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EFFECTS OF SEX, STATUS AND ETHNIC SIMILARITY ON WILLINGNESS TO DONATE TO BEGGARS: A QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY

ABSTRACT: The aim of the present study was to extend an observational study of giving to beggars by analysing in evolutionary perspective the subjective dimension of selectivity in alms giving. A multiple choice questionnaire was developed containing questions about the motives of alms giving, perceptions about the reasons for begging, as well as questions about respondents' status and welfare, age, sex and ethnicity. Self-report data were collected from 497 Moscow students. Significant sex differences in attitude towards beggars were found and givers with high social status were generally inclined to donate more frequently than those with low status. Greater favoritism was expressed by male respondents, towards beggars belonging to the ethnic majority, offering further support for Ethnic Nepotism Theory.

KEY WORDS: Begging – Sharing – Alms giving – Empathy – Ethnic nepotism

INTRODUCTION AND HYPOTHESES

The fact might not accord with econometric assumptions of utility maximization, but gift-giving is a large part of economic behaviour in traditional and modern societies (Offer 1997, Landa 1994). Yet the study of giving in modern settings is undeveloped compared to studies to be found in the anthropological and historical literature (e.g. Bremner 1996, Davis 2000, Mauss 1968, Heeschen *et al.* 1980, Wiessner, Tumu 1998, Khanna *et al.* 1995). Understanding the main currents and side eddies of giving requires insights into the motivational structure of altruism and delayed reciprocity, a task falling within the ambit of bioeconomics. In this paper the ethological and evolutionary psychology concepts and psychological methods are applied to alms-giving.

Begging is a widespread human phenomenon in large societies, observed both in the historical past and present in modern pre-industrial, industrial, and postindustrial economies (Banisaiya 1974, Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a, Burns

1991, Fabrega 1971, Gmelch & Gmelch 1978, Goldberg 1995, Heilman 1975, Iglinoia 1991, Meir-Dviri & Raz 1995, Misra 1971, Prujov 1997, Salter 1998, Shaw 1989). Donations to beggars are usually a form of charity towards strangers, contrasting with sharing between the familiar members of kin groups.

The tendency for sharing to flow from high status individuals to those of low status is typical within traditional human societies (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1989, Wiessner, Schiefenhovel 1996). Similar tendencies have been reported for non-human primates (Stanford 1995). Thus it is possible that this behavioural pattern is a human universal due to general selective processes in social primates and phylogenetic inertia. If so, a similar pattern should be evident in industrial and post-industrial societies. One aim of this study is to test for a correlation between income status and generosity of giving in an urban anonymous society.

Previous studies have indicated that charity releasers – behaviours or appearances that elicit giving – are severely

constrained in form (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a, Salter 1998). Examples of universal charity releasers are the cupped hand, thanking, or childlike appearance (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a). At the same time, different traditions bear culture-specific releasers that are especially or uniquely understandable and touching to group members. Culture-specific releasers are often religious, such as blessing and crossing in the Russian Orthodox culture. Universal help-eliciting signals are more efficient in inter-cultural interactions.

Differences in alliance formation between males and females were found in many primate species (Harcourt, de Waal 1992, Wrangham, Peterson 1996). One broad trend found in both humans and chimpanzees is that female alliances are motivated more by emotional attachment, while male alliances are more pragmatic in the interests of acquiring and holding social power. In this study we test whether sex differences exist in inclination to give alms as an emotional component of attitude towards beggars. In accordance with these differences, we expect that leading motivations for alms giving towards same-sex beggars will be different in males and females. Motivation towards opposite sex beggars should be more similar and at least somewhat connected with potential partner choice (Goldberg 1995, Butovskaya *et al.* 2000b).

In a previous study of anonymous alms giving on Moscow subway trains (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a), we posited a universal human propensity to share with conspecifics since the sharing propensity is deeply rooted in the species' evolutionary past. However, from the ethological perspective a bias towards kin is expected. Humans evolved in small kin-oriented groups where all members were familiar and often bonded with each other (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1989). Preferential altruism directed towards kin – kin selection – is not a human innovation. Its rudimentary forms are practiced by many species, including our closest ape relatives (Goodall 1986, Silk 1979) and the more genetically distant capuchin monkeys (Butovskaya *et al.* 1995, Perry, Rose 1994). The latter share food and other attractive items with group members, especially from mother to offspring, in response to begging. Kin selection is a widespread phenomenon with an ancient phylogeny. The formal theory of kin selection, subsequently nested within the theory of inclusive fitness, was first formalized by Hamilton in a model applied to social insects (1964).

