of the emotion considered to be most significant, these studies all support the idea that emotional reactions are the root cause of helping behaviours. This has important consequences for how charities choose to communicate. If certain emotions are predictive of giving, it makes sense for charities to design their communication around eliciting these emotions, rather than around providing certain types of information. The way that charities communicate visually is central to their ability to elicit emotions. Burt and Strongman (2005: 571) found that images of children were particularly emotive for respondents, and that 'images showing negative emotions generated significantly larger donations'. However, this was not the only outcome. Just as pre-existing beliefs about the world influence readings of charity communication (Harper et al. 1990), the precise nature of the images used by charities can also affect our beliefs. McWha and Carr (2009) found that using cropped images with little background information significantly increased the chances of attributing blame to the poor amongst some of their respondents. Analytic work on images themselves rather than on viewers' responses also highlights the potential for emotive images of powerless victims to dehumanise and disempower charities' beneficiaries (see Chouliaraki 2010, pp. 111-112 for an overview of these arguments). The point that emphasising the distress of others in an attempt to evoke emotional responses to them can detract from the humanity of sufferers is also made about verbal appeals. Boltanski, Chouliaraki and others argue that emotional appeals 'displace[...] the long-term concern with establishing structures of justice with the urgent concern for doing something for those who suffer' (2010: 108).

As well as doing a possible disservice to represented participants, another disadvantage of relying on people's emotional responses to compel action towards others is that this resource is exhaustible. The notion of compassion fatigue appears frequently in literature about mediated charity. The term was initially coined to describe the diminishing ability to nurture others, particularly in professional settings such as nursing, as a result of secondary post-traumatic stress disorder (Figley 1995: xiv), but it has since been applied to the idea that viewers' emotional and practical responses to the suffering of others lessen after repeated exposure to it (Driessens et al. 2012: 717). Some empirical evidence in support of this hypothesis has been found (Kinnick et al. 1996), but it seems to be dependent on individuals' initial responses to certain issues. If, for example, participants were initially unsympathetic to a certain issue, they would be more likely to report compassion fatigue over campaigns in relation to it than to those that they were initially sympathetic to (1996: 702). In other words, we are less likely to suffer from compassion fatigue if we truly care in the first place.

As well as looking at what conditions prompt compassion fatigue, some researchers have also studied the reasons given by individuals for their (lack of) response to appeals. This was the approach taken by Seu (2010), who used focus groups to explore viewers' responses to an Amnesty International appeal. She found that when viewers attempted to account for their decision not to respond to others' suffering, they often argued that this suffering was being misrepresented in some way. Seu (2010: 443) argues that when people choose to discuss the problems with a particular campaign, it is often a way of deflecting responsibility for responding to its message. According to her, criticisms of the representativeness of charity campaigns function to facilitate a collective denial of serious issues. On the other hand, both Cohen (2001) and Boltanski (2003) see such arguments as an inevitable reaction by viewers to media representations that present situations as hopeless and make the reliability of their messages impossible to gauge.

Chouliaraki (2010: 112) breaks down 'compassion fatigue' into two categories, one of which leaves the viewer feeling powerless (and therefore less likely take action) and the other which is a negative feeling directed at the channel or campaign. She argues that viewers must take responsibility for the latter, whereas the former highlights the failings of charity media. These two aspects appear to work in tandem. In response to demands from the public to alter their messages, charities sometimes make their campaigns less challenging and more donor-focused (Vestergaard 2008; Chouliaraki 2010). In turn, the public becomes even less tolerant of disturbing depictions of others.

For charities deciding how to communicate their message, there are thus conflicting factors to take into account. On the one hand, shocking, guilt-provoking scenes might create the best outcomes in terms of donations. On the other hand, as these formats become familiar to audiences, they become less effective in evoking the desired responses as they leave viewers feeling negative not only about the situations shown but also towards the charities themselves as sources of this information. When charities focus on the question of what communicative strategies are likely to produce the best financial outcomes, they are likely to become less inclined to confront viewers with realities that are unpleasant, but unlikely to persuade people to give. Television companies are also reluctant to show images repeatedly that might deter viewers. Commercial ownership of channels also makes them less likely to provoke their audiences, as vital sponsorship deals are often at stake (Gamson et al. 1992). Both of these pressures privilege the immediate responses of television bosses and potential donors over the more gradual process of educating viewers to inspire lasting change. In these ways, the need to elicit support in the short-term might make the longer-term aims of charities harder to achieve.

In this section, I have focussed mainly on psychological studies of charity, which use experimental methods to discover the conditions under which people are most likely to give. Such research

provides valuable insights into the mechanisms behind specific instances of giving, but it is focussed on solving particular problems within the process of giving, such as how to elicit donations, rather than on shedding light on the system as a whole. In indicating some potential drawbacks of adopting approaches aimed exclusively at eliciting donations, I have briefly mentioned some studies on the discourse of giving. In the following section, I look at this area of study in more detail.

1.5 The discourse of charity: how is charitable action represented?

So far, the studies considered here have examined charity media only insofar as it led, or failed to lead, to emotional responses and giving behaviours. These responses are, however, not the only possible outcomes of viewing charities' representations of others. It is logical to assume that charity media contributes to the spread of ideologies in the same way that other media do. It is this ideological aspect of discourse that most of the studies on charity discourse are concerned with. Gee (1999: 7) highlights the contrast between 'discourse' understood simply as language-in-use and 'discourse' used to refer to the combination of language with other social practices (behaviour, values, ways of thinking, etc.), by referring to the former as 'discourse' and to the latter as 'Discourse'. This is a useful distinction to make. Although I will not use the capitalised form in the rest of the thesis, it is Discourse that I will be interested in examining and unveiling.

This strand of research on charity media has been picked up by a number of scholars. For example, Driessens, Joye, and Biltereyst (2012) analyse the 2010 Dutch and Flemish Haiti relief shows with a view to laying bare the assumptions that they make about different social actors. They argue that the Dutch show in particular contains elements of patriotism, as it sought to unify nationals (2012: 720) and to portray the Netherlands in a positive light, while Haiti was represented with less specificity, to the extent that it might easily be interchanged with other beneficiary countries (2012: 721). They also point out that the representation of disasters as short-term problems that can be addressed by relief aid is ideological in itself. They do not, however, examine the extent to which their own readings are shared by the shows' audiences.

Vestergaard (2008) finds a different ideology in charity discourse. Her analysis of an Amnesty International campaign (one that does not call for any specific action on the part of its audience) focuses on how viewers of the advert are encouraged to position themselves in relation to those suffering from human rights abuses. She argues that the ad interpellates its audience as humanitarians (2008: 488), but, by articulating human rights abuses as something that might one day threaten them, rather than something that only affects others, it does so egocentrically (2008: 490). Again, her own reading, which is informed by Luc Boltanski's (1999) theory of 'the politics of pity', is not accompanied by an examination of viewers' interpretations. Chouliaraki (e.g. 2006a; 2006b, 2013)

likewise draws extensively on Boltanski's theory of pity in a series of elaborate and thorough interpretations of different types of media representation of distant suffering. She too uses close textual readings, rather than audience-generated data.

Researchers have theorised the power balance in relationships between television programmes and their viewers in radically different ways. Early theories saw the mass media as powerful manipulators of social signs, to which viewers were helplessly subjected (e.g. Lasswell 1927: 627). Later work, such as that by Katz and Lazarsfeld (2009 [1955]), asserted the importance of a viewer's social network in guiding her interpretation of media texts. McQuail, Blumler and Brown (1972) suggested that we should look at the problem in a different way, focusing not on how people are influenced but on how individuals use the mass media to fulfil their own ends. Hall (1980) and Morley (1980) argued that media texts propose certain understandings, but that viewers actively decode them in preferred, negotiated or oppositional ways. Such theories have been matched by counterarguments reasserting the power of the mass media to shape public opinion (e.g. McCombs 2013). Another strand of research has suggested that audiences with different relationships to a given topic accept the assumptions of mass media to different extents. For example, Richardson (1994) found that a documentary programme on poverty in Britain was interpreted more sympathetically by those who had experienced poverty recently than by older people who had experienced poverty only in their youths. As well as changes in theory, it is also likely that the reality of the power balance between the producers of mass media and their audience has shifted over time, particularly with the dawn of the Internet age. Even if the direction of influence is unidirectional from media outlets to audiences, it is worth reassessing or reconfirming this influence in the form of audience research.

A number of academics have sought to analyse audiences' discursive responses to mass media representations of suffering. Hoijer (2004) draws on viewer responses to violent news in order to explore what she describes as the 'discourse of global compassion', again informed by Boltanski's theory of pity. She uses participants' self-reporting to examine the differences between male and female responses to distant suffering. However, she does this without exploring the potentially performed aspect of these identities. Another problem is that Hoijer interprets her interviewees' reports as giving transparent access to their feelings (2004: 520). She argues that her participants tend not to question the authenticity of the depictions of others they see, and that they experience documentaries as if they give direct access to reality (2004: 521). Seu's (2010) participants, by contrast, frequently question the reality of and motivations behind the depictions of others in the Amnesty campaign they are shown. Seu (2010: 445) argues that her participants put forward critical views of the campaign in order to present themselves in a positive light, while accounting for their decision not to respond to it. The difference between Hoijer's and Seu's participants in terms of their tendency to read the media critically can be explained at least in part by the difference in the type of

media they were asked to provide opinions on: Hoijer's data were interview and focus group responses to television news programmes on war or in general, which are perhaps regarded as more objective, while Seu's focus group participants were asked about a charity advert. Seu (2010: 445) notes with frustration her participants' cynical responses to the Amnesty appeal, in which the charity was represented as emotionally manipulative and categorised as being the same as other charities, notably including the expectation that donations would be requested (even though in this instance they were not). Like Hoijer (2004), Seu seeks to uncover broader discourses through the talk produced by her participants. However, by focusing on the production of accounts by her participants, Seu produces a more convincing analysis. She views people as being motivated to provide socially-acceptable reasons for their stances. By identifying a number of ways in which arguments are put forward, she is also able to identify some of the reasons for not giving money that are seen as acceptable in this social group. Although they analyse mediated rather than 'everyday' talk, Hanson-Easey and Augoustinos (2011) adopt a similar approach. They interpret radio talk show callers as being involved in acts of self-positioning, in which viewpoints that might be interpreted as prejudiced are softened, using what they term 'sympathy talk'. In the methodology chapter, I explore the idea of accounts more fully. For now, it is worth noting that examining talk about media has been instrumental in extending our knowledge about the discourse of charity.

As I mentioned in section 1.4, most of the studies on charitable giving in the field of psychology are concerned with inter- rather than intra- national giving. This bias is also present in the field of discourse studies, with many researchers studying adverts for international charities or international telethons, but relatively few examining intra-national giving, and those few are generally focused on specific issues, such as the representation of people with disabilities in charity campaigns (e.g. Barnett and Hammond 1999). Many charity discourse scholars refer to Boltanski's (1999) notion of 'distant suffering' in their analysis, often without being precise about what this notion means (e.g. Hoijer 2004; Driessens et al. 2012; Cottle and Nolan 2007; Seu 2010). Boltanski (1999: 5) specifies that 'distant suffering' is not synonymous with international suffering and suggests that many different types of distance, including those which can occur between people within one country, can bring about a similarly detached relationship between sufferers and those who observe them. The absence of literature addressing this idea is particularly significant as so many scholars engage with and modify the concept of 'distant suffering' (most notably Chouliaraki, 2013). In chapter 3, I construct a framework for analysing data on intra-national giving, drawing heavily on Boltanski's theory. This framework will be suitable for application to both verbal and visual data. In the aspect I examine in chapter 6 in particular, I draw on social semiotics (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). Although multimodal aspects of representations of suffering, especially visual aspects, have been analysed by Chouliaraki (2006: 268), I suggest that social semiotics in particular provides a means of operationalising abstract ideas that have been linked to pity.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a broad overview of studies on charitable giving. I started by presenting an impression of the history of charity in the UK. This revealed that, contrary to some current conceptions, the state and charities have, historically, often worked in tandem, if not in collaboration (Gente 2000). Unlike in modern times, the virtue of reason was extolled over emotion in the 18th century (Ryan 2000). It was also discovered that concerns about the reliability of representations that are a central concern for modern givers precede charities' representation in the mass media. I then considered the current conditions for charities operating in the UK. Key issues included the need for the voluntary sector to accommodate to the shrinking welfare state (Clarke et al. 2005; Fyfe 2005), the proliferation of charities (Cottle and Nolan 2007) and the resulting need to become more business-like (Balabanis et al. 1997). Thirdly, I explored mediated giving and indicated a number of key critiques of charity media events and giving as a mode of action in itself.

In section 1.4, research on individuals' motivations for giving was explored. Of particular note was the idea that some sort of emotion, rather than reason, is involved in triggering philanthropic responses to others. This led to two other important research concerns: how to trigger these emotions most effectively, and the degree to which these emotions might be exhaustible. Literature on the role of charity media in (re)producing discourses about others was then reviewed. I highlighted a significant gap in this literature: its failure to address the potential influence of representations of fellow nationals in charity media. I also indicated that an important question that remains unanswered is whether telethons might contribute to the distancing of donors from beneficiaries or simply reflect the existence of this distance.

Returning to the research questions put forward in the introduction, I suggest that the following more specific questions remain unanswered in relation to intra-national giving:

What sort of relationship does CiN suggest should occur between its donors and beneficiaries?

What effect does mediation have on this relationship?

How does a shared national identity between these groups alter the relationship?

What sorts of actions are presented as possible in redressing the suffering of others?

As a whole, this literature review has indicated a number of tensions between different ideas about who should be helped and in what way. It has also raised some questions about the distance between donors and recipients. Historical research indicated that social distance between donors and recipients is not a necessary condition of charity, but a number of contemporary scholars have suggested that distance is increased by money and mediation, which are the corollaries of modern philanthropy. In

chapter 3, I engage with more literature on issues of representation, and in particular on the distance between donors and recipients. I build a framework for analysing my data, based on a theory that unites the key ideas identified in my literature review: emotion versus reason, the use money as a form of action, anxiety about the reliability of representations, the role of national and other group-based identities in deciding who to help. I outline my methodological approach in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Methodology

In this chapter, I outline the procedure I adopted to address my research questions. I detail the rationale for gathering certain types of data and the means by which it was collected, transcribed and analysed. In the literature review, I identified an important gap in the research on charitable giving: its failure to address how other members of one's nation are represented in charity media and in discourse on charity more generally. I suggested that this literature left the following questions inadequately answered in relation to intra-national giving, and that the present research might begin by attempting to address them:

What sort of relationship does CiN suggest should occur between its donors and beneficiaries?

What effect does mediation have on this relationship?

How does a shared national identity between these groups alter the relationship?

What sorts of actions are presented as possible in redressing the suffering of others?

2.1 Data collection

My aim was to gather data that would allow me to carry out an in-depth analysis of the discourse of intra-national charitable giving in the UK. In terms of Gee's (1999:7) distinction between 'discourse' on the one hand and 'Discourse' on the other, it is the latter that the present study is designed to access. In other words, I am interested in the broad ways of framing issues of disadvantage that were circulating in UK society in 2011, rather than focusing on particular instances of communication about more specific topics. Practical constraints, including a limited time scale, prevented me from collecting and analysing a very large data set. Instead, I chose to select examples of different types of data that might indicate wider discourses, but which I would be able to subject to in-depth analysis.

My decision to study a media event as well as focus group talk reflects an assumption that mass media have a role to play in producing and reproducing discourse on charitable giving. Research suggests that other factors, such as our beliefs about the world (Harper et al. 1990) and educational backgrounds (McWha and Carr 2009) are likely to play an important role in how we conceive of disadvantaged others. However, the way that information is presented to us also has an effect. For example, when individual victims are identified, we are more motivated to relieve their suffering than when information about a group is presented to us (Kogut and Ritov 2005). I therefore consider mass media representations to be an important influence on our attitudes towards and ways of talking about others. Media data on the topic of charity is plentiful, and a range of potential sources was considered,

including newspaper articles, printed charity flyers, television campaigns and interviews or questionnaires with the producers of this material.

From these potential sources, I selected a UK charity telethon called 'Children in Need' as my primary source of data for the following reasons. Despite fluctuations in the amount of money given by UK citizens to different charities over time, the proportion of overall giving that occurs at fundraising events has remained remarkably stable. It accounts for 13% of all private donations over seven years of the Office for National Statistics' survey up until 2012 (Charities Aid Foundation 2012). In terms of television coverage, interactive charity media events have increased in both size and number in the UK in recent years. In 2002, the charity Comic Relief introduced a biennial Sport Relief event to supplement the Red Nose Day event that occurs on alternate years, and in 2009 Children in Need began a series of music concerts called 'Children in Need Rocks' to complement every other Children in Need event. Non-broadcast event days have also been increasingly used by charities to generate interest and donations. Cancer Research, for example, has built on the success of its first 'Race for Life' in 1994 and now hosts over 300 events across the UK a year (Cancer Research 2016), and Amnesty International's Secret Policeman's Ball events have increased in frequency since their reintroduction in 2006, following a 5-year hiatus. In the UK, Comic Relief, Sport Relief and Children in Need are advertised in a range of media formats across the BBC, as well as in print and in online television guides. They are also reported on in a wide range of national newspapers. In terms of their contribution to discourses on how and why we should respond to people in need, charity telethons are thus potentially powerful.

Children in Need is the only UK telethon that raises money exclusively for UK citizens. It was therefore expected that it would play an important role in producing and reflecting the discourse of UK-based charitable giving. Comic Relief, a telethon that is broadcast every other year on the same channel (BBC One) awards grants to both UK and overseas charities. Although Comic Relief could have been used as a supplementary source of data, the timing of the two programmes (CiN takes place in November yearly, but following the commencement of the current project in 2011, the first Comic Relief show was not until March 2013), meant that this was not practical within the scope of the study. My review of the literature also revealed a notable gap in the consideration of intra-national charities. Analysing CiN would start to provide some understanding of this area.

Depending on their theories about the distribution of power between the mass media and their viewers, many researchers have chosen to focus exclusively either on television programmes or the views of their audiences (Vestergaard 2008; Chouliaraki 2010; Seu 2010). But even if we accept that producers of media texts are more powerful than their consumers, the influence of these texts should also be the focus of study (Hall 1993). As I discussed in the literature review, researchers have sought

to address the ways in which viewers actively make sense of mass media representations of a range of topics (e.g. Hall 1993; Morley 1980; Richardson, 1994). But, as I indicated, there is a dearth of studies combining audience research with textual and visual analyses of stimulus material in the ‘politics of pity’ debate (Seu 2010). Moreover, focusing exclusively on either media or audience data means omitting an important part of the dialogue between them (see Wood 2006 pp. 78-80 for a discussion of this relationship). Therefore, I decided to supplement my media event data (the 2011 broadcast of CiN) with a series of focus group discussions carried out with different groups in a short period following this broadcast.

Following a number of scholars who have examined reactions to topics represented in the media generally, rather than to specific programmes (e.g. Atkinson, Bellis, & Sumnall 2012; Henderson 2014; Glasgow University Media Group 1976), I sought to understand not only the ways in which my participants would react to a specific television programme (in this case, CiN), but how they had understood the topic of disadvantage in the UK more broadly. I therefore chose to include the views of people who had taken the decision not to watch the programme and did not make this a prerequisite for participation in the focus groups. After all, a programme can only be persuasive to the extent that it is watched. Focus group participants were also not asked to watch the Children in Need programme after recruitment. Indeed, no mention was made of it at all in the recruitment process, or in the initial questions in the focus groups themselves. If the programme was not mentioned by the participants themselves, the topic was introduced by the moderator (myself) in the second half of the conversations (after at least 30 minutes). As one of the central research questions concerned the extent to which there were similarities between the programme’s presentation of social inequality and the manner in which it was represented in unrelated discussions on the topic, it was important that the talk data should not be directly influenced by the programme. Both sets of data represented ways of framing issues around social inequality at a given time and place. All 25 focus group participants appeared to be aware of the event when it was mentioned. But the decision of some participants *not* to watch it also seemed to be an important part of their framing of social inequality and how it should and should not be responded to. For example, one participant stated that she would be willing to watch the programme for analytical purposes but would not choose to watch it for enjoyment. A discussion of her reasons for not watching the programme formed part of her argument about what she saw as its objectionable juxtaposition of suffering and silliness (see chapter 6).

Many published research articles using focus groups combine them with other methods (see Morgan 1996: 133 for a discussion). However, these supplementary data most commonly include in-depth individual interviews or surveys (1996: 133), and rarely include analyses of the source materials discussed in them. As I assumed both mass media professionals and individual audience members would be engaged in the production and reproduction of discourses, I chose to study the discourses

produced by both separately, and to compare the representations of different aspects of this topic. I assumed that both of these sources contributed to an ongoing discourse on the topic, albeit to different degrees. Programme-makers are, after all, subject to the same influences as audience members (Gitlin 1994: 90). Where themes converged across these two data sources, these themes were understood as constituting a significant way of framing debates around intra-national charity in the UK at the current time.

2.2 Focus group data

Focus groups are better suited to the purpose of extending the range of responses collected as far as possible than to the aim of creating a representative sample (Macnaghten and Myers 2006: 68). My approach to recruitment was primarily informed by the work of Richardson (1994), who gained a wide range of responses to a television representation of poverty by selecting groups of viewers based on their relationship to the topic rather than on their demographic features. In order to access as many ways of talking about a given topic as possible, I selected groups of participants who had diverse relationships to UK charities. These groups were volunteers for two different types of charity, campaigners for a human rights group, professional charity workers and two groups of people who had no explicit link to the topic of charity and whose relationship to each other was professional.

In detail, these groups were:

1) Current or recent student volunteers at Cardiff University, henceforth ‘Students’

Aged 21-27, 1 female, 3 males, including current chairperson of student volunteering organisation

2) Office workers in a small depot in Cardiff, henceforth ‘Office’

Aged 40 – 59, 4 female, including one line manager

3) Members of Cardiff Amnesty International, henceforth ‘Amnesty’

Aged 19 – 65, 2 female, 2 male

4) People who were in paid employment with different registered charities based in Cardiff, henceforth ‘Charities’

Aged 24 – 31, 4 females

5) Volunteers for ‘Pembrokeshire Cruse’, who provide bereavement counselling for adults, henceforth ‘Counselling’

Aged 44 – 70, 5 females, including one group supervisor

6) Academics employed in Cardiff University, henceforth ‘Academics’

Aged 38 – 58, 3 female, 1 male

Like Richardson (1994), Atkinson et al. (2012) and Henderson (2014), I chose to conduct the focus groups with each of these groups separately instead of combining different groups. This was because I wanted to gain access to a maximally realistic impression of these groups' ways of discussing the topic (Kitzinger 1994: 105). Four of these six sets of people came from pre-existing groups (group 3 meet for monthly meetings, group 5 meet regularly for group supervision, and groups 2 and 6 are co-workers), and two of them were made up of individuals who had not met, or did not usually meet (group 1 was recruited from a student volunteering mailing list and group 4 work for different charities, but were either known by the researcher, or by contacts of the researcher). In the latter two cases, two of the participants in each group already knew each other.

Myers (2004: 9) stresses that the researcher should not assume that participants' opinions exist and can be made available to the researcher in ways that are consistent with what might be expressed in other contexts. However, for the purposes of the present study, whether or not peoples' private opinions exist is less relevant than the discourses participants draw upon when talking about these issues. This is in line with my analytic approach (discussed in section 2.9), which rejects the idea that language is 'the overt expression or manifestation of a life within' (Edwards and Stokoe 2004: 499).

As I mentioned in the introduction, all of the groups were recruited in South Wales. CiN is UK-wide (although it sometimes uses the term 'Britain' or 'British' to refer to its scope). I therefore considered selecting groups, or at least group members, from Scotland, England and Northern Ireland in order to reflect the views of people on the same scale as the programme. However, this would have meant that geographical differences could also have contributed to participants' ideas about charity, and that divergences between them could therefore be attributed to this, rather than to differences in their relationships to the topic. I was mindful that holding focus groups in only one of the UK's constituent nations might limit the generalizability of results and that participants in Wales, for example, might view Wales, rather than the UK, as a more meaningful political unit. However, Wales was mentioned only rarely as a scope for action and the Welsh Government was only discussed when one group considered the possible impact of education policy on social inequality.

Focus groups were carried out during a period of ten days following the Children in Need broadcast. This meant that both the telethon and talk data were taken from a relatively small window of time. This was done in order to minimise the effects of time differences on the data, so that intervening events would be less likely to produce differences between the groups, and between the talk and telethon data. I also thought it likely that recording conversations about disadvantage shortly after Children in Need would make it more likely that talk about the programme (and / or reports about it) would occur in this data. This time limit introduced an additional constraint on the organisation of

focus groups, but it was successful in minimising the impact of this potential variable, as none of the groups discussed media events that had occurred since the CiN broadcast, apart from in the Charities group, in which a programme broadcast four days after the event was briefly discussed.

2.3 Why focus groups?

Although the format of focus groups as a method of accessing people's views originated in market research, they have since been used in a variety of academic studies to generate data, either as the only data for analysis or to supplement other forms of research (Morgan 1997: 3). One of the reasons that this technique is so popular is that the data obtained seems to be more similar to that of naturally-occurring speech than that obtained in interviews, for example. Naturally-occurring talk is very difficult to obtain. Ethical considerations require that speakers are made aware of their speech being recorded and their talk is likely to be influenced by this (Golato 2003: 97). Furthermore, it is very difficult to acquire naturally-occurring talk on a given topic without recording an unwieldy amount of data.

It is worth bearing in mind, however, that focus group talk is different from everyday talk in a number of important ways (Myers 1998: 87). For instance, many focus groups bring together groups of people who have not met before. This has a number of consequences for the resulting interactions. Firstly, the situation is fairly unusual. People do of course come into contact with strangers, but, with the exception of some work and educational settings, it is relatively rare that a whole group of individuals is required to interact when they are all unknown to each other. Secondly, constructing groups in which members do not know each other means that there are fewer consequences for the relationships of participants of expressing their views, which might mean that they discuss these topics quite differently in this setting than they would elsewhere (Myers 1998: 87). For example, it has been found that more ideas are generated in groups when participants are not acquainted with each other than when they are (Fern 1982: 10). In my own study only two of the groups (the Students and Charities groups) were recruited from a pool of people who did not necessarily know each other. Both of these groups contained members who had met before, albeit infrequently. As it turned out, these individuals, as is common with many focus groups, consisted of people living in a similar geographical location, with similar interests or occupations, so the need to manage potential relationships between them would be no less pressing than in other settings.

Speer (2002: 512) suggests that concerns about 'contaminating' data with researcher bias should be neglected altogether and that the interview or focus group can be regarded as an interaction in its own right, although it is not necessarily an accurate reflection of what goes on beyond it. It is in this spirit that I collected and interpreted my own data. I assumed that the ways in which the participants

expressed their ideas about the topic in the focus groups would be similar to how they would have expressed these ideas in other settings, but my analysis did not depend on the way that speakers interacted in this setting being entirely ‘natural’. What I sought to uncover were ways of expressing arguments about social inequality or disadvantage that might circulate in society, rather than focusing on how these particular participants expressed their ideas with other people.

I carried out focus groups rather than interviews because I wanted to access participants’ ways of talking about these issues in a conversation, while minimising the effect of my own way of framing them (Morgan 1997: 3). Focus groups are commonly described as a more egalitarian method than interviews in their attempt to balance the roles of moderator and participant (Puchta and Potter 1999: 316). The moderator facilitates, rather than controls, the development of the conversation (Krueger 1998: 2). This dissemination of power should mean that topics are selected by participants as well as the moderator, so that themes that are not anticipated by the researcher would be more likely to appear in the data. Conversely, it also means that the data collected could deviate substantially from the focus of the study, if the talk is insufficiently directed by the moderator. I discuss this further under section 2.7.

2.4 Recruitment and incentives

The groups were recruited by a variety of means. In all but the Charities group, I made contact via one individual within an organisation, who forwarded information on to other potential participants. Such ‘gatekeepers’ are often vital in ensuring the success of recruitment procedures (Minichiello et al. 1990). Student volunteers were recruited by way of an email sent to Student Volunteering Cardiff’s contact list by the president of this organisation. The Office group were recruited via the Operational Manager of the organisation, who agreed to send an email to employees asking them to participate. In the case of the Amnesty group and the Counselling volunteers, contact was made through one group member, who asked other members to take part. Employees of charities in Cardiff were recruited by utilising my network of existing contacts and their contacts, via an advertisement on Facebook. At recruitment stage, contributors were told only that the study would involve a focus group discussion on social inequality.

A donation of £30 was made to the Pembrokeshire Cruse charity in return for their volunteers’ time, and a donation of £10 was made to each of the Charities group’s respective charities. Lunch was provided for the Office group. The other groups were not paid in any way for their participation. This variation might be considered important because particular personality characteristics have been associated with voluntary participation in research (Martin and Marcuse 1958). Across different types of research, volunteers have been found to be significantly more intelligent than non-volunteers, and

other personality traits have been found to differ between volunteers and non-volunteers for a range of types of study (1958: 478). Given the subject under investigation, this might seem particularly important. But none of the participants was personally financially rewarded for his or her participation. The Charities group, however, was the most inconvenienced of any of the groups, as they attended the focus groups at a different time and place from their work or voluntary activities. Mindful that this might make it more difficult for me to recruit an adequate number of participants, I wanted to maximise people's willingness to take part by offering an incentive. As the Counselling group were using some of their weekly supervision time to take part, I also wanted to show my appreciation to the charity for allowing me to use its volunteers' time in this way.

At both the recruitment stage and at the opening and closings of the group discussions, I expressed my gratitude for the participants' help with the study. Given the nature of my enquiry, I was aware that it was unlikely that the findings would be directly beneficial to my participants. I was, however, keen to stress what I saw as the collaborative nature of the process. Although I did not involve the participants in the research design, their contribution to the discussions informed my analysis of both their talk and, to a certain extent, CiN.

2.5 Anonymity and ethical approval

As collecting focus group data means working with people, I was required by Cardiff University to submit an ethical approval form to an ethics officer. As my research did not involve vulnerable individuals or use any deception, this was a relatively straightforward process. However, as the University guidelines indicate, ethical considerations should involve reflection, and can never be completely resolved. Having to engage in this process made me more aware of the potential impact my study might have on my participants, which I consider below.

Cardiff University's ethical policy is built around three key ideas: obtaining informed consent from participants; conducting risk-benefit analyses; and peer review. There are several stages in the research process where ethical issues might have arisen. Firstly, during data collection, the immediate effects of taking part in the focus group were considered. The physical risks to my participants were minimal, but it was possible that there could be emotional consequences of taking part. As the topic to be discussed was a potentially emotive one, and for some groups involved co-workers or managers, it was possible that participants could feel uncomfortable about sharing their opinions or about having these recorded. Informed consent was obtained by means of asking all participants to sign the form in appendix 1. This highlighted participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time without being questioned, as well as detailing as fully as possible what participants could expect to happen in the session, and how the data would be used.

In addition to considering the possible impact of the focus groups on participants, it was also necessary to reflect on the possible implications of the use of the data generated in them at a later stage in the research process. Tisdale (2004: 28) describes research participants as ‘vulnerable’ in this respect. Firstly, what participants say can be open to misrepresentation, in terms of either factual accuracy or of how they would like to be seen. In either case, when research participants read what they think of as inaccurate or negative representations of themselves by researchers, it can cause considerable distress. Secondly, the way that data is represented in research papers can lead to negative consequences for participants, such as reinforcing negative stereotypes of certain groups for those who read it (2004: 28).

My approach to the data also meant that I was likely to interpret some of the talk in ways that the participants themselves might not be happy with. I was interested in the ways of talking about the issue that participants drew on and I assumed that these discourses were in some ways independent of the individuals themselves. This stance, however, made it likely that people might feel misrepresented by an analysis of what they said and might find some of the inferences that I drew, for example about the metaphors they used, offensive. Using data in a way that does not sit well with participants is often an issue where multiple stakeholders are involved and it sometimes means making a decision about where one’s primary responsibilities lie. For example, when carrying out research within a school setting, Sleeter (1996: 55) decided that, in situations where the needs of teachers and pupils were incompatible, she would present her work in a way that benefitted the children. In my own research I identify broadly disadvantaged groups, both within and outside the UK, as my primary concern. I therefore wanted to find the right balance between respecting my participants and reporting on the potentially unhelpful ways in which they might speak about such disadvantaged groups. One way in which the needs of participants could be protected is by anonymising not only their own names but also the names of the places that they mention when these relate to their everyday lives (Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger 2015: 8). I have done this wherever I thought it possible that personal details could be gleaned from the transcript. Anonymity is never absolute, and deductive disclosure (Kaiser 2009: 1632) can occur whenever any identifying characteristics of individuals or groups mean that they can be recognized from transcripts or reports. In my case, the occupation, either professional or voluntary, of my participants, particularly in combination with their location, is the feature most likely to compromise their anonymity. In many cases, the groups I recruited were from a relatively small pool of people. However, not disclosing this information would risk compromising the usefulness of the data as a representation of these participants’ ways of framing the issues (Saunders et al. 2015: 1). This is a factor that is almost always in tension with maintaining anonymity (Scott 1998). I could have chosen to refer, for example, to the Amnesty group as ‘a local human rights activist group’, but this would hardly broaden

the scope of possible participants, or as ‘a local campaigning group’, but this would give too little information about how to interpret their responses. There might be situations where these participants’ membership of this particular group, rather than a political organisation for example might be relevant. As well as anonymising the transcripts I produced from these recordings in terms of both participants’ names (leaving only their gender the same) and the names and locations that they mentioned, I protected their data by storing the audio recordings of the discussions securely on my private computer.

