Title: Print media portrayals of giving: exploring national 'cultures of philanthropy'

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Abstract

In their 2010 study drawing on 500 empirical philanthropy studies, Bekkers and Wiepking identified eight consistently significant giving mechanisms. The pilot study reported here extends what is known about one mechanism, values, as a giving driver, in particular considering how national cultural values apply to giving. Personal values are not formed in a vacuum. They are influenced by the wider culture and society: thus values have a socio-cultural dimension. Accordingly, this pilot research draws on media theory and cultural studies work on national ethos to explore how these national cultural values interact with giving. A directed qualitative content analysis has been undertaken to compare US and Australian print media coverage about philanthropy. The two nations share an Anglo-Saxon orientation but differ significantly in national character and philanthropic activity. This study posits that a nation's media coverage about giving will reflect its national cultural ethos. This coverage can also shape personal values, thus implications exist for theory about the antecedents of personal giving values. Wider national values may drive or stifle giving, so this wider view of values as a driver has implications also for philanthropy promotion and fundraising.

Introduction

Eight consistently significant giving mechanisms have been distilled by Bekkers and Wiepking from their analysis of 500 empirical philanthropy studies (2010, p.4). Factors identified are: awareness of need, solicitation, costs and benefits; altruism; reputation; psychological benefits; values; and efficacy. This theoretical base can be amplified by applying different disciplinary lenses. The pilot study reported here extends what is known about values as a giving driver by drawing upon media theory and cultural studies work on national ethos to explore how national cultural values interact with giving, as evident in media coverage. In comparing philanthropy and charity in the US and UK, Wright (2002) called for more research that added to the social understanding of the role and meaning of charitable giving in different countries and cultures. Thus, while explicating a giving driver, the two-nation comparison of philanthropy media coverage reported here seeks to contribute greater cross-cultural understanding. Using a directed qualitative content analysis of their respective top four newspapers, this study compares the extent and nature of print media coverage about philanthropy between 1986 and 2010 in the US and Australia: two nations with similar Anglo-Saxon orientation but significant national character and philanthropic differences. It posits that media coverage about giving will reflect a nation's prime cultural values. Given that in a mediated society this coverage can also shape personal values, theoretical implications exist about the antecedents of personal giving values. Contributions to philanthropy promotion and fundraising also emerge. In this study, 'philanthropy' pertains to *financial* giving, to reflect the newspaper meaning.

US and Australian giving differences

While data collection variations make direct cross-national comparisons difficult, research suggests US giving overshadows Australia's philanthropy (Madden and Scaife, 2008a) and that of other nations[1]. The Charities Aid Foundation (2006) world comparison of giving as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ranks the US as double its nearest comparator (the UK), in front of (in order) Canada, Australia, South Africa, Ireland, The Netherlands and right down to France giving 0.14% of GDP.

Australia's situation matches what Wright (2002) found in the UK– Australia too is yet to reach 1% of GDP in giving, half of the US, which nudges 2%. In 2004, Americans gave 1.6% of their GDP, while Australians gave just 0.68% (ACOSS, 2005). In 2007, total American philanthropy was estimated at US$306.39 billion, compared to AU$7.2 billion (including corporate philanthropy, foundation giving and charitable bequests) (Giving USA, 2008; Productivity Commission, 2010). Even considering the relative population size and wealth, the greater US philanthropy is evident (ACOSS, 2005).

Leat (2004, 2) suggests the difference relates to divergent *socio-cultural* values.

> Australian cultural attitudes towards wealth are different from those in the US. Australian culture places considerable emphasis on equality; 'charity' still has 19th century de *haut en bas* colonial overtones, and displays of benevolence are as likely to generate cynicism as praise.

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[1] Again, this reflects the emphasis on financial giving as a comparison of other giving forms is beyond the scope of this study. It is worth noting, however that in the Charities Aid Foundation World Giving Index (2010) Australia and New Zealand shared first ranking as the most 'giving' countries in the world when the parameters included giving money, time and helping a stranger.

The US in contrast, claims to be the world's most generous nation with a 'citizen generosity' that is far more than just an alternative to government or corporate investment, and represents how the nation fulfils its upward mobility imperative (Gaudiani, 2003). However, little is known empirically about how cultural values, which underlie and justify the functioning of societal institutions, interact with personal values (the beliefs that people hold with respect to themselves and the goals for which they strive), to influence philanthropic behavior (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 2011).

Values, socio-cultural context, and behaviour
Values shape how we view the world and act in it, because they reflect the desired 'ultimate end-states of existence' (Flint *et al.*, 1997). When a discrepancy exists between the world we see and the world we want, people often are motivated to intervene (Lerner, 1980; Rokeach, 1971). Studies show that those endorsing pro-social, altruistic, religious, and/or post materialistic values are more likely to respond to injustice (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2010, p.18). However, an individual's response varies according to their value system and ideal world vision. Values then are often cited as a key reason people give (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2010, p.18; Boris, 1987; Ditkoff and Colby, 2009; Madden and Scaife, 2008a; Sargeant and Woodliffe, 2007; Schervish, 2005; Wiepking *et al.*, 2010).