The evolutionary approach discussed above suggests that sharing resources with begging strangers could be an extension of or influenced by the tendency to share with relations. Evidence of this would be a pattern of more generous giving to co-ethnic strangers than to strangers of other ethnic groups. This is the expectation from ethnic nepotism theory, according to which co-ethnics are distant kin (van den Berghe 1981). This follows from three criteria. Firstly, like kin, fellow ethnics share real or putative common descent from an ancestor group. Secondly, co-ethnics share group markers of language, dress and other cultural features, and sometimes somatic characteristics

denoting genetic similarity. According to the theory group markers can have the same psychological effect as kin recognition markers, namely by releasing altruism. In both of these senses, ethnics are super families, at least in the perception of their members. Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1971) offered perhaps the earliest instance of this theory, and Landa (1994) presented a bioeconomic analysis of ethnic trust and cooperation that incorporates group markers.

Both innate and culturally specific begging signals key into the human perceptual and motivational systems evolved for the support of group members (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a, b, Salter 1998). While humans are sensitive to releasers of charitable motivation coming from any conspecific, alms giving is by no means a non-discriminatory process. Butovskaya *et al.* (2000a, b) found significant levels of discrimination in favour of co-ethnics among the general public of Moscow. Universal releasers, although working across groups, appear to be more effective within in-groups such as ethnics.

The aim of the present study is to analyse the attitude towards beggars as a subjective dimension of selectivity (if any) in alms giving, subjecting the data to evolutionary interpretation. We tested the following hypotheses.

1. Attitude towards beggars is determined by both universal ethological patterns (empathy elicited by releasers) and cultural specific patterns (social position and group membership of beggar).
2. Sex differences exist in attitudes towards beggars. Females are expected to show greater empathy towards need, and males greater sympathy for other males with whom they identify, e.g. wounded servicemen.
3. Social status of givers correlates with inclination to donate. Other factor excluded, individuals with higher social status and welfare are more prone to donate than those with lower status and lower welfare.
4. Similarity of givers' and beggars' ethnicity plays an important role in alms giving interactions, with greater favoritism being shown towards beggars as ethnic similarity increases.

METHODS AND SUBJECTS

A questionnaire was used to test and extend the findings of a previous observational study (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a). Data were collected on intended giving to different age, sex, and ethnic categories. Further items sought to ascertain subjects' charitable feelings towards beggars of different status. We also asked respondents to rate their own socio-economic status.

A multiple choice questionnaire was developed containing questions about the motives of alms giving, perceptions about the reasons for begging, as well as questions about respondents' social status and welfare, age, sex and ethnicity. Respondents were also asked to indicate their personal inclinations to donate to different categories of beggars (age, sex, health status, and ethnicity). In

TABLE 1. The list of questions put to respondents to elicit their attitudes towards beggars.

This questionnaire is anonymous. Please answer the following questions.

1. Your sex 1. M. 2. F
2. Please, estimate your welfare on the ten-point scale, where 1 is minimum income and 10 is maximum.
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. Have you ever donated to a beggar? 1. Yes 2. No
5. If yes, how frequently do you usually donate?
 1. Less than once per year 2. More than once per year
 3. More than once per month 4. More than once per week
6. What do you think stimulates you to donate?
 - a. religious feelings;
 - b. feelings of social justice;
 - c. empathy;
 - d. other (please state)
7. What do you think could be the reasons that these people became to beg? (please, indicate no more than 2 factors)
 - a. it is their own fault;
 - b. life circumstances;
 - c. weak governmental insurance policy;
 - d. bad luck;
 - e. other (please state)
8. Do you think that most beggars are really in need?
 1. Yes. 2. No. 3. Don't know.
9. Imagine a group of beggars standing on the footpath where you walk. They are a mother & child belonging to different ethnic groups. Please indicate on a 10-point scale your inclination to donate (1 is minimum, 10 is maximum):
 1. Slavic mother & child;
 2. Gypsy mother & child;
 3. Tajik mother & child.
10. Please indicate the probability of your donating to the following categories of beggars in descending order (1 is highest priority and 10 is a least priority):