Saunders et al. (2015) suggest that the question of what to anonymise can form a helpful part of the interview process when dealing with very sensitive data, such as in their own study about patients in a vegetative state. In my own data, the topics covered are of a much less sensitive nature, both morally and legally, and the focus group format drastically changes the nature of the interaction, in the sense that participants are less likely to disclose information that they would like to remain private. On the other hand, if participants had raised sensitive topics, it would also have been more difficult to discuss what they would like to happen with the data than in a one-to-one interaction. Another way of allowing participants to maintain some control over the use of their data is to allow them to read and comment on the analysis and to give them the option of withdrawing their consent if they disagree with it. I therefore gave each of my participants written information detailing the reason for their participation in the study and offering them a copy of any findings and the opportunity to ask further questions (see appendix 2). None of the participants took this opportunity, and I therefore concluded that they were not concerned about this aspect of the study.

2.6 Setting

The implications of using different settings for focus groups or interviews are well-documented (e.g. Macnaghten and Myers 2009: 67; Elwood and Martin 2000). Some focus group guides suggest that a ‘neutral’ setting should be sought, even though, in terms of power relations and associations, all places carry connotations (e.g. Gibbs 1997, Longhurst 2003: 109). I was keen to minimise inconvenience to participants and to elicit conversation as much like the groups might have had without my presence as possible. I therefore decided that it would be advantageous to meet as many of the groups as possible at both the places and the times that they would normally meet. I met the Students in a room in the Students’ Union on a weekday at lunchtime; Office workers came to their workplace informal meeting room at lunchtime on a work day; the Amnesty group met in a room in the building that they hold their meetings in, directly after a meeting; the Counselling volunteers agreed for me to join them in the church hall used for regular supervision meetings directly after one of these meetings; and the Academics met me in a room in the department where they were based, at the end of a working day. This arrangement was not possible for the Charities group. Because they

work at different locations, and their hours of work also vary, I found it too difficult to arrange a meeting either on a weekday at lunchtime or at the end of a working day. Instead, I arranged to meet these individuals in a room at Cardiff University Graduate Centre on a Saturday afternoon. This was an easy location for all of the participants to access, and the room used was quiet and had chairs and tables, but no other particular markers of a university setting. As one of the participants mentioned in this group, they had all attended university at some point in the past, so this sort of setting was also likely to be familiar to them. In line with the ethos of accessing data in a relatively egalitarian way that focus groups can provide, the participants in all groups sat in chairs in a circular formation with the moderator, as recommended by Stewart and Shamdasani (2014: 98). This maximised eye contact and allowed interactions between all members of the group.

2.7 Questions

As the aim of the research was to examine the discourse of charitable giving in the UK, I was interested in the extent to which charities appeared to be considered the best or most obvious avenue for redressing certain problems. I therefore decided not to start the focus groups by talking about charity, but to open up a discussion about the sorts of problems that charities might want to address and see whether participants made this link of their own accord. In particular, I wanted to obtain data that showed the similarities or differences between CiN's presentation of the situation it sought to redress and the everyday discussion of similar issues. I therefore sought to phrase my initial questions in line with Children in Need's remit. Both online and on television, Children in Need's objectives are stated only in vague terms. As a grant-giving organisation, their beneficiaries are only identified after the money has been raised. Applicants are advised that grants are awarded to 'children and young people of 18 years and under experiencing disadvantage through: illness, distress, abuse or neglect; any kind of disability; behavioural or psychological difficulties or; living in poverty or situations of deprivation' (Children in Need 2014). This statement encompasses a wide range of situations, with the only uniting term being 'disadvantage'. I therefore decided to base my opening question around the idea of redressing 'disadvantage', or the difference between people who are 'disadvantaged' and those who are not. I also made reference to the narrative of 'fairness' that had been a major part of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition's rhetoric since their election in 2010 (e.g. BBC Election News broadcast 2010). It was formulated as an 'elaborate question' (Puchta and Potter 1999) in order to maximise the range of potential responses:

(As you know,) I'm interested in your opinions about social inequality. There's a lot of talk about 'fairness' and building a 'fair society', which assumes that society isn't fair. So I'd like to put it to you – would you agree / say that society isn't 'fair'? And if so, do you think it should be? And if so, how do you think that could happen? What do you think would need to change?

Although all focus groups were initiated with the same question, subsequent questions were used as guide and followed loosely, depending on when and which topics were raised by participants. The questions were:

Who should have help in society?

Who is responsible for people in a disadvantaged position? (themselves / us / government / their networks of family and friends)

What do you think should be done to help disadvantaged people?

How about charitable giving?

How about events like Children In Need that took place on Friday?

Additional questions about themes that emerged were also asked whenever I wanted to elicit more information on a topic. These were often guided by the comments of participants in other groups. For example, Amy's phrasing in the Students group inspired a question I later asked in the Counselling group, when Sara mentioned equality of opportunity:

Students group, original line numbers 21 – 23 (see appendix 5)

- 1 Amy is equality of opportunity fair (.) or is there equality of opportunity?
2 Ben [I suppose it depends [yes
3 Amy or is (*laugh*) is it (.) should it be equality of outcome

Counselling group, original line numbers 79 and 115-119 (see appendix 9)

- 1 Sara [or uh you know equality of opportunity (.) what a joke [...]

And later

- 2 HL hmm (2.0) hmm (.) so (*to Sara*) you mentioned then the the phrase
3 'equality of opportunity' (.) um (.) and- is that what seen as as being (1.5)
4 important about equality that (.) you're providing everybody with the
5 same starting-point or the same opportunities or (.) you know (.) would
6 you broaden that out to kind of (.) equality of outcome

It is difficult to strike a balance between guiding participants to produce data that will answer one's research questions on the one hand and discouraging them from contributing in ways that have not been anticipated on the other. While the researcher's agenda inevitably drives some aspects of data collection, it should nevertheless be possible for participants to provide unanticipated answers that

could be equally informative. The benefits of ‘off-topic’ focus group talk have been documented (e.g. Franz 2011). However, the literature on focus groups frequently makes reference to the practice of guiding participants away from the discussion of ‘irrelevant topics’ (e.g. Puchta and Potter 1999: 317, Krueger 1998: 42). This is a problematic concept in that it assumes that topics that are not anticipated by the researcher are ‘irrelevant’ to the research, as Briggs (1984: 23) points out: ‘Mr. [sic] Córdova “wandered off the point,” that is, gained control of topical selection’. Although it is important that participants are able to reveal their own framings of the topic without these being dismissed, the balance between allowing for unanticipated contributions on the one hand and talk unrelated to the topic on the other is a difficult one to strike.

In terms of raising the topics I had hoped participants would discuss, some of the groups were much easier to steer than others. The Students were particularly willing to discuss topics that I was interested in exploring at that point in the study, whereas the Amnesty group’s responses frequently deviated both from what I had discussed with the other groups and from what I had expected them to talk about. In particular, their primary interest seemed to lie in discussing educational policies within Wales and how these led to and reinforced social inequality. I had expected them to focus more on international inequities because of their membership of a group that is primarily devoted to challenging sentences and human rights laws in other countries. My interjections in this discussion were therefore more obviously designed to steer the conversation in a certain direction than those in other focus groups. For example:

Amnesty group, original line numbers 278 – 287 (see appendix 7)

1	HL	so if we <u>were</u> to kind of broaden it out and say (.) uh I mean I don’t
2		know if if <u>you</u> would define society as being (.) primarily (.) Welsh or (.)
3		British or (.) whatever (1.0) but (.) but say if you were to take it (.) it kind
4		of (.) <u>wider</u> and kind of think about people (.) that <u>you</u> would think of as
5		being (1.0) disad <u>van</u> tagged (.) in some way I don’t know what sort of
6		groups you would identify them as but (.) um (.) I don’t know whether- are
7		there issues other than education (1.0) that (2.5) kind of cause social
8		inequality? (.) as far as you’re concerned? (2.5)

And later:

Amnesty group, original line numbers 717 - 729

1	HL	[can I (.) can I sorry reel you back a little
2		bit again about um (1.0) uh maybe not stressing (<i>laughing</i>) maybe quite
3		so much on education (.) primarily (.) um
4	Kim	[(<i>laugh</i>)

5 Sam (*laughing*) we've got a bee in our bonnet about that if you've noticed
6 HL [(*laugh*) [um (.)]
7 but (.) um (1.0) I was just kind of wondering (.) if (.) there are kind of
8 other things that (.) you know I mean (1.0) obviously in our society that's
9 quite a- a- an important issue (.) um (.) but also kind of maybe that there
10 are groups that (.) you know for whom (.) that isn't even an issue (.) like
11 the- you know whereas you were saying kind of the people who don't
12 have access to healthcare (.) or (1.0) you know even maybe even food (.)
13 or (.) you know whatever (.) um and (.) you kind of (.)
14 Tara [hmm shelter yeah

My own interjections here appeared somewhat hesitant and apologetic. Although this style is more or less natural to me, I was also aware of presenting myself in a way that would minimise the likelihood of participants responding to me as a privileged member of the group, which was particularly difficult at points where I was attempting to direct the conversation.

These extended questions are a marked departure from those I asked in other groups, for example, in the Students group:

Students group, original line numbers 537 - 538 (see appendix 5)

1 HL so (.) you're saying (.) you know if if everybody had the the wo- the kind
2 of 'what can I do?' (1.0) um what what do you think they could do? (2.0)

Whereas in the extracts from the Amnesty group, I put my questions in a number of ways and hedged my contribution heavily (in extract 1: 'I don't know', lines 1-2, 'kind of', lines 3-4, 'I don't know', line 5, in extract 2: 'sorry', line 1, 'a little' line 1, 'maybe' line 2, 'maybe quite so much', lines 2-3, 'kind of', twice on line 7, 'maybe', line 9, 'maybe', line 12), in the Students group, I quoted one of the participants' contributions and asked them a direct question about it.

There are other important ways in which the focus groups varied, for example in their settings, times and in the types of group dynamic that already existed between members, as discussed above. While they were not intended to be identical in terms of the questions I asked, it is worth bearing in mind that there were differences in how talk was elicited within the groups when reading and/or analysing the data.

2.8 Transcription

I transcribed selected extracts of CiN for the first hour and a half of the broadcast. After repeated viewings of the programme, I decided that this 90 minute section would provide an appropriate source of examples to analyse in more detail, as many of the extracts shown in this first section are repeated later on in the show, and new content, particularly showing beneficiaries, is shown less frequently beyond this point. The hour between 8pm and 9pm also constitutes ‘prime time’ television in the UK (TV Licensing 2011), meaning that it is the time that is likely to be viewed by the greatest number of people. I transcribed the show using multiple modes, including screenshots and verbal descriptions of nonverbal sounds, such as music and applause. Consideration of images adds an important dimension to the analysis of television or film texts; these media privilege the visual over other modes of representation (Chouliaraki 2005: 145). How such multimodal texts are transcribed has an important impact on the sort of analysis that can be produced from them (Bezemer and Mavers 2011). I selected what I considered to be representative stills from the range of shots that occurred at given times in the programme, rather than those that occurred at regular intervals. In this way, I paid more attention to sections of the programme that I thought were relevant to my research questions (those in which beneficiaries and / or fundraisers were represented) than I did to those that were less likely to be the focus of analysis (such as entertainment scenes performed in various BBC studios). This selective rather than regular capture of shots allowed me to include what seemed to be important images for the analysis, even if these fell between certain intervals. I also verbally transcribed only the sections of the programme that I was interested in analysing in more depth. As a result of this selectivity, the transcript was less likely to be replicable by other researchers, or by myself at another time, than if I had transcribed the whole section verbally and reproduced the still images that occurred for example at 5 second intervals. Transcription is always to some extent a selective process, which is led by the researcher’s aims and biases in the same ways that analysis is (Coates and Thornborrow 1999). In terms of the CiN data, I gained an impression of the text via multiple viewings, and my transcription was guided by impressions I had already gained from the text itself. My method of transcription made this process easier and more time-efficient.

In order to make my analysis on the basis of this transcript transparent, I have reproduced sections of the transcript in its original form in my analysis chapters. Some researchers, while acknowledging the importance of analysing images, nevertheless present their visual data by verbally describing scenes. Flewitt et al. (2009: 54) argue that the question of whether such a practice is acceptable remains unresolved, and point out that the different media for presenting research will dictate to some extent whether this decision is in the hands of the researcher or not. Some journals, for example, do not accept pictures, whereas other journals and many books do. The verbal description of images, however, re-imposes linguistic primacy and the resulting information can only be a partial

representation of what has been analysed. Different modes have different affordances (i.e. ways of making meaning (e.g. Kress and van Leeuwen 2002: 355)), so visualising verbal data or describing visual data verbally inevitably leaves out some of the nuances of the original mode, a process referred to as ‘transduction’ (Bezemer and Mavers 2011: 196). One possible shortcoming of my research method is that I did not visually record my focus group conversations and therefore only analysed the CiN data multimodally. However, I felt that this discrepancy would occur in either case, as the type of multimodal analysis I undertake in examining the CiN data is markedly different from the analysis of gestures, facial expressions and movement of people that recording the focus groups would have allowed.

I transcribed all of the focus group conversations in full, using conventions adapted from O’Connell and Kowal (1995) (see appendix 3). These conventions require timing pauses, providing information about overlapping talk, and signalling minimal responses. Such features are not usually relevant for discourse analysis of the type I intended to carry out in this thesis, and, as each of the conversations took around one hour, this was a relatively labour-intensive activity. However, I felt that, at what has been argued constitutes the first stage in the analytic process (Coates and Thornborrow 1999, Ochs 1979), it was important to include as much potentially relevant information as possible. Another advantage to transcribing the data in such detail is that it allows and requires the researcher to listen to the recordings in detail a number of times. This results in the researcher becoming acquainted with all parts of the data, rather than simply those that initially stand out as being related to the topic she is researching. Whether or not this resulted in a better or more accurate representation of the data in my analysis than I would have achieved from transcribing only parts of the conversations, it certainly gave me a more thorough understanding of the conversations as a whole. In the analytic chapters, I will keep this detail in the extracts that I reproduce, in order to give the reader as much information about the nature and context of each utterance as possible. This has the disadvantage that the resulting transcripts might be more difficult to read (Ochs 1979: 69). However, in some instances, the analysis is informed by the way in which participants performed their utterances. For example, the difference between statements made markedly quietly or with hesitations, and those made loudly, with emphasis on certain words, is considered indicative of the degree of certainty or conviction with which the participants have chosen to perform these utterances.

2.9 Method of analysis

Many aspects of the method employed were informed by Grounded Theory, an approach in which the researcher allows the data, rather than her own agenda, to dominate the analysis (Charmaz 1995). Data collection was carried out early in the project. The literature review was carried out later, and it was thus guided by themes identified in the data (1995: 28). Although focus groups were carried out

within a short period of time, some questions asked in later focus groups were informed by themes that emerged during the first groups (as discussed above). Analysis likewise drew on Grounded Theory ideas, such as close reading of the data, to develop codes from the data, rather than using ‘preconceived hypotheses’ to judge which parts of it were relevant for the analysis (1995: 32). I did not code each line of the data, although several close, line-by-line readings of the transcripts were carried out in order to ascertain what the most relevant categories seemed to be. Codes identified were then used to revisit extant data, but not to gather more data from participants. I identified codes on a number of topics, and found that the overarching narrative behind most of these topics was of a description of various types and levels of distance between the donors and recipients of charitable action. After I identified this meta-theme, I revisited the literature and developed a detailed analytic framework for isolating a number of aspects of the data, which I outline in the following chapter.

The approach I took in analysing my data was broadly a discourse analytic one. I chose this approach because I assumed that semiotic processes around charitable giving could potentially play a role in shaping the distribution of social goods amongst different parties (Gee 1999:2). In other words, encoding charity messages in certain ways is likely to affect the way that people think about, and, ultimately, act in relation to the people portrayed in them (Nelson, Clawson and Oxley 1997). In this way, I regard language (and other modes of communication) as political rather than merely descriptive. Critical Discourse Analysis has proven useful for researchers seeking to uncover power imbalances between different social groups. In my study, however, I did not wish to place myself firmly on the side of the less powerful group, such as CiN’s beneficiaries, and to advocate for their emancipation, which is the explicit aim of some CDA theorists (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 358). Although, as stated above, my interest in this thesis is in the ways that disadvantaged groups were being represented, what counts as disadvantage is relative and is frequently under negotiation, especially in the focus group data. I therefore wanted to use a method of analysis that was capable of responding to this flexibility, and to avoid projecting a fixed agenda onto the data from the outset.

Both the CiN and focus group talk data were analysed primarily in terms of discourse analytic concepts. In particular, I drew upon ideas associated with Rhetorical Discourse Analysis (Arribas-Ayllon et al. 2013). Rhetorical Discourse Analysis (or ‘RDA’) suggests, rather than prescribes, what aspects of language should be focussed on. The list of possible foci provided by Arribas-Ayllon et al. (2013: 57, below) is not exhaustive, and I also used complementary concepts, for example from discursive psychology, in my analysis. Indeed, I agree with Gee (1999: 6) that discourse analytic concepts should act as ‘thinking devices’, rather than as constraints. I made use of the foci RDA offered in ways that were useful in interrogating the data, rather than seeing it as a rigid system to be followed. The decision as to which tools were selected as relevant was shaped by the data itself.

Different types of analysis not only highlight the importance of distinct features of language, such as metaphor or contrast devices, but they also make different assumptions about the underlying motivations and discursive goals of the social actors who use them. In both Rhetorical Discourse Analysis and Discursive Psychology, communicators are understood to be impelled to create favourable impressions of themselves. Discursive Psychology (Edwards and Potter 1992) takes the courtroom as its prototypical setting. It assumes that participants are individual actors who are motivated to put across convincing versions of events that portray them in the best possible light. Similarly, RDA views speakers as people who wish to represent themselves as responsible and knowledgeable actors, although its prototypical setting is clinical, rather than legal.

In their proposal of what should constitute RDA, Arribas-Ayllon et al. (2013) focus on ‘accounts’ that are provided by speakers in interaction. After Billig, they see accounts as a pervasive social activity (2013: 57), as opposed to viewing them as remedial actions (Goffman 2010 [1971], Buttny 1993, Scott and Lyman 1968). Although these authors are primarily concerned with accounts given by individuals, they state that ‘beyond individual actions, accounts reflect culturally embedded normative explanations’ (2013: 58). In other words, what is given and accepted as an adequate account indicates what the priorities and normative practices of the society might be, because ‘individuals project a version of self that emulates or upholds the standards and competencies of [a] given society’ (2013: 59). Van Dijk (1992), for example, draws attention to the use of denial of racism in racist talk as a means of creating a favourable impression of the speaker. Cohen (2001: 59) argues that a knowledge of what accounts are acceptable are instilled in individuals as part of socialisation.

Influenced by the work of Garfinkel (1967), Arribas-Ayllon et al. argue that a society’s value system is constantly in the process of being produced and reproduced (2013: 79). This means that an account that is initially unacceptable might gradually become acceptable through a process of its being used repeatedly or by powerful discourse participants. Seeing moral discourse as something that is constantly in flux and under negotiation means that the findings of a study such as my own might be valid only for a limited amount of time. On the other hand, it also means that the instances of communication that I have studied could potentially be part of a process that not only reflects but also changes the moral order. The two key aspects of Rhetorical Discourse Analysis that are relevant to the present study are its view of communication as influencing as well as influenced by the society it takes place in and its emphasis on the idea that speakers orient to notions of morality. In my own data, I have interpreted both CiN and participants’ communication as attempts to account for their stance in relation to others.

When analysing the data, I have considered how a number of ‘rhetorical devices’ (Arribas-Ayllon 2013: 70) were used to create accounts that were projected as valid. Rhetorical devices are the ‘analytic themes’ of RDA. They include:

Character work, which is how people depict others in conversation, in order to provide justification for the attitudes and actions they take in regard to them (2013: 69).

Event work, which means how situations are described in ways that justify certain behaviours, for example by describing an event as an exception or as the norm (2013: 69.).

Framing borrows from Goffman’s (1981:71) notion, referring to a person’s ‘schemata of interpretation’ or ‘definition of the situation’.

Footing is a related concept, in which interactants have a shared ‘ground’, or understanding of the nature and purpose of a given interaction. This shared ‘footing’ can be shifted by a participant in the exchange, so that the function of the conversation changes (Goffman 1981: 125). For example, an interviewer might speak about the weather to an interviewee, in which case both people understand that the conversation between them is informal. If the interviewer then signals verbally or otherwise that the interview has begun, this is a change in footing.

Metaphor is a means by which certain ideas are expressed by reference to something else, in order to highlight some aspects of the situations and to obscure others.

Contrast devices are the means by which people explain how they have categorised a person or thing in a particular way (2013: 75)

Modalization refers to the construction of an idea of facticity or probability, for example by use of modal adverbs (probably, possibly, definitely), modal verbs (must, can, should), hedges (‘sort of’, ‘kind of’) (2013: 68) and ‘Extreme Case Formulations’ (Pomerantz 1986), which are expressions using words such as ‘all’ or ‘every’ in order to validate a claim.

Reported speech and constructed dialogue, in which the voices of others are used, either to ‘bolster and legitimize [one’s] claim’ (2013: 75) or to offer an alternative view that is presented as self-evidently ridiculous (2013: 76).

In each of my analysis chapters, I focus on a number of these rhetorical devices, as appropriate to the nature of the discourse I select for consideration. The potential drawback of using this analytic focus, as with the use of any investigative lens, is that it draws attention to some aspects of the data and omits others. A further limitation of any qualitative analysis is that its findings are inherently subjective (Starks and Brown Trinidad 2007: 1376). In order to ensure that the analysis produced was as rigorous and reliable as possible, I was reflexive about my own role in the process (Finlay 2002). In the analytic chapters, I provide extensive evidence for the claims I make, thereby allowing the reader to judge for herself the trustworthiness of the arguments presented (Starks and Brown Trinidad 2007: 1376).

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have detailed how my research questions have informed my choice to look in detail at one charity telethon and to supplement the data generated from it with focus group discussions by potential viewers. I have set out my rationale for studying Britain's only intra-national media event, Children in Need, and for garnering a wide range of potential responses to this programme (including the decision not to watch it). I have also given detailed information about the procedure I used in recruiting participants for these focus groups, including the potential ethical implications. Finally, I have presented an overview of Rhetorical Discourse Analysis, my chosen method of analysis, as well as my justification for selecting this approach. In the following chapter, I turn to literature that is focused on the topic of representations of others in order to provide an analytic framework for addressing my research questions.

Chapter 3: Pity, Spectacle and Distance:

Developing a Framework for Studying Mediated National Giving

In the literature review, I outlined a number of debates that have taken place around charitable giving since it was first recorded. In the present chapter I develop a detailed framework for analysing my own data, which is informed by my research questions and by key ideas that have emerged in this field. This chapter therefore represents a shift in focus, away from considering charitable giving in general, to looking specifically at how charities communicate their ideas and how people talk about the sorts of issues that charities seek to address. I start by exploring the notion of pity, which encompasses several of the key ideas discussed in the literature review, namely: a) the role (if any) of emotion in charitable giving, b) the use of money as a form of action, c) the sight of suffering and associated ideas about the reliability of representations, and d) the role of group-based identities in deciding whom to help. I then draw on theories from a number of fields in order to develop one under-researched aspect of this idea that is particularly salient in the intra-national giving context: the concept of distance.

3.1 Pity

Charitable giving has often been linked to notions of pity (Balaji 2011; Barnett and Hammond 1999; Littler 2008). The association between feeling pity and donating lies at the heart of one of the most difficult ethical dilemmas for many charities. There is a great deal of evidence that when we feel pity for another person we are more likely to respond by donating money to a cause that might help them (Stockdale and Farr 1987). Evoking pity, however, is often perceived to be at odds with the ideal of valuing all people consistently and integrating them into society as equal members (Eayrs and Ellis 1990), which is an over-arching goal for many charities. This tension between the need to attract funding in the short term and the desire for change in the long-term makes marketing them particularly difficult (Stride 2006).

In the context of research on charitable giving, as well as in lay use of the term, pity is often understood as an emotional response to witnessing the suffering of another person (Stockdale & Farr 1987; Hirschberger, Florian and Mikulincer 2000). In terms of both its emotional and other-focused characteristics, pity is sometimes regarded as being similar to empathy, sympathy and even guilt. Indeed, some authors use these terms interchangeably (e.g. Batson 2009; Eayrs and Ellis 1990; Lim and Moufahim 2015). What others have seen as setting pity apart from these terms is that, in pity, the person feeling the emotion possesses higher status than the person that they feel it for (for a review, see Goetz, Keltner and Simon-Thomas 2010).

A different understanding of pity was developed by Hannah Arendt (1990 [1963]). Arendt defines pity in opposition to compassion. While she sees compassion as an emotion, she describes pity, by contrast, as a sentiment (1990 [1963]: 84). Pity, in other words, is what is expressed and thought about, while compassion is what is felt. Arendt also distinguishes pity and compassion from one another in reference to their objects. She argues that, whereas compassion is felt as a response to the suffering of individual people, pity is directed at multitudes. While this may seem like technical and inconsequential distinction, for Arendt it is a matter of life and death. She describes how Robespierre glorified feeling for the poor multitudes (pity), whilst losing the ability to feel for individuals (compassion) and thus reigned with terror over dissenters, while failing to establish the institutions which might ultimately have freed the poor from the shackles of want. In this way, she argues, pity can be cruel (1990: 85).

In this political conception of pity, which has been taken up and expanded upon more recently by a range of authors, including Boltanski (1999), Chouliaraki (e.g. 2006) and Vestergaard (2008), pity is neither necessarily emotional, nor a question of status. According to these authors, pity is a mode of relating to unfortunate others on a social rather than on an individual level. This difference is signalled by referring to this new conception as the ‘politics of pity’, rather than simply as ‘pity’. It is Boltanski who has both developed the concept most fully, and who has been responsible for popularising the idea as a way of framing research about aid, although his own exploration is theoretical rather than empirical. In the following table, I summarise my understanding of Boltanski’s definition of pity in comparison with compassion and justice:

Pity, Compassion and Justice as represented in ‘Distant Suffering’ (Boltanski 1999)

	Pity	Compassion	Justice
Urgency	Medium – too urgent to consider what is just (p. 5), but action is not immediately available (p. 8)	High (p. 8)	Low (p. 5)
Target of the response	Groups (p. 6) as represented by individuals (p. 11)	Specific individuals (p. 6)	Individuals or groups (p. 4)
Fatalism	High (p. 5)	Low	Low (p. 4)
Action required	Unclear (p. 17)	Clear (p. 8)	Clear (p. 4)
Distance	Far (p. 5)	Close (p. 6)	Close (p. 4)
Emotion	High (p. 6)	Low (p. 8)	Low (p. 5)
Relationship	Looking (p. 1)	Doing (p. 6)	Judging (p. 4)

According to Boltanski, the most salient features of the politics of pity are thus its interest in groups, the act of looking at sufferers, the distance between sufferers and observers, and the articulation of emotional reactions.

The fact that pity is concerned with groups rather than individuals is what, according to Boltanski, makes it political rather than personal. He notes a contradiction, however, between pity's concern for the welfare of the many (1999:6), and the fact that it is often inspired by viewing not groups but individual examples (1999: 11). This political side of pity is closely tied to the question of distance. Boltanski argues that the attempt to unify people across distance is a defining characteristic of political systems (1999: 7) and that *maintenance* of the distance between people is a defining characteristic of pity (1999: 5). Similarly, Arendt states that pity is the opposite of compassion with respect to the dimension of distance: whereas compassion abolishes the distance between sufferer and viewer (1990:81), pity maintains a distance between them (1990: 87). Chouliaraki (2006: 2) makes the same distinction; while she refers to 'action [on suffering] that incorporates the dimension of distance' as pity, she suggests that immediate responses to suffering that are witnessed first-hand can be described as compassion. Considered from this perspective, the distinction between pity and compassion seems quite straightforward: pity = compassion + distance. According to this definition, research on bystander intervention that has been carried out within psychology (classic studies include Darley and Batson 1973, Darley and Latane 1968) would be understood as studies of compassion. By contrast, research from a wide range of disciplines examining either the production or the reception of media representations of distant unfortunate others (e.g. Adams 1987, Barnett and Hammond 1999, Belk 1984, Boykoff and Goodman 2009, Brunel and Nelson 2000, etc.) would be understood as studies of pity.

This straightforward distinction is less easy to maintain when one examines the nature of distance in detail. Boltanski (1999: 17) suggests that there are two key effects that distance has on the relationship between spectators and sufferers. Firstly, it results in a time delay in the interaction between them. Suffering is conveyed to an audience hours and sometimes days after it is witnessed by news or charity agents (although in 24 hour news reporting, this is less often the case). Any response from this audience will also take time to reach sufferers. Secondly, in order to both witness and respond to the suffering of others at a distance, viewers must rely upon a chain of intermediaries to convey both reports of suffering and the goods and services that might ameliorate it. As Boltanski points out, most often, the form of help requested by charities is therefore monetary, because this allows goods and services to be purchased by the charity, and conveyed to those who need them. But, as discussed in the literature review, giving money means that the giver's intentions are depersonalised (Boltanski 1999: 18), and, arguably, that the impact on the giver of the act of helping is minimised (Vestergaard 2008: 487). For these reasons, Boltanski argues that distance results in

increased doubt over both the veracity of the reports about sufferers that reach viewers and viewers' ability to influence events, compared to how they might feel about suffering that is close by (1999: 16).

Both Boltanski and Chouliaraki acknowledge that the dimension of distance that they discuss need not be physical. Boltanski stresses that in societies where suffering is responded to with pity, the 'fortunate' and the 'unfortunate' are seen to form distinct groups. This distinction, however, need not always be maintained by physical distance:

The fortunate and the unfortunate can live in the same country without the former seeing the latter, either as the result of a kind of physical blindness arising from a subtle separation of the spaces within which they each move, that is of their social networks, or, and the two phenomena are commonly mixed together, due to a moral blindness, when the discrepancy between their respective conditions creates a gulf that prevents the class of 'those who do not suffer' from forming an idea of the suffering of the unfortunate. (Boltanski 1999: 5)

This recognition that many different types of distance can affect the interactions between members of different social groups has been echoed by other researchers across a range of disciplines. However, it is not made clear whether the consequences of distance that are most problematic for Boltanski (time difference and the need for intermediaries) still apply in the case of other types of distance.

Boltanski and Chouliaraki assume that mediated (distant) interactions between viewers and unfortunate others are qualitatively different from helping behaviours where bystanders respond (or not) to requests for help from people at close proximity. These authors, as well as others writing about mediated giving, tend to conflate mediated giving with giving across distance (e.g. Höijer 2004; Kyriakidou 2009; Joye 2010; Olesen 2012). The existence of mediation between unfortunate others and those who view them is understood as being the direct result of the physical distance between these groups. This is a mistake for two reasons: Firstly, mediation often occurs within national borders and therefore is not always necessitated by distance. Rather, it may sometimes be chosen deliberately as a means of conveying information. The effects of this should be explored more fully.

When mediation is chosen over direct communication where direct communication is, in theory, possible, it might give ambiguous signals about the distance between the viewer and the viewed. On the one hand, mediated images are associated with viewing from a distance, but, on the other hand, media technologies can also seem to minimise the distance between the viewer and the viewed, by making distant others appear close. Secondly, the assumption that mediation is a result of distance means that the effects of other types of distance that might exist instead of or alongside physical distance are left unexplored. For example, although social distance (as described in the above quotation from Boltanski (1999)) might make interactions between members of different groups difficult and infrequent, such interactions are nevertheless still possible without intermediaries (such

as the mass media) or time delays. This does not mean that intermediaries are never used to communicate information about a given social group to another group within the same country, or that this communication never happens after a time delay. What it does mean is that this is not necessitated by the (territorial and physical) situation. Although Arendt (1990), Boltanski (1999), Chouliaraki (e.g. 2006) and others have indicated an area of enquiry, work on non-physical distance in this area is lacking. This means that there is no existing framework that can be used to examine my data in terms of pity and distance. As a means of developing one, I start by distinguishing different types of distance, in order to clarify which aspects of the situation impact on the relationship between donors and beneficiaries.

I am not the first to examine the idea that a sense of distance can be enhanced or reduced by means of communication. For example, in order to analyse a Danish telethon for HIV/AIDS sufferers in Africa, Olesen (2012) identifies three aspects of the representation of distant sufferers as contributing to 'distance reduction': emphasising the sufferers' humanity (for example by the invocation of universal experiences, symbols or values), portraying sufferers as innocent, and making it seem that action to alleviate their suffering will be effective. The present context is quite different, however, in that physical distance between donors and beneficiaries does not exist to the same extent. I will first consider the types of distance that might exist between beneficiaries and donors with reference to the existing scholarly literature, and then consider which types might be relevant in the case of a British intra-national telethon like CiN, and how they might be operationalised for analysis of my data.

3.2 Four main types of distance in existing literature

Firstly, there is *physical* distance (often intercontinental, or international), where the inability of social groups to communicate with one another is the direct result of their relative positions across the earth's surface. This is the kind of distance that has been taken for granted as existing between sufferers and witnesses in recent conceptions of pity. Many charitable interactions happen between continents, so that beneficiaries can only be seen via mediated news reports and aid appeals and responses are limited to cash donations, which are converted into food, water, medical supplies and personnel by charities acting as intermediaries. Although the number of places without forms of media such as radio, television and newspapers has decreased dramatically in recent decades, the Internet revolution has still not spread everywhere, with 58% of the world's population still lacking access (West 2015). The mass media can therefore sometimes be the only means of knowing about the problems faced by people in such places. In the case of physical distance, then, the mass media are necessary for communication, although this communication can still differ in the degree to which it encourages viewers to experience a feeling of closeness to those they view (Olesen 2012).

Physical distance can be contrasted with *territorial* distance, in which social groups are prevented from interacting with each other by the presence of guarded barriers, such as the walls of prisons and other closed institutions, military checkpoints or national borders. Sack (1983: 56) states that individuals or groups try to control objects, people, and relationships by creating borders with rules of access. He refers to this as ‘territoriality’. Although the physical distance between territorially distant people is thus not necessarily great, such barriers prevent direct communication without mediation. For those who cannot access territorially distant places, knowledge about the people who live in them is still reliant on news reports, documentaries, fictional accounts and the accounts and stories of people who are able to cross the boundaries either physically or by means of telephone or written communication.