Yet personal values are not formed in a vacuum; they are inherently shaped by the broader socio-cultural context. Building on Weberian sociology, culture is seen as the shared set of beliefs that influence what we value. National cultures studies highlight 'collective programming' of a nation's people and the 'psychic distance' between comparative cultures (disparity of backgrounds). Amongst increasing globalisation, studies have examined shared national culture impacts on: leadership (Byrne and Bradley, 2007), business practices (Bhaskaran and Sukumaran, 2007), business entry (Kogut and Singh, 1988), gender inequality (Siemienska, 2004), advertising (Chang *et al.*, 2009), trust-building (Doney *et al.*, 1998), and trans-national alliances (Bhaskaran and Gligorovska, 2009). While comparative studies of giving levels are evident in cross-cultural philanthropy (for example Pharoah and Keidan, 2010) limited work exists on national culture and philanthropy. Lew and Wojcik (2009) compared the philanthropy cultures in USA, UK and German foundation governance. However, apart from a UK/Canada comparison (Basil, 2007), Wright's USA/UK generosity versus altruism work (2002), and an upcoming Science of Generosity project connecting individual generosity to the wider environment (http://generosityresearch.nd.edu/current-research-projects/), comparative cultural values influence on philanthropic attitudes is largely unexamined.

Theory and hypotheses
Mass media has been established by sociologists, cultural and political theorists as both representing and shaping cultural values. Such cultures are known as 'mediated'. Theories have emerged about media power to influence *what* people think about and *how* they think about it (agenda setting and framing). A topic's extent of coverage signifies its relative importance (Hale, 2007). News selection is a core aspect of media's agenda setting role. Along with assigning issue salience, the media can influence opinions by how they frame a topic (Chyi and McCombs, 2004; Foster and Howell, 2010; McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Wanta *et al.*, 2004).

Several studies investigate the public opinion impact of media representations of causes. However, fewer studies have been conducted on philanthropy itself. Media research has

explored: nonprofit organization portrayal and the implications of scandals on public trust (Gibelman and Gelman, 2001; Gibelman and Gelman, 2004; Greenberg and Walters, 2004; Hale, 2007; Therkelsen, 2010); volunteering portrayals and the media's role in raising consciousness, promoting volunteerism, and priming potential donors; or conversely, promoting public apathy towards social problems (Deacon *et al.*, 1995; Rausch, 2002); and media assumptions about the global financial crisis impact (Breeze and Morgan, 2009). None has taken a cross-cultural approach.

Extent of coverage
'The mass media may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but the mass media are stunningly successful in telling their audience what to think about' (Cohen, 1963). As discussed, philanthropy activity appears more prevalent in the US than in Australia. Beyond the financial giving comparisons, the US tradition is as a nation where philanthropy is embedded and widespread. As Sawaya (2008) suggests, 'Since Alexis de Tocqueville, the philanthropic mode has been associated, rightly or wrongly, with the United States'. Eikenberry (2006) charts a growing US philanthropy pervasiveness fuelled by: downsized governments promoting a reliance on philanthropy, the growing rich/poor divide, and the conspicuous emergence of signficiant giving (e.g. Gates and Buffet).

It is expected therefore, that philanthropy will be more salient in US news media, resulting in a greater extent of philanthropic coverage than Australia.

Nature of coverage
Framing analysis is based on the principle that news media, rather than mirroring a precise reality, is socially constructed (Foster and Howell, 2010). How a topic is constructed has the potential to influence how people perceive it (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Iyengar, 1991). Communication theory identifies several framing types, including affective and thematic framing.

Affective framing
Affective framing describes a topic's emotional attributes and is typically measured by whether an object is portrayed positively, neutrally, or negatively (Chyi and McCombs, 2004; Hale, 2007). While the media are more likely to negatively frame (Addatto, 1994; Bennett, 1988; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Hale, 2007), literature suggests that nonprofits receive favourable coverage (Deacon, 1999; Gould *et al.*, 2003; Hale, 2007; Martens, 1996). This may be because nonprofit organizations are associated with social betterment (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2010, p.18).

Prosociality
It is plausible that this same logic applies to philanthropy, recognised as a form of prosocial behavior (seen by society as beneficial to others) (Collett and Morrissey, 2007). **It is anticipated that newspaper articles from both countries will portray philanthropy positively, especially in the US where philanthropy is better established and more likely to have longterm social acceptance.** This greater US coverage positivity is forecast because, arguably, the Australian population is less philanthropy-savvy, evidenced by an unpublished government study (Eureka, 2004) that suggests everyday Australians neither understand nor identify with the word itself. Academic studies of Australia's affluent report philanthropy as 'not on their radar,' with up to 40% giving only negligibly or on par with average-earning Australians (Madden and Scaife, 2008b). As outlined previously, less Australian philanthropy exists, exemplified also by lower foundation numbers and giving.