(a) a child; (b) mother & child; (c) disabled male, not a former military servicemen; (d) disabled male, dressed in military uniform; (e) a grandmother; (f) a grandfather; (g) an alcoholic; (h) a person with a pet; (i) a musician (poor playing); (j) a pet.

addition, respondents were asked to imagine a standard situation of contact with a mother begging with her child. Mother-child beggars were portrayed as representing the main ethnic groups of beggars currently found in Moscow and its suburbs. Subjects were asked to estimate how likely they were to give to the above-mentioned categories, by rating their response on a spatial-lineal scale ranging from one (least probable) to ten (most probable) (see *Table 1* for details). The questionnaire was anonymous.

Data on 497 Moscow students were collected: 321 respondents were from the Russian State University for the Humanities (RSUH), and 176 from Moscow Civil Engineering Institute (MCEI). The age of respondents varied from 18 to 24. There were 140 males and 357 females in the sample. Based on the questionnaire, there were 426 ethnic Russians, 42 non-Russians, and 29 unspecified. Thus Russians prevailed in our sample (426 versus 71, chi-square= 252.14, $p < 0.0001$).

Students from the first to the fifth years of studies were interviewed. They were asked to estimate the level of their income and social origin according to 10-point scale, taking into account living standards present in contemporary Russian society. Socio-economic status was close to being normally distributed. Students from RSUH estimated their economic level significantly higher than students from

MCEI (RSUH: mean = 5.37, SE = 0.09, MCEI: mean = 4.98, SE = 0.13, Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -2.421$, $n = 321$, $m = 176$, $p < 0.016$).

Two potential confounds confront our aim of testing for a correlation between income status and generosity. First, wealthy individuals have more resources to give than do poorer individuals. Since our measure of status is wealth, capacity could be mistaken for generosity. Secondly higher status individuals might use public philanthropy as a strategy for enhancing their status among givers and observers. The first potential confound was avoided by considering propensity to give very small gifts, which are of trivial size to most individuals and are typically given to street beggars. The second confound was avoided by ensuring anonymity of the stated intention to give.

RESULTS

We have analysed our sample according to the alternatives "donate" (1) versus "not donate" (0). We found that most respondents were alms givers ($\chi^2 = 155.5$, $p < 0.0001$). Thus, most subjects were donors at some frequency of giving. For females the mean probability of donations was 0.80 ± 0.02 ($n = 357$), for males 0.74 ± 0.04 ($n = 140$).

Students were also asked how often they gave to beggars, if at all. Twenty two percent reported that they never donate, 45 percent that they donate less than once per month, 20 percent that they donate more than once per month but less than once per week, and 13 percent stated that they donate more than once per week. Those who reported donating once per month were more numerous than those who gave more than once per month but less than once per week, and those who donated regularly, more than once per week (225 versus 99, $\chi = 48.2$, $p < 0.001$, 225 versus 64, $\chi = 88.6$, $p < 0.001$). In general females donated significantly more frequently than males (Wilcoxon, $N = 497$, $z = -2.32$, $p < 0.02$).

To explore a possible association between social status and frequency of alms giving, we divided our sample of respondents into two groups. Group 1 comprised those who never donated or donated less than once per month ($n = 334$). Group 2 comprised those who donated more than once per month ($n = 163$). Students from Group 2 appeared to come from families with higher social status and welfare (Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -2.898$, $n = 334$, $m = 163$, $p < 0.004$).

Students were asked to choose the main motive for their alms giving. Each respondent was free to mention not more than two motives. Analysis was limited to the 388 students who reported that they were generally inclined to donate. Religious beliefs were cited by 4.3 percent of students as a main motive of charity. A sense of social justice was nominated by 16.4 percent. Most respondents (79.3 percent) explained their decisions to donate by referring to feelings of empathy. Thus empathy was the most widespread reason for donations by students in our sample. This motive was mentioned significantly more often than religious motives ($\chi = 137$, $p < 0.001$), and more frequently than social justice ($\chi = 75.4$, $p < 0.001$). At the same time social justice was more frequently indicated as a reason of alms-giving than religious feelings ($\chi = 11.2$, $p < 0.01$).