In addition to the immediate physical limitations placed on interaction by physical and territorial distance, there are other more subtle ways in which communication between different groups of people may be curtailed. Geographers increasingly recognise the existence of *social* distance (e.g. Harvey 2006). In this case, while different social groups are not technically prevented from interacting with each other, they are discouraged from so doing via socio-spatial segregation. Contact between different social groups may be minimised by unequal access to certain places (e.g. having or not having the means of buying a house in a sought-after location), and/or the habitual use of particular spaces (e.g. patronising different shops) or modes of transport (e.g. buses as opposed to taxis) (see also Thurlow and Jaworski 2010).

A fourth, less tangible form of distance is what Bilandzic (2006: 333) refers to as *perceived* distance. Bilandzic uses the idea of distance metaphorically. She explores the process by which people’s views of others are shaped by representations of them in fictional accounts, such as in films and literature. She argues that there are two means by which a feeling of closeness or distance is cultivated between viewers/readers and viewed/read about. The first is what she calls ‘experiential closeness’, which occurs when a sense of familiarity with the viewed/read is created in representations that emphasise their similarities to the viewer/reader. In the case of a telethon for a national charity, as in CiN, the most salient aspect of shared identity between viewers and beneficiaries is that they are British, or at least living in Britain. My own exploration of experiential distance will therefore focus on this aspect, which I now explore in detail, drawing on theories and research about nationalism.

3.3 Experiential distance and nationalism

Scholarly interest in the subject of nationalism is due in part to surprise at the concept’s enduring political and emotional potency. Earlier predictions suggested that cultural changes would have rendered it obsolete by now (Anderson 2004 [1983]: 3). Large-scale migration within and between

countries has made communities seem less coherent, and the freedom offered by postmodernity is also at odds with the idea of rootedness to place (Newman and Paasi 1998). Travel has become faster and cheaper, and new electronic media facilitate interactions across space (Johnstone 2004: 70). Of course, international travel is only available to the few, and there is a considerable gap between new media use in developed and developing countries (Dutta and Mia 2011). However, the resurgence of nationalism appears paradoxical. It seems that when people become uprooted from their native lands their national identity becomes more salient. The fact that mobility seems to have increased, rather than decreased, investment in the idea of one's nation is one of a number of seemingly contradictory ideas or tensions at the heart of nationalistic thinking.

Nationalism rests on the assumption that space can be divided up into clearly-bounded territories. This understanding of the world as a set of demarcated areas with different characteristics is given on maps and in school geography classes (Johnstone 2004: 66). The boundaries between these areas are correlated with political structures: those of nation-states. In this way, seeing the world as divided into nations seems to be an unmotivated description of political arrangements. Many have argued that the idea of national identity has been naturalised to the extent that it has come to be seen as a 'common sense' understanding of the world (e.g. Billig 1995; Bishop and Jaworski 2003: 247; Johnston 2004). Billig (1995) argues that this sense of normalcy is built upon the continual reinforcement of the concept of nations in settings where it goes almost unnoticed, for example by the presence of flags on public buildings. In this way, the idea of nationalism is not presented as an ideology to be argued with, but rather as unworthy of attention (1995: 6). He argues that it is this 'banal nationalism' (1995: 6) which facilitates impassioned forms of celebration and defence of national identities. At such points, nations come to be imbued with visceral meaning, for example as 'homelands' (Sack 1983: 62). This is a key tension in nationalism; it is made to appear common-sense and rational, yet it is also designed to evoke strong emotional responses.

The persistence of nationalism in the postmodern age has also been accounted for in terms of a kind of nostalgia for rootedness in the local (Entrikin 1991: 7, Johnstone 2004). Kristeva (1993) argues that the radical openness of postmodernity leads some to seek shelter in the 'family' of their motherland. Hobsbawm (1983: 4) observes that rapid transformations in societies in general often result in a proliferation of new 'invented traditions', whereby a sense of the past is constructed. Many of these new traditions take the form of national ceremonies. Indeed, national identities are inextricably tied to a relationship with the past. National histories are loaded with meaning because they are assumed to implicate present citizens (Poole 1999: 72). The past becomes a site of struggle, with different histories having implications for the members of different countries (Heller 2003: 488). Ideas about chronology represent a key tension in the concept of nationalism. Nationalism is a relatively modern phenomenon, which is generally traced to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries (although it is of course impossible to put an exact date on the gradual development of nation-states) (James 2006: 232). However, it gains legitimacy only in the idea of being age-old (Anderson 2004 [1983]: 5, Hobsbawm 1983: 13, Poole 1999: 69).

Nationality appears to be ubiquitous in the sense that everyone is presumed to 'have' a nationality, which they are called on to state, for example, on job applications. In reality, however, different nations hold unique kinds of relationship to their citizens (Anderson 2004 [1983]: 5). National identity can be partially, although not completely, built on a shared language (Poole 1999: 68). Like other forms of identity, such as gender or family, national identity involves a degree of shared responsibility which allows the bearer to feel pride for fellow nationals' achievements, such as sporting achievements, and guilt for past events (as indicated above). Poole (1999) argues that national identity draws us into a kind of contract. While it provides the capacity to transcend our mortal limits, by connecting us with past and future generations, it places demands upon us, including sometimes the demand to sacrifice our lives.

There is a symbiotic relationship between war and nationalism. Nationalism provides a cause for war. War symbolism, such as cenotaphs (Anderson 1983) and the particular words and phrases associated with war (Bishop and Jaworski 2003), reinforce the discourse of nationalism. Nationalism also demands that we assist compatriots over foreigners, even when the latter might have morally more urgent needs (Poole 1999: 70). This is a crucial argument for charity beginning at home: it is mutually-beneficial to ensure that the privileges awarded to members of one's nation are maintained. Nationalism, like other forms of identity, involves a drawing of boundaries around certain groups of people, some of whom are part of the self and others who are separate from it.

While it is a difficult idea to defend philosophically, nationalism has proven politically powerful. The link between nationalism and capitalism has long been recognised (Anderson 2004 [1983]). But even for anti-capitalist political ideologies such as Marxism, the nation has a key role to play. Marx suggests that global socialism can only come into being through each nation's proletariat rebelling against their own ruling class. It has been difficult to marshal socialist movements beyond these limits (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 13). Yet, as Gupta and Ferguson (1999: 12) point out, associations between places and the idea of 'home' are not always advantageous to, and propagated by, those in power. They have been proved to be empowering in anticolonial contexts and in resistance movements such as the Palestinian struggles, too.

While Anderson (2004 [1983]) argues that the nation is constructed as an 'imagined community' that we feel part of, Žižek (1993: 200) reasons that such an act of identification is not enough to account for the phenomenon of nationalism. He suggests that the members of national communities share a

relationship not only with each other but with the nation itself, which constitutes a potential source of enjoyment, or *jouissance* (after Lacan 1992 [1959-60]). It is this fantasy of potential enjoyment which is brought into play in arguments about what has been taken away or is threatened by non-nationals. Žižek describes this paradox as follows:

It appears to us as “our Thing” [...], as something accessible only to us, as something “they”, the others, cannot grasp; nonetheless it is something constantly menaced by “them”. (1993: 200)

For Žižek, this Thing is a sense of enjoyment that is organised around specialised community ceremonies and myths about its past. The idea is constantly circulated that *jouissance* could be achieved, if not for the other, who takes away our potential jobs, sexual partners and general way of life (1993: 203). This hypothesis has been proved correct in empirical research. For example, Hanson-Easey and Augoustinos (2011: 252) note that negative constructions of immigration often involve unrealistically positive ideas about what the ‘home’ was like before the immigrants arrived. This is another key tension for nationalism: it is only in the presence of non-nationals that national identity becomes relevant, but these individuals are also held responsible for thwarting the idealised nation of the past or future that it is felt would otherwise be the birth-right of its members.

Several alternatives to nationalism have been put forward. Some argue that different forms of place-based identity might be considered as being more important than that of the nation. Nations are just one scale of interaction with others, which can be as wide as the global, or as narrow as the extremely localised (Watts 1992: 121). A second alternative, posited within geographical studies, is that the traditional idea of the region should be replaced with recognition that membership of place-based communities can be voluntary, and therefore that spatial communities sometimes reflect rather than influence their members’ ideas (Johnstone 2004: 70).

The link between nationalism and charity media has also been examined in some research. Even if they are raising money for members of another nation, charity media events often encourage viewers to become more aware of their shared national identity (Mason 2011). In international telethons, unity between citizens in the donor nation is often emphasised, and their national identity contrasted with that of a single recipient nation, although it is usually the donor nation whose identity is the primary focus (Driessens et al. 2012: 721). Donor countries are often depicted in a favourable light, as the generous bearers of life-saving gifts, while any less flattering facts about their historical political role in relation to recipient nations are obscured (Mason 2011: 97). The role of nationalism in intra-national charity events is as yet unexplored. This is another significant angle of within-nation giving that will be considered in the present study. Just as in programmes where donor and beneficiary countries are different, CiN could also be expected to engage in national identity work, as

it operates on a national scale both in terms of its donors and its beneficiaries. It would, however, be expected that the impression of national identity would be complicated by the need to include beneficiaries. In international charity events, being a member of a donor country implies that one occupies a position of relative affluence (Mason 2011: 98). In CiN, in order to justify requests for money, Britain will also have to be portrayed as a place of need. In my analysis I will focus on the ways in which viewers are encouraged to see themselves as sharing a national identity with beneficiaries, and the use of this identity to encourage giving to fellow nationals over other potential recipients.

In this overview, I have highlighted a number of tensions at the heart of nationalistic thought. They are: movement versus stasis, past versus present, reason versus emotion, self versus other, and appropriation versus inalienability. I now return to different theories of distance that might be relevant to my study.

3.4 Mediated distance and immersion

The second aspect of Bilandzic's (2006) 'perceived closeness' is 'mediated closeness', which marks the viewer's engagement in the narrative. This sense of involvement is dependent on factors such as the skill of the storyteller. This concept is similar to what others have called 'immersion' or 'transportation', in which readers of a given book or viewers of a film or television programme become so engrossed in the life of the character/s in these texts that they lose awareness of their own lives and become less critical of what they are viewing (Green and Brock 2000: 701). Although these specific terms have not always been applied to representations of suffering others, both 'experiential distance' (in which the viewed are made to appear similar to the viewer) and 'mediated distance' (in which the viewer is engrossed in the narrative) are already supported by findings in psychological research. There is extensive evidence that people are more likely to report empathetic feelings when they are made aware of similarities between them and suffering others (e.g. Krebs 1975, Davis 1994, Houston 1990, Kogut and Ritov 2007)¹. Similarly, representations that are constructed in ways that make it easier for immersion to take place are more successful in eliciting donations. For example, when particular individuals are identified, people are more likely to give (Small and Lowenstein 2003). Cohen (2001: 168-9) describes the 'unimaginability' of certain types of suffering as a 'fathomless distance' between the observer and the sufferer. It is possible, however, that depicting others' suffering in a certain way will make the imaginative leap required to understand it more or less easy and likely. According to Cohen (2001), there are four key ways in which viewer/readers respond to a given character when they are immersed in a narrative. Firstly, they respond emotionally, sharing

¹ Batson et al. (2005) contest this, suggesting that feelings of 'nurturance', fostered by considering those who are dissimilar even in terms of their species, are more powerful motivators for action than perceived similarity.

in the feelings of this character. Secondly, they take on the perspective of that character in terms of their thoughts and attitudes. Thirdly, they partake of the goals or motivations of the character, feeling happy when these goals are achieved and frustrated or upset when they are not. Fourthly, Cohen (2001: 256) suggests, viewer/readers become absorbed in the text to the extent that they lose awareness of themselves and of their status as observers.

It is this fourth element of ‘mediated closeness’ that becomes problematic when applied to a text like CiN. Viewers’ emotional and cognitive sharing in the lives of sufferers, and especially the wish for them to achieve their goals, would be a desirable outcome for charities seeking to garner donations. However, the ultimate goal of encouraging viewers to take some form of action, such as to donate money, would be hindered if viewers lost the sense of themselves as having a separate role in relation to beneficiaries. For Boltanski, it is the engagement in the lives of suffering others that is ultimately important, and this can only happen if their suffering is apprehended as being part of the real lives of the viewers. It is orientation towards action that, he argues, separates the experience of immersion in a real story from that of immersion in a fictional one (1999: 153). Immersion can be fleeting and intermittent (Cohen 2001: 250), but, crucially, it entails a degree of removal from reality. This means that viewers who felt immersed in a narrative would be less likely to consider real-life action in relation to it.

For the purposes of the present study, therefore, ‘mediated closeness’ will have to be amended in order to be a useful analytic concept. In particular, what counts as closeness and distance might need to be reversed; distance would result from the suspension of viewers’ reality, and closeness would be experienced whenever there was a sense of connection between the reality of the people they observed and their own lives. In other words, closeness would occur when viewers were invited to see a beneficiary as someone that they might have a social relationship with, rather than as someone whose perspective could replace their own in the narrative. When engagement that mimics a real social connection takes place between viewers and the media personae they watch, it has been dubbed ‘para-social interaction’, which gives ‘the illusion of face-to-face relationships’ (Horton and Wohl 1956: 215). Para-social interaction, however, is built up over time, and results in changes in self-image and sometimes behaviour of the viewer (Giles 2002), so it is not applicable to the current context. Because my own definition deviates so significantly from Bilandzic’s concept of mediated closeness/distance, I will refer to my own analytic concept as *representational* distance. In order to operationalise *representational* distance, I will, firstly, seek to understand how realistic depictions of suffering others are and, secondly, examine the extent to which viewers are encouraged to respond to the suffering of those that they see.

3.5 Representational distance: the spectacle of suffering and the possibility of action

When considering how suffering might be made to appear unreal in modern televisual representations, Debord's (2007 [1967]) theory of the spectacle seems pertinent. The term 'spectacle' has been defined in a variety of ways in different contexts. Its dictionary definition describes a show or a scene, sometimes with an element of absurdity (Collins Compact English Dictionary 1994: 841). It is defined differently, however, by Debord. For him, the spectacle is 'a social relation between people that is mediated by images' (2007 [1967]: 1). In other words, images replace reality. Like Baudrillard's (1981) 'simulacra and simulation', Debord's 'spectacle' is a concept that is meant to define the condition of the society as a whole, rather than to describe isolated events.²

Both Boltanski (1999) and Chouliaraki (2006) draw upon the theory of the spectacle in order to explain how some images do not hold meaning for viewers and therefore fail to motivate them to take action. I will now explore this idea in more depth, before focusing on theories that might help to conceptualise the extent to which viewers are oriented towards actions that could ameliorate this suffering. The idea of the spectacle is invoked by Boltanski because pity, he argues, involves *looking* at suffering (1999: 3). In order to be able to observe someone else's suffering, that suffering must be made visible in some way (1999: 8). For Boltanski, the sight of suffering presents the viewer with a moral dilemma (Boltanski 1999: 20). She is torn between acting to ameliorate the suffering she sees and acting as she did before seeing it. Doing the latter means she must accept the sense of guilt which comes with choosing to watch, but not respond to, what she sees. This is, however, not the only moral problem for the viewer, according to Boltanski. The strong emotions that viewing suffering can elicit (fascination, horror, interest, and excitement (1999: 21)) mean that watching others in distress is also a potential source of enjoyment (1999: 105). This visual aspect of contemplating the suffering of others is one of the most problematic aspects of the politics of pity. It encourages us to look from a distance, instead of acting, and to respond to what we see in the short-term, rather than examining what lies behind it (1999: 3).

Although we can, and often do, often witness suffering face-to-face, the age of television has made the practice of looking at suffering particularly prevalent. While visible examples of suffering such as street homelessness are still present in Western society today (Gerrard and Farrugia 2014), many of the images of suffering that many people experience are presented to them by the mass media,

² Debord's (2007 [1967]) and Baudrillard's (1981) work can be classified as 'post-aesthetic'. The aesthetic movement separated aesthetic domains such as art from those of science, technology and finance, for example. Post-aesthetic thinkers, such as Heidegger, Nietzsche Debord and Baudrillard, do not view art as separate from life (Babich 1989: 3).

particularly in media events at times of crisis (Kyriakidou 2015: 216). This alters the form of the message. On television, in particular, images are privileged over other forms of representation (Chouliaraki 2005: 145). It therefore follows that a society in which the relationship between sufferers and non-sufferers is highly mediated will to some extent make a spectacle of suffering.

Whereas Debord's (2007 [1967]) idea of the spectacle is all-encompassing, the term 'spectacle' has also been applied to specific phenomena by scholars such as Kellner (2003) and Schirato (2007). The latter is more similar to the dictionary definition of spectacle and its everyday use. However, what unites these two quite different understandings of spectacle is the belief that spectacles are somehow tied to the values of the society that produced them. For Debord and Baurillard, the society-wide spectacle is the manifestation of capitalist society's values (Debord 2002: 1); they believe that capitalist concerns seep into social relations, transforming them into transactions. For scholars such as Kellner, specific media spectacles are also worthy of study because they, too, embody a society's belief systems (2003: 2).

Like Kellner (2003), Chouliaraki (2005) applies the term 'spectacle' to specific instances of mass media, rather than to the society that produced them as a whole. She (2005: 275) argues that televisual depictions of crises involving different types of human actor vary in the extent to which they appear spectacular. For example, she suggests that images of the Iraq war shown on news programmes presented the scenes of suffering from a distance, devoid of both sufferers and perpetrators, which therefore encouraged viewers to be emotionally detached from the imagery of violence by erasing its human consequences (2005: 274). She argues that other reports of suffering, by contrast, *over-emotionalise* the suffering of certain groups or figures (2005: 274). This means that certain types of sufferers are made to seem more important than others in the mass media, even in the event that neither is excluded from representation.

Boltanski (1999) uses the term 'spectacle' throughout his book *Distant Suffering* but does not explore the concept in detail. He suggests that the mediated, pictorial nature of information received about distant suffering makes it easier for viewers to dismiss it. Drawing on the idea of simulacra and simulation (Baudrillard 1981), he argues that widespread disillusion about the idea that reality can be represented in the mass media has resulted in mediated images of suffering being mistrusted and ignored. It is no longer an issue of criticising false representations (as Debord's notion of the spectacle implies), Baudrillard argues, but of recognising the loss of referentiality altogether. Representations are no longer understood as referring to anything but themselves. It is this sense of doubt, over not only whether the representation is accurate but also whether the represented is in fact real, Boltanski argues, that allows the spectator of mediated suffering to escape her guilt (1999: 176-7).

Chouliaraki (2006: 50) takes issue with Baudrillard's (1981) thesis that the form of images takes precedence over their content. She argues that exclusively focusing on the mode of appearance gives an impoverished view not only of the relations of power that are hidden behind an image, but of the image itself, which is 'not exhausted in its surface form' (2006: 52). In other words, images should be interpreted in light of the social meanings that they carry, rather than simply as decontextualized pictures. She argues that other modes, such as language, also add to and interact with the meanings with which a given image is imbued. It stands to reason that images are effective and commercially valuable in the capitalist system because of their provenances (Kress and van Leeuwen 2002: 355), and the connotations and myths (Barthes 2009 [1957]) that they carry.

The difference between the spectacle and non-spectacle has also been theorised in relation to unmediated images of suffering. Debord insists that the society of the spectacle necessarily includes privation and poverty, although it may attempt to disguise it (2002: 10). By contrast, Gerrard and Farrugia (2014: 8) interpret the phenomenon of homelessness as a chink in the armour of the spectacle. They argue that the spectacle, as understood by Debord, is at odds with images or instances of poverty and suffering. There is, they argue, a clash between the images and relations of consumer capitalism and the reality of suffering, which is made visible, for example, in street homelessness. In this way, the reality of living poverty is experienced as a deviation from the norm of sanitised capitalist spaces, such as shopping malls.

For my own analysis, I will leave aside questions of spectacle as a pervasive social phenomenon, as my data would not be sufficient to explore such a concept and because, as I will argue in chapter 6, my focus group participants discuss different images and narratives as having differing levels of reality. I also reject the use of the term 'spectacle' as a descriptor of events such as CiN because this interpretation involves treating such media events as a whole and therefore does not allow for analysis that distinguishes between the levels of spectacularity that seem to be present at different points. I define 'spectacle' as the separation between images and reality, as signalled in each of my data sets, particularly in relation to sights of suffering.

I argued above that, by contrast with Bilandzic's 'mediated closeness', which is created when viewers' real lives recede into the background when immersed in a narrative, *representational* closeness should be seen as having been created when the lives of the viewed were made to seem tangible and therefore alterable. Having examined the first aspect of what I have termed *representational* distance (i.e. the extent to which the lives of sufferers appear as real), I now move on to explore the second aspect: the extent to which action on suffering is represented as possible. Assessing this will mean, firstly, examining what sorts of actions are presented and, secondly, the

extent to which these action appear to have an impact on the lives of sufferers. In order to explore the latter, I draw on Barthes' (2009 [1972]) concept of myth. Barthes argues that, in addition to the denotative and connotative levels of meaning associated with signs, some carry an additional, ideological level of meaning (2009 [1972]: 138). This ideological or 'mythical' meaning is constructed to serve the interests of the most powerful members of a society. If actions taken to ameliorate suffering are to be understood as truly connected to the lives of sufferers, then there should be a straightforward relationship between these actions and outcomes. However, the connection of additional meanings to such acts would imply a more donor-focused representation of action, in which the distance between donors and beneficiaries would be maximised.

Drawing distinctions between different types of distance helps to understand the processes that bring about these distances, and how they might be measured in relation to my data. It has already been recognised, however, that some of these types of distance overlap and / or interact with each other. *Social* distances, for example, are manifested in and entrenched by the arrangement of *physical* locations (Harvey 2006). Places also affect our relationship with mass media. The further away we are from phenomena, the more reliant we become on media representations of them (Blommaert et al. 2003). Conversely, how we interpret media stories is affected by the attitudes of people in our social networks, which, in turn, are commonly shaped by the communities in which we live (2003: 324). It is therefore to be expected that other types of distance will also interact with each other, so that, for example, *physical* distance and *experiential* distance are both likely to result in increased *social* distance. This is not a reason however, to collapse any of these distinctions, as they are nevertheless separate phenomena, which, for analytical purposes, I will keep separate. I now consider these types of distance in relation to my own data.

3.6 Analytic foci: social, experiential and representational distance

The children who are typically classified as disadvantaged by CiN are resident in all parts of the country, albeit in differing proportions. Likewise, potential donors are not limited to a particular geographical location. This means that the lack of interaction between them is not a result of *physical* distance. Few, if any of these children (and none of those who are shown in the programme) live permanently in closed institutions either, so their separation from potential donors is not a matter of *territorial* distance. Any distance between these groups of people is likely to be of the *social* variety, in the sense that the donors and recipients may belong to different social groups that have limited interaction with each other. In terms of the narratives that are presented about disadvantaged groups in programmes like CiN, *experiential* and *representational* distances are also important factors. Indeed, as mentioned above, it seems likely that these three forms of distance might eventually interact with one another, so that, for example, groups that are *socially* close will be more likely to

represent each other as *experientially* close, and representations that encourage *representational* closeness to others might result in increased *social* closeness in the future.

Each of the types of distance above is analytically important because it can affect the relationships between people. What makes *social* and *perceived* (*experiential* and *mediated* / *representational*) distance different from *physical* distance in this respect is that these types of distance are always produced by people. This means that these types of distance are constructed in response to the relationships between people, as well as having an effect on these relationships. Physical distance can, of course, also be a means of control, as when people are forced into exile or not allowed to immigrate. This type of distance is, however, not necessarily a human construct. My own analysis will therefore consider distance as both productive of and potentially produced by other factors, such as mediation. In the following chapters, I consider *social*, *experiential* and *representational* closeness in turn, examining the effects of each type of distance on the relationship that is discursively created between viewers of and beneficiaries to CiN, both in the programme itself and by its potential viewers.

Chapter summary

At the start of this chapter, I identified the concept of pity as a key idea in the critical study of charity discourse. The idea unites some of the key themes identified in the literature review, i.e. emotional responses, monetary donation, visibility and the role of group-based identities in deciding whom to help. While, as I indicated, this idea is frequently referred to in studies of portrayals of and responses to international suffering, it has not yet been applied to the intra-national giving context. This means that it has only been used to discuss giving at a *physical* distance, and so the relationship between pity and other types of distance has been left unclear. In order to address this gap in knowledge, I set out to build a framework that would allow me to examine the concept of distance in my own data. I concluded that *social*, *experiential*, and *representational* types of distance are most likely to play a role in the relationship between CiN's beneficiaries and its potential viewers. In the analytic chapters that follow, I examine my data in terms of each of these concepts in turn, in order to gain a better understanding of how this relationship is constructed, and to develop the concept of pity for use in the intra-national giving context.

Chapter 4: Social Distance

In the previous chapter, I developed a theoretical framework for analysing my data. As I outlined, pity, a central concept in charitable giving, has been reconceptualised in literature on mediated giving as a form of compassion that comes about specifically when there is a distance between sufferers and those who witness their suffering (e.g. Chouliaraki 2006). Despite Boltanski (1999) stating that this distance need not be of a literal, physical nature, subsequent research has largely studied situations in which sufferers and viewers were in different countries and often different continents. In order to evaluate the usefulness of pity as a concept in the context of charitable giving within a country however, it is necessary to consider alternative conceptions of distance. ‘Social distance’ is an intangible yet important means by which members of different groups are discouraged from interacting with each other via the separation of the spaces they habitually occupy (Harvey 2006, Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). Social distance can be understood as being maximised when members of different social groups are kept separate from each other, and minimised when they frequently come into close contact. In the present chapter, I apply the concept of social distance to my own data, focusing on instances from both charity media data (the 2011 broadcast of BBC ‘Children in Need’) and focus group talk where members of different social groups are represented as either sharing spaces with or using separate spaces from each other. In the former, I focus specifically on the separation or integration of donors and beneficiaries. In the latter, I examine the concept of social distance as discussed in the focus groups more broadly.

4.1 Social distance in Children in Need: the separation of places and people

In CiN, different places are used for different purposes, which has the effect of separating groups of people from each other. I interpret this as the representation of *social* distance between these groups for the following reasons: Firstly, the different places shown are not *physically* distant from one another. Secondly, the viewer is not made aware of any means by which people are materially prevented from entering any of the places that are shown in the programme, which means it is not a case of *territorial* distance, either. While it is quite possible, for example, that fundraisers would not be allowed to enter some of the centres that beneficiaries use, and that beneficiaries would not be able to enter some of the studios shown in the programme, any such inhibitions are implicit.

There are a number of different types of location in the show and these are generally associated with different sets of actors in relation to the charity. Switches between location types and the activities associated with them are marked by a range of visual and verbal features, which create boundaries

between them. When the presentation is about to shift from one place to another, presenters signal the change by changing tense, in phrases such as ‘that was brilliant... now’ (presenter Alesha Dixon at 19 minutes). They also shift their footing (Goffman 1981), by switching from addressing co-present individuals to addressing the audience or the camera. These shifts of footing are realised in the presenters’ changes in gaze and their use of personal pronouns. Boundary-marking graphics, such as CGI representations of the show’s mascot ‘Pudsey bear’, are also frequently used between shots showing different places.

By recognising such signals, I was able to identify different kinds of places represented in the show and to group them into a limited number of place types, which I categorise as follows: *fundraising places* (where fundraisers, who are presented as representatives of the programme’s viewers, are shown), the *studio* and other entertainment settings (where television presenters, entertainers, and the studio audiences appear), and *beneficiary places*. The latter can be further broken down into *problematic places* (where suffering children and families are seen), and *therapeutic places* (places that ameliorate this suffering for these families). In the following section, I focus on each of these different types of place in turn, giving examples of the imagery used to portray them and considering the social actors that appear in them.

Because this chapter concerns the representation of people and places as similar to or different from each other, I draw on discursive devices that are used to delineate people and events. In the CiN data, I focus on the visual framing (Goffman 1981: 71) of different places, i.e. the ways in which they are defined by the presence or absence of particular features. In the focus group data, I explore a similar concept: the ‘event work’ (Arribas-Ayllon et al. 2013: 69) carried out by speakers, or the description of situations in particular ways in order to justify attitudes and actions taken in relation to them.

Fundraising places

The main aim of the CiN programme is to raise money. This means that even entertainment items and celebrity challenges could theoretically be classified as ‘fundraising activities’. Under this heading, however, I categorise only the parts of the programme where the explicit efforts of non-celebrities to raise money for the charity are shown. Fundraising vignettes usually take place at the site of the sponsored activities and are often pre-recorded, showing events that have taken place before the live broadcast. These are the places where ‘we’, the viewers, are positioned; they are often described by presenters as being ‘in your area’ (25:51). These sections are used to create the impression of a community of fundraisers across Britain, magnifying the scale and impact of the event. The following frames illustrate how these places are typically visually represented in the show. Frames 4.1-3 are

taken from the first general fundraising vignette in the show. Frame 4.4 is from a more specific type of vignette, which focuses on activities in schools across the country.



4.1 - 28:26



4.2 – 27:09



4.3 – 27:01



4.4 – 23:25

As exemplified in frames 4.1 – 4.3, from the show's first fundraising vignette, the places that are displayed as the site of fundraising activities are often archetypal community spaces that appear in villages, towns and cities across the country, including high streets (4.3) and football grounds (4.2). These community spaces, like the schools shown in the second vignette (4.4), are common across the UK and therefore make fundraising scenes seem generalizable to other localities. This helps to build the impression that viewers are socially and experientially close to the fundraisers in the sense that both groups share similar places and experiences. It also suggests that these activities are happening in a vast number of locations across the country.

The schools update vignette also creates the impression of multiple interchangeable locations. Frame 4.4 accompanies presenter Terry Wogan's introduction to the 'schools update' section. It depicts still images of fundraising activities carried out in the four schools to be shown in this clip, pictured from a distance. The circles encompassing each of these four schools are uniformly sized and randomly placed and thus are represented as being equal to one another (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 81-88). This shot appears before each of the schools' particular fundraising activities are shown, with the

circle representing the school to be viewed next growing in size until it occupies the whole screen. In their shape and colour, these four circles themselves are also presented as having been chosen at random from the multi-sized, multi-coloured dots behind them. In this way, the visual representation suggests that the clips that are shown in this section should be regarded as exemplary of a large number of schools across the UK, any one of which could equally have been singled out.

In many cases, before fundraising places are introduced, live ‘local area’ celebrations are shown. Montgomery (2007: 64) suggests that in news bulletins reporting ‘from the field’ is used to give an enhanced impression of facticity by displaying the sights and sounds of the event. In CiN, the display of live celebrations also provides evidence of widespread participation in the event. Some of the fundraising participants are present in these places, and they are often asked to tell the presenter about their activities and how much money they have raised. In the London and South East England version accessed for this research, these celebrations take place in paid-entry commercial venues that are used for leisure activities (such as Winter Wonderland, frame 4.1). The association of these places with leisure activities indicates the tenor of the fundraising as a form of entertainment.

The visual features of these sites, including their modality, will be discussed in chapter 6. For now, it is worth noting that extracts showing fundraising sites are commonly pre-recorded (sometimes with live introductions) and that they show members of the public who engage in the task of raising money for the show, rather than those who donate. As a whole, fundraising sites are presented as being unexceptional. It is implied that the scenes shown are representative both of viewers’ localities and of other fundraising sites.

The studio

The studio is the site that appears between all other places within the programme (other entertainment locations, fundraising places and beneficiary places). It is the only place where the entertainers and consumers of the show are united. In terms of the social actors who appear in these settings, celebrity presenters and performers are shown most often, and a studio audience is also present, although its role is restricted to providing reactions to events in the form of laughter and applause, in lieu of the home audience. In other words, the purpose of ‘ordinary people’ in this setting is to display satisfaction with the show, as well as to provide a sense of collective participation (Clayman 1993: 110).

Frames 4.5 – 4.8 show the studio’s diverse visual presentation and its different functions of celebrating (4.5), introducing (4.6), summarising (4.7) and entertaining (4.8).



4.5 – 01:11



4.6 – 01:54



4.7 – 22:51









4.8 – 17:25

As can be seen in these frames, a frequent focal point in this setting is the studio screen. As in news broadcasts, this monitor performs a range of functions, but its main role is the representation of images from other places. The studio unites the depictions of other sites, appearing before and after all other types of place, except other entertainment studios, which sometimes appear directly before fundraising locations. Like the increasingly elaborated news studio, CiN's studio is a complex presentation space (Montgomery 2007: 193). Its role, however, is not only to represent but also to act as a counterpoint to other representations. It is what Montgomery (2007: 77) refers to as a 'deictic zero point'; a fixed point, from which the places to be reported on can be ventured into.

In the following example, the 'X-Factor' talent show runner-up Olly Murs provides the conclusion to a vignette about a specialised nursery for blind children. In the following shot, the studio is shown, and presenter Alesha Dixon delivers a gloss of the vignette, and gives a further invitation to donate, before Terry Wogan joins her to introduce the next section about fundraising in schools.