Beliefs about the main causes of the rise of begging in Moscow were analysed. To gather data on this, we asked students to choose no more than two reasons, stimulating their alms giving. In this case the total sample was 497, of whom 311 (62 percent) indicated two causes. Thirty eight percent of respondents thought that beggars themselves are responsible for their poor situation. Fifty two percent blamed governmental social policy, and 11 percent believed that people become beggars because of bad luck. Thus students attributed begging more to life-circumstances than to inadequacy ($\chi = 24.1$, $p < 0.001$), and were less inclined

to explain the economic needs of beggars as an outcome of poor life circumstances ($\chi = 168.6$, $p < 0.001$). Students believed that inept government social policy was significantly more influential as a factor than the personal incompetence of beggars ($\chi = 12.7$, $p < 0.01$) or their bad luck ($\chi = 133$, $p < 0.001$).

Respondents were asked whether they believe that most beggars are really in need. Despite the fact that the majority of respondents believed that beggars are living in poor conditions and that they are not responsible for their poor economic situation, significantly more respondents stated that in reality most beggars are not in need ($\chi = 13.2$, $p < 0.01$).

To test the observational finding (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a) of ethnocentric preference in alms giving we asked students to express their intentions to donate along a 10 point scale (1 as minimum and 10 as maximum priority) in response to a standard scenario expressed the following way "Please, imagine three mothers-with-child, each of the same age and dress quality. The mothers are of Russian, Gypsy, and Tajik origin. They are begging 50 meters from each other on the street. To whom would you donate?" *Table 2* summarizes the results. Would-be givers mainly preferred to donate to Russian mothers-with-child rather to Tajiks (Wilcoxon test for two related samples, $z = -15.349$, $n = 497$, $p < 0.001$) or Gypsies (Wilcoxon test for two related samples, $z = -16.683$, $n = 497$, $p < 0.001$). Greater preference was shown for Tajiks than for Gypsies (Wilcoxon test for two related samples, $z = -11.793$, $n = 497$, $p < 0.001$). Given the fact that 86 percent of respondents were of Russian origin, these results indicate that shared ethnic identity between giver and beggar is a strong motivation for alms giving. This result accords with our previous observational study of Moscow begging (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000).

We found sex differences in inclination to donate to mothers-with-children when the latter were of non-Russian ethnicity (*Table 2*). Males were less inclined to donate to Tajik mothers than were females (Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -3.861$, $n = 357$, $m = 140$, $p < 0.0001$). Males were also less inclined to donate to Gypsy mothers than females (Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -2.263$, $n = 357$, $m = 140$, $p < 0.02$). Meantime, no sex differences were found for inclinations to donate to Russian mothers with children (Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -0.114$, $n = 357$, $m = 140$, N.S.).

TABLE 2. Sex differences in expressed inclinations to donate to mother-with-child belonging to different ethnic groups.

Ethnicity of mother and child	In total		Males		Females		Significance*
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	
Russian	6.58	0.22	6.33	0.31	6.67	0.15	NS
Gipsy	1.93	0.17	1.56	0.20	2.07	0.14	$z = -2.26$, $p < 0.02$
Tajik	3.06	0.28	2.38	0.24	3.33	0.15	$z = -3.86$, $p < 0.0001$

*(Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test)

TABLE 3. Sex differences in expressed inclination to donate to different categories of beggars.

Category of beggars	In total		Males		Females		Significance*
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	
Child	4.22	0.11	4.30	0.21	4.19	0.14	NS
Mother & child	4.46	0.10	4.46	0.20	4.46	0.12	NS
Disabled person	5.35	0.09	5.19	0.16	5.41	0.11	NS
Disabled person in military dress	4.60	0.15	3.92	0.19	4.86	0.19	$z = -3.453, p < 0.001$
Grandfather	4.58	0.14	4.45	0.18	4.62	0.18	NS
Grandmother	3.51	0.09	3.48	0.18	3.52	0.12	NS
Alcoholic	8.89	0.09	8.6	0.19	9.00	0.11	$z = -2.763, p < 0.006$
Person with pet	6.62	0.10	7.08	0.18	6.44	0.12	$z = -3.141, p < 0.002$
Musician	5.55	0.16	5.71	0.21	5.48	0.20	NS
Pet alone	6.66	0.13	7.11	0.22	6.49	0.15	$z = -2.183, p < 0.029$

Inclinations to donate are stated as mean ranks, where rank one is the top priority and rank 10 the least possible priority.

*(Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test)

TABLE 4. Sex differences in the leading motive to donate.

Motives of donations	In total		Males		Females		Significance*
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	
Religious motives	0.04	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.01	NS
Social justice	0.16	0.02	0.27	0.05	0.12	0.01	$z = 2.778, p < 0.006$
Empathy	0.79	0.03	0.66	0.06	0.84	0.03	$z = -2.931, p < 0.003$

*(Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test)

To test the hypothesis that males were more nepotistic in their donation strategies than females, we conducted the partial correlation analysis separately for male and female samples, controlling for donations and respondents welfare. It was found that probability of donations to Russian mother was not correlated with probability of donation by the same person to Tajik or Gypsy mother in males. Meantime, probability of donations to Tajik mother was correlated with probability of donations to Gypsy mother ($R = 0.55, p < 0.001$).

We were also interested in possible influences of other factors, such as beggars' age, sex, advertisement of former identity as soldiers, as well as the begging strategies they used. We investigated these variables by asking subjects to estimate their readiness to donate to different categories of beggars on a 10 point scale, with 1 designating top priority and 10 the bottom. The results are shown in *Table 3*. Generally, elderly people were preferred as recipients (grandmothers and grandfathers), as well as children begging alone, mothers with children and disabled persons in military uniform. Students were least inclined to donate to alcoholics.

Some sex differences in inclination to donate deserve special attention. It was found that males were more inclined to donate to disabled males in military uniform (Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -3.453, n = 357, m = 140, p < 0.001$) and to alcoholics (Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -2.763, n = 357, m = 140, p < 0.006$), while females were more ready to give alms to individuals with pets (Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -3.141, n = 357, m = 140, p < 0.002$).

Sex differences in motive for donating matched sex differences in inclination to donate (*Table 4*). Females were more motivated by feelings of empathy than were males (Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -2.731, n = 357, m = 140, p < 0.006$).

Partial correlation analysis controlling for donations and welfare revealed the negative correlation between the empathy feelings and probability of donations to Gypsy mother ($R = -0.18, p < 0.05$), between social justice and probability of donations to Gypsy mother ($R = -0.14, p < 0.05$) in males. Positive correlation was found between empathy and probability of donations to Russian mother in males ($R = 0.16, p < 0.05$).

Partial correlation analysis controlling for donations and welfare revealed the negative correlation between the empathy feelings and probability of donations revealed the different tendencies for female respondents. It was found that probability of donations to Tajik and Gypsy mothers was positively correlated ($R = 0.76, p < 0.001$). At the same time the probability of donations to Russian mother was weakly but significantly correlated with probability of donations to Tajik mother ($R = 0.18, p < 0.001$). No correlation in probability of donations to Russian and Gypsy mothers was found ($R = 0.073, p = 0.083$). No correlation between donations and ethnies of beggars for females respondents was found while controlling for welfare. It means that probability of donations to beggars from the side of females could be explained as an outcome of general tendency for donations, but not the ethnies of any particular beggar. In addition, it was found in our study that females drawn by religious motives were more inclined to donate to Gypsy mothers ($R = 0.11, p < 0.05$), as well as

TABLE 5. Differences between universities in the leading motive to donate.

Motives of donations	In total		MCEI		RSUH		Significance*
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	
Religious motives	0.04	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.01	NS
Social justice	0.16	0.02	0.28	0.05	0.09	0.02	$z = 3.713, p < 0.001$
Empathy	0.79	0.03	0.65	0.05	0.87	0.03	$z = 3.924, p < 0.001$

*(Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test)

TABLE 6. Percent of variation in preferences of potential givers explained by four principal components (PC) corresponding to categories of beggars.