Extract 1 – Transcript Including the Studio Screen (see appendix 4)


1	22:44		Olly Murs: (to camera) it's been great to watch their music sessions (.) and (.) and see all the fantastic work that Dorton Nursery does for these kids (.) to help them develop their sight (.) <u>but</u> (.) we <u>need</u> more <u>money</u> (1.0) so <u>please</u> pick up the phone (.) and donate on oh three four five seven (.) double three (.) double two (.) double three (1.0) and we can help all these lovely children out (1.0) thank you (4.0)	Silence
2	22:51		Alesha Dixon: (to camera) ah it's a wonderful place isn't it (.) and thirty pounds pays for half a day there (.) and other projects like it (1.0) you saw how much Ella loved it (.) so please help us fund more spaces for children like her (.) the number to call? is oh three four five seven (.) double three (.) double two (.) double three (1.0) thank you	
3	23:07			
4	23:09		Terry Wogan: thanks Alesha (1.0) now we need to say (.) a lot of thank yous (.) to a lot of people tonight because frankly (1.0) without you (.) we're nothing Alesha Dixon: exactly Terry Wogan: and I want to start with some people (.) who don't get nearly enough praise (1.0) those of you (.) all over the United Kingdom (2.0) who go to school	
5	23:25			Music: Maroon 5 'Moves like Jagger' Children screaming





6	23:35		Alan Dedicoat V/O: In Tywyn it was fancy dress foaming fun for the pupils of Llanegryn primary (.) as the teachers paid to have their cars cleaned (4.0)	Music: Maroon 5 'Moves like Jagger' Children screaming
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In this instance, the studio is only performing a linking function; no entertainment performances take place in it, and it is shown only as the site of the programme's presenters, who conclude, comment on, and introduce other sections of the programme. The studio appears for only 30 seconds, but this section marks a clear separation between the representation of beneficiaries in frame 1 and fundraisers in frame 5. This means that no connection is made between the figure sought by Dorton Nursery (2) and the figure raised by Ysgol Llanegryn (6). In frame 2, Ella (the principal subject of the beneficiary vignette) appears in the screen to the left of the presenter, with words that summarise information from this vignette: '£30 half day at nursery'. This image then gradually fades – it is just visible in frame 3, but invisible by frame 4. It is replaced by multi-coloured dots floating on a black background. Here, as at many other points in the show, the studio mediates between beneficiaries and benefactors in a way that makes them appear otherwise unconnected.

It is also in the studio that the combined total raised by all fundraisers until that point is revealed at many points in the show (as seen in extract 2), removed from the places of its potential impact.

Extract 2 – Decontextualized Fundraising Total (see appendix 4)

1	31:44		<p>Alesha Dixon: Now with that fantastic amount raised it may just be time for our very first total of the night (.) what do you think everyone?</p> <p>Alesha Dixon: Let's see where we're at</p> <p>Terry Wogan: Well (.) I'm very glad that you've reacted in this way (1.5) because that's exactly what we're going to do (.) (<i>shouting</i>) give you the ongoing total even at this early stage (.)</p>	Audience cheers (5 seconds)
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2	32:37		let's have a look (.) at the total raised (.) so far	Drumroll, audience whooping
3	32:40		Terry Wogan: four million,	Audience cheering, celebratory music
4	32:44		three hundred and sixty-four thousand, four hundred and eleven pounds	Audience cheering, celebratory music, pyrotechnics shooting on the stage
5	32:50		That's the most we've ever raised at this early stage	

In frame 3, the total appears in the middle of the screen, from which the presenters have stepped away (shown in frame 2). The amount raised is presented as the cause for visual and auditory audience celebration, but is not linked to beneficiary need. Verbally, the figure is compared only to the previous year's total, rather than to a target in terms of funding specific projects.

The studio, then, operates as a presenting location, from which other sections of the programme are ventured into, and against which they are contrasted. However, it is important to note that the different areas and people represented either side of it are not brought together in the studio, but kept separate from each other by it.

Problematic Places

Under this heading, I classed the places that beneficiaries are to be shown in before their admission to a place that helps alleviate their suffering. As I will discuss below, not all beneficiary vignettes feature such problematic places. Often, however, the problems experienced by families or children that are helped by Children in Need are presented as being linked to their occupation of certain places.



4.9 – 48:39



4.10– 63:11



4.11 – 08:31



4.12 – 08:28

Narratives accompanying images of such places emphasise the problems the children face, such as low income or isolation. They are thus signalled as problematic places. For example, frame 4.9 occurs with a narrative about social housing and low-income families, and frame 4.10 is linked to a narrative about social isolation. Negativity is also signalled through multimodal features such as slow-paced music.

The following extracts are verbal introductions to problematic places. In extract 3, television and radio presenter Zoë Ball introduces a school breakfast club in the area of Littlehampton, pictures of which (including frame 4.9) appear simultaneously with her voiceover.

Extract 3

Zoë Ball V/O: it's seven in the morning (1.0) and all over the country (.) families are starting their day (5.0) you take it for granted don't you (1.0) get the kids dressed (.) feed them breakfast (.) do the school run (2.0) but it's not like that for everyone (4.0) one in five families in the UK are living in poverty (1.0) and sadly (.) some of the kids in those families (.) are going without breakfast

In this extract, frame 4.9 is linked to the idea of 'poverty'. Although neither the high rise itself nor the other shots that appear before or after it showing the sorts of scenes that are visible in areas of deprivation (vandalised playgrounds, rubbish) are explicitly linked to the problems faced by the beneficiaries shown in this vignette, they are used to illustrate them.

What is particularly striking in this introduction is the presentation of the fact that some British children live in poverty as unknown to viewers. The situation faced by these children is contrasted with what is presented as the more familiar situation of not living in these conditions. The use of 'you' here signals the projected sharedness of the situation described. By contrast, when describing poorer families, a more distant and authoritative stance is taken. Statistics are given ('one in five'), and personal indexicals are used that distance the speaker from the people she is referring to ('some of the kids in *those* families')³. These features are typical of what Edwards and Potter (1992) refer to as 'empiricist accounting', in which ideas are expressed in a way that is typical of scientific discourse. Facts are presented as unequivocal, a form of language linked to the attempt to create rhetorically persuasive arguments (1992: 154).

The viewers are addressed in a way that suggests they are not part of the 20% of families described and they are also assumed to be ignorant of these people's situation. This creates the impression that poverty is a problem that is detached from the lives of viewers and is only knowable through media representations such as CiN's. At the same time, the presentation of images such as frame 4.9 presents a paradox: viewers are expected to be able to decode what such shots signify (poverty, social housing), whilst apparently having no level of prior knowledge of, or interaction with, such places.

In extract 4, television presenter Lorraine Kelly introduces a child called Melissa. During this introduction, she is pictured sitting in a dark room with a black background. Following this introduction, Melissa is shown in her home (frame 4.10).

³ For a discussion of how the word 'those' can refer to people at differing degrees from the deictic centre, depending on context, see Adetunji 2006: 178.

Extract 4

Lorraine Kelly: it's a harsh reality (.) that some children's disabilities mean (.) they will rely (.) on help from family or carers (.) for their whole lives (1.0) for them to enjoy a sense of freedom and independence (1.0) can seem (.) impossible (2.0) I want to introduce you to a young girl called Melissa (.) and a Children in Need project (.) that has transformed her life (.) and that of her family

In this extract, children's disabilities are not presented as unknown, but the fact that this often results in their lifelong dependence on others is presented as 'new' information. Halliday (1970) argues that information that the hearer is not expected to know is likely to appear after what he is expected to know in the clause structure. In this case, the phrase 'some children's disabilities' appears before what this means in terms of their dependence on others. While some viewers may have experience of similar disabilities, using a specific example (in this case Melissa) means that some aspects of the situation can be presented as if they are not formerly understood by the viewer. The use of third person pronouns here also indicates that the children described are not represented as forming part of the audience, which would be referred to as 'us', or 'we' (Harwood 2006: 355).

In both extracts 3 and 4, the presenters provide interpretations of the situations they are introducing to viewers – these are 'harsh' realities and 'sad' situations. Aslama and Pantti (2006) suggest that monologue is frequently used in reality television shows because it allows for emotional content to be portrayed in a uniquely authentic-seeming way. Goodman and Barnes (2011) argue that the relationship between celebrities and development charities (what they refer to as 'the star/poverty space') is predicated on the idea that celebrities represent authenticity as well as expertise. In other words, they provide a sense of the familiar and reliable for situations that are unfamiliar and unknown. The use of celebrities in CiN to provide an emotional gloss on the representation of people and places within the UK thus suggests that beneficiaries are distant from or unfamiliar to the viewer in ways that the celebrity herself is not.

The potential consequences of presenting upsetting realities as unfamiliar will be explored in chapter 6. For now, it is worth noting that problematic places and the people who occupy them are verbally and visually signalled as unknown to viewers outside of their representation in the show.

Therapeutic places

In most vignettes about CiN's beneficiaries, the children, and sometimes their families as well, are admitted to a centre that appears to address some of their problems. These centres take a number of forms, from before-school breakfast clubs for children from low-income families, to nurseries specialising in the treatment of specific medical conditions. I use the term 'therapeutic places'

because, while these places appear to effect positive changes, their role is often not to reverse the principal problems faced by these families and children (such as disabilities, poverty or bereavement), but rather to provide temporary or partial relief from them.

Table 1 summarises some features of the beneficiary vignettes that occur in the first three hours of the show (just before the switch-over to BBC 2, during the BBC news broadcast on BBC 1). This time frame was selected both because it constitutes the time in which ordinary viewing is interrupted on BBC1 and because after this time several of the vignettes are repeated.

The classification of items 1 and 9 as beneficiary vignettes is debatable, as vignette 1 is a collage of vignettes that occur later in the programme, and vignette 9 is a clip taken from a BBC documentary. These two examples also lack some of the features that are common to all others, such as the inclusion of a celebrity. Of the eight unmistakable beneficiary vignettes, specific centres feature in seven. This feature occurs with the same regularity as the familiar trope of showing individual children to represent the many children affected by a particular issue.

As summarised in table 1, in most cases the centres presented do not address the most problematic part of the children's lives. For example, these centres' remits are not to correct disabilities (vignettes 2 and 4) or health problems (vignettes 6 and 7), but to provide temporary relief from some difficulties associated with them, such as relief from loneliness.

Huxford (2001: 667) argues that one of the chief functions that the presentation of places serves in journalistic practice is to 'illustrate and instantiate abstract issues'. In these instances, the therapeutic places represent a range of activities that are performed in them and the changes in the lives of their users claimed in the voiceovers. Like fundraising spaces, they are presented as examples of similar centres, which provide relief from other forms of suffering.

Table 1: Beneficiary Vignettes for First 3 Hours

	Time	Child	Problem	Centre	Role of centre	Celebrity	Celebrity Involvement
1	8:53-9:51 (58 sec)	Many, unspecified	-	-	-	-	-
2	19:05-22:51 (3 min 46 sec)	Ella	Disability, visual impairment	Dorton Nursery	Light therapy, specialist massage, music group	Olly Murs (pop singer / X Factor contestant)	Meets family, goes to centre
3	48:19-50:58 (2 min 39 sec)	Unspecified	Poverty / not being fed breakfast	Launchpad breakfast club	Provides breakfast, and possibly emotional support	Zoë Ball (former Radio 1 DJ)	Goes to town, helps in centre
4	62:01-65:41 (3 min 40 sec)	Melissa	Learning disability	The Yard Adventure Centre	Learning life skills, art, etc.	Lorraine Kelly (TV presenter)	Intro and outro only
5	1h 29 (89)-1h 31:59 (3 mins)	Hayley / James, Casie / Tyler, Natalie, Suzie	Poverty	No centre shown (Buttle Trust)	- (provides emergency grants to families)	Jessie J, Tulisa, Matt Cardle (pop singers, talent contest winners)	Speak on behalf of children
6	1h 40:07-1h 44:07 (4 mins)	Harry	Health problems, including cerebral palsy	Steps Centre	Education centre for children with motor disorders	Jo Joiner (actor - Tanya Branning in Eastenders)	Meets family, goes to centre, goes into studio to testify about her 'first-hand' experience
7	2h 03:04 – 2h 08:21 (5 mins 17 sec)	Elliot	Died of leukaemia	Claire House	Hospice, support for families	Daniel Craig (actor)	Intro and outro only
8	2h 19:20 – 2h 23:27 (4 mins 7 sec)	Will	Brain injury as result of car accident	Splash Play Centre	Play centre	Gary Barlow (pop singer)	Intro and outro only
9	2h 38:17-2h 43:16 (4 min 59 sec)	A selection of children from a BBC documentary called 'Poor Kids'	Poverty	-	-	-	-
10	3 h 0:48-3 h 5:03 (4 mins 15 sec)	Brett	Died on train track – link made to drug abuse	KPC Youth Centre	Preventative measure for others	Alesha Dixon (former pop singer, TV presenter)	Meets Brett's family, goes on streets with social workers, and to centre

In the following frames, visual presentations of therapeutic places are shown. These frames are taken from three different beneficiary vignettes, and display: an activity centre for children with learning disabilities (frame 4.13), a before-school breakfast club (discussed above) (frame 4.14), a nursery for children with disabilities (frame 4.15), and a light therapy room for children with visual impairments as part of this nursery (frame 4.16).



4.13 - 64:47



4.14 – 49:51



4.15 – 22:44



4.16 – 21:28i

The children's or families' entry into therapeutic places is always signalled as a transformative event in the narrative, in the sense that the change of place also marks a significant change in their lives. The places themselves are often described as having extraordinary properties, which allow them to be the agent of change in the child / family's life. For example, the nursery shown in frame 4.15 is described by the presenter as 'life-changing' for the family featured, and the play centre in frame 4.13 is described as having an 'unique atmosphere' that facilitates learning.

In some ways, the description of centres as having special properties echoes the attempt in the 1970s and 1980s to overcome stigmatising language when referring to persons with disabilities by using terms such as 'special' and 'exceptional' (Longmore 1985: 421). Longmore points out that the use of

such terminology is problematic because it maintains the idea of a distinction between people with disabilities and others. In CiN, this distinction is represented not only linguistically but spatially; children with ‘special’ needs are not only labelled as deviating from the norm but are also represented visually as occupying different, ‘special’ places. The idea that certain individuals should be placed in institutions and separated from the rest of society is historically a troubling one. For example Foucault (1986: 25) cites care homes, psychiatric hospitals and prisons as examples of places of ‘deviation’, in which people whose behaviour differed from the norm were placed. He saw such places as becoming more numerous towards the end of the twentieth century. Decisions about where to place certain groups of people, he argued, were a question of classification of these people as those that should be close to or distant from one another (1986: 23).

However, the use of place as a means of controlling access to these services is not necessarily ideologically-driven (Sack 1983). There are methodical and disinterested reasons for collecting resources at certain locations (Harvey 2006: 69). Furthermore, the therapeutic sites that appear in CiN are temporary, and the complete segregation of these individuals is not advocated. Nevertheless, these specialised sites are for children with particular problems and their families and carers only. They do not provide the opportunity to interact with members of society who are not co-sufferers.

This is arguably not just an issue of representation, however. If projects that are based in specific centres are often funded by CiN, then showing these centres simply enhances the potential donors’ understanding of these projects. But even if we accept that these projects are typical of the type of work funded by CiN, the programme does not call upon viewers to be more accepting of disadvantaged individuals, including those with disabilities, in society, but to support their existence elsewhere.

Summary of findings in section 4.1

It is clear that Children in Need presents different places as being linked to activity types. These activities involve different actors. While the studio contains an audience, entertainers and celebrity presenters, different celebrities appear with children and families in the vignettes that show beneficiary places. Non-celebrity fundraisers are shown at fundraising events in their own local areas. Beneficiaries generally only appear in problematic or therapeutic spaces; on the few occasions that they appear in fundraising spaces it is because groups from the latter are also taking part in fundraising activities. This representation of different groups in distinct places has the potential to naturalise the separation of these groups in society.

In rhetorical terms, the marked visual differences between the fundraising places, beneficiary places and the studio present them as being categorically different from one another (Arribas-Allyon et. al 2013). In this way, the programme reinforces the idea that mediators are needed to negotiate between the people in them. The needs of the sufferers and the efforts of the viewers cannot be reconciled without the charity. The show becomes the focal point for both sets of people, and viewers and beneficiaries are encouraged to feel socially distant from one another.

4.2: Social distance in the focus group data: extreme physical proximity

In this section, I explore the idea of social distance as represented in talk in the focus group data. As discussed above, social distance is what occurs when different social groups fail to interact with each other because they occupy different places, or the same places at different times, without this being enforced. The idea that interaction between different social groups is minimised in this way is discussed both implicitly and explicitly at many points in the focus group data. It seems that, for these speakers at least, issues of social inequality are inextricably tied to the differential use of place. Participants explicitly refer to patterns of spatial segregation, for example brought about by a lack of housing in London and a lack of jobs elsewhere (Amnesty group). They also discuss how the practice of using catchment areas to determine access to schools creates and entrenches socioeconomic differences within towns (Amnesty group and Charities group).

Furthermore, different focus group participants also report having different levels of contact with the people they identify as being disadvantaged within Britain. The Office group identify people that they see outside their workplace in a relatively poor ward in Cardiff as disadvantaged, although they note that these people use the place in different ways from themselves. Specifically, these people are seen around the area during work hours, dressed in sleepwear, while the group members themselves watch them from inside while at work. Members of the Charities group present themselves as having in-depth knowledge of issues of disadvantaged people based on close professional, but not personal, relationships. The Academics, by contrast, often use reports from other people that they know to talk about the subject of social inequality, and report feeling distanced or insulated from these issues. This data suggests that viewers of CiN might feel somewhat separated from members of other social groups before they have watched the programme.

I have chosen the extracts below to illustrate and further examine the idea of social distance as represented in this data because they run counter to CiN's representation in which social differences are mapped onto spatial differences. In both extracts presented below from the Charities and the Office group, what I will call 'formulations of extreme proximity' are used to highlight a difference in circumstances. In other words, at these moments, focus group participants represent people with different circumstances as occupying contiguous places. These formulations indicate that physical closeness is not necessarily related to occupation of different places for these speakers.

In the following extract, from the Charities group, the boundaries that are set between the official areas of support and areas without official support are highlighted. These boundaries are described explicitly as not coinciding with real differences of circumstances for residents, however.

Charities group, original line numbers 1084 – 1105 (see appendix 8)

- 1 Penny yeah the (.) Communities First (.) funding is (.) um given out depending on (.) the results
2 from the WIMD Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (.) if you've ever taken or if you're
3 ever bored (.) and you take the time to look at specifically (.) where Communities First
4 areas were because I work in Adamsdown which is a very small ward in Cardiff (.) spilt
5 Mary [hmm
6 Penny into five sub-wards
7 Mary oh wow
8 Penny [only three of which qualify for Communities First (.) and you get to the point where
9 (.) one side of a street qualifies and the other side of a street
10 Mary [yeah
11 Nicola [yeah
12 Penny doesn't
13 Nicola it's like Flying Start as well isn't it for the children
14 Penny [exactly it's with um (.) school catchment areas
15 Nicola //yeah
16 Mary //yeah
17 Penny [so if you fall on (.) the wrong side of a street (.) you are not entitled to the support
18 (.) in uh officially (.) not entitled to the support (.) I think there's a lot of workers that (.)
19 bend the rules (1.0) and I'm sure you find this with ((your own))
20 Mary (laughing) [yeah
21 Penny the the (.) there are ways and means to do it (.) but officially yeah (.) you live on
22 Mary [as they should do (indistinguishable) (laugh)
23 Penny (.) number thirty-two and you can't get the help that number thirty-one gets

In this extract, the assessment by Communities First of need based on address is criticised. However, like the policy itself, this criticism is based on the premise that people in the same localities have the same experiences. The assumption that people who occupy similar places have shared circumstances is described as being the basis for deciding who gets support (lines 1-4), and also for suggesting that the boundaries set in these circumstances are not workable (line 9 onwards). While official support ends at a specified boundary, Penny suggests that the residents' need for support does not necessarily change at this point. Rather than discussing examples from the centre of each type of area, Penny draws attention to the borders between supported and unsupported areas, where the circumstances of occupants are more likely to be similar. Penny also creates the impression that Communities First's methods are overly technical. She does this by providing detailed, potentially boring (line 3), information about it (lines 3-8).

Penny repeatedly invokes the idea of neighbours whose support needs are assumed to be similar in order to highlight the idea that such boundaries are not practical (lines 9, 17, 23). Pomerantz (1986) observes that when people provide accounts of their views or actions, they often do so by using formulations such as 'all the time,' 'everybody,' or 'no one' (1986: 228). She refers to these as 'Extreme Case Formulations', or 'ECFs'. These formulations are used to defend the legitimacy of the

speaker's stance. Although Penny does not use this type of ECF, she nevertheless uses several formulations relating to extreme proximity ('one side of a street... the other side' (9), 'the wrong side of a street' (17), 'number thirty-two... number thirty-one' (23)) to emphasise her point. Like ECFs, these statements take an idea and push it to its logical limits. They seem to function to defend Penny's opposition to the rigidity of the assessment, and to provide support for her decision to 'bend the rules' (line 19) accordingly. Nicola likens the phenomenon Penny is describing to another government scheme in which these processes also occur (line 13). Other speakers support these statements by means of minimal feedback.

In some of the other focus groups proximity is also discussed in relation to social distance. By contrast to Penny's argument in the extract above, in the following extract, from the Office group, Helen contends that differences in socioeconomic status *do* correspond with residence on opposite sides of a street. Helen argues that it is these differences that endow members of different social groups with differing attitudes to an issue affecting a local resident.

Office group, original line numbers 266 – 275 (see appendix 6)

- 1 Helen you've got a road (.) running through where I live (.) and one side is (.)
- 2 private housing (.) and the other side is (.) supported housing (2.5) and (1.5)
- 3 you know i- it's a case of (.) uh an attitude towards an individual we were
- 4 talking about (.) where (.) there was an article in the local paper (.) and I
- 5 know for a fact that on one side of the road all the people were saying
- 6 '(gasp) this (.) whatever happened (.) is disgusting he- uh shouldn't have to
- 7 put up with that and (.) the uh government's all wrong and they- he should
- 8 be getting this and he should be getting that' (.) but on the other side of the
- 9 road probably everyone who opened that newspaper would be sitting there
- 10 saying (.) 'well if he doesn't like it he should get a job' (laugh) you know (.)

Here, proximity is used to contrast what are represented as two different communities of practice. Communities of practice are defined by Eckert (2006: 683) as groups of people who unite because of a shared interest or position, which inform their members' responses to the world around them (Eckert 2006: 683)). The contrast between the group that supports the individual in question and the group that is more critical of him is emphasised by depicting these communities as residents of the same area, separated only by a road, but different in terms of whether or not they own their own homes. Helen contrasts the reactions of these groups by using constructed dialogue that she attributes to their members. Whereas the first group is depicted as reactionary, as expressed in their paralinguistic respiration (line 6), the second group is described as having a relaxed physical posture ('sitting there', line 9) and responding in a more considered way.

The contrasting views of these different groups are also represented with differing degrees of certainty. The ECF 'all' (line 5) is used to describe the level of uptake of the opinion attributed to people who live in supported housing. Knowledge of the views of these people is also represented using markedly high modality ('I know for a fact', lines 4-5). The views of the group who live in private housing are described with lower modality ('probably everyone', line 9). This difference has the effect of making the views of the people in supported housing appear more fixed and extreme than those of the people in private housing.

In this extract, the cause of the link between peoples' differing views and the socioeconomic differences between them is left unclear. While it is likely that the personal circumstances of residents influence how they interpret the situation, it is also subtly suggested that these people's attitudes might be the source of the difference in their circumstances. While those in supported housing are portrayed as blaming external sources for the difficulties people might face (lines 6-8), those in private housing are portrayed as advocating personally taking responsibility for them (line 10). The implication therefore is that those in private housing are those who tend to take more responsibility for themselves in general.

The commonality between the above extracts is the speakers' use of formulations of extreme proximity. Similarly, in the Amnesty group, the school catchment area system is discussed using formulations of extreme proximity. Sam describes the difference between the school he attended and the better school 'next door' (original line number 86). This motif is echoed by Tara around 10 minutes later, when she argues that investment is needed to address catchment area-related failure of schools, with the aim of making underprivileged children's opportunities equal with those of 'the lucky kids in the school next door' (line 210).

However, I would contend that the fact that proximity is evoked to emphasise difference in each of these instances indicates that these situations run counter to expectations. The expectation is that people who live adjacent to each other *will* have access to similar levels of support from government schemes, *will* belong to the same community of practice, *will* have similar socioeconomic circumstances and *will* have similar experiences of education. What each of these examples demonstrates, then, is an underlying assumption that people who are geographically close to one another will have some level of shared experience. In tension with this assumption is the recognition that, in many instances, this is not the case, because sometimes even next-door neighbours may have irreconcilably different experiences. However, in each of these instances, social groups whose experiences diverge nevertheless have some level of contact with, or at least the ability to be in contact with the other group. Despite the disparity of their situations, people in these groups are not reliant on mass media in order to experience one another. Rather, contrasted groups appear side-by-

side in their desire for services (government support, education, healthcare), but with unequal access to and attitudes towards them.

In terms of the politics of pity, the focus group data examined here indicates that the ability for the fortunate and the unfortunate to meet face-to-face does not in itself make other bodies such as charities obsolete. This introduces a complication into the politics of pity as described by Boltanski (1999). Boltanski (1999) sees the unfortunate as looking towards the fortunate to ameliorate their suffering, and these two groups as being irreconcilably different from one another. However, the data examined in this chapter suggest that in the case of an intra-national charity, this distinction might not be so clear. For example, neighbours may have unequal access to some services, while being otherwise similar in terms of their circumstances. While the fortunate may regard the unfortunate from socially distant (but physically close) positions, both groups may be looking to a third party, rather than to each other, to redress the differences between them. Furthermore, it is clear that 'disadvantage' has several facets. For CiN this broad term is used to cover poverty, health conditions and tragic life circumstances, such as the death of a family member. It is therefore quite possible that viewers who are 'disadvantaged' in one area of their lives as defined by CiN will still donate to the charity. For example, a family on a low income who have able-bodied children might fundraise or give money. Equally, individuals who are not disadvantaged in some areas might receive support from the charity. For example, children of families who have favourable physical and financial circumstances might access the services it supports in politically volatile areas in Northern Ireland (as shown in chapter 5). If the fortunate and the unfortunate are not naturally distinct then the fact that some charities create the impression of difference between them is particularly significant.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored how social distance between groups is represented in CiN and in focus group discussions. In CiN different social groups in relation to the charity (givers, beneficiaries, and celebrity supporters) are represented in physically separate places. Viewers are primarily positioned in fundraising places, which are common and familiar. By contrast, those who the charity might benefit appear in problematic and therapeutic places, which are represented as unknown to viewers both in the use of celebrities to present and interpret them and in terms of what these celebrities say. The studio and, in particular, its screen, marks the boundaries between different types of places. This adds to the impression that these places, and by extension their occupants, would be irreconcilably distinct without the use of intermediary agents such as CiN to unite them.

Meanwhile, the focus group discussions reveal an underlying investment in the idea of social distance between different groups and the social similarities that are likely to exist between those that occupy

the same place. However, these differences may be enforced by government initiatives that seek to redress them, such as Communities First, and disparities of situation may occur on a much smaller scale than is suggested in CiN.

Taken together, my findings suggest that the idea of social distance has an impact on the way that different groups can (or not) interact with each other in UK society. This type of distance might account in part for the belief in the usefulness of third parties such as charities as intermediaries when those in one social group seek to tackle issues faced by those in another. While, on the whole, viewers and beneficiaries are presented as socially distant from one another in CiN, in the following chapter, I address how its portrayal of experiential closeness/distance complicates this picture.

Chapter 5: Experiential Distance

Because charitable interactions often occur between continents, there is usually a great physical distance between donors and beneficiaries. This, it has been argued by many scholars, transforms the nature of the interaction between those who suffer and those who seek to help them from compassion into pity (Arendt 1990, Boltanski 1999, Chouliaraki 2006). In my own framework, however, I suggested that different types of distance might have a similar impact on these exchanges. These distinct types of distance form the basis of my enquiry in each of my analysis chapters. In the previous chapter, I explored how social distance is reflected and reinforced in both sets of data through the representation of different people in separate places. In the present chapter, I explore a second type of closeness/distance: the degree to which sufferers are portrayed as being similar to viewers. Bilandzic's (2006) theory of 'perceived distance' is a means of conceptualising the ways in which people are encouraged to feel more or less involved in narratives about others. It is comprised of two different elements. The first is a feeling of similarity with the depicted people felt by those who view them. It is this aspect, which Bilandzic calls 'experiential closeness', that I will examine in this chapter. The second is a sense of immersion in narratives about the lives of others, regardless of the degree to which they appear to be similar to the viewer/reader. I will explore this aspect in chapters 6 and 7.

In CiN, there is one aspect of identity that is taken as shared across viewers and beneficiaries: British, or UK nationality.⁴ The intended audience of CiN, and everyone who appears in it, may vary in age, gender, race, and class, but all live within the UK. It follows that understanding how national identities are represented, taken up and / or contested is key to examining the degree to which CiN and its potential viewers are encouraged to invest in the idea that they are experientially close to its beneficiaries. I begin this chapter by revisiting and expanding upon theoretical understandings of nationalism that were introduced in chapter 3, focusing on national identity in particular and its potential consequences in the context of charitable giving. I then turn again to the data, first exploring CiN's presentation of national identity and then examining the discussions about this topic in the focus groups.

⁴ In fact, CiN supports projects within Northern Ireland, but its presenters often use the terms 'UK' and 'Britain' interchangeably, an error that has also been reported to occur in BBC News programmes (Lewis et al. 2008 :16)

5.1 Nationalism and charity media

As a charity only for UK-based children, CiN's remit is defined in terms of this scale. Although it is not unusual for telethons to either fundraise or to donate on a national scale (i.e. for one nation by another nation, e.g. Berg 2005; Mason 2011), it is relatively rare for a telethon to fundraise from and for the same area. On a practical level, a national remit might be administratively easier. However, both in form and content, the programme at the very least reinscribes the idea that national boundaries are valid.

As outlined in chapter 3, although the term 'nationalism' is often associated with patriotic fervour and right-wing politics, it also applies to softer, less noticeable, expressions of ideas about national character and the requirement to prioritise the needs of one's compatriots over those of other nations (Billig 1995). Nationalism rests on a set of assumptions about the division of space, politics and identity. However, many of the ideas and assumptions that are linked to national identity appear somewhat contradictory. I suggested that there were five key tensions in nationalism: 1) naturalness / ubiquity versus contingency; 2) reason versus emotion; 3) past versus future and present; 4) self versus other; and 5) movement versus stasis. Firstly, nationalism assumes that there is a natural relationship between people and the spaces they live in, which inevitably imbues them with a sense of national identity (Johnstone 2004: 66). This relationship is seen as ubiquitous, in that everyone is assumed to have a national identity (Anderson 2004 [1983]: 5). In reality, however, nationality is based upon political units of different sizes, with clearly defined and enforced borders, within which people have quite differing relationships to their nation. For example, for some people their subcultural identity might be primary, while for others their national identity is more significant (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 7). Secondly, seeing the world as divided into nations is taken as a rational, common sense understanding of the world (Billig 1995, Bishop and Jaworski 2003: 247). But the nation is also imbued with personal and emotional meanings, as when, for example, one's nation is referred to as one's 'homeland' (Sack 1983: 62). Thirdly, our national identity is promised as something that will outlive us, which is why we are in some cases willing to die for it (Poole 1999: 70). However, it also implicates us in the achievements and failures of fellow nationals from the past (1999: 72), which is why past events are often hotly contested by nationalists. Fourthly, national identity, to an even greater extent than in other forms of identity, ultimately requires the bearer to privilege the needs of his compatriots over those of outsiders (Poole 1999: 70). In this way, it is concerned with other national selves. On the other hand, as with most other forms of identity, it is defined only in opposition to other identities. In other words, there could never be a whole British world (Anderson 2004 [1983]: 7). Finally, nationalism is predicated on the idea that people are to some degree static across time, although this requires ignoring mass migration and natural history.

Yet it is only when citizens move, or engage with members of different nations in other ways, that their national identity becomes relevant. Across all of these dimensions, nationalists emphasise an idea of closeness with other nationals, and, sometimes only implicitly, distance from others.

Anderson (1983) argues that one of the key ways in which people are made to feel closer to fellow nationals is by their sharing of simultaneous experiences such as reading national newspapers (Anderson 2004 [1983]: 7). This practice is now less pervasive than in the earlier part of the twentieth century in particular, but cinema and television can be seen as providing other ways in which ‘imagined world[s]’ (2004 [1983]: 35) (both fictional and non-fictional) can still be consumed, and with even greater simultaneity. The norm for a great deal of broadcast television’s time has been for these shared experiences to take place at the national level (Richardson and Meinhof 1999: 9). More recently, the proliferation of television channels, as well as the increased accessibility of internet entertainment, have resulted in a more separate, ‘radically privatised’ viewing experience (Turner and Tay 2009:1). But this means that rare one-off live events (Marriott 1996: 69) are able to utilise their status as a departure from the norm of more fragmented cultural experiences. CiN is a major television event. It is broadcast live across the UK for an entire Friday evening on a major television channel and, in 2011, reports about the show’s success appeared in many British newspapers, including *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Using this format allows CiN to attract viewers seeking a communal experience, as it acts as a point of contact between them and other Britons. In this way, it generates a temporary community, which might strengthen viewers’ shared feelings (Olesen 2012: 100). There is evidence to suggest that local television news, for example, is used by people seeking a form of social interaction (Rubin, Perse and Powell 1985). CiN’s live nature is repeatedly mentioned during the broadcast, although many of its features are pre-recorded, with only studio and live local fundraising sections appearing to be aired in real-time. In this way, it encourages viewers to feel that they are partaking in a national event, rather than simply watching a programme.