Category	PC 1 (24.4%)	PC 2 (19.1%)	PC 3 (13.6%)	PC 4 (10.7%)
Child	0.64981	0.16054	-0.4732	-0.21862
Mother & child	0.72932	0.07434	-0.35715	-0.19644
Disabled person	0.52629	0.06381	0.43934	0.40776
Disabled person (military dress)	0.21314	0.05446	0.71639	-0.10734
Grandmother	-0.15936	-0.85053	-0.19572	0.04772
Grandfather	-0.22367	-0.78452	-0.05382	0.33188
Alcoholic	0.13335	0.43378	-0.01838	0.64177
Man & pet	-0.66735	0.37349	-0.26088	0.05593
Musician	-0.32051	-0.01162	0.41076	-0.52226
Pet	-0.72336	0.45213	-0.1394	0.05557

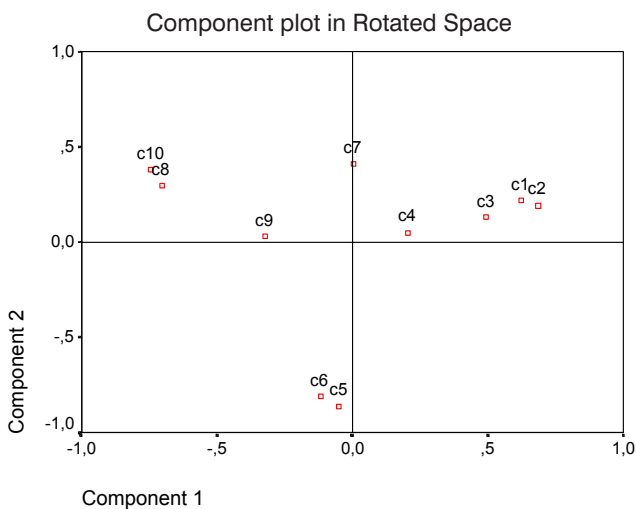
to Tajik mothers ($R = 0.10, p < 0.05$). In sum: females in general are more religiously oriented and religious motives may be one of the main factors leading to the lack of ethnic nepotism in females.

Student from RSUH and MCEI showed similar patterns of expressed inclination to donate to beggars (255 respondents out of 321 or 79 percent from RSUH versus

133 out of 176 or 76 percent from MCEI). At the same time, certain differences in main motives were found between the two institutions. Students from MCEI were much more motivated by social justice concerns than their counterparts from RSUH (Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for two independent samples, $z = -3.713, n = 321, m = 176, p < 0.001$ – see Table 5).

The general picture of alms-giving preference in our Moscow student respondents is clearly brought out by principal component analysis (Table 6 and Figure 1). This analysis was performed on the basis of information about different categories of beggars contained in the questionnaire. Four principal components (PCs) were responsible for 67.3 percent of all variations in respondents' answers. Two main factors stimulating alms giving of our informants were revealed. We interpret PC1 (24.2 percent of the variation) as an ethological factor. This finding accords with the ethological theory that support and sharing behaviour in humans is most compelling towards the demographic categories of young and females (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1989, Salter 1998). Indeed, a child or a mother-with-child received the highest positive loading on this PC, while a pet and a person with pet got the highest negative loadings. This means that two main categories of givers were differentiated by PC1, those preferentially donating to child and mother-with child, and those who preferred pets. We interpreted PC2 (18.8 percent of variation) to be an indicator of probable personal investment in social welfare. Grandmother and grandfather categories received the highest negative loading, while alcoholics were on the opposite side of the scale, which means that in this case, again, two different categories of givers were present in

FIGURE 1. Categories in space of PC 1 and PC 2.



Legend: c1 – child, c2 – mother and child, c3 – disabled person, c4 – disabled person (military dress), c5 – grandmother, c6 – grandfather, c7 – alcoholic, c8 – man & pet, c9 – musician, c10 – a pet.

the sample. PC3 (13.6 percent of variation) was somehow connected with PC2, in the sense that this PC reflected beggars' probable social investment. However, in this case investment was expressed in relation to military service in the interests of the nation (governmental service). PC4 (10.7 percent of variation) reflected beggars' present-day investment. While alcoholics were the most passive in their strategies, musicians were the most active, and demonstrated at least symbolically their social services and usefulness to passersby.

DISCUSSION

Why begging can be successful in an anonymous society?

The present questionnaire study supports in many respects the conclusions of our previous study, which was based on direct ethological observations of beggar-giver interactions in Moscow and suburbs in 1999 (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a). It is obvious that ordinary citizens are rather positively motivated towards beggars. People who grew up under Soviet socialism were largely unfamiliar with begging. The collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe has led to a great increase in economic inequality and a general drop in living standards (Spending 1997). Eventually, a new social class began to form in large urban centres, mostly capital cities: forced beggars. The sight of street beggars, who first appeared in Moscow in the early 1990s, shocked many people. In this novel situation beggars were treated as "one of us" who due to no fault of their own had got into trouble and needed to be helped. Over the years the number of beggars in Moscow increased and at present there are about 2000 beggars on the street every day. While the majority of beggars are ethnic Russians, a certain proportion of non-Russian beggars are present. And it is individuals of different ethnicity who are more easily treated with hostility as "others", "aliens", and "outsiders" (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1998).

These data confirm the idea that both ethological and cultural factors influence alms-giving behaviour (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a, b). In most cases the causes of individual givers' preferences for certain categories of beggars are subconscious, generating feelings of empathy in response to strong ethological releasers (*Figure 1*, PC1).

The results reported in this paper further evidence that alms-giving preferences are strongly influenced by biosocial factors. These include universal releasers of charitable motivation such as signs of disability and young and old age, as well as group identity and reciprocal altruism. Evidence for the last factor comes from this study and interviews with givers in previous research, indicating that a major releaser of charitable motivation is belief that a beggar has invested in society (*Figure 1*, PC2). The main evidence in this direction coming from the present study is that grandmothers and grandfathers scored the highest on PC2. Arguably the elderly have contributed most to society during the span of their lives and generosity towards them,

as well as toward the elderly in general, is an expression of reciprocal care. When we ask respondents why they prefer donating to elderly beggars, their answers usually include reciprocity – that old people have invested much in our economy and improvement of our life and so deserved reciprocation.

SEX DIFFERENCES

One of the clearest signs of an ethological factor in alms giving is that females were significantly more often motivated by empathic feelings as a leading stimulus of alms giving than were males. Females were found to donate more to those categories of beggars that displayed universal species typical releasers of childlike appearance, female sex, disability, and helplessness. We hypothesize that emotion-based motivations for sharing are more expressed in females due to their evolved behavioural repertoire as well as socialization for mother's role. Females seemed not to be stimulated by any type of social identity in decisions to give alms. Rather their charity was more understandable in terms of mechanisms of interpersonal interactions and personalization. During our ethological observations we had frequently observed various cases of close personal contacts between female givers and beggars (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a). Women frequently talked to beggars, gave advice and recommendations, and sometimes promised to bring them food and clothing in the near future.

Males are more same-sex oriented in their choices. Male group solidarity was evidently a main motive for giving. It was males, not females, who reported a significantly greater willingness to donate to military veterans and male alcoholics. These preferences may be explained in the light of group identity theory. Our male respondents appear to have been more inclined to identify with social categories such as fellow males and co-ethnics, and direct helping motivation to those categories. Social identity processes have been subjected to extensive laboratory study (e.g. Tajfel, Turner 1986). It could be countered that females are generally less sympathetic with these categories of beggars because women are less inclined to drink alcohol and may have had negative experiences with intoxicated males. But this criticism does not work in the case of disabled former servicemen. We suggest that feelings of comradeship, ultimately deriving from the male adaptation of competitive alliances (a universal for males in humans and many non-human social primates – Harcourt, de Waal 1992, Wrangham, Peterson 1996), is the best explanation for this distinctly male preference.

Giving by high status individuals – a cross-cultural universal?