The content of CiN also contributes to nationalist discourse by presenting a certain image of the UK. According to Bishop and Jaworski (2003), nationalistic ideology is perpetuated not only in media texts expressly dealing with nationalism, but also in other types of communication. The sort of nationalism that is utilised in entertainment programmes, such as sports, can appear harmless and apolitical, but it constitutes a form of ‘banal nationalism’ (Billig 1995) that keeps the idea ready for utilisation at other, more consequential, points in time. CiN gives a particular impression of what the UK is like, defining its national character as generous and identifying what the country’s gravest problems are. By disregarding all problems outside of the UK, it also suggests that it is both possible

and appropriate to address the UK's problems in isolation. Both its remit and its portrayal of the UK contribute to a wider discourse about whether or not charity should end at national borders.⁵

Experiments have indicated that making a shared national identity salient makes individuals more likely to donate (Levine and Thompson 2004), although programmes in which donors and beneficiaries occupy the same country are rare in practice. In international charity events, being a donor country indicates a relative level of affluence (Mason 2010: 98, Olesen 2012: 100). But, in CiN, in order to justify requests for money for its citizens, the UK also has to be portrayed as a place of need. While a shared national identity might be a source of empathy, the separate roles of beneficiaries and donor-viewers necessarily imply differences of situation, if not of character, between members of the same nation.

The features that I pay particular attention to in analysing the extent to which CiN and the focus group discussions indicate experiential closeness are those which posit certain kinds of relationships between people. In particular, I examine contrast devices, pronoun use and metaphors. I also discuss 'event work' in relation to a section of the CiN data which, I argue, goes beyond the creation of experiential closeness in its evocation of a sense of a British national community. Contrast devices are defined here as a means of explaining categorisation, particularly of social actors, by opposing one thing, person, or group with another (Arribas-Ayllon et al. 2013: 74). They are thus an important way of accounting for beliefs about who should be included in or excluded from certain contexts. Pronoun use also is an important element of accounts about moral decisions, particularly in regard to interpersonal relationships (2013: 76). Studies have shown that using different pronouns leads people to think and behave differently to one another. For example, random words paired with 'us' are rated as more pleasant than words paired with 'them' (Perdue et al. 1990). Inclusive plural pronouns such as 'we' and 'us' have also been found to increase people's perception that their relationships are close and high in quality (Fitzsimons and Kay 2004).

Metaphors can both reveal and affect understanding. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) posits that linguistic metaphors index cognitive processes. They argue that mappings between the 'target' (thing to be understood) and 'source' (agent of understanding) domains occur not only in expression but also in understanding. They view the linguistic expressions of metaphors as being secondary to the cognitive mappings they reveal (Lakoff 1993: 203). According to this theory, then, the metaphors that participants use in the focus groups might provide an insight into their thoughts.

⁵ The UK is, of course made up of four constituent nations: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In this analysis, I interpret the UK as the primary unit of national identity, as this was the scale on which it primarily appeared in both sets of data.

More recently, Cameron et al. (2009) have proposed a ‘discourse dynamics’ approach to metaphor. They understand language as a situated activity, in the sense that what gets said is influenced by the situation. Utterances are understood as being affected both by what else has been said and by speakers’ apprehensions of how what they say will be perceived by those present. Metaphors are therefore not seen as pre-existing tools that can be utilized in talk, but as means of expression that come into being in the act of speaking itself. When common metaphors are found to be shared across speakers and contexts, they are described as having been ‘stabilized’. Stabilized metaphors are understood to be the result not of cognitive mappings that are shared across individuals, but as ways of speaking and understanding phenomena that have come about through repeated use (2009: 67).

Although Cameron et al. accept the CMT premise that ‘metaphor reveals something of how people think and feel’ (2009: 63), they argue that the role of language in metaphor has been unduly downplayed. Both approaches suggest that the repeated use of particular metaphors *affect* thinking, as well as reflecting it (2009: 68). If we accept that metaphors can shape people’s understanding of social concepts, then their use in discourse about others can potentially change people’s understandings of, and eventually, reactions to, members of these groups. Over time, metaphors that are repeatedly used can come to be understood as a ‘natural’ way of talking about certain issues. In the analysis that follows, I will draw upon Cameron et al.’s (2009) approach to metaphor, exploring not only the mappings between target and source domains that appear in the data, but also how metaphors are sometimes tentatively introduced and then expanded upon in the conversations, and how they are rejected or reconfigured by other speakers.


5.2 Prioritising compatriots

Following Arribas-Ayllon et al. (2013), I assume throughout this thesis that both the producers of CiN and the focus group participants are involved in providing justifications of some kind for their actions and / or stances. In terms of CiN, I presuppose that there will be an attempt to account for donation requests. Different justifications appear at different points during the show. Before and after entertainment scenes, the norm of reciprocity is invoked: the show has provided entertainment, and something is requested in return. In beneficiary vignettes, the show provides justification in terms of the assumed greater needs of recipients compared with those of viewers, as I discuss in section 5.3. In the present section, I examine another kind of justification: accounts for prioritising CiN’s recipients over those of other charities, particularly international ones.


In both extracts 1 and 2, presenters Alesha Dixon and Terry Wogan introduce segments of the programme that have been filmed away from the studio: a beneficiary vignette and a fundraising

vignette. They focus the audience's attention on the purpose of raising money, providing two types of account for their requests. Firstly, they justify making a demand for charitable donations in a challenging economic climate in terms of the acute needs of recipients, and secondly, they provide reasons for supporting this charity over others.

Extract 1

8:02		<p>Alesha Dixon: wow what a line-up (.) and we're all here for one reason (.) to help children in need across the country=</p> <p>Terry Wogan:=yeah=</p> <p>Alesha Dixon: =one thing we <u>really</u> need to tell you (.) every penny is spent right here in the United Kingdom</p> <p>Terry Wogan: yeah (.) now we know that (.) times are tough (.) perhaps this year (.) more than ever (.) but of course (.) sadly (.) that's when the most vulnerable members of our society feel- feel it the most (1.0) that's why your help (.) is desperately needed (.) now I know you'll do your bit (1.0) you always do (1.0) so please (.) just have a look at what we're trying to achieve (1.0) and how a simple act of kindness (.) from you (1.0) can change children's lives</p>	Silence in background
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Extract 2

25:51		<p>Alesha Dixon: everywhere you look (.) people are pulling together for Children in Need (1.0) and the <u>great</u> thing (.) is that all the money raised (.) helps children in <u>this</u> country (1.0) later on (.) children all over the UK (.) will be coming together for an incredible musical performance in aid of this year's appeal (1.0) let's hear about that (.) and everything else that's been happening in (points at camera) <u>your</u> area (.) for Children in Need (.) two thousand and eleven</p>	
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In both extracts 1 and 2, presenters provide rationalisations for prioritising this charity in particular. These justifications focus on the intra-national aspects of the charity: the fact that the money will be



given exclusively to citizens of the UK, and the opportunity for viewers to be assimilated into a national community of fundraisers by donating money. The charity exclusively helping children in the UK is emphasised as a ‘great’ thing (2). No reason is provided for this, however. This lack of justification suggests that viewers are expected to already understand the benefits of helping only nationals. Alesha Dixon’s statement that all funds raised stay within the UK also contains many points of emphasis: it is ‘really’ important, the money is spent ‘right’ here and includes ‘every’ penny. This suggests that this aspect of the show is expected to appeal to the audience. It also implies that this scope is exceptional, in that this group of people is not usually prioritised in this way. Although no other types of charities or care providers are mentioned, this sets up a dichotomy between CiN’s focus and those of other organisations. Billig (1991: 44) argues that all ‘arguments’ are inherently counterarguments to another position, which is sometimes left implicit. In this instance, the charity defines itself in opposition to those bodies for which UK citizens are not the priority.

These clips also offer viewers a sense of communal identity. The first person plural pronoun is used both inclusively (referring to both the presenters and producers of the show and its viewers) and exclusively (referring only to the former) in these figures. Using pronouns inclusively (‘what we’re trying to achieve’), according to Fitzsimons and Kay (2004), should cause viewers to feel closer to the presenters. Many of the uses of ‘we’ in this instance, however, are ambiguous; it is unclear whether the viewers are included in or excluded from the group of people mentioned. For example, in extract 1, Alesha Dixon’s phrase ‘we’re all here for one reason’ could be interpreted as referring only to those in the studio, or also to those watching at home. Terry Wogan primarily refers to viewers as ‘you’ (and also uses the possessive determiner ‘your’). This is an exclusive use of the second person pronoun in the sense that a distinction is made between the people addressed and the addressor. This means that a sense of distance between Wogan and CiN’s viewers is created that does not exist when, for example, ‘we’ is used inclusively. There are, however, other possible advantages to addressing viewers directly. Brunyé et al. (2009) found that texts that use the pronoun ‘you’ make it easier for readers to imagine themselves participating in the narrative they were reading. Addressing viewers as ‘you’ therefore may make it more likely that they will imagine themselves in the terms in which they are described. In this case, they might be more likely to view themselves as donors and therefore be more likely to donate. Furthermore, Wogan implies a sense of familiarity with viewers by displaying his apparent knowledge of their values and behaviour (‘I know you’ll do your bit (1.0) you always do’, figure 1). ‘You’ also potentially refers to all viewers, and therefore serves to emphasise the idea that they constitute one community of people concerned with the health and happiness of the UK’s children. In these clips, pronouns are thus used in ways that maximise a sense of community, both between the givers themselves and, to a lesser extent, between givers and presenters. This inferred solidarity is predicated on a shared experience of watching the show and a shared geographical location (the UK).







5.3 Beyond accounting for national giving: Children in Need and the Imagined Community








The show's attempts to create a sense of national community are also sometimes made explicit. Extract 3 is taken from the end of the first hour of the broadcast. In it, the audience is shown the preparation of an entertainment feature that will appear slightly later in the programme. This feature will involve children singing in unison in a number of choirs in different locations across the UK that will be linked up by digital technology. In the previous chapter, I showed how beneficiaries and donors appeared separately in the show and were also presented in different places. The following clip provides a rare exception to this rule of separation. In this instance, both choirs that are and are not funded by CiN are united in the task of fundraising for the charity. This multi-choir performance therefore gives beneficiaries as well as other children the opportunity to contribute to the charity. However, the inclusion of beneficiaries in the task of fundraising does not seem to be the primary goal of this exercise. Instead, the unity of diverse groups of children is used to symbolise the potential unity of Britain more broadly. In this introductory clip, the forthcoming performance is framed both as a potential personal victory for choirmaster Gareth Malone and as evidence of the achievement of accord across Britain.



Extract 3

	Time	Visual	Verbal	Audio
1	57:23		Alesha Dixon: Children in Need is that time of year when people come together to do extraordinary things for the nation's children (.) <u>this</u> year (.) choir guru Gareth Malone has stepped up for his toughest challenge yet (.) Terry Wogan: hmm Alesha Dixon: two and a half thousand kids singing (.) live (.) this is his story	
2	57:48		Sara Cox (v/o): charismatic choir master Gareth Malone	Dramatic, war-themed music

3	57:51	 <p>A series of shots of Gareth and of children singing, including some audio of children singing</p>	is on a mission to bring the country <u>together</u> like never before he's already <u>successfully</u> turned the most <u>unlikely</u> singers into seasoned performers but could his next challenge be a step too far?	
4	58:12		creating a nation-wide choir to sing in unison <u>live</u> via satellite tonight for Children in Need	
5	58:17	 <p>A series of shots of UK locations</p>	Malone: Getting choirs to sing at the same time <u>all</u> over Britain (.) is going to be a huge technical challenge (.) and a huge musical challenge	Music: Ellie Goulding – Starry Eyed
6	58:24	 <p>Series of shots of Gareth driving and walking, and of some choirs</p>	v/o: Gareth has travelled the length and breadth of the country in search of singing groups to take part in this <u>national</u> sing-along	Music: Ellie Goulding – Starry Eyed
7	58:30		Gareth: hello Devon! Children cheer	Music: Ellie Goulding – Starry Eyed
8	58:33		Gareth to choir(s) (v/o): we're going (.) <u>all</u> over the country looking for groups to <u>join</u> us (.) and we're wondering whether you'd like to be part of that (.) on the night	Music: Ellie Goulding – Starry Eyed

9	58:39		Choir (shouts): yes	Music: Ellie Goulding – Starry Eyed
10	58:43		Gareth: yay! Woo!	Gareth 'high fives' choir members
...				
11	59:05		Sara Cox (v/o): <u>this</u> singing group was formed within Omagh to promote peace within a <u>shattered</u> community	Choir sings: ooo sweet child of mine
12	59:14		Gareth Maloney: what <u>they</u> do u- is is (.) <u>exactly</u> what this is about it's about bringing people together <u>through</u> singing	
...				
13	59:44	 <p>Series of shots of children in choirs, and of Gareth Maloney speaking to camera</p>	Gareth Maloney (v/o): getting choirs <u>together</u> (1.0) when you're (.) <u>six</u> hundred miles apart (1.0) is really tough	Music: upbeat harp playing (Florence and the Machine)
14	59:49	 <p>Series of shots of choirs in practice</p>	Sara Cox (v/o): as the choirmasters hold fort all around the country <u>Gareth</u> will be based at TV centre conducting the national event	Music: upbeat harp playing (Florence and the Machine)

15	60:00		joining him <u>in</u> the studio are the Big Performance Choir (.) ten <u>nervous</u> singers he's been <u>transforming</u> into <u>confident</u> performers (1.0)	
16	60:07			Boy sings: true love of mi:ne Audience cheering
17	60:11		<u>they</u> 'll be kicking off this <u>special</u> performance for Children in Need Avril Lavigne's keep holding on	Choir sings: keep holding o:n
...				
18	60:52		Gareth Malone (v/o): it's a community project it's completely un-auditioned	Gareth sings in exaggerated way: papapapapa and he gets choir to sing after him
19	60:58		that's what this whole thing's about it's about bringing people together	
20	61:02		Sara Cox (v/o): with a choir of up to three thousand people	Upbeat music
21	61:04		and the performance only moments away can Gareth pull this off?	Upbeat music

22	61:10		this is far and away the biggest thing I've done (1.0) no question	
...				
23	61:18		Gareth Malone: yes there's potential for it to go wrong (1.0) but there's great potential for it to be (.) am <u>a</u> zing	
24	61:19			Audience cheering

In this clip, the ‘event work’ (Arribas-Ayllon et al. 2013, 69) carried out by presenters couches the creation of a choir in terms of an opportunity to build a national community. The idea that the purpose of assembling this choir is to unite people is explicitly mentioned at several points (frames 3, 12, 19). This is reinforced by other references to choirs apparently performing such a role for their members: choral singing is described as a being capable of transcending entrenched political conflicts (11-12). There is an interesting tension at work here. On the one hand, Britain is depicted as a unit that can be mobilised for a particular cause. On the other hand, it is represented as naturally more fractured. Saying that Britain can be ‘[brought] together’ (frame 3) implies that this state of togetherness does not usually exist. The point that the unity created by this project was difficult to achieve is repeatedly made. In this relatively brief clip (3 and a half minutes), the term ‘challenge’ is used five times, by three different speakers. This theme is sustained throughout the clip, with Malone summing up the clip by highlighting the element of risk (22), which appears to be central to the categorisation of the event as a daunting but worthwhile task.

The event is also described as exceptional in scope. It is referred to as unprecedented (‘like never before’, frame 3), ‘huge’ (frames 5) and demanding (frame 22). The number of children involved is both explicitly mentioned (frame 1) and emphasised by using fast-moving montages of them that make them appear numerous, even though some groups appear more than once (for example those in frames 9 and 20). The choir is described as being exclusively national (5), but it is later referred to as ‘universal’ (58:54 in original transcript). The great distances involved in uniting the choir are mentioned and several cities are listed (58:46 and 58:47 in original). This sense of scope is reinforced in the visual channel by the depiction of Gareth Malone travelling between locations, both by car and

on foot (frames 5 and 6, and 60:35 in original). This enhances the verbal narrative, which describes the UK as if it is almost too large to be the site for collective action.

Gareth Malone is foregrounded as the protagonist in this narrative. In the introduction to the clip, it is referred to as his 'story' and as his 'challenge' (frame 1). His own feelings in relation to the project are also foregrounded (61:11 in original). He is portrayed as being responsible for creating a sense of national unity. This is reinforced by the arrangement of shots, which alternate between views of the choirs and Gareth Malone. For example, in frames 20-21 (61:00 – 61:07 in original), there is a montage of different choirs, but these are bookended by shots of Malone. In this way, Malone is depicted as a necessary catalyst in creating the choir's unity. While collective action is lauded in this clip, it is still Malone, as the facilitator of this action, who is credited with bringing these actors all together.

It is likely that many members of the audience will be familiar with Malone's project to form the Military Wives choir, which was aired on the BBC during November 2011. The single produced from the project later went on to reach Christmas Number One in the UK. The description of Malone's CiN challenge also carries militaristic overtones. It is described as a 'mission' (frame 3), with choir masters 'hold[ing] fort' (14). The multi-instrument, dramatic band music played at the beginning of this clip (2-4) also enhances this impression.

This theme can be traced throughout the show, for example in the phrase 'pulling together' in extract 2, and 'do your bit' in extract 1, which is associated with wartime in Britain (Ayto 2010). The relationship between nationalism and war has been repeatedly stressed in the scholarly literature. Nationalism provides a cause for war (Poole 1999) and, conversely, war symbolism incites nationalism (Anderson 2004 [1983]: 9, Bishop and Jaworski 2003). Memories of past wars are particularly potent sources for the construction of national identity. Wars that appear to present one's national citizens in a favourable light tend to be evoked more than unsuccessful or unpopular campaigns (Noon 2004). In America and Britain, World War II is generally remembered as a 'good war' (Bostdorff 2003), which is often used to justify later conflicts, such as the 'war on terror' (Noon 2004: 341).

War metaphors can be seen as supporting a nationalistic understanding of the world by contributing to the representation of different nations as being in conflict, which lends strength to the notion that they are naturally distinct (Bishop and Jaworski 2003: 251-3). War metaphors appear in a broad range of contexts; they have been used to describe business in media discourse (Koller 2004), cancer in a range of texts (e.g. Marshall 2011), and sporting events in the mass media (Jansen and Sabo 1994, Bishop and Jaworski 2003). They have also been naturalised as a way of talking about the internal struggles

in mental illness literature (Szasz 1998: 107), and a range of social ills, including poverty (Brauer 1982). Whereas many war metaphors revolve around making an enemy of something undesired (e.g. poverty, illness), others lack a specific opponent (e.g. in business). Some are used as a schema for understanding complex phenomena (e.g. complex international relations, business data), whereas others, such as those used in sports reporting are more playful.





It is this playful use of war metaphors that seems most relevant in the context of CiN. Indeed, the use of war metaphors in language can be understood as a form of war play. The link between war and play is long-established. While educators have warned against some potentially negative impacts of war-based play on children (Levin and Carlsson-Paige 1987), it has also been suggested that the lines between simulated and real war have also become blurred to the point that war is sometimes experienced by soldiers as play (Baudrillard 1995). In CiN, the use of war metaphors introduces a third concern. War is understood as an unproblematic concept, whose primary effect is to unite, rather than to separate people, much less to kill the enemy. References to war appear primarily in sections of the programme devoted to building an idea of a national community. As in all metaphors, some aspects of war, such as united effort and collective strength, are utilised, while other aspects, such as genuine threats to safety, are obscured. The comparison of the creation of a national children's choir with a war mission presents the idea of war as unproblematic. Britons are promised the same sense of camaraderie that their ancestors enjoyed, but without the distressing aspects that necessitated this. This sanitised concept of war is facilitated by the fact that recent wars with UK involvement have all taken place in distant locations. War is thus associated with a particular time in British history, rather than a present threat.

In terms of experiential distance, the sense of shared national identity between donors and beneficiaries that is constructed in extract 3 is likely to make viewers feel closer to their compatriots. It might also make them more likely to donate (Levine and Thompson 2004). Furthermore, donors and beneficiaries are depicted as not only similar in their shared Britishness but also as sharing the project of creating British unity in a way that collapses the boundaries between them. Significantly, this message of collective action takes precedence over other aspects of the performance that is being prepared for. The aim of raising money is mentioned by Malone to the children themselves (60:46 – 60:48 in original), but never in the voiceover, whereas the uniting goal is mentioned repeatedly to the audience (frames 1, 3, 12 and 19). In terms of the theory of nationalism, in this clip, an idea of shared history is constructed in order to justify the present action. Specifically, a romanticised notion of uniting in a war effort is invoked in order to make the task of caring for British children seem desirable. It should also be remembered that nationalism always implies a distinction between the compatriot selves and those outside of the nation. In this clip, as in the show as a whole, only the UK's children are shown and mentioned, so that everyone appears to be included.

5.4 With us, but not one of us: shared national points of reference as contrast devices





The uniting element of nationalism that builds a sense of experiential closeness is, however, not the only element of national identity drawn upon in CiN. As I mentioned in the framework chapter, regardless of the extent to which experiential distance is collapsed by highlighting the shared national identity of viewers and beneficiaries, it is necessary that these groups are differentiated from each other in order to justify the request for help that is made. This is achieved by creating a contrast between the idea of an expected or normative UK citizen and a person who might benefit from donations. In figures 4 and 5, references are made to the conditions of normal British children in order to highlight the need for help.

Extract 4




1	19:12		Olly Murs: this is Ella (.) and she's four	Acoustic guitar music
2	19:14		years old (1.5) and (.) she's just started school like other four-year-olds (2.0) but um (1.0) things (.) are a little different for Ella	Acoustic guitar music
3	19:20	 Camera pans photograph	Olly Murs V/O: Ella was deprived of oxygen at birth (2.0) it left her severely disabled (.) she can't walk (.)	Acoustic guitar music
4	19:25	 Camera pans photograph	or talk (1.0) she's fed through a tube in her stomach (.) and (.) she's partially-sighted	Acoustic guitar music

In the introduction to the clip shown in extract 4, Olly Murs refers to the standard age for beginning education in the UK.⁶ This allows for a contrast to be made between Ella, who suffers with severe disabilities, and the average UK child of her age. Both Ella and the average UK child will be starting school aged four, but their divergent experiences of this milestone event highlight Ella's difficulties. The inclusion of earlier photographs of Ella, particularly in her incubator, also encourages the comparison between Ella and other British children, whose baby photographs would typically not include specialist medical equipment. This contrast between the average British child and the CiN beneficiary seems quite straightforward. There is a tension, however, between constructing a particular idea of normalcy for children in the UK in order to highlight the difference between the norm and the experiences of CiN's beneficiaries and using this as a means of encouraging viewers to relate to beneficiaries whose experiences are different from their own. This conflict is more marked in the following extract, in which Zoë Ball introduces a before-school breakfast club for children from low-income families.

Extract 5

1	48:19			Guitar and string music
2	48:20		Zoë Ball V/O: it's seven in the morning (1.0) and all over the country (.)	Guitar and string music
3	48:24		families are starting their day (5.0)	Guitar and string music Background noises of food preparation and talking
4	48:28		you take it for granted don't you (1.0) get the kids dressed (.) feed them breakfast (.) do the school run (2.0) but it's not like that for <u>everyone</u> (4.0) one in <u>five</u> families in the UK	Guitar and string music Background noises of food preparation and talking

⁶ The compulsory starting age is 5 in Britain and 4 in Northern Ireland, but different provisions for pre-school are available in England, Wales and Scotland (The Education Website 2016)

5	48:37		are living in poverty (1.0) and	Guitar and string music
6	48:39		<u>sadly</u> (.) some of the kids in those families (.)	Guitar and string music
7	48:41		are going without breakfast	Guitar and string music

The ‘you’ addressed by Zoë Ball in frame 4 seems to refer to a parent for whom providing breakfast for his or her family is unproblematic. Yet in emphasising the prevalence of poverty in this clip, the idea of the normative UK family as not being poor is destabilised. If one in five families lives in poverty, they form quite a large proportion of the UK’s population. The definition of ‘poverty’ in frame 5 is also kept vague. In reality, this figure refers to ‘relative poverty’, which is a comparative rather than absolute measure; it is defined as having a household income below 60% of the median (Jin et al. 2011: 39). In the same way that this figure is calculated by comparison to the norm, it is by reference to an idea of normalcy that this clip gives an impression of what poverty is. In the visual channel, this contrast is constructed by alternating images that are similar to and different from the norm. While the first shots (frames 1 and 2) appear unfamiliar, the action of slicing an apple, particularly in combination with the verbal description of starting the day preparing breakfast (frame 3), seem familiar. Frame 4 is a combination of the familiar and the unfamiliar, with the seemingly normal action of food preparation appearing in an unusually institutional setting for a family breakfast.

Drawing contrasts between relatively affluent UK families and CiN’s beneficiaries highlights the needs of the latter. Beneficiaries are not compared with those of less affluent countries, but words and phrases that are associated with international poverty, such as those in charity appeals, are used to describe the situations of the children depicted. Zoë Ball’s voiceover for clip 5 concludes as follows:

it’s simple really (1.0) to feed more kids they need more staff (.) which they can’t afford projects like this need our help (.) more than ever because like it or not (.) without them (.) some children right here in Britain (.) would be going hungry

The phrase ‘going hungry’ in this context invokes the idea of children in developing or war-torn countries, with whom images of starvation are more commonly associated (Burman 1994). Although both sets of children might be at risk of malnutrition, the ‘hunger’ they experience is likely to be different in some important ways. However, the comparison is not made between the differing experiences of ‘going hungry’ these two sets of children might face. The structural causes of the relative poverty CiN’s beneficiaries face and the many associated problems that lead to child hunger are also left unexplored. Organisations funded by the charity are presented as the only barrier between these children and the hunger they would otherwise face. The phrase ‘right here in Britain’ that appears in this clip is used repeatedly in the show. The proximity of fellow nationals is emphasised in this prepositional phrase, which suggests that physical (and possibly experiential) closeness to these people makes their situation particularly objectionable.

In these clips, then, an idea of normative relative affluence is used as a contrast to highlight the problems faced by some of the UK’s children. Despite the suggestion that some of these problems are widespread, the families who face them are still constructed as lying outside of the norm. Loaded terms that are used to describe chronic problems in developing countries, such as poverty and hunger, are used to infer similarity between the UK’s hungry children and those elsewhere by evoking the familiar discourse of foreign aid. On one hand, this emphasises the seriousness of problems such as malnutrition. On the other, it precludes examination of the causes of and longer-term solutions to these problems, so it is helpful only to the extent that it might encourage viewers to give to CiN. The comparison favours UK children, whose problems are portrayed as equally serious as those faced by children in developing countries, but who are closer to home. While these portrayals ignore the fact that some of the world’s children might face more acute problems, they also fail to address the problem of relative poverty in the UK.

In sum, in CiN a particular construction of British or UK national identity is used, which acts as both a unifier of and a divider between donors and beneficiaries at different points. CiN is silent on anything outside of the UK and makes comparisons only between different types of its citizens. The argument that fellow citizens should be prioritised over people elsewhere, which is encouraged by its nationalistic way of framing a range of otherwise unrelated entertainment features, is implied rather than stated explicitly. As I will show in the following section, this is a key point of difference between my two data sets when considering experiential distance. In the focus group data, the question of whether only the needs of other nationals or those with the most morally urgent needs elsewhere (Poole 1999: 70) should be addressed was frequently a point of discussion, even though it was never initiated by the moderator. This is a central concern within charitable discourse in the UK, in the academic literature as well as in the mass media (e.g. Moral Maze 2013).

5.5 Temporal closeness: Britain in 2011

In the CiN data, other countries are never explicitly mentioned. Disadvantaged children in the UK are compared with other children in the UK who are not. While certain phrases used evoke a sense that these children's situations are similar to those of children who need international aid, there is no acknowledgement of the UK as comparatively developmentally advanced. In the focus groups, by contrast, the discrepancy between the needs faced by Britain's relatively poor and the needs faced by the absolutely poor in developing countries is used to argue that those elsewhere are too experientially distant to relate to. In particular, a specific turn of phrase is used by a participant in the Academics group and by another participant in the Amnesty group: 'Britain in 2011'. This phrase appears to encapsulate the idea that the standard of living in Britain is expected to be higher than elsewhere.

In the following extract from the Academics group, Vera responds to a comment from Joe about the mediation of suffering. She contrasts common responses to mediated depictions of suffering with reactions to local suffering. She argues that different frames should be used to understand each type of suffering, as conceptions of suffering are related to expectations. In the extract below it, from the Amnesty group, Tara frames charitable work as an egotistic positioning act, rather than as altruism. She suggests that CiN is part of a culture in which the just allocation of taxes is being replaced by voluntary giving. In both instances, the expectations of British citizens encapsulated in this phrase implies a sense of experiential closeness to other Britons and distance from those elsewhere.

Academics group, original line numbers 276 – 295 (see appendix 10)

- | | | |
|----|------|--|
| 1 | Vera | yeah (.) because in a way it's (.) easier for us to understand the sort of (.) local |
| 2 | | inequalities and sufferings because (2.0) well (.) in in some ways if if we kind of |
| 3 | | think that we are more like (.) those people (.) who don't have what we have (.) |
| 4 | HL | [hmm |
| 5 | Vera | rather than people in far distant places who (.) we don't really know what their |
| 6 | | expectations are and (.) how they themselves view (.) their lives (.) what kind of |
| 7 | | what could they reasonably expect (.) um and what extent I mean there's no |
| 8 | Jess | [hmm |
| 9 | Vera | question that- about their suffering but (.) kind of what are they comparing |
| 10 | | themselves with and what (.) at what level is that suffering kind of (2.0) |
| 11 | HL | [hmm |
| 12 | Vera | conceptualised you know it's (.) whereas people in our society (.) um (.) you kind |
| 13 | | of (1.0) uh (.) I don't know um (1.0) I suppose what I'm getting at is who who's |
| 14 | | defining the the inequality and uh er what what's how does it relate to (.) to to |
| 15 | Jess | [hmm |
| 16 | Vera | different groups of people (.) so (.) um (1.5) and what might- what might you |
| 17 | | reasonably ex- expect (1.5) to to have (.) in (.) Great Britain in twenty eleven (.) |

5.6 Evolutionary metaphors

As stated above, in many of the focus groups a central theme of dispute is whether Britons should respond to global needs or only to those of British citizens. In some of these discussions, the process of subjugating other nations is likened to the competition between different species in the process that brings about evolution. Nations are likened to species as they compete to pass on their cultural rather than genetic inheritance. Participants in both the Students and Office focus groups use the idea of nature and evolution to defend the idea that solving British problems should be prioritised at the expense of foreign aid, or contribution to international loans for foreign governments. In the following extract, from the Office group, Helen uses a number of biological metaphors to make her case that Britain's position of relative wealth should be protected.

Office group, original line numbers 399 – 439 (see appendix 6)

- 1 Helen [I mean (.) I do (.) I do have issues with
2 (.) a lot of what's going on on the on the global economy and everything now
3 because (2.0) I'm old-fashioned (.) i- in order to help somebody else you've got
4 to be strong enough to pick them up (.) and I don't think there's anything to be
5 Eve [hmm
6 Helen gained by completely weakening the Western economies (.) and (1.5) taking any
7 kind of power off them (.) because (.) all that's happens is that they'll get
8 dragged down and there'll be nobody strong enough to help anybody else then
9 Eve [hmm [yeah
10 Helen (.) because (.) at the end of the day economies are money-making machines?
11 (2.5) and that money how it gets distributed then gets into morality and the rest
12 of it? (2.0) is it is it fair that (.) somebody has a baby and sees it die the next day
13 (.) uh uh I don't know whether that comes under fairness
14 HL [hmm
15 Helen I don't (.) you know you can't (.) because uh (.) f- fair to me (.) i- is something
16 you make a conscious decision about (.) somebody someb- somewhere makes a
17 decision (.) that to the person that comes off worst is an unfair decision I don't
18 think (1.5) I don't think (.) the massive ecosystem of the world then is something
19 that's subject to 'fair'
20 HL right
21 Helen coming back to the zebra again (.) the zebra doesn't wake up one morning think
22 Fern [hmm
23 HL [hmm
24 Helen 'it's really not fair I wanted to be a lion' (.) you know because (.) that's (.) it's not
25 a decision you've got to make (.) it's not a (.) it's not a decision (1.5) we can (.)
26 Eve [yeah
27 Helen make when we're born whether we're born in (.) a mud hut (1.0) with no clean

28 water or or in the palace (.) of a house in (.) Westminster or something (1.5) so
29 Eve [hmm
30 Helen (3.0) I don't know I think fairness is a different thing (1.5) and I I don't think (1.5)
31 (*louder and quicker*) we can have a sense of fair play and a sense of conscience
32 (2.5) that makes us do charitable stuff (2.5) i- it's when it comes down to 'is the
33 Fern [yeah
34 Helen world fair?' no it's not because it's an organic thing (1.5) it's not fair that (1.0)
35 Eve [no
36 HL [hmm
37 Helen slugs get trod on (.) he never hurt anyone (.) you know (*laughing*) do you know
38 Eve [yeah (*laugh*)
39 Helen what I mean
40 Eve yeah
41 Helen it's just the way it is

Helen starts this section of talk by accounting for her position by referring to herself as ‘old-fashioned’ (line 3). While this might appear to deprecate herself and her argument, it actually contributes to the presentation of her views as having an easily-comprehensible, common-sense logic. She initially describes different countries as people, whose economies are bodies that can be strong, and heavy (lines 3-4). This bodily metaphor unfolds into a broadly biological one as Helen’s argument develops. She likens the disparate circumstances of citizens born into developed or developing countries to the differences that come about as a result of being born as members of separate species (21-24), and describes the world as ‘organic’ (34) and as an ‘ecosystem’ (18). In this way, she sets up a dualism between nature and civilisation.

In lines 1-30, Helen's metaphor describes not only others but also 'us' as animals. The mappings (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) in this metaphor can be described as follows:

Developed countries' citizens = lions

Developing countries' citizens = zebras

Relative level of development = place in the food chain

Lack of control over economic circumstances = lack of control over one's place in the food chain

What cannot be mapped in this metaphor is the human capacity for reason and the ability to transcend animal urges. The human capacity for integrity and intelligence are restricted to a limited set of actions (31-32).