Individuals from wealthier families were more prone to donate. Thus even in conditions of anonymity in modern industrial societies people with higher social status are more inclined to share and to do this more regularly. This is a trend found cross-culturally, based on ethnographic

research of traditional societies (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1989, Hayden, Gargett 1996, Wiessner, Schiefenovel 1996). Generosity is frequently mentioned among the most important values for chiefs in egalitarian societies (!Kung of Kalahari, Pintupi, Arapaho, Mescalero Apache etc. – see Basehart 1970, Hilger 1952, Maers 1980, Marshall 1967). In some cases leaders in foraging communities are reported to act so generously that they themselves "have nothing" (Boehm 1999). Indeed, sharing can become economically costly. But under conditions of small group foraging, where people are closely monitored by fellow group members, cooperation and generosity could be among the main traits that maintained high status. A disposition to share goods with the group, and the high regard that is reciprocated, could be human universals. Small cash donations to beggars in anonymous society are by no means economically costly to high status individuals. But why should high status people be concerned about gaining respect from beggars? Possibly the payoff is emotional, caused by an innate mechanism that makes it psychologically better to give than to receive. Indeed, there is evidence that altruism yields pleasant emotional feelings in givers in experimental settings (Isen 1987).

Most of our young respondents grew up during the post-Soviet period when beggars were already present on the streets. These young people might have become accustomed to the sight of beggars, although respondents' families might continue to instill some Soviet-style sympathy for the destitute. Our data revealed that students from MCEI mostly came from low-middle to middle-middle class families, while students from RSUH were mainly from middle-middle and upper-middle class families. The mean income of students from MCEI was significantly lower than that of students from RSUH. It is not by chance, then, that we found differences in attitudes towards beggars, frequency of donations and motives of donations between students from RSUH and MCEI. It is possible that students from MCEI were socialized in the communist tradition by their parents, as well as by their extra-familial social surroundings. This tradition is a mix of values – social justice, class consciousness, and egalitarianism. The value set includes the principles of equal distribution of welfare and respect to retired people in gratitude for their contributions to the economy and national defence (Nazarov 1999). Students from the RSUH are perhaps socialized in a more liberal undifferentiated humanitarian way in which case their interpretation of social justice would run in a different direction. They are inclined to believe that everybody (including beggars) is responsible for his own welfare and they are less inclined to help poor people.

Beggars' characteristics and success: ethnic nepotism theory supported

Our previous study on vagrant beggars in Moscow and Moscow suburbs indicates the existence of ethnic nepotistic tendencies in alms giving (Butovskaya *et al.* 2000a). One

anonymous reviewer at that time expressed his doubts on this point, stating that the ethnic factor was not easily differentiated from a number of other influential factors, such as age, evidence of need, begging strategies, etc. In this study our hypothesis was supported using a method benefiting from a degree of experimental control. Because students were offered an experimental situation that allowed comparison of inclination to donate towards a standard category of beggar (mother-and-children of similar standard dress), but belonging to different ethnic groups (Russians, Gypsy and Tajik), we believe that ethnicity was effectively isolated as a factor influencing differences in motivation between subjects belonging to the same demographic categories. Partial correlations analysis controlling for donations and welfare revealed significant gender differences in probabilities of donations to different ethnies. Male students preferred to give to Russian mothers significantly more frequently than to Tajik mothers, while choosing Tajik mothers over Gypsy mothers. Since the majority of respondents were of Russian origin, it is reasonable to conclude that inclination to donate was patterned in a manner predicted by the theory of ethnic nepotism (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1998, van den Berghe 1981, Salter 2001).

Ethnic relatedness could contribute to a certain extent to the differential altruism shown in our study.

Clearly more research is needed to untangle the knot of causes contributing to inter-ethnic relations ranging from cooperative to antagonism. The approach we recommend for the future is studying relations between groups without a history of conflict. Hostility between Gypsies and non-Gypsy ethnic groups is common throughout Eastern Europe (Fraser 1995a, b). And it cannot be assumed that Russian – Tajik relations are devoid of antagonism. The forced departure of Russians from Tajikistan in the late 1980s due to the activities of fundamentalist nationalists caused some resentment. Patterns of altruism between completely non-antagonistic ethnic groups needs to be studied in other countries before generalizations about ethnic-nepotism can be accepted with confidence.

CONCLUSIONS

Significant sex differences in attitude towards beggars were found. Females generally were inclined to donate because of empathic feelings, while males were more motivated by external, social identity, and cultural factors.

Characteristics of givers (mainly social status) were correlated with their attitudes towards beggars. Givers with high social status were generally inclined to donate more frequently than were givers with low status.

Greater favoritism was expressed by potential male givers towards beggars belonging to the ethnic majority. This result confirms observational studies of actual giving to beggars, that ethnic nepotism strongly influences beggar-giver interaction in males.

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