In line 37, however, Helen begins to use another metaphor along the same lines. This time, the less fortunate people she has described (those living in mud huts) appear as slugs, and the more fortunate

Westerners, or perhaps Western economies, appear as a human that tramples them. Lakoff and Turner (2009: 167) argue that idea of a 'Great Chain of Being' continues to exert a considerable influence on conceptions of our place in the world. This theory holds that humans are superior to animals and so naturally dominate them, and that similar structures of superiority and dominance exist within groups of both animals and humans. All levels of being conform to the rules of the entire cosmos, so that certain humans using brute force to overcome others is interpreted as an extension of their essentially animal natures. When applied to castes, social classes, or races of people, those in relatively powerful positions can not only justify their position as part of a natural law (2009: 209), but can also sometimes persuade others that to attempt to subvert this state of affairs would be doomed to failure and morally wrong (2009: 210). In both of Helen's metaphors, lower domain animals are mapped onto people in foreign countries, and those higher in the food chain are mapped onto 'us'. As with the idea of the great chain, the implication of this analogy is that less powerful groups should not object to their position.

What is significant about this stretch of talk from the point of view of the discourse dynamics approach to metaphor (Cameron et al. 2009) is that Helen's metaphor becomes more stable and elaborate as the discussion progresses. In line 21 ('coming back to the zebra again'), Helen draws on a metaphor she used earlier in the conversation. A few minutes before this stretch of talk, Helen explains her opinion that unfairness is 'defined by' those experiencing the less favourable situation, by saying 'because if you're a zebra it's not fair that lions eat you if you're a lion it's more than fair' (original line number 286). This comment receives support in terms of minimal feedback from both Fern and Eve, but is not developed further at that point. Helen's metaphor explicitly expresses people born in different countries as different species of animal (lines 21 – 41, original line numbers 419 – 439). Later on in the discussion, Helen refers back to this argument again when she simply says 'zebras and lions' (original line number 930) in response to Eve talking about people's differing perceptions of fairness. This appears to be an instance of a metaphor being used tentatively initially, but becoming more stable during the course of a conversation.

In the Students group (see original line numbers 82 – 134), Dave makes a similar case and also uses biological terminology to express this. When Amy introduces the idea that some nations exploit others, Dave refers to this state of affairs as 'the natural order'. He suggests that in the absence of British imperialism, other powerful countries would have stepped in and gained similar advantages. Amy argues that societies have developed past the need to exploit others. She applies the term 'evolved' to the development of cultures, which challenges Dave's application of the biological metaphor only to the base instincts of humans. Dave counters this by stating that 'human nature will get in the way' of attempts to implement non-exploitative policies. In this instance, terms linked to evolutionary theory are used differently by these speakers. The metaphorical reference is again made

tentatively at first, but, unlike in the Office group, it is not reinforced to the point where biological terms can be used to represent people without further explanation.

In both of these instances, human nature is depicted as consisting of dual forces: animalism on the one hand, and integrity and / or reason on the other. While the latter is represented as being the source of civilised ideas of worldwide ‘fairness’, the former is seen as being manifested in the battles that are played out between nations. By selecting organic metaphors, both Helen and Dave emphasise what they describe as the most influential aspect of this dualism: animal instinct. The urge to self-protect at the expense of others is seen as inevitable and the desire to transcend this as unrealistic. This idea of unavoidability is used by both speakers to account for their lack of desire to attempt to change the existing state of affairs.

Although ‘the Great Chain of Being’ is an ancient idea, which has been linked to religious conceptions of human stewardship of other beings and deference to a god, it also overlaps considerably with certain aspects of evolutionary theory, in which more complex beings are seen as dominating simpler beings lower down in the food chain. Darwin’s take on the supremacy of certain races was influenced by his own cultural conditions, and his beliefs were more nuanced than the scientific racism that drew on his and other similar theories (Shields and Bhatia 2009: 113). But when it has been applied to human society, Darwinian theory has tended to be (mis)construed in a way that has served the interest of those in positions of relative power (2009: 116). It seems that recent presentations of evolutionary theory might lead people to associate it with selfish and racist interpretations of the world, despite the range of more positive inferences that might be drawn from it, such as the overwhelming genetic similarity between humans and the importance of altruism to the survival of a species (Brem et al. 2003: 183). It is also important to bear in mind that the influence is not unidirectional; popular conceptions of our place in the world can also influence scientific theory (Shields and Bhatia 2009).

5.7 Nation-states as contrast devices

As well as the striking use of evolutionary metaphor discussed above, there are also more subtle ways in which speakers in the focus groups reinforce the idea that nations are the primary unit for the redistribution of resources. When discussing possibilities, both positive and negative, for social policies, comparisons are repeatedly made with other nation-states. The names of nations or continents are often used to embody certain ideas in relation to society. For example, in the Students group, America is given as an example of poor civic engagement despite the high rate of volunteering there (original line numbers 973 – 981). France is used to explain the idea of good government provisions for veterans, as evidenced by the lack of need for the assistance of charities such as Help for Heroes (394 – 400)⁷ and Britain is described as a relatively democratic country, carrying a range of privileges (899 – 904). Similarly, in the Office group, a comparison is drawn between Britain, in which certain amenities are taken for granted, and ‘Third World countries’, in which there might not be shops such as ‘Tesco’s around the corner’ (line 347) and some people live in houses made of ‘twigs and mud’ (line 349). However, Britain is also portrayed as a place with its own problems, with some participants arguing that its people aren’t in a position to help those elsewhere, as discussed above. Indonesia and Africa are referenced in relation to charitable giving as places one might choose whether or not ‘to worry about’ (589 – 593). Somalia is given as an example of extreme deprivation, with ‘women walking for days...with children dying’ (lines 624 – 627). The idea that UK citizens should be prioritised is therefore not contingent on them having greater needs.⁸

In terms of experiential distance such descriptions are complex. On the one hand, other countries are repeatedly used to create a contrast against which to describe current conditions in the UK. Swathes

⁷ The fact that France and Germany do not have ‘Help for Heroes’ or similar charities is interpreted in the Counsellors group, by contrast, as evidence of the greater responsiveness of British people to challenges such as poorly provided-for veterans than their mainland European counterparts (original line numbers 1405 – 1417).

⁸ The Charities group tends to focus on local issues, so global comparisons are made less regularly. However, America is given as a bad example in terms of its lack of access to free healthcare (lines 708 – 718). In the Counselling group, different countries are mainly mentioned in reference to their citizens’ capacity for cultural assimilation on migrating to the UK, or their tolerance of UK culture for UK ex-pats. Australia is presented as an example of a country with a better immigration policy than Britain’s, for the fact that they ‘don’t let anybody in’ (lines 1246 – 1248). Saudi Arabia is used to illustrate the idea that British ex-pats are sometimes required to adopt the customs of their host country (1107 – 1114). For one speaker in particular, such examples demonstrate the UK’s excessive lenience towards foreigners in comparison with countries. In the Academics group, Hong Kong is discussed as an example of city in which a particularly unequal society is evident (lines 42 – 47). Sweden, on the other hand, is seen as exemplifying egalitarianism (47 49). In the Amnesty group, Scandinavian societies are also described as the ‘least stratified’ (lines 147 – 150) having high rates of taxation but also high levels of government investment in services. African and South-East Asian countries are mentioned as having extreme social problems due to the lack of free universal healthcare (lines 293 – 296). Like in the Students group, America is described in negative terms because its government is seen to focus on philanthropy in order to compensate for a lack of provision of state services (746 – 757). One speaker also advocates secular schooling and describes this as a ‘French system’ (105 – 108).

of people are homogenised, which Coupland describes as a common strategy of ‘othering’ (2010: 248). On the other hand, the comparison of these policies highlights the contingency of cultural conditions, and the attempt is made to imagine other possibilities for Britons.

There are some interesting similarities between the ideas of countries as expressed by members of the different focus groups. Although in certain cases areas bigger or smaller than national ones are referred to (Hong Kong, Scandinavia, and Africa), the names of individual countries are the most common form of reference. In the following extract, from the Amnesty group, Sam shows an awareness of this form of comparison:

Amnesty group, original line numbers 762 – 774 (see appendix 7)

- 1 Sam *good thing* (.) I mean I’m not saying ‘yes we should have more of that’
- 2 because I think (1.0) you know I mean uh I I remember s- seeing
- 3 something some Republican senator said you know (.) ‘imagine how
- 4 when Obama got elected it’s like waking up in a nightmare and finding
- 5 yourself in Sweden’ (1.0) you know Eur- if he’d said that to Europe you’d
- 6 think ‘oh wow fantastic’ our economy’s
- 7 Tara [fantastic (.) yes
- 8 Sam become Sweden and that’s (1.0) what we aspire to in America that’s
- 9 Tara [yeah [great
- 10 Sam (1.0) seen as you know one step away from China or Russia (1.5) you
- 11 Tara [awful [yes
- 12 Sam know (1.0) and I think
- 13 Tara (*laugh*) (1.5) but [I mean that’s an interesting comparison because
- 14 actually why (.) why there’s a huge tradition of philanthropy in the States is
- 15 you’ve got tax relief

In this section of talk, Sam describes the relationship between one’s desire to emulate styles of administration in certain countries and one’s political affiliations. This example is unusual in that in all other instances (referenced above) the countries referred to are described as if they were universally regarded as desirable or undesirable, whereas Sam explicitly addresses the contingency of these viewpoints. On the one hand, linking other countries to arguments about political possibilities can be interpreted as a straightforward result of different governments pursuing different policies. On the other hand, it demonstrates how the apparent political leanings of a government, or former government, can become a shorthand for representing the political life of its country’s people. It is not clear whether the ‘we’ who aspire to having an economy like Sweden’s refers only to the other speakers present (who, as members of the same activist group might be assumed to share a political standpoint to some extent) or to Britons as a whole, and his mention of Europe adds weight to this interpretation.

Interestingly, while this ‘we’ views the high taxes and investment in services exemplified in Sweden as positive, the communism nominally associated with China and formerly associated with Russia are taken as self-evidently a step too far. Knowledge of what type of political system each of these countries has is required to decode this conversation. It is taken as given that the other participants in this discussion will possess this knowledge.

The similarity between Sam’s discussion in the extract above and the other examples of comparison between Britain’s social policies and those of other countries summarised at the beginning of section 5.7 is that, when talking about many kinds of social problems, references to other countries are made in order to ground political ideas in reality. This practice is widespread in the groups and it is clearly regarded by participants as a normal feature of this kind of discussion in that it is never questioned. While this practice allows for alternatives to be imagined, it largely draws upon the existing structures of nation-states and therefore places limitations on what alternatives can be imagined.

Taken together, the focus group data evidences a broad range of stances towards UK or British national identity and the prioritisation of the needs of compatriots over those of others. A sense of experiential closeness to fellow nationals is achieved when participants create a sense of spatial and temporal sharedness of context by using phrases such as ‘Britain in 2011’ and evolutionary metaphors that map members of their nation onto members of the same species. On the flip side of this, experiential distance from non-nationals is maximised when speakers use other countries as contrast devices to compare UK policies and problems with those elsewhere.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used the concept of nationalism to discuss experiential distance. Experiential distance (Bilandzic 2006) refers to the extent to which viewer/readers are encouraged to see themselves as being similar to the people that are presented to them in media and other texts. In CiN, the fact that both viewers and beneficiaries reside in the same country is used to create a sense of shared experience and identity between them. Its viewers are encouraged to feel experientially close to its beneficiaries to the extent that they are made aware of this shared identity.

However, as I argued above, these concepts did not map onto one another neatly. Firstly, even though the show creates a strong sense of national community at many points, there are other points at which the different roles of donors and beneficiaries are highlighted. To a certain extent, this emphasis on the difference between these groups is one that is necessary for any charity requesting help: donors must be made to feel that their own position is preferable to that of beneficiaries. In CiN, presenters address ‘you’ always as a potential donor rather than as a beneficiary. Similarly, in clips about

beneficiaries, shared cultural points of reference such as the UK's school starting age and national morning rituals are used as a point of contrast between viewers' and beneficiaries' experiences. Secondly, when viewers and beneficiaries are represented as one united group, such as in the creation of a UK-wide children's choir, the shared project of constructing a national community appears to go beyond the point of creating a sense of closeness between these groups. Instead, it creates a selective impression of historic and contemporary Britain that favours the interests of some people over those of others.

While CiN is silent about other nations, the focus group data serves as a reminder that creating experiential closeness based on a shared national identity comes at the cost of distancing non-nationals. Both the metaphors used by focus group participants and their references to 'Britain in 2011' emphasise experiential closeness to nationals and distance from people elsewhere. This distancing of out-group members is common to other forms of identity. Relating to others based on shared gender, age range or practices risks further alienating those who do not have these characteristics. The alternative to this is to attempt to identify with all humanity equally. This moral ideal is undercut when the world is perceived as dangerous (McFarland and Brown 2008: 46). Helen's concern in the Office group that helping members of other nations will 'drag' Western economies down is an example of such a fear. In CiN, comfort and security is provided by membership of the UK community, even if this community experiences some problems of its own. While never mentioning overseas charities, it plays on some people's existing concerns that the UK's own needs are being overlooked.

Many of the apparently nationalistic features of CiN's presentation of the UK can be explained in terms of the desire to distinguish the cause from other charities, particularly those whose recipients are overseas. This has long been a concern about charitable giving. Dickens, for example, drew a character in *Bleak House* whose dedication to foreign causes was linked to her inattentive treatment of her own children. This character continues to be cited in debates about foreign aid (Moral Maze, 2013), despite the substantial advances in UK welfare since then. CiN's use of terms associated with foreign aid such as 'poverty' in relation to the UK's children reinforces the idea that foreign aid is something the country can ill-afford. The use of such ambiguous terminology also fails to fully explore problems associated with relative poverty and the impact of political policies on these children.

The naturalization of metaphors is of particular concern when they negatively affect our understandings of other groups, for example in media discourses on immigration (El Refaie 2001: 368). Referring to immigrants as 'animals', for example, can have negative impacts on how they are subsequently treated (Santa Ana 1999). In the primary metaphor discussed in this chapter, non-native

others are mapped onto animals of a lower order than compatriots are. This understanding of the world seems to draw upon both evolutionary theory and the idea of a 'Great Chain of Being'. Both of these ideas have historically been used to justify the subjugation of other peoples or races (Shields and Bhatia 2009: 116, Lakoff and Turner 2009: 212).

Charitable giving, like war and immigration, is a site for the assertion and contestation of nationalistic views. All concern the allocation of resources and therefore involve establishing who should be entitled to how much of the available assets. While some progress has been made in addressing race inequalities within Western countries, the failure to fully recognise non-nationals as fellow citizens with the same rights is likely to be a driver for world inequalities. Although the nationalism that pervades the discourse discussed here is subtler than that seen in other contexts such as sport, it nevertheless has important ramifications in this setting. It may also contribute to a wider stock of background knowledge that can be utilised elsewhere (Billig 1995).

Chapter 6: Representational Distance

Part 1: Spectacle

In the last chapter, I examined how what Bilandzic (2006: 344) calls ‘experiential closeness’ can be used to create a sense of unity between those depicted in texts and the people who consume them. Bilandzic argues that people are more likely to relate to (and therefore to experience a feeling of closeness to) people that are depicted as being similar to themselves. I discussed this idea in relation to national identity, which was shared between *Children in Need*’s viewers and its beneficiaries.

In this chapter, I depart from Bilandzic’s (2006) model and focus on my own concept of ‘representational distance’. As I discussed in chapter 3, ‘experiential closeness’ was one half of Bilandzic’s broader notion of ‘perceived closeness’. The second part of ‘perceived closeness’ is ‘mediated closeness’, which is similar to the concept of ‘immersion’. This refers to the way in which the reader of a given book or viewer of a film or television programme becomes engrossed in the life of the character/s in these texts to the extent that they become less aware of their own lives (Green and Brock 2000: 701). Immersion, I argued, is in opposition to the sort of engagement that Boltanski and others suggest would be likely to make viewers engage in the lives of suffering others. I therefore suggested that what counts as closeness and distance should be seen in direct opposition to that suggested by Bilandzic: closeness is experienced whenever there was a sense of connection between the viewer’s lived reality and the lives of the observed. In order to make the distinction between what Bilandzic (2006: 337) calls ‘mediated closeness’ and my contrasting conception of closeness clear, I have called the latter ‘representational closeness / distance’, as it relates to the level of reality with which representations of others (both in talk and in texts) are imbued.

In order to operationalise representational closeness / distance, I will seek to understand a) the degree to which representations of suffering others are made to seem consistent with viewers’ experience of reality, and b) the extent to which viewers are oriented towards actions that could ameliorate this suffering. In the present chapter, I focus on the former. I refer to the idea of the spectacle, as explored in chapter 3, to examine the extent to which televisual representations of suffering are experienced as real or as unreal. I take ‘spectacle’ to mean the separation between images and reality. I therefore consider two central questions: 1) in *CiN*, whose lives are represented as being most ‘real’? and 2) in the focus groups, do alternative ways of knowing about suffering seem more or less reliable than images seen in such televisual representations?

Answering the first of these two questions involves first operationalising the idea of reality. For Debord (2002 [1967]), reality is concealed in the spectacle. For Baudrillard (1984), it no longer exists. In terms of CiN, however, I am more concerned with how differing levels of reality are presented to the audience at different points. One way of assessing this is to consider the visual modality of images; another is to examine their authenticity. In relation to language, modality generally refers to the level of probability with which the producer of an utterance imbues his or her statement. For example, one understands something different from a clause containing the modal verb ‘must’ to one with ‘might’ (Sulkunen, Pekka and Törrönen 1997).⁹ This idea has been taken up by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 159) in relation to the semiotics of visual images. They suggest that the same function is performed in images by a range of ‘modality markers’, which indicate how realistic or reliable the producer is suggesting the image is. These markers can be imagined as a range of scales running from low to high. They include colour saturation, differentiation and modulation, as well as the presence or absence of background features (contextualisation), and the representation of detail. At a point around 2/3 along these scales lies a maximally ‘naturalistic’ representation. At the extreme ends of each of these scales the level of projected reality is reduced.

Images with maximal naturalistic visual modality, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 159) suggest, are those that are closest to what we might see with the naked eye. However, modality also differs across contexts, so that, for example, images with undifferentiated colour, which include representations of what cannot be seen by the naked eye, such as cells, are understood as having high modality in scientific textbooks (1996: 170). But even for contexts in which closeness to what can be seen with the naked eye appears to be the criterion for deciding whether an image is maximally real, the affordances of the most commonly used technology for representation at a given point (e.g. 35mm colour film in the 1990s) imposes limitations on what a social group considers realistic (1996: 163). This means that some features that might formally make images appear more realistic, such as the ability to view pictures in three dimensions in holograms, can sometimes have the reverse effect if people are not accustomed to them, by seeming ‘more than real’ and therefore drawing attention to their artifice. It is the interplay of these various visual modality cues that creates an overall impression of the projected truth value of an image (1996: 168).

El Refaie (2010) suggests that the concept of ‘authenticity’ is a more productive way of examining the truth value of images than visual modality. Drawing on examples of autobiographical comics, she suggests that the sense of truthfulness that some of these texts create cannot be captured by Kress and

⁹ Halliday (1976) differentiates between ‘modality’, which he argues is part of the interpersonal metafunction and ‘modulation’, which is part of the ideational metafunction. As Sulkunen and Torronen (1997: 48) explain this, for Halliday, the ‘must’ in ‘John must be worried’ is a marker of high modality, whereas the ‘must’ in ‘you must build a gazebo’ is part of the meaning of the clause itself, rather than of the speaker’s disposition to it.

van Leeuwen's modality markers (2010: 169). The notion of authenticity, as used by El Refaie, foregrounds the relationship between the image and its producer (2010: 170). This is also how van Leeuwen views authenticity: as 'a special aspect of modality, concerned more with the moral or artistic authority of the representation than with its truth or reality' (2001: 396). It is primarily concerned with the degree to which the narrator of a tale tells his or her own truth. The viewer can come to accept the style of the drawings on the artist's terms, rather than comparing it with her own perception of reality. Like in Bilandzic's concept of mediated closeness, when reading or viewing another's authentic experience, referents of 'reality' can recede into the background, as the reader becomes immersed in the narrator's world. In the present context, however, it is the relationship between the image and the world of the viewers that is at stake, rather than that between the image and the world of the producer. In other words, it is high visual modality, rather than high authenticity, that is more likely to orient viewers to action.

When analysing CiN, it is important to take into account not only the way that sufferers are represented but also the wide range of other images that are presented to viewers. In addition to vignettes that show the children the charity supports there are also fundraising scenes, entertainment items and a dazzling television studio. Pictures of celebrity performers are central to the show's visual identity. It is images of these individuals, rather than those of sufferers, that are most often circulated in other media. 'Children in Need 2011 in Pictures' features that appeared on the BBC, The Guardian, and The Times websites, for example, showed celebrity performers and some fundraising efforts, but did not include any images of beneficiaries. The juxtaposition of these very different types of image is likely to impact how scenes of suffering are likely to be interpreted. Rather than assuming that all images are experienced as unreal by viewers, I examine the extent to which different images project different levels of realness. When considering the focus group data, I also examine what sort of evidence comes to be regarded by speakers as (more) believable, if televisual images are not regarded by speakers as reflecting reality.









6.1 The differing modality of scenes of suffering and celebration in CiN

In the first analytic chapter (chapter 4), I detailed the different places that are represented in CiN and explained that these tend to separate the different types of actors (celebrities, beneficiaries, fundraisers, viewers) who appear in them. In the following section, I explore the visual representation of each of these types of places, paying particular attention to the differing degrees of projected reality, or modality, that they are imbued with. Although each setting is represented by a wide range of images, it appears that features that relate to Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) 'modality markers', such as the inclusion or exclusion of background details, and the use of colour and light, differ between these settings in uniform ways. On a number of scales, the studio, for example, appears to be

represented with lower modality than the problematic settings. Patterned differences between these features encourage the viewer to interpret them differently.

In the table below, two representative examples of each type of setting are presented for comparison. These images were selected from my multimodal transcript of the programme (see appendix 4). In table 1 in chapter 4 (page 85), I detailed the children shown, the problems they faced and the centres they attended in beneficiary vignettes for the first 3 hours of the programme. Of these ten vignettes, six were focused on individual children, and the other four either involved groups of children, or did not give details of the children helped. In the table below, I have chosen stills from one of each of these types of vignette (problematic and therapeutic settings), as well as the two other types of places identified in chapter 4: fundraising settings and studio / entertainment settings. The beneficiary vignettes chosen were clips 3 and 4 from the table on page 85, as there was no problematic setting shown in clip 2 and clip 1 was a montage of different children that would be shown later in the programme and these were therefore the earliest suitable clips. I used images from the same clips (images 1 and 5 and images 2 and 6 were from earlier and later points in the same vignettes), so that they could be compared. In each case, the frames chosen are representative examples of the sequences they were extracted from in the transcript in terms of their subjects and features, although, as I explained in chapter 2, the individual shots chosen for the transcript were those I judged as being significant (showing changes of scene, for example, rather than using time changes that would have produced many images of one camera shot). In particular, I chose the images below because they were characteristic of these places in terms of their modality. Original times are given below the images for comparison with the original transcript. Below, I discuss how the visual features of these four different types of setting confer these images with differing levels of modality.

Table 2

Problematic settings	
	
Image 1 (49:09)	Image 2 (63:26)
Fundraising settings	
	
Image 3 (24:10)	Image 4 (27:01)
Therapeutic settings	
	
Image 5 (49:51)	Image 6 (64:06)
The studio	
	
Image 7 (10:46)	Image 8 (17:25)

As I outlined above, for Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), an optimally realistic shot would be fairly (but not maximally): contextualised (showing background features) and detailed (including many features of represented participants, such as pores or strands of hair) (1996: 165-6). In terms of colour, it would display moderately modulated (many shades), saturated (bright colours at one end and black and white on the other) and differentiated (showing many colours, as opposed to monochrome) hues (1996: 165). Each of the images that represent the fundraising and therapeutic settings (images 3, 4, 5 and 6) fulfil these requirements. These images have what Huxford (2001: 56) calls a ‘candid’ style (i.e. a style which lays claims to truthfulness by lacking features such as ‘staged’ composition and the noticeably high image quality associated with professional shots). Although the children in frame 3, for example, have clearly been arranged for the camera, some children are cut out of the shot, and some of those who are in shot are not looking at the camera. All four of these shots include background details, such as doors, walls and windows. These contextual features make these settings appear not only realistic but also recognisable as the sorts of spaces that might be occupied by viewers: a school hall (image 3); a high street (image 4); community centres (images 5 and 6). As would be expected for candid camera shots, a wide range of colours appear in them (the exception to this variation resulting from the children’s uniforms in images 3 and 5). Each of these shots seems to have been taken in natural light, so these colours are modulated by light and shade. In terms of the majority of Kress and van Leeuwen’s modality markers, these images can thus be categorised as having high modality.

A slight deviation from this rule occurs in terms of the brightness of these images. Pictures from both problematic (images 1 and 2) and therapeutic (images 5 and 6) settings sometimes have lower modality than, for example, those representing fundraising settings, because they show marked use of low (problematic) and high (therapeutic) lighting, as exemplified by images 2 and 6, respectively. This appears to reinforce the bad → good shift in the narrative that accompanies the transition of sufferers from problematic places to therapeutic places. This shift is also emphasised by changes in the tempo and key of background music, from slow-paced and melancholic acoustic music, often in a minor key, to faster and more upbeat electronic music. Forceville and Renckens (2013: 160) suggest that the metaphorical use of dark for bad and light for good is a common device in feature films, although these meanings are context-dependent. Familiarity with such tropes means that viewers are likely to interpret emphasised dark or light scenes as a representational choice, rather than as a feature of the setting, which makes it seem less realistic. In turn, this lighting also affects the modulation of colour in these settings, making it slightly ‘flatter’ than the shots that have more naturalistic lighting. The colours are slightly more muted than would be naturalistic in problematic settings, and slightly more saturated than naturalistic in therapeutic settings. The reason for these differences appears clear when considering their combination with narratives about the beneficiaries’ lives. As mentioned in the first analytic chapter, entrance to ‘therapeutic places’ is signalled in verbal, audio and visual

modes as a transformative event, and the pattern of representation in dark and then light images appears across examples as an additional signifier of this change.

These differences, however, are less conspicuous than the difference between the studio and all other types of setting. Even at a glance, the stark contrast between the visual features of problematic, fundraising and therapeutic settings and the studio is noticeable. For example, the images of the studio (7 and 8) have markedly higher colour saturation than appears in shots from other places. Likewise, while the contextual features that appear in all three non-studio settings seem naturalistic, the studio, by contrast, is shown with extremes of either shallowness (image 7) or depth (image 8).

The constantly changing graphics on this screen further highlight the artificiality of the setting. Similarly, the perspective in frame 8 is unlikely to be accessible to someone present in the audience, as it appears to have been taken from higher up. The extreme depth shown in this shot is afforded by the particular features of the television studio. The combination of these extremes lowers the naturalistic modality of the representation of this setting. These differences, however, are a result not only of different representational styles but also of the settings themselves. The studio's background colour and lighting are unlikely to be replicated in everyday settings.

The question of contextualisation is slightly more complicated. All three non-studio settings appear to show similarly high levels of contextualisation in the individual shots. But, whereas problematic places in particular are highly contextualised by showing a number of location shots, and giving verbal references to place, fundraising places appear less specific. This is in keeping with the generality of fundraising settings, as discussed in chapter 1. The studio is given a concrete context visually and verbally in the introduction to the programme. The setting, in the BBC Television Centre, is shown from the outside. However, in terms of the visual features, this space appears decontextualized, as specific features of the setting are obscured with screens and lighting. The screen in front of which the presenters stand in image 7 occludes the features of the room that might otherwise be seen behind it. This means that images in this setting exclude background detail. This is not true of all entertainment settings, however. While some features, such as a special edition of dancing competition show 'Strictly Come Dancing', appear in settings similar to that of the CiN studio, each of the programmes featured is located where the programme is set. This means that, for example, a dance routine performed by the cast of popular soap opera *EastEnders* takes place in the urban square that is used to represent one in a London borough in the show. In this way, entertainment settings are less homogenous than other settings, but some form of studio is shown between each representation of beneficiary and fundraiser settings. Thus, television studios are juxtaposed with other settings and appear as a point of contrast visually.

Taking these images in isolation, the studio setting appears to have low modality, appearing fantasy-like, whereas fundraisers' and beneficiaries' settings seem more 'real'. The highest modality can be found in fundraising settings, which are displayed most naturalistically. It is the studio that appears 'hyper-real' when contrasted with each of these settings. However, as Kress and van Leeuwen point out, modality is defined in relation to a given genre (1996: 161). What is interpreted as 'realistic' in one type of text is quite different from what is in others. In the same way, programmes such as CiN might therefore have their own standards for what counts as normal and realistic. The CiN studio, while being represented in what might seem to be low modality images, is presented as the norm within the programme. As well as being shown for the longest time and most frequently of all the different types of places, the studio is also used to frame other settings, appearing before and after them (except in beneficiary vignettes, where problematic settings appear directly before therapeutic settings). In the same way that the high street setting is constructed as a norm against which the reality of homelessness appears as an anomaly (Gerrard and Farrugia 2014), the CiN studio can thus be interpreted as a norm against which images of reality appear hyper-real. In other words, the presentation of the 'fantastical' studio as the normal setting means that images of beneficiaries appear as deviations. However, it is not only suffering people but also people raising money for them who are contrasted with the glamour of the studio in CiN.

The studio / 'real life' setting split here echoes the role of studios in news programmes (Montgomery 2007: 193). While fundraising and beneficiary vignettes appear as 'reports' on the activities of the charity and its supporters in the field, the studio is the site from which information is 'presented' to the viewers (2007: 77). The different temporal and spatial locations of CiN's reports and presentations, as well as their visual features, support this interpretation. News reports, like CiN's vignettes about beneficiaries and fundraisers, are often pre-recorded and are marked by a candid camera style of visual representation. By contrast, in both CiN and news programmes, the live studio setting is marked by technological and visual precision, where a range of camera angles are utilised and picture quality is high. These genres differ, however, in terms of the events that take place in the studio. Whereas news studios feature presenters who soberly anchor reports from outside the studio, CiN's studio is the locus of light-hearted celebratory activities.

In terms of representational distance, what is of chief importance is the degree to which viewers are encouraged to interpret the situations of potential beneficiaries as having a similar level of reality to that of their own lives. What really matters, therefore, is how much beneficiary settings possess the same presentational features as those of potential viewers. In CiN, as discussed in chapter 4, potential viewers are represented as being placed in the position of fundraisers. This means that, in order to portray beneficiaries in a way that would make them seem maximally 'representationally close' to viewers, the key visual features of beneficiary settings would have to be similar to those of fundraiser

settings. In CiN, this is the case. In terms of most of the features examined, beneficiary places are represented in the same way as fundraising places. This suggests that representational distance between givers and beneficiaries is minimised by CiN. This sense of shared reality between viewers and beneficiaries is reinforced by both beneficiary and fundraising places being represented with high visual modality, defined as similarity to what can be seen with the naked eye (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 159). I will now turn to potential viewers' interpretations of charity telethons' presentation of sufferers.

6.2 Interpreting the spectacle of suffering and celebration

While CiN presents beneficiaries as being representationally close to potential donors, it is possible that viewers' interpretations of the reality of sufferers' lives might be quite different. The show can only successfully minimise representational distance to the degree that viewers feel that beneficiaries' lives are real. In order to examine this, I introduce just one extract that is particularly noticeable in terms of the discussion of charity media events' representation of reality in the focus group data.

In the Academics focus group, participants talk about charity telethons and their apparent ability to 'create (.) astonishing amounts of money'. CiN was given as an example of this type of fundraising, which was described as a 'lazy' way to clear one's conscience. I asked the group whether they had watched it, and one of the participants (Jess) said that she couldn't 'bear it'. The following section of talk comes after a brief discussion of the programme between Jess and Vera, in which Vera described the programme as 'formulaic' and Jess said it was 'horrible'. Jess contrasted CiN with earlier instances of entertainment-related giving, such as George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh and Live Aid, which she described as 'more spontaneous' and stemming from a sense of 'personal conviction'.

Academics group, original line numbers 1106 – 1135 (see appendix 10)

- | | | |
|----|------|---|
| 1 | Joe | the- (.) they (.) what do you call them (.) the people who benefit anyway are |
| 2 | | (1.0) largely out of the picture |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | Jess | yeah and it's that (.) that that mismatch between the actual poverty and |
| 5 | | suffering and the terrible things that are going on (1.0) <u>juxtaposed</u> in the same |
| 6 | HL | [um hmm |
| 7 | Jess | evening with all these people doing really <u>stupid</u> things (1.0) that I find (.) |
| 8 | | distasteful (.) I think (.) and or or <u>wrong</u> somehow |
| 9 | | |
| 10 | Cath | [I don't think it's intentional at all (1.0) but |
| 11 | Jess | [no |
| 12 | Cath | because of the juxtaposition that's kind of (1.0) what's left with the watcher |
| 13 | Jess | [yeah |

14 Jess yeah (.) yeah (2.0) and they'll probably go and talk about (.) the person lying in
 15 HL [hmm
 16 Cath [and
 17 Jess the bath of baked beans rather than (.) the images of (.) suffering that they s- I
 18 HL [hmm
 19 Jess mean what what do you bring away from something like that (1.5) 'well I gave
 20 HL [hmm
 21 Jess money to so-and-so to live in a (.) to to to lie in a bath of baked beans'

In explaining why they have chosen to disengage from telethons, both Joe and Jess cite antipathy towards what they describe as the jarring combination of depictions of need and of extravagance in these programmes (lines 5-6). Jess articulates her disapproval particularly strongly, using moralistic terms such as 'distasteful', and 'wrong' (line 8). For her, the problem with this state of affairs is that it threatens to change what people who view suffering on television will talk about to others. Jess and Joe's criticisms focus on visual representations. In particular, they criticise the fact that 'picture[s]' shown on such programme exclude sufferers (line 2), and that 'images' of suffering are ignored (line 17). In other words, the celebratory aspect of the programmes is seen as altering the way that beneficiary vignettes are interpreted. Images of celebration are only read as 'distasteful' when they immediately follow images of suffering. The latter, although they are described as quite different from those of celebration, are nevertheless still labelled as 'images' (line 17). This suggests that beneficiaries remain representationally distant from viewers; they are not perceived as real people but merely as pictures of people.

So it is not just the content and presentation of beneficiary vignettes that suggest to the audience whether and how this information should be received and acted upon. At least for some viewers, the juxtaposition of these clips with the other settings and activities in the show also shape the way that potential beneficiaries are related to. In the case of CiN, the brevity of beneficiary vignettes (on average 3 minutes, 40 seconds – see page 85), and the easy resolution of problems that appear at the point when donations are received, are combined with depictions of frivolous entertainment. It follows that the audience receives the message that the suffering of children and families in the programme can be engaged with in a temporary and superficial way. It encourages viewers to experience suffering as part of the spectacle, and foregrounds the enjoyment of fundraisers. This means that the representational distance between viewers and sufferers is increased.

In the extract presented above, participants discuss different types of representation within charity telethons. In the following section, I examine how such representations are interpreted in comparison with other ways of knowing about disadvantaged people.

6.3 'Hidden' places of suffering

As I set out at the beginning of the chapter, representational closeness depends on viewers feeling as much as possible that suffering others share their own reality and, therefore, that they will be able to take action to ameliorate that suffering. As I examined in chapter 4, the presenters introduce scenes of suffering as if they are unfamiliar to viewers. I did not, however, suggest that this representation of beneficiaries' situations as unknown indicated that they were portrayed as being less real. As examined above, visually the beneficiary settings are presented with similar features, and with a similar degree of modality, as fundraising settings, which is where the viewers are encouraged to picture themselves. In the following data extracts from the focus group discussions, however, a complicated relationship between viewing mediated representations of suffering and understanding (investing in, comprehending, apprehending) the reality of that suffering is revealed. In these extracts, media representations of victims are compared with other ways of knowing about the suffering of others.

As discussed above, both Boltanski (1999) and Chouliaraki (2005) believe that the sight of suffering has become part of a 'spectacle', partly because it has been produced by the media as a commodity. While Gerrard and Farrugia (2014) see suffering as part of the reality that disturbs and reveals the simulacra (Baudrillard 1984), Boltanski understands suffering as part of a constructed spectacle (1999: 176). This contradiction between pre- and post-aesthetics interpretations might be due to the fact that these writers are considering different types of suffering: suffering as presented by the media on the one hand and unmediated suffering on the other. For scholars as much as for others, interpreting mediated suffering might be quite a different experience from interpreting suffering witnessed face-to-face (so their theoretical insights on suffering might be informed by the data they consider). In my own data, the picture is more complicated, partially because I take both media representations of suffering and talk about experiences of others' suffering in general into account. The idea that personally-witnessed suffering is 'real', and mediated images of suffering are 'unreal' appears in some of the accounts provided by the focus group participants, echoing the seemingly contradictory views of Gerrard and Farrugia and Boltanski. I analyse these extracts by drawing on the Rhetorical Discourse Analytic rhetorical device of 'event work' (Arribas-Ayllon et al. 2013: 11), examining how a person or phenomenon is characterised in order to explain actions and attitudes taken in relation to them.

In many of the focus group participants' accounts, visible suffering is contrasted with hidden places of suffering. Participants not only suggest that certain enclaves of suffering are unknown to the wider public, but they also portray such sites and sufferings as *unknowable*. In the following

extracts, participants draw a distinction between the suffering that they have seen in media representations and those that they know about through other means but that are not reported in the mass media. Participants' accounts indicate that their mistrust of media representations causes them to question the veracity of the reports about suffering that they see. It also makes them wonder whether other forms of suffering may have been missed out. The following extract is from the Academics group. It comes much earlier in the discussion than the extract discussed above. In it, participants discuss representations of suffering, for example in the first Live Aid broadcast for Africa in 1985.

Academics group, original line numbers 99 – 117 (see appendix 10)

- 1 Joe I think with more reflection (.) people thought that (.)
- 2 you know poverty isn't (.) simply (1.5) what you see through the lens of
- 3 (.) the TV and (1.0) uh (.) you know in in (.) underprivileged Africa and
- 4 India and uh other places but (.) but it's in pockets (.) all around you
- 5 Jess yeah and it's more or less hidden I think as well I mean it's very visible in
- 6 Africa isn't it because of of the (1.0) um (.) not visible to us because we
- 7 HL [yeah
- 8 Jess go there but because (1.0) of the campaigns and the kinds of things we
- 9 find out about on the television and the newspaper there are images
- 10 (1.0) um (.) there's the news (.) um (.) so we're very aware of that I think
- 11 whereas I think (.) we're a uh (.) well I have a friend who's a (1.0)
- 12 community (.) paediatrician who works up in the valleys and she says
- 13 that they're one of the (.) most deprived and poverty-stricken areas
- 14 she's ever come across in the UK (1.5) um (1.0) you know so right on our
- 15 doorsteps but uh whether (1.0) it's very (.) visible like Joe said (.) people
- 16 Joe [hmm
- 17 Vera [yeah
- 18 Jess (.) sleeping on the streets or whether it's kind of hidden in a place that
- 19 nobody really goes to

In this stretch of talk, both Joe and Jess distinguish between 'hidden' suffering and 'visible' suffering. They contrast mediated images of faraway places, which form part of the 'visible' suffering, with places of suffering within the UK, which become 'invisible' through not being reported in the mass media. Jess argues that suffering in Africa is something that we are 'aware of' (line 10), but when she recounts professional knowledge of poverty in the UK, accessed through her social network, she presents this information as being 'hidden' from others (line 18). In Jess' account, traditional understandings of distance and knowledge are thus subverted, so that the distant becomes known, and the proximate becomes unknown.

Traditionally, people have tended to share knowledge with people living or working in close physical proximity to themselves, so that communal knowledge has been found in shared spaces (e.g. Morgan

2004; Tagliaventi and Mattarelli 2006). This link between places and opinions has also been found to work the other way around, in that people with certain ideas and opinions tend to gather in particular places, such as Silicon Valley (Harvey 2005: 85). More recently, these so-called 'knowledge networks' based on interpersonal interaction have been seen to be less significant, as people increasingly use internet-based technologies, and advances in travel technology have meant more and easier movement of people and knowledge. Non place-based ways of interacting have thus to some extent transformed the way that knowledge is shared and spread (Crevoisier and Jeannerat 2009). The relationship between place-based transference of ways of thinking and the mass media has also been studied by Blommaert et al. (2003). These researchers found that individuals' differing degrees of physical distance from a refugee centre changed the way that they described it. In particular, they noted that interviewees who lived close to the centre used their knowledge as a source of authority more than those who lived further away. But they also found that place-based knowledge changed people's interpretation of mass media information about the centre. Witnessing the centre for themselves allowed them to challenge information offered by the media with a level of authority (2003: 311).

In the extract discussed above, the relationship between media representations and interpersonal, place-based knowledge (or at least awareness), is similar to that found in Blommaert et al.'s (2003) study. Examples of suffering that are not reported in the media are used to make the case that televisual representations are misrepresentative. In other words, the mass media is portrayed as being concerned with a certain sort of situation, whereas the real problems lie elsewhere. According to Jess' account, what the mass media presents is 'images' of suffering (line 9), whereas the information her friend provides is recounted as giving more transparent access to the situation in the valleys, because it is backed up by an eyewitness account and professional knowledge (line 12). At the same time, the information provided by Jess' friend is constructed as something that people are less aware of than the television representations they see of suffering elsewhere (line 10). In this account, mediated suffering is known, but unreal and unmediated suffering, whether seen or unseen, is the reality it masks. In terms of representational closeness, the people who appear on television are placed at a distance from the people who view them. The speakers here portray their own reality as being removed from these pictures. This sense of removal is also emphasised by Joe in lines 2-3. The word 'lens' carries two meanings here. Firstly, it is a mediator between the image and the viewer, separating the sufferers from the people who view them only on television. Secondly, it is a filter through which only part of the picture is shown.

A number of Extreme Case Formulations (Pomerantz 1986) are used here. The pockets of suffering are described as being 'all around you' (line 4), 'on our doorsteps' (line 15) and as places that 'nobody' visits (line 18). Suffering elsewhere, on the other hand, is described as being 'very visible'

(line 5), and as something we are ‘very aware of’ (line 10). The use of pronouns and possessive determiners here projects the idea that this experience is universal for those present: poverty is ‘all around *you*’ (line 8), and ‘on *our* doorsteps’ (lines 14-15). Despite this, Jess and Joe present their own interpretations of the relationship between knowledge and media representations as more unusual than unquestioning acceptance of the media’s representations of suffering. A view of poverty as a nuanced issue that sometimes lies close to home is presented by Joe as being more considered (line 1) than an association of poverty with only extreme deprivation elsewhere.

The level of detail given about suffering within and outside of the UK is also very different. Jess identifies a specific area of Wales as underprivileged (line 12), while Joe refers to ‘Africa and India and other places’ (lines 3-4), not differentiating between these regions or specifying which nations might be included here, alongside India. The frame of reference for what counts as poverty in each of these places is also quite different. India and Africa are identified as ‘underprivileged’, presumably in comparison with the UK and America. The valleys, however, are ‘one of’ the poorest areas ‘in the UK’ (lines 13-14). In this short stretch of talk, then, speakers emphasise the representational distance between them and the sufferers that they see on television. This adds to the physical and social distance that exists between these speakers and individuals in Africa and India.

In the following extract from the Office group, speakers voice similar concerns about the representation of poverty on television. Just before the following stretch of talk, Helen has compared conditions for people living in Britain with those of people elsewhere. She argued that witnessing suffering on television leaves the viewer with a sense of responsibility, as well as gratitude for one’s own situation. In the extract that follows, Gill contradicts this interpretation by suggesting that conditions in the UK are unknowable, which makes comparison with situations elsewhere impossible.

Office group, original line numbers 393 – 398 (see appendix 6)

- | | | |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | Eve | [yeah but then there are (.) there are people in this country |
| 2 | | who haven’t got a (.) nice warm house and a flat screen television aren’t |
| 3 | Gill | [yeah exactly (.) I think we should concentrate on our |
| 4 | Eve | //there |
| 5 | Gill | //home (.) first of all (.) so that all the kids it’s not just kids it’s the |
| 6 | | <u>elderly</u> as well you know? (1.0) (<i>quieter</i>) we probably don’t know half of |
| 7 | Eve | [hmm yeah |
| 8 | | what’s going on |

In lines 3-5, Gill refers to the UK as ‘our home’, yet she describes the scope of its people’s problems as unknown to her (line 6). Her utterance in lines 6-8 contains markers of lower modality (‘probably’,

‘don’t know half of what’s going on’), although she corroborates Eve’s high modality presentation of this hidden reality (‘there are’, line 1) with emphasis (‘exactly’, line 3). Gill’s utterance also suggests that some aspects of these problems are identifiable: they involve elderly as well as young people, and can be ameliorated by focusing on these issues (line 3) instead of considering problems elsewhere (line 5). Gill’s tag question (line 6) implies that she expects consensus on this issue (Edwards and Potter 1992: 16). In this stretch of talk, as in the extract from the Academics group, the relationship between knowledge about suffering and mediated representations of it is complex.

In both of these examples, nearby, personally-witnessed suffering is presented as both real and unknown, whereas mediated distant suffering is portrayed as known but less real. It is not just other people who are presented by these speakers as being unaware of hidden suffering. In both extracts, speakers include themselves in the group of people that they identify as having this unbalanced impression of suffering. What is also interesting about these extracts is that the participants in both groups argue that suffering in the UK is under-reported compared to the suffering in other countries. They suggest that whole continents’ problems can be easily understood by watching media representations (Academics group, lines 5-6), whereas the UK’s problems are more complex. While Blommaert et al. (2003) suggest that knownness is linked to closeness, here some of what is close appears unknown. While Gerrard and Farrugia (2014) theorise images of suffering as glimpses of reality that reveal the artifice of the spectacle, here, some suffering appears unreal.

The ideas that are expressed by these speakers are particularly interesting in light of CiN’s presentation of suffering in the UK. As I suggested in chapter 4, CiN reveals places of suffering as if they are unknown to viewers. While CiN makes viewers aware of the issues faced by its beneficiaries, it preserves the idea that they can only gain knowledge of these issues via media representations such as its own. It is possible that the representation in the media of UK problems as only knowable through them is linked to audiences’ mistrust of both media representations of suffering and the unmediated suffering that they assume also lies beyond them. If audiences are given to understand that the suffering they are now being shown has previously been concealed from them, this might lead them to question what else is yet to be uncovered.

Conclusion

Examining the idea of the spectacle has revealed another dimension of the role of distance in my data. CiN portrays beneficiary vignettes both with high modality and with similar visual features to fundraising scenes. This means that the representational distance between sufferers and viewers is to some extent minimised; they share the same reality. The show, however, keeps these sites and the people who appear in them distinct. Because CiN consistently separates representations of sufferers

from representations of fundraisers by presenting the studio between these scenes, it fails to project the idea that their lives share the same level of reality. As I explore in the following chapter, the mode of action suggested to viewers is one that can operate at a distance.

While beneficiary vignettes in themselves might encourage indulgence in emotional reactions, the juxtaposition of these vignettes with celebratory scenes indicates that these emotions should be limited – powerful to the extent that they elicit donations, but not so overwhelming as to curtail the enjoyment to be found at other points. The juxtaposition of celebratory and pitying frames ultimately creates the impression that engagement with others' suffering can and should be temporary and superficial. The management of spectacle and emotion in this way is not, however, straightforward. For those who believe the mass media's portrayal of suffering others to be misrepresentative or unrealistic, there are at least two possible responses. Some viewers may use interactive media to put across an alternative view, while others will disconnect from these types of presentations altogether (Kaun 2013: 72).

The discussions of hidden places of suffering in the focus group data reveal an interesting interaction between the visibility and perceived reality of suffering. In particular, media representations are described as less real than both visible and invisible unrepresented suffering: they are described as if they are simply one more 'image' to see. Mediated suffering can therefore be interpreted as part of the spectacle, rather than as an exception to it. Personally-witnessed suffering, on the other hand, is experienced as a complete rupture in the fabric of the spectacle. This seems to present an impossible position for the mass media seeking to inform audiences of suffering. But it might be that it is only when watching programmes in which other types of spectacle are presented that viewers apprehend representations of suffering in this way. Further research on a range of television programmes would be required to clarify this. I now move on to examining the second aspect of representational distance: the degree to which it appears that action to redress the suffering of others is possible.

Chapter 7: Representational Distance

Part 2: Action and Myth

In both the previous analytic chapter and the present chapter, I examine the data in relation to a concept I have called 'representational distance'. In chapter 6, I examined the degree to which viewers were encouraged to see the lives of sufferers as being real. Representational distance was understood as being minimised where suffering others were represented or interpreted as real, and maximised where sufferers were seen or shown as lacking reality. I concluded that some aspects of CiN minimise the representational distance between viewers and beneficiaries by presenting fundraising places (the location of fundraisers, who are presented as the representatives of viewers) and beneficiary settings (where sufferers are shown) using a high level of visual modality, and similar visual features. Focus group speakers, however, did not interpret themselves as being representationally close to the people they witnessed on television, repeatedly drawing attention to the mediated nature of the interaction.

In the present chapter, I examine the second component of representational distance: the degree to which viewers are encouraged to consider it possible to take action to prevent others' suffering. I draw on the concept of myth (Barthes [1972] 2009) in order to study the degree to which one form of action - fundraising - is imbued with additional meanings, while other potential actions are obscured. I begin this section by briefly defining myth, before using it to examine the degree to which taking action on suffering is represented as possible in my data.

7.1 Myth

When reading any type of sign, there are at least two possible levels of meaning to decode: the sign's denotative or literal meaning, which is widely understood, and its connotative or associated meanings, which are culturally-specific and depend on how that thing is represented. For example, the sign:



uses a continuous line to roughly approximate the shape of a human heart. It denotes a heart, but the connotation attached to it in western culture is the idea of love. It is no longer necessary to understand or to remember a) the link between the physical responses that accompany loving someone and the human heart, or b) the link between the shape of this symbol and that of the human heart, in order to make the connection between this symbol and the concept of love.

Barthes argues that there is a third level of meaning associated with some signs; in addition to denotative and connotative levels, there is an ideological or mythical level of meaning (2009 [1972]: 138). This level of meaning is created by a given society, where it usually serves the interests of those in powerful positions by making ideological interpretations of the world appear natural and eternal (2009 [1972]): 148, 168). At the same time, aspects of the sign that were once meaningful are obscured and changed into a gesture (2009 [1972]: 146). For example, a picture of a black soldier in an army uniform comes to evoke the greatness of a nation, while his specific characteristics and history are ignored (2009 [1972]: 146). Such signs function as myths. Barthes presents a number of examples of signs that function as myths, including detergents. Detergents and soap powders, and advertising for them in particular, naturalise a number of ideas about how one should operate in society. For example, they assume that one should be interested in appearances and strive to be better than others. This is achieved by offering before and after views, one of which is 'whiter' and appears self-evidently more desirable (2009 [1972]: 32).

The concept of myth shares some important features with the concept of the spectacle. Myth, like spectacle, involves signification (though, in this case, not only visual signification) in which some parts of the referent are placed at a distance from the decoder (Barthes 2009 [1972]: 151). The theory of myth does not hold that all instances of communication are detached from reality, but singles out particular examples that are. In this way, it is similar to understandings of the spectacle that single out particular examples, rather than to the post-aesthetics understanding of the spectacle. What are obscured in both myth and the spectacle are the social relations behind what is articulated (2009 [1972]: 169). Like the spectacle, myth is also posited as something that is used by dominant powers in society to maintain their position. However, what gives myths their power is their ability to project their reality and naturalness, whereas the spectacle is assumed to maintain its power despite people being aware of its unreality.

Van Leeuwen (2001: 98) focuses on the connotations that can be created not only by depicting certain objects or people, but by the way in which these figures are represented. In other words, grammar, as well as lexis, creates meaning (2001: 98). Having examined the visual presentation of sufferers in detail in chapter 6, in the present chapter I refer to these issues only very briefly, using images illustratively rather than for analysis. I use the technique suggested in 'iconography' (e.g. Panofsky 2006 [1939]), of using others' interpretations to determine what can be said to be a myth, rather than taking my own reading as evidence (van Leeuwen 2001: 101).

7.2 Data analysis: the myth of giving as good

CiN presents the money raised by its donors as a cause for celebration across a range of different parts of the programme. Totals are the focal point of reports on fundraising activities and appear in front of other images (see frame 7.1) at the conclusion of these vignettes. Similarly, in the ‘local’ sections of the programme, fundraisers are asked to report how much money they have raised and are verbally congratulated by the presenter (frame 7.2). The monetary contributions made by the sale of particular products or the use of particular campaigns are announced and applauded in the studio. For example, in image 7.3, CountryFile presenter John Craven announces the amount raised by selling the CiN CountryFile calendar, and the amount raised by baked goods shop Gregg’s special CiN products appears on the screen after a clip about the shop’s efforts (see frame 7.6). Running combined totals of all the money pledged are also presented throughout the show (e.g. frame 7.4), accompanied by lighting displays, drum rolls and applause (frame 7.5). Partly because many of these moments take place in the studio, they appear visually striking, with a broad spectrum of highly saturated colours. This enhances the impression that these figures are pivotal points for celebrating the show’s success.



7.1 (23:49)



7.2 (27:37)



7.3 (31:16)



7.4 (32:40)



7.5 (32:50)



7.6 (53:08)

As discussed in chapter 4, fundraising figures, both from individual groups and across the event as a whole, appear decontextualised in terms of outcomes, although the costs of service provision are given at the end of each beneficiary vignette (frames 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9). The figures that have been raised are thus not related to what this money might mean for beneficiaries.



7.7 (22:51)



7.8 (50:58)



7.9 (65:41)

There is a presumed link between giving more money and achieving these outcomes, but, at the point where money has been raised, this is backgrounded in favour of a celebration of giving itself. The only frame of reference provided for interpreting fundraising totals comes from a comparison with those of the previous year. It is not just in the programme itself that the figures raised in CiN are announced as a measure of success. Newspaper reports about CiN also emphasise its success with reference to the total figures raised. The final total is often widely reported. It is this information that is therefore most likely to reach those who do not watch the programme. In these contexts too, the figure is only compared with previous totals (e.g. *The Daily Mirror* 2011; *The Telegraph* 2011; Satherley and Anisiobi 2011), and no reference to specific outcomes is made. Shown in isolation in this way, these amounts are not easily interpreted by viewers, as I will examine below.

As I mentioned in chapter 1, the common practice of showing the figure raised at fundraising events prompts a sense of competition between the current fundraising efforts and those of previous years or of other charities (Tester 2001: 123). In other words, all attention is focused on the actions of donors, rather than on its impact on the lives of recipients. In this way, representational distance is maximised; viewers are encouraged to celebrate and connect with other fundraisers, but not with beneficiaries. This is the ultimate ‘impersonalisation’ of beneficiaries that occurs in the mass media (Boltanski 1999: 18), which limits, rather than creates, shared understanding. On the other hand, being given a clear impression of what action can be taken reminds viewers that this situation is real, and therefore demands more than the emotional response that a fictional depiction of the same situation would call for (Boltanski 1999: 152). Action is clearly represented as possible, but at this point it is action without an object. At these moments, the figures raised are presented as evidence of something good having been achieved, while these actions are not explicitly referred to. However, the comparison between funds raised in the present and previous years suggests that an increase in money is to be interpreted as a sign of more good having been done.

Returning to Barthes’ definition of myth ([1972] 2009: 138), the signifier (a pound sign followed by a number) denotes an amount of money. There is also a connotation (‘concept’ / ‘second signified’) attached to this sign. In this case, this is the idea that the money will be used to pay for the types of activities detailed in frames 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9. In addition to this connotation, there is another level of meaning attached to this sign: of benefit, success, or achievement. This latter level of meaning is expressed not only in the fact that the figures are announced in this way, but also in the form that these announcements take. They are displayed centrally, in bright colours, and are accompanied by lighting displays (frame 4), applause and smiles (image 5).

I now turn to data from the focus groups in order to examine how such figures are interpreted by viewers and potential viewers of the show. In four of the six focus groups, participants point out that CiN's donations reached a staggeringly high figure in 2011. They also mention that the figure raised in this year is higher than it was in the previous year. While some speakers echo the idea presented in CiN that increased money equals increased good, others challenge this view, exposing the assumptions that lie behind it and questioning whether these assumptions are always correct. Such challenges to the 'money = good' assumption are accepted or rejected to differing degrees by other participants. In my analysis of these extracts, I focus on how the money is characterised differently by different speakers. In each of the following sections of talk, participants perform 'character work' (Arribas-Ayllon et al. 2013: 70) to justify their different stances towards fundraising figures. While the first extract is an example of funds raised being characterised as good in themselves, in the following three extracts, one or more of the participants challenge this assumption. In the extract below, participants in the Office group discuss CiN's financial success. There is agreement on this across speakers and other charity events with similar levels of success are mentioned. The money raised is characterised as an achievement but such donations are also described as a finite resource, so that raising money in this way might mean other charities receive less support.

Office group, original line numbers 570 – 587 (see appendix 6)

- 1 Helen Children in Need bucked the trend
- 2 Eve yeah (1.0) yeah they collected more
- 3 Helen [they collected more this time again didn't they?
- 4 Eve [yeah [they did (1.0)
- 5 yeah
- 6 Fern [they always seem to and (.) um Sports aid [sic] and Comic Relief and
- 7 Gill [Comic Relief
- 8 Helen [they do and (.)
- 9 //every year it goes up doesn't it
- 10 Eve [yeah
- 11 //yeah
- 12 Gill //yeah
- 13 Fern // that they always seem to do better and better yeah
- 14 Eve yeah (.) so people are still (.) um
- 15 Fern [hmm
- 16 Fern //but it- maybe it's to the detriment of others that
- 17 Helen //but is it just that you get whipped up in the occasion rather than in (.)
- 18 like monthly regular giving (.) like we used to with the (1.0) you know (.)
- 19 Eve [yeah
- 20 Helen people resisting to give the (.) Friday donation (1.5)

In this extract, CiN's financial success is characterised as running counter to expectations (line 1), but, it is also described as being part of a trend for this type of event (lines 6-9). Charitable donations are framed as a finite resource, with other forms of giving losing out as a result of the success of such televised events (lines 15-18). However, the increase in donations is also described as if it were a phenomenon that occurs without the agency of donors – as something that simply 'goes up' (line 9). Donors are therefore erased (Irvine and Gal 2000: 38) from this description. It is the charities who are credited with success here; they 'collected' (line 3) the money, a task at which they 'do better' every year (line 13). The only action that potential donors are explicitly described as performing is 'resisting to give' elsewhere (line 20).

Indeed, charities' success is described only in terms of their ability to raise large sums of money. Listing the charities as event names, rather than in terms of their beneficiaries (line 6), means that recipients are also removed from the picture. In terms of representational distance, donors are set far apart from beneficiaries. The mediators (charities) are foregrounded, but their actions relate only to donors, rather than to recipients. Charities are framed as competing with each other (line 16), instead of collaborating to effect social change. This example demonstrates that the raising of money is sometimes described as if it is an end in itself, as a sign that charities are doing 'better' (line 13) than before. What underlies such arguments seems to be the idea that fundraising = good. While charitable work helping beneficiaries is understood by these participants as valuable, and fundraising has been seen as necessary in order to carry out this work, these parts of the process seem to have been obscured, so that fundraising is taken as good in itself. This interpretation can partly be accounted for by the fact that the speakers articulating it in this extract have no immediate experience of charity work themselves. In the final extract in this chapter, I present the Charities workers' discussion on the same topic, which contrasts markedly with the Office workers' extract.

In the following extract, taken from the Academics group, Joe challenges the idea that the fundraising totals from shows such as CiN that are reported in the mass media should be taken as evidence that beneficiaries have been helped by their efforts. He characterises fundraising figures as meaningless and unconnected to calculations about need.

Academics group, original line numbers 1157 – 1169 (see appendix 10)

- | | | |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | Joe | it seems to go up every year (<i>indistinguishable</i>) ((I don't understand)) |
| 2 | Vera | [yeah [yeah (.) yeah |
| 3 | Joe | but (.) one thing that has always puzzled me about (.) about these big |
| 4 | | events is is really the problem of <u>scale</u> that (.) you know you get these |
| 5 | | huge numbers that no-one can really (.) interpret (.) um you know how |
| 6 | HL | [hmm |

- 7 Joe many mill- I honestly don't know whether it was (.) five million fifteen or
8 fifty what was it that was (1.0) taken (.) from Children in Need but it's a
9 Jess [I don't know
10 Joe huge amount of money and yet (.) um (.) going back to the structural (.)
11 social things that we were talking about at the beginning uh I have no
12 conception of (.) how much of a dent that makes in (1.0) the need you
13 Vera [uh huh
14 Joe the need you know

In this stretch of talk, Joe suggests that the needs of beneficiaries should be considered when assessing charities' successes (lines 11-14). He starts, however, by describing the current situation, in which these needs are not the focus of attention. In this way, Joe attempts to reintroduce beneficiaries into the discussion, lessening the representational distance between them and members of his own social group. At this stage however, the specific details of the beneficiaries is lost and he can therefore only refer to the possible 'need' (line 12) that might have put them in this role. Like Helen in the Office group, Joe characterises the increase in donations as something that appears to 'go up' without the agency of donors (line 1). He, however, distances himself from this statement, by describing it as an impression that is given in CiN ('it seems to', line 1), rather than as an objective truth. Despite apparently commenting only on his own lack of understanding, Joe nevertheless makes the point that fundraising totals are incomprehensible more generally. As an academic speaking to peers, he is unlikely to regard his own intellectual ability as something that might be questioned. It is likely to be taken as read by the other participants that what 'puzzles' Joe is also likely to puzzle others. This sense of incomprehensibility is reinforced by Joe's use of Extreme Case Formulations (Pomerantz: 1986), such as 'always', 'huge' and 'no-one' (lines 3 and 5), and of a three-part list of uninterpretable figures in lines 7-8. In line with his argument, Joe downplays the significance of the amount raised by displaying his inability to remember it, even to the nearest £10 million. Joe concludes his turn by providing a justification for his classification of this unfathomable figure as a 'problem' (line 4): such information is removed from considerations of 'need' (line 14). In stating that he does not know what effect such money has on donors (lines 11 – 14), he implies that this information is not given when the figures are announced. In other words, Joe expresses frustration that fundraising is portrayed as an end in itself, regardless of its efficacy in effecting change.

In the following extract from the Students group, CiN's fundraising total is also represented as somewhat unrelated to the beneficiaries for whom it was raised. This is a common theme in participants' criticism of the presentation of this figure. But whereas Joe's critique goes unchallenged by the other participants in the Academics group, participants in the Students group reassert the idea that fundraising is 'good' in itself, for a number of reasons. Before this extract commenced, participants had discussed charity advertising. Two of them expressed their dislike of watching

charity adverts, and the group went on to discuss whether such requests were effective. Dave stated that £26 million had been raised by CiN, and put this amount into context by guessing the average amount given by individual donors and estimating what proportion of the population would have given a donation, based on this figure. In the following section of talk, I question the group about their decision to characterise charities as ‘effective’ on the grounds that they raise more money than others. While Ben appears to assume that more money results in more help, both Dave and Amy question the link between money and effectiveness.

Students group, original line numbers 1106 – 113 (see appendix 5)

- 1 HL [(laughs) when you (.) when you talk about this figure
- 2 that that was raised on Friday (.) you know (.) is is that a measure of
- 3 effectiveness do you think? do you think that that means that it must’ve been (.)
- 4 effective (3.0)
- 5 Ben well they tell you that (.) tell you it is isn’t it isn’t it the most they’ve ever raised
- 6 or something like that so
- 7 Dave [yeah I think they bil-(.) beat last year by eight million (.) so in that sense
- 8 it’s effective? but (1.0) if that was to end only uh help ten children (.) then I think
- 9 we’d all agree that wasn’t effective (.) so is (.) effectiveness measured by the
- 10 outcome (1.0) um (3.0)
- 11 Ben because it’s never going to be a (.) solution
- 12 Amy [but then (.) surely if you start measuring
- 13 outcome in that (.) (quieter) oh I don’t know (2.5) in that way (.) then just kind of
- 14 you’re turning it into like (.) business like (.) activity (1.0)
- 15 HL in what way
- 16 Amy in the sense that (.) I’m saying (.) how do you measure uh er (.) just using
- 17 HL [I mean (.) when you measure it in what way
- 18 Amy financial (.) fin- (.) just money (1.0) how do you (3.0) I don’t know
- 19 Dave I think there’s a business element to everything (1.0) because (.) if your twenty
- 20 six million is going to help (1.5) a big (.) uh you know you can go to (.) prepare
- 21 Amy [but help (.)
- 22 Dave //you to help a lot more
- 23 Amy //how (.) how much help them? how much help them? (1.0)
- 24 Ben better than what they (.) enough if if you didn’t raise anything though (1.5) it’s
- 25 better than nothing
- 26 Amy yeah yeah I’m not saying that (.) you don’t need money (.) I’m just saying that (.)
- 27 Chris [and better than a slap or a punch in the face
- 28 Amy how you measure effectiveness is
- 29 Ben maybe you uh that should ‘is it better than what we had (.) just before we did it’
- 30 perhaps? I don’t know (2.5) is that in itself just an effective outcome (1.0) the
- 31 fact that it wasn’t there before but now twenty-six million has been raised so
- 32 there’s something there that wasn’t there before (.) is that enough? I don’t
- 33 Amy [yeah
- 34 Ben know (3.0)

In this section of talk, the taken-for-granted link between money raised and charitable work carried out is picked apart and made more explicit. Ben initially interprets 'effectiveness' in terms of funds raised relative to previous years (line 5). He distances himself from the assertion that the 2011 figure is the most ever raised by questioning its trustworthiness. He emphasises the fact that this information is received from elsewhere ('they tell you', line 5) and is imprecise about what this information is ('or something like that', line 6). However, this evidence is presented as a sign of the charity's effectiveness to the extent that it is true. In terms of representational distance, Ben foregrounds the relationship between givers, and beneficiaries are removed from the picture. Giving is associated with good, while the specifics of the outcomes it facilitates and the people it helps are obscured.

In lines 7-10, Dave introduces the possible results of fundraising and its effects on beneficiaries into the discussion. He takes the interpretation of effectiveness as measured by funds raised as a starting-point and contrasts it with one centred on a different kind of outcome. The example he gives of 'ten children' is an extreme one in the sense that it is obviously too small, and his projection that there would be wide consensus over such a situation ('we'd all agree', line 9) reinforces the point that the situation he describes would be unrealistic and unsatisfactory. However, his turn achieves a shift of focus to the beneficiaries of charitable action, minimising the representational distance between them and those who view them. Amy takes Dave's point further, suggesting that any kind of finance-based assessment risks commercializing what should be a social project (lines 12-14). In other words, using money as a unit of measurement is an ideologically-loaded decision that is tied to capitalist understandings of what constitutes success (see Berg 2005; Mason 2011; Seu 2010). Dave responds by making the link between increased funding and increased help that has been implied in previous turns explicit: raising money is good, because it is linked to an increased ability to produce other outcomes (lines 19-22). When Amy questions this assumption (line 23), Ben makes a contrast not between different ways of measuring effectiveness, but between fundraising and not fundraising. Despite the challenges to the idea that 'money = good' that Dave and Amy put forward, it is Ben who is allowed to conclude this subject. He rearticulates the myth that the money raised by the charity is good, characterising it as an isolated entity, unlinked to other structures or demands for resources (line 32). He does this invoking the rhetoric of argument (Edwards and Potter 1992: 162), by using a question and answer sequence that makes it appear as if the evidence is being forced upon him.

In the following extended extract from the Counselling group, different participants also provide diverse interpretations of fundraising figures. Tina, whose remarks close this extended stretch of talk on this topic, also does so by upholding the myth that fundraising is evidence of good. Unlike Ben's logical style of reasoning, Tina evokes an emotive scene to make her case for fundraising. The use of figures to assess the success of charity events is again questioned by some speakers. Before this

section of talk, I asked whether the participants thought that charitable giving was ‘working’. I then introduced the topic of the CiN show, which had been aired the previous Friday night. The talk comes from one 5-minute section towards the end of their hour-long discussion. I have removed short sections that repeated the themes discussed here; missing sections of talk are represented by line breaks.

Counselling group, original line numbers 843 – 848, 1423 – 1441, 1459 – 1462, 1469 – 1473 and 1487 – 1494 (see appendix 9)

- 1 Sara people like volunteering (.) strange enough (.) and they like raising money
2 (2.0) for some strange reason (*laughing*) people love raising money (3.5) well
3 Ruth [hmm
4 Tina [yeah there's (*laugh*)
5 Sara they do: (2.0) (*laugh*)
-
- 6 Ruth [hmm (.) hmm (.) hmm (.) but
7 Children in Need (.) um (.) you know each year and it uh you know (.) here we
8 are in a recession (.) and (.) each year
9 Uma [hmm
10 Tina [hmm it always happens doesn't it
11 Ruth they (.) they (1.0) go even (1.0) uh I I don't know the figures I don't know the
12 Tina [yeah
13 Sara [yeah [yes
14 Ruth figures but they always do better
15 Tina [they just (?) doesn't it (.) yeah
16 Sara [I mean look at how Newfield school
17 Tina Newfield Comp my daughter's in the sixth form and last year they raised twenty
18 Sara [of cour-
19 Tina two and this year it's twenty five thousand (*indistinguishable*-----)
20 Ruth [hmm (.) hmm
21 Vicky [so uh (.) it was on the (.) on the news
22 Sara [it's an
23 Vicky //wasn't it
24 Sara //enormous sum from a town like Newfield
-
- 25 Tina [there's a competition with the Sixth Form though I
26 think 'we've got to beat last year's'
27 Sara [oh it's huge now
28 Tina [yeah
-
- 29 Ruth [I wonder (.) I wonder with that (.) having been involved in that and
30 you know (.) there are always different things that they do i- in different schools
31 and I wonder (.) about (1.0) um (2.0) whether people kind of lose sight of what

Tina counters Ruth's interpretation by reasserting the positives of fundraising as a collective activity in itself. She describes fundraising as an example of 'team spirit' (line 34), notable for its emotional nature. She repeats that the children were 'crying' (lines 39 and 41), repeatedly using the ECF (Pomerantz 1986) 'all' to describe the wide-ranging displays of emotion and affection. She offers a vivid description of the climax of the fundraising at her daughter's school, giving an array of details such as time (line 35) setting (line 35), and the presence of prominent figures (line 41). This rich account allows the other participants to imagine themselves as part of the scene (Edwards and Potter 1992: 164), particularly as Tina includes herself in it (lines 37 – 39). She also includes her own assessment of the event, which she considers 'lovely' (lines 34 and 41). The idea that fundraising is 'doing good' is presented as having an additional dimension – that of creating links between fundraisers.

Jasper (2011) provides a typology of the many emotion types that are at play in social movements. He argues that a sense of connection between people who unite for a given cause can induce them to remain members of activist groups longer than they otherwise would (2011: 290). This sense of connection is a result of sharing emotions such as love, pride, and emotional excitement with other members of the group (2011: 290). However, the point of contention in the extract above is not whether the emotional bond made between schoolchild fundraisers is a positive thing or not, but the degree to which this connection being made comes at the expense of making a connection with beneficiaries.

Taken together, these extracts suggest that the interpretation of figures produced from CiN is complex. Although fundraising totals are put forward as markers of success and reasons to celebrate, not all viewers and potential viewers adopt this interpretation. The accounts that are produced in support of the 'money = good done' reading reveal that fundraising is often assumed to stand for a wide range of other processes, such as help provided for those who need it and the teamwork of fundraisers. The fundraising figure thus appears to function as a sign of a range of other socially-meaningful processes that take place around it. Doing good is signified by fundraising, but the contingency of this on other processes being carried out is obscured and sometimes invisible. On one level, the discursive link between providing services for sufferers and the raising of money reflects an economic reality (Callen 1994). But this link is not reliable: some services can be carried out without it, and fundraising does not necessarily lead to successful outcomes for sufferers (1994: 215). What might have originated in the observation of a correlation between an action and a set of social practices has become mythologised as a way to judge the success of charities. The idea that giving can be interpreted as evidence of outcomes is reinforced discursively when it is stated, repeated and left unchallenged. Although the participants here do challenge this interpretation at some points in their conversations,

the last word on this topic in many cases is a rebuttal (e.g. Students, lines 29 – 34; Counselling, lines 34 - 41).

It is, however, possible that this link between money and the idea of ‘doing good’ or ‘success’ is not specific to the context of charitable giving. It could be that the link appears in these data because money is taken as a measure of accomplishment more generally. In the Charities group, the phrase ‘doing good’ appears in a context that is closely related to charity. This suggests that this idea is specifically related to this context.

Charities groups, original line numbers 1072 – 1083 (see appendix 8)

- 1 Penny ... but you have to go with the will and the wisp of (.)
2 Mary the funders
3 Penny [the funders (.) the money
4 Nicola [and it's so outcome driven isn't it and (1.0) based on the data
5 Penny [oh (*makes vomiting noise*)
7 Nicola collection and I know people need that to prove that the projects are working (.)
8 but it- (.) I think it gets to a point then where it takes away from the focus of the
9 project (.) and you spend (1.0) more of your time (.) collating data about the
10 Penny [hmm (*indistinguishable*)
11 Nicola good that you're doing than actually doing the good (.) that you're supposed to
13 Mary [yeah yeah
14 Nicola be doing

In this section of talk, the relationship between charitable giving and ‘doing good’ that is expressed in extracts from the Office, Students and Counselling groups is inverted. Instead of facilitating charities’ work, the need to account for actions in relation to donations diverts charity workers’ attention from tasks they would otherwise be carrying out. Yet despite these speakers articulating a disjunction between fundraising and the chain of events that leads to good being done, the association between charitable work and ‘good’ remains intact. Mary summarises the range of tasks carried out by charities such as the one she works for as ‘doing [...] good’ (line 11). This phrase emphasises the importance of these tasks, which, she contends, are what she is ‘supposed to be doing’ (lines 11 - 14). Moreover, the fact that this way of referring to her work is unquestioned by her co-participants indicates that this is an established, accepted way of referring to it among people who work in this sector. About 5 minutes before this section of talk, Kate, another participant, also referred to voluntary work in this way, asking ‘do you have to put your heart and soul into it? (.) if it (.) if you’re doing good?’ (original line number 969). Whilst this is not an uncommon phrase, the word ‘good’ occupies an unusual place in these formulations. It would be hard to imagine synonyms such as ‘beneficial’, ‘honourable’ or ‘charitable’ replacing the word ‘good’. Rather than being used as an

adjective, as in ‘doing something good’, it has been nominalised. It is also imprecise with regard to activity. Even in settings where most people would agree that the work carried out is socially valuable, such as healthcare work, referring to this work as ‘doing good’ would seem out of place. Charitable work, and the enabling of this work via donations, is unusual in being described in moral terms as an act of ‘good’ in itself.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the mode of action suggested in CiN and the reaction of its potential audience members to this. Giving money has already been recognised as a form of help that maintains the distance between donors and recipients insofar as it depersonalises both their contribution and their needs, and requires a mediator to translate funds into goods and actions (Boltanski 1999: 18). In these data, however, an additional level of separation seems to have taken place. Money and fundraising appear to have become the measure of charities’ success and the focus for the celebration of charitable action, instead of this being judged in terms of how much they impact on the lives of beneficiaries. This can be described as a myth, in which the fundraising total has come to signify not only the success of a given charity, but the idea that good has been done. What is obscured in this myth is the chain of actions that are needed to convert this potential for action into deeds that will be of benefit to others. Focusing on the donors’ success comes at the expense of paying more attention to outcomes for recipients. The representational distance between these two groups of people is therefore maximised by making the needs of sufferers and the offers of donors seem unrelated.

What many of the focus group discussions have in common is the participants’ criticism of this aspect of charities’ communication. CiN’s success is clearly not always interpreted as directly related to its ability to encourage financial donations. Kaun (2013) suggests that when people criticise media representations, they use such criticisms to account for one of two reactions that they have as a result. Some people respond by wanting to engage in media dialogues, such as giving feedback on online articles as a way of producing counter-narratives. Kaun refers to these people as ‘critical media connectors’ (2013: PG). Others use what they see as the problems with mass media as reasons to disengage, becoming increasingly reliant on personal networks for information. These individuals are referred to as ‘critical media disconnectors’. Based on the focus group conversations alone, participants overwhelmingly seem to fall into the latter category. While they attempt to reintroduce the idea of beneficiaries into discussions of charitable giving, the speakers who make these criticisms do not report making an active contribution to charity mass media discourses. They do, however, connect with recipients of other charities in alternative ways. For Amy (Students group) volunteering while at university is a way of connecting with and helping vulnerable others, as is Ruth’s

(Counselling group) voluntary work with the Cruse bereavement charity. It is also worth noting that the focus on fundraising is seen as more of a problem for those who regularly engage in other charitable activities than for those who do not, or who do not vocalise these experiences.

The concept of myth is useful for explaining how a certain indicator of carrying out actions for social good (giving) has come to be understood and enacted as a marker of social good. In the myth of giving as good, several levels of meaning are built upon the act of giving. In capitalist societies, money is needed in order to carry out certain actions. In order to run a pre-school breakfast club for children, for example, money is needed to buy the food, pay staff, and possibly to hire a space in a building. Charities who want to provide more of such services need money in order to do this. When people donate money to such a charity, they assume that these actions will be carried out as a result, although this link between donating money and increased charitable outcomes is not always straightforward (Callen 1994). The action of giving money therefore comes to be associated with a range of other actions (e.g. feeding children, administering medical care, or providing access to safe spaces), which it is assumed will be carried out as a result of them. The idea of helping vulnerable others has become so tied to the idea of giving money that giving money in itself is taken as a sign of this action having taken place. The pre-existing link between money and the actions facilitated by it has been replaced with a belief that to fundraise *is* to do these actions. Fundraising becomes seen as an end in itself, an event to be celebrated. The idea that to provide assistance without reward is virtuous means that a wide range of charitable actions are shorthanded in the phrase 'doing good'. Ultimately, the giving of money comes to be read, and performed, as a sign of good having been done.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined how an intra-national telethon and talk by some of its potential viewers represent the relationship between the charity's beneficiaries and its potential donors. I have drawn upon Boltanski's (1999) concept of pity, and particularly the aspect of distance this theory incorporates, in order to examine the extent to which beneficiaries are portrayed as detached from, different from, and possessing a similar level of reality to, donors. I have suggested that in CiN disadvantaged others are generally presented as socially and representationally distant from donors. However, in the experiential dimension, donors and beneficiaries are represented as close, because of their shared national identity. In this way, CiN suggests that its beneficiaries are reachable only through the help of an intermediary such as a charity, despite the fact that they occupy the same country as its viewers. In other words, CiN's beneficiaries are no more accessible than those in other countries, but the moral obligation towards them is presented as higher. In the present chapter, I return to the research questions posed at the end of the literature review, in order to assess how my research has contributed to the gaps in knowledge I identified in previous studies. I then consider how these findings relate to the theories I have engaged with, before reflecting on the limitations of this work and possible avenues for future research.

8.1 What sort of relationship does CiN suggest should occur between its donors and beneficiaries?

Put simply, from the perspective of CiN, the relationship between donors and beneficiaries is one that does not exist outside of the mediated interaction it provides. This question was addressed to some extent in each of the chapters, but particularly in the first analytic chapter (chapter 4) on social distance and in chapter 6, where the spectacular aspect of representational distance was considered. In chapter 4, I examined the extent to which both the media and focus group data represent different types of social actors as sharing the same or occupying different places. I presented by finding that CiN represents different types of participants (beneficiaries, celebrities, fundraisers) in distinct places, as these places are used for different activity types (such as displaying entertainment, fundraising or suffering and its amelioration). These places are presented using strikingly different visual styles, which, I argued, suggests that they, and therefore the different social actors associated with them, are irreconcilably different from one another. This visual representation of beneficiaries as being distant from viewers is enhanced by a verbal narrative that presents beneficiaries' struggles as if they are unknown to them. In this way, the programme reinforces the idea that mediators, such as the charity itself, are needed to negotiate between these different groups of people: their worlds are represented

as being so different that the needs of the sufferers and the efforts of the viewers cannot be reconciled without the charity or another body communicating their privations and efforts to each other.

In the focus group data, I identified an underlying assumption that people who are geographically close to one another will have some level of shared experience. In tension with this assumption is the recognition of speakers that this is not always the case. Indeed, participants stress that distance on a very small scale can sometimes result in neighbours having irreconcilably different experiences. Also notable was the repeated motif that appears in these discussions of groups with very different circumstances who are physically close to one another and require the same services (government support, education, healthcare), but with unequal access and attitudes to them. In terms of the politics of pity, I argued, these data suggest that, while the fortunate may regard the unfortunate from socially distant positions, both groups may be looking to a third party, rather than to each other, to redress the differences between them. This may explain the role that charities such as CiN have in mediating between different social groups who are geographically close to one another. It also suggests that more work needs to be done on clarifying the status of different groups in relation to charities, as I discuss under 'Limitations' below.

8.2 What effect does mediation have on this relationship?

In chapters 6 and 7, I addressed my own concept of 'representational distance', which I defined as a distance that is maximized when the lives of others are portrayed or experienced as being less real than those who witness their suffering and minimized when they are made to seem equally real. As I discussed in chapter 6, the programme represents the places of sufferers and those of fundraisers as sharing a similar level of reality, and therefore minimises the sense of representational distance between them to some extent. Furthermore, beneficiary vignettes encourage emotional reactions to the suffering of those who appear in them. However, the extent to which viewers are encouraged to feel pity is limited by the juxtaposition of these scenes with scenes of celebration. This prevents viewers from being overwhelmed by negative emotions, but it also creates the impression that engagement with others' suffering should be temporary and superficial. Overwhelming emotion might lead viewers to seek other avenues for action or to call into question the efficacy of charitable action. Viewers are encouraged to engage with disadvantaged others only to the extent that they are motivated to donate. Perhaps most strikingly, as I explored in chapter 4, the show reinforces its own role as mediator by addressing its viewers as if they do not know about the suffering of children in the UK. To the extent that viewers accept this, it follows that they will feel reliant on CiN's representations.

The focus group data indicate a more radical disjuncture between the experience of reality and representations of suffering. In some of these conversations, media representations of suffering are described as if they are simply one more image to see. Mediated suffering can therefore be interpreted as being part of the spectacle (Debord 2002 [1967]) for viewers, rather than as the reality the spectacle masks. Suffering that is witnessed by peers, on the other hand, is experienced as a complete departure from the spectacle. This seems to present an impossible predicament for the mass media seeking to inform audiences of suffering: my findings suggest that none of their depictions of suffering are experienced as being entirely real, regardless of how they are presented. However, at these points in the focus group discussions, participants are talking only about charity programmes. Viewers might respond differently to representations that do not have a celebratory aspect. Further research is needed in order to explore this idea more fully. As I examined in the literature review, studies on a range of media genres have already indicated that there may be stark differences in the ways in which viewers interpret their level of reality (e.g. Hoijer 2004; Seu 2010).

In considering representational distance in the focus group data, I also highlighted the theme of hidden suffering that emerges in some of the discussions. In the extracts I presented, the participants discuss near and distant suffering in a way that appears to invert the positive correlation between reality and closeness that has been noted in previous studies (e.g. Blommaert et al. 2003; Harvey 2006). In fact, this relationship is complicated by a less than straightforward relationship between “knownness” and reality. Close-hand, personally-witnessed suffering is represented as being both real and unknown, whereas mediated distant suffering is portrayed as known, but less real. Furthermore, participants in both the academics’ and office workers’ groups argue that British suffering is under-reported compared to the suffering in other countries, and they represent the former as being more complex. This finding is particularly interesting in light of CiN’s representation of British problems as being unknown, as shown in chapter 4. I suggested that there was potentially a link between media representations of British problems as only knowable through them and audiences’ mistrust of mediated representations of suffering.

8.3 How does a shared national identity between these groups alter the relationship?

As mentioned in the introduction, most charitable donations made by UK citizens in 2011 were to charities for UK citizens. It was thus only to be expected that CiN would try to create a positive impression of the UK. Caring for vulnerable citizens can be a point of national pride (Ryan 2000), and highlighting shared national identity between donors and recipients can also make donors more generous (Levine and Thompson 2004). The UK’s only other regular media charity event, ‘Comic Relief’ (also broadcast on the BBC), raises funds for projects both in the UK and abroad. CiN’s provision exclusively for projects within the UK is therefore part of its unique selling point. But,

unlike in many previously studied examples, there is no separate recipient nation that can be contrasted with the beneficiary nation in this case (e.g. Driessens et al. 2012, Mason 2011). Instead, the impression of the UK that is constructed and celebrated in CiN is one of a nation in which its citizens care for each other and use their ability to mobilise to overcome its problems. However, this does not mean that the show offers no invitation to viewers to make comparisons between UK recipients and those in other places.

The national identity shared by both potential donors and recipients, which was examined in chapter 5 with reference to the notion of experiential distance, is the main means by which these groups are represented as close to one another. Yet I argued that this aspect of their relationship goes beyond simply creating a sense of closeness between these groups; a sense of national identity is also constructed for viewers at other points in the show, where benefactors are not the main focus. In a number of ways, CiN both draws upon and reinforces the ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 2004 [1983]) of the UK. Firstly, the live broadcast format of the show (Marriott 1996: 69) is utilised as a means of creating a sense of connection between citizens, through a shared simultaneous experience (2004 [1983]: 35). Secondly, a sense of shared past is evoked in fundraising and entertainment sections of the show. Turns of phrase associated with particular periods in history are used, including those associated with ‘safe war’, an idea I defined as the playful use of military language associated with an unthreatening past, rather than with present threats to safety. Although the nationalistic aspect of the programme can be read optimistically as minimising the experiential distance between the charity’s donors and beneficiaries, it should also be borne in mind that relating to others because they share certain demographic features with you inevitably means distancing yourself from those who do not.

Set against this view of donors and beneficiaries as united in their national identity are the differences between these groups that are highlighted at other points in the show. In particular, the presenters use an idea of the normative family or child in the UK as a point of contrast to highlight the problems faced by its beneficiaries by comparison. Shared experiences, such as starting school, are used in CiN to emphasise the difference between the UK’s typical child on the one hand and children who face the difficulties it seeks to remedy, such as poverty or disability, on the other. While contrasting the lives of these groups maximises the experiential distance between them, it is of course necessary to distinguish between donors and beneficiaries in order to justify requests for help (a similar case about people with disabilities is made by Rix 1984). I indicated that terms associated with chronic problems in developing countries, such as ‘poverty’ and ‘hunger’, are used in CiN to suggest a similarity between children within and outside of the UK. This implies that UK problems are equally serious but easier and more important to remedy.

In the focus group data, participants are more explicit about the comparison between the needs of sufferers in the UK and those elsewhere. In these discussions, a recurring metaphor that expresses the relationship between the fortunate and unfortunate in the UK describes citizens of different countries as different species of animal. Again, this metaphor highlights the similarity between compatriots, minimizing the experiential distance between UK sufferers and non-sufferers. Although such metaphors are generally associated with negative attitudes and practices towards others (El Refaie 2001: 368; Santa Ana 1999; Shields and Bhatia 2009: 116), I found encouraging evidence in some focus groups of this metaphor being contested and subsequently rejected.

8.4 What sorts of actions are presented as possible in redressing the suffering of others?

In chapter 7, I considered the extent to which action by the fortunate to alleviate the suffering of the unfortunate was presented as being possible. The only ameliorative action suggested in CiN is the giving of money. Utilising Barthes' (2009 [1972]) concept of 'myth', I analysed CiN's presentation of fundraising figures as carrying an additional level of meaning, so that the raising of money is construed as an unequivocal social good and as an end in itself, rather than simply as one possible means of helping others. Overall, I suggested that the idea that *money = good done* has become mythologised, so that fundraising is taken as evidence of other outcomes, which, although facilitated by giving, do not necessarily occur as a result of it.

This impression was modified by my consideration of the focus group data on this topic. Alongside the discussion of international issues, this is one of the most significant differences between the two data sets in my study. I considered a number of extracts taken from different groups in the study where they discuss and interpret fundraising figures. Some speakers suggest that fundraising totals can be used as markers of charities' success and as causes for celebration. Others, however, are careful to make the link between this 'outcome' and the social processes that it might denote more explicit. Members of the Charities group in particular highlight the stark difference between the *money = good* view and the reality of their working lives. Furthermore, in practice many of these individuals do interact with disadvantaged others in a variety of ways: working with them, campaigning on their behalf, and interacting with them face-to-face in both social and volunteer settings. In this way, the impact of representations of others on programmes such as CiN is likely to be more limited than that of programmes depicting people in other countries, where physical distance adds to (but does not replace) other types of distance.

8.5 Why donate to a national charity?

Taken together, my analytic chapters present a complex view of the relationship between the fortunate and the unfortunate that is posited in both data sets. While CiN's viewers and beneficiaries appear socially distant (they occupy different places), they are nevertheless represented as experientially close (they share characteristics such as their national identity). Although they are representationally close in CiN according to one measure (visual modality), they are representationally distant when considering the brevity of beneficiary vignettes. The focus group data, meanwhile, suggests that knownness and reality are not always equivalent. While a clear means of action (giving money) is suggested in CiN, this action is tied up in a process in which the signified is distanced from the signifier, and the needs of beneficiaries are obscured in the process of celebrating fundraising success.

The significance of this quite confusing picture of distance creation and collapse in CiN is that viewers are made to feel close to depicted sufferers in ways that might encourage them to donate, yet not close enough to lead them to act on their suffering in other ways. So, for example, when experiential distance is minimised by emphasising a shared national identity, beneficiaries seem closer (and therefore more worthy of care) than those of international charities. However, distinctions are drawn between viewers' and recipients' experiences of UK life in ways that maintain the idea that the people depicted are worthy recipients of donations. Social distance is maintained, so that other types of action involving face-to-face interaction do not seem possible. The act of fundraising is celebrated and mythologised as unequivocal evidence of social good, but it is the viewers and fundraisers who celebrate these successes, rather than the beneficiaries whose lives should have been transformed by it.

In these ways, a sort of charitable distance is maintained – a distance at which charity is both necessary (for information and action, given the social distance that exists between potential donors and beneficiaries) and desirable (as these beneficiaries seem closer and therefore more deserving than those in other countries). The focus group data add another layer of complexity to this picture. My findings indicate that the relationship that CiN suggests should occur between its viewers and its beneficiaries is questioned by its potential audience. Suffering others are sometimes experienced as unreal or unrepresentative, and fundraising is sometimes portrayed as having uncertain value.

8.6 Intra-national pity

In this section, I consider the study's engagement with and contribution to relevant literature. The present study is unusual if not unique in considering the concept of pity (Boltanski 1999) in an intra-national context. The notion of pity is based upon a distinction between beneficiaries and benefactors,

who are regarded as comprising separate groups and existing at a distance from one another (1999: 5). This thesis has examined the possible shortcomings of a theory of pity based exclusively on physical distance, drawing upon more complex and nuanced understandings of the types of interpersonal distance that can exist between people, particularly when they are represented in the media. It has also considered the extent to which these types of distance could be created as well as reflected in a charity media event and in discussions between peers. CiN clearly encourages its viewers to relate to its beneficiaries as objects of pity in that it portrays them as being socially distant from its viewers, despite the fact that both groups occupy the same country.

This, however, is not the whole story. As discussed above, and as anticipated in the framework chapter (chapter 3), the dimension of national identity complicates this aspect of distance in ways that go beyond the implication of spatial proximity this involves. This study therefore constitutes a critique of the concept of pity when applied to intra-national suffering. While it suggests that the concept of pity can be useful when applied in such contexts, two important amendments to the general theory of pity are also suggested: 1) that the sense of distance integral to pity can be created and not only reflected in media and other texts and 2) that the element of nationalism constitutes a separate dimension of the relationship between donors and beneficiaries, which should be considered alongside the impact of other types of distance.

Nevertheless, I contend that the concept of pity is productive when considered from this perspective. When applied to my data, the concept of pity means understanding the relationship between donors and beneficiaries as one that is premised on them being irreconcilably different from one another, whilst seeming to connect them.

Chouliaraki (e.g. 2013) suggests that the charity media environment has shifted from the politics of pity to ‘the politics of irony’. In the present environment, she argues, the viewer is called on to experience the suffering of others only through his or her own choices, experiences and fears. Such campaigns focus on the viewers’ potential sense of satisfaction if they choose to give, the fear they might feel if their human rights were denied them, or the kudos that they could enjoy as a result of showing their support for a modish cause. This is evidently relevant for the data she examines (appeals for Amnesty International, Oxfam and the World Food Programme (2013: 65-69)), but appeals that invite the viewer to offer support as an aesthetic choice are still relatively rare. The examples Chouliaraki gives are also limited to international charity appeals, which, although important in shaping our ideas of others, are not those that UK benefactors primarily engage with, if giving is to be taken as evidence of engagement. I would also contend that explaining viewers’ responses (or lack thereof) to international aid appeals can only partly be explained by examining the appeals themselves. As individuals are generally understood as having predetermined limits for their

financial contributions to charities (Sargeant and Woodliffe 2007: 277), the successes of intra-national charities could be understood as a limiting factor for those of international charities. Therefore, in order to understand the failure to donate to international charities, it is worth examining the means by which members of one's own country come to be accepted as more important.

Alongside the critique of pity, this thesis has also engaged with a number of other theories in different chapters. The following three points are particularly significant. Firstly, my focus group data indicates a more complex relationship between mediation, distance, knowledge and the perception of reality for some speakers than has been suggested in previous literature (chapter 6). Blommaert et al. (2003) argue that being close to something gives people knowledge of it that can help them to contest media representations. In my focus group data, some of what is close appears unknown, and media representations, by contrast, seem more knowable. Furthermore, knownness does not appear to be the same as realness for these speakers. Nearby, personally-witnessed suffering is presented as both real and unknown, whereas mediated distant suffering is portrayed as known but less real.

Secondly, the evolutionary metaphor I examined in relation to the focus group data in chapter 5 appears to be an offshoot from metaphors that have been observed in other contexts that refer to Darwinian theories or the 'great chain of being'. My analysis built upon previous understandings of metaphors and how they can shape understandings of out-group members (El Refaie 2001; Santa Ana 1999; Shields and Bhatia 2009). In particular, I sought to reveal how this particular metaphor framed the relationships between the members of different nations and the actions that were possible to alleviate the suffering of non-nationals by considering what could and could not be 'mapped' in this metaphor (Lakoff and Turner 2009). Following Cameron et al. (2009), I also demonstrated how such metaphors can be either successfully contested or stabilised in the course of a conversation.

Thirdly, I utilised Barthes' (2009 [1972]) concept of myth to examine how fundraising has come to be seen as worthy of celebration in itself (chapter 7). This analysis drew on both data sets to demonstrate how the act of giving has come to stand for additional meanings: the carrying out of charitable work, and the associated concept of virtue. I now consider the limitations of the study, including some possible directions for future research, before closing this chapter with some final remarks about the study as a whole.

8.7 Limitations

My research questions and my literature review informed my choices in selecting and analysing the data. However, I recognise a number of potential problems associated with this aspect of my research design. The most obvious and serious limitation of this study is in what (and who) it does not address.

The study has excluded the views of the show's beneficiaries, i.e. those that it defines as disadvantaged. The CiN and focus group data have been useful in illuminating the relationship between the fortunate and unfortunate in the UK as defined by the former but not the latter. This is of particular concern given the dearth of literature exploring the views of charities' recipients in general. While some recent research has sought to redress this imbalance (e.g. Anderson, Brown and Jean 2012), the majority of literature on this area has neglected to consider recipients' views. This would constitute an important counterpoint to this study, which would potentially yield very different results. Secondly, as CiN is only one programme of a wide range of telethons and other media information, focusing on this as my sole source of mass media data means that my research effectively constitutes a case study. This impedes the study's wider validity, i.e. the extent to which it is generalizable to discourse about charitable giving in the UK as a whole. While the focus groups were designed to broaden the scope of the findings to include different types of discourse on the subject, this method is also very limited in terms of generalizability. It is also possible that the decision to recruit groups only in South Wales influenced my findings. These shortcomings are, however, common to most research that attempts to provide detailed analysis over a limited amount of time.

A third important limitation of my study is the possible incompatibility of the different types of data I have analysed. CiN is pre-planned, multimodal, and designed for a large audience. The focus group talk, by contrast, is emergent, only recorded and transcribed in one mode, and is directed at a small audience. The focus group discussions also included a much broader range of topics than CiN. These differences added another layer of complexity onto an already complicated subject, and made the task of analysing these data and presenting the findings more difficult. However, I see this ambitious approach as a potential strength. Much of the research on the topic of charity media so far has looked exclusively at either media texts or their reception, and taking both into account has enriched the analysis, making the conclusions more complex, but also more nuanced than they would have been otherwise.

Another related limitation is the study's reliance on a distinction between sufferers and non-sufferers, potential donors and potential beneficiaries, the fortunate and the unfortunate, that has not been fully examined. These distinctions are problematic. For one thing, a person can be a sufferer in one area of his or her life and a potential donor in another. Even treating only the donors and beneficiaries of this charity as distinct groups is inaccurate at certain points. Not all of CiN's beneficiaries are financially poor, so it is quite possible that some of the programme's donors might be more economically disadvantaged than some of its recipients, for example. As I noted in chapter 4, some of the show's beneficiaries (a choir group) are shown to be taking part in fundraising for the charity. I defined this group primarily as beneficiaries, because this is the smaller group, whereas potential donors include all citizens in the UK (as well as those who might view the programme from elsewhere). This

dividing-line is an issue that is likely to occur more for intra-national charities than for international charities, but studies on both could benefit from more clarity in this area, particularly as, for the most part, donors and beneficiaries are depicted as being socially and experientially different from each other in charity appeals.

8.8 Closing remarks

As a whole, this project has attempted to shed light on what is a complex and multifaceted relationship between donors to and beneficiaries of a UK intra-national charity. Utilising the concepts of pity and distance to clarify the different aspects of this relationship, I have highlighted the tension between representations of beneficiaries as existing outside of viewers' social interactions, yet being united with them by a shared national identity.

The focus group data complicate this picture by suggesting that this projected relationship between CiN's potential viewers and its beneficiaries is not necessarily taken up. However, my participants' talk broadly supports the key premise on which CiN bases its demand for money: that the difficulties faced by disadvantaged people in the UK are the same as, or even more complex than, those of people elsewhere, but that, as compatriots, they are more deserving of support. This goes some way to understanding the enduring appeal of intra-national charity, despite the option of face-to-face or political action, and when those in some other countries still lack the educational, health and welfare services that are currently (though in ever-diminished forms) in place for citizens of the UK.

My hope is that this research will eventually be used to encourage some charities and individuals to consider more carefully what the championing of UK and other national identities means for those who happen to have been born elsewhere. I would like it to help to challenge the idea that compatriots are more deserving of any kind of support than other human beings. I also hope that charities such as CiN will be persuaded to use a more integrative approach to solving the problems that they rightly identify and bring to our attention. Far from making it their aim to compete for donations in order to survive, where possible charities should encourage political and community-based action alongside giving and inspire their viewers to find as many ways as possible to make them obsolete.

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Appendix 1: Consent form

This study is about people's opinions about social inequality. As a group, you will be asked a series of questions about what you think, for you to discuss. The session will be recorded (sound only – not video) and I will later write out what was said, from this recording. When I do this, I will use random letters for different speakers, rather than your own names, so other people who read it will not be able to tell who you are. I plan to use this (anonymised) data as part of my PhD thesis and possibly as part of conference presentations in my subject area. Only myself and my supervisor will have access to the original recording.

At the end, I will give you some more information about the study to take away, and my contact details, in case you have further questions.

The session will take up to 60 minutes. If you want to leave at any point, you are free to do so, without having to explain why. If you are experiencing any discomfort at any point during the session, you can let me know.

- I understand that my participation in this project will involve a focus group discussion that will be recorded for analysis by the researcher and that it will take approximately 40-60 minutes of my time.
- I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. If for any reason I experience discomfort during participation in this project, I am free to withdraw or discuss my concerns with the researcher.
- I understand that the information provided by me will be held anonymously, such that only the researcher can trace this information back to me individually.

I, _____ (PRINT NAME) consent to participate in the study conducted by Harriet Lloyd, School of English, Communication & Philosophy, Cardiff University, under the supervision of Professor Adam Jaworski.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 2: Information slip for participants after the focus groups

My study is on the 'discourse' of charitable giving. I want to find out how people talk about things like what can be done for disadvantaged people.

I very much appreciate your help and would be happy to provide you with a copy of my findings if you would like one. If you have any further questions, please contact me on:

Lloydhr1@cardiff.ac.uk

Or

07749 716383

Harriet Lloyd

Appendix 3: Transcription Conventions

(.)	untimed short pause
(2.0)	pause timed in seconds
(<i>faster</i>)	informal commentary on style of following utterance, or phonological feature
?	rising intonation towards previous word(s)
[overlapping speech
=	'latched' to previous utterance (following without a perceptible pause)
<u>underlining</u>	noticeably heavier emphasis

Adapted from:

O'Connell, Daniel C. and Kowal, Sabine (1995) 'Basic principles of transcription' in Johnathan A. Smith, Rom Harré and Luk Van Lagenhove (Eds.) *Rethinking Methods in Psychology* London: SAGE Publications, pp. 93-105