Philanthropy Australia (2011) estimates a 5,000-strong foundation population distributing below a billion dollars annually whereas the US reports 76,000 grantmaking foundations distributing $45.7 billion in 2010 (Foundation Center, 2011). As Cialdini *et al* suggest (1999), people are more open to activities they see others doing (social proof) and Australian philanthropy is not conspicuous. Thus, less knowledge and visibility of a sector that is much smaller in Australia may equate with less social approval than in the US.

Behavior also is more likely to be considered prosocial when other-benefit is the primary goal (Hinde and Groebel, 1991). Altruistic acts are typically defined as voluntary, intentional acts that do not benefit, and may even cost the helper (Collett and Morrissey, 2007). **It is anticipated that philanthropy is more likely to be framed positively when the motivations are viewed as altruistic or selfless. Conversely, it is anticipated that self-centred motivations or philanthropic acts that result in benefit for the donor, are more likely to be framed negatively.**

Thematic framing

Thematic framing describes how a topic relates to wider discourses and how media may encourage certain readings of information and discourage others, leading individuals to particular value judgements about a topic (Hale, 2007; Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar, 1996). Media coverage reflects and provides insights into cultural values, which are more than simply collective personal values. Despite many socio-historical similarities, the US and Australia have different underlying social structures and ideological frameworks. Most prominently, the US reflects a dominant culture of individualism, compared with Australia's culture of egalitarianism (Basil, 2007; Kemmelmeier *et al.*, 2006; Skitka and Tetlock, 1993; Teo and White, 2003). Both phenomena frame how interpretations occur.

Individualism is the belief in the individual's primary importance, and its unit of focus is the individual's qualities. The trait-set representing individualism includes Bellah *et al*'s (1985) list of American individualistic qualities: self-reliance, independence, utilitarianism, emphasis on exchange and competition, and rejection of arbitrary authority. Kemmelmeier *et al* (2006) add association with higher giving and volunteering. They also cite studies that place the US among the world's most individualistic societies (including Hofstede, 2001; Oyserman *et al,* 2002).

In contrast, egalitarianism suggests equality matters (Holtug and Lippert-Rasmussen, 2006). Nathan (1983) sees it as 'the doctrine that there is an intrinsic value in the equal distribution of intrinsically good things'. Australian cultural studies literature emphasises the egalitarian notion's strength in the national ethos (for example, Ward 1958, Teo and White 2003) describing it as unshakeably part of Australia's tradition (Teo and White 2003). As Leat (2004) and Scaife, McDonald and Smyllie (2011) suggest, Australia, unlike the US, has a culture that celebrates neither wealth nor individual financial achievement.

Given these contrasting national attributes, it is anticipated that philanthropy will be framed by media predominately in terms of individualism (US) and egalitarianism (Australia). To explore these different values systems and locate them in the media articles, three attributes of egalitarian and individualistic behaviour were selected as most related to philanthropic behaviour: conceptualisations of responsibility, attitudes towards helping behavior, and beneficiary perceptions. The egalitarian and individualist frames on these attributes are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Attributes of cultural values relating to philanthropy

Attributes	Individualism	Egalitarianism
Responsibility	Wealthy individuals	Collective
Helping behavior	Exceptional / Self-actualisation	Group norm
Recipients	'Deserving' individuals	In group

Responsibility

Individualism is underpinned by competitive social relations (Thompson *et al.*, 1990, Bellah *et al* 1985). While, everyone should have an equal opportunity to compete in the marketplace, some will inherently succeed more. The most successful, who have generated greatest wealth, have most capacity for action. The responsibility to help others lies with the most successful wealthy individuals. Conversely, egalitarianism is characterised by equal social relations (Thompson *et al.*, 1990). Rather than emphasising equal opportunity, egalitarianism focuses on equal outcomes (Basil, 2007). A normative expectation exists towards helping other group members, creating a sense of collective responsibility, which often translates to a social welfare system. Given these contrasting views on responsibility, **it is anticipated that US news media will emphasise the responsibility of wealthy individuals in alleviating social problems, while Australian articles will emphasise collective responsibility, specifically, government responsibility.**

Helping behavior

In individualism, personal choice and self-determination are highly valued; helping others is a matter of individual agency, and is seen as exceptional. Philanthropic actions are seen to reflect the authentic self and express one's true moral character (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2010, p.15; Kemmelmeier *et al.*, 2006). Philanthropy's voluntary nature bestows social approval. In egalitarianism, helping behavior is viewed as a group norm rather than an act of individual agency. It is less likely to be recognised as exceptional, or receive the same social approval levels (Kemmelmeier *et al.*, 2006). Indeed, because everyone is seen as equal, individuals lack the authority to speak for the collective. Gift promotion or philanthropic leadership may be perceived as undue self-importance, not well received by the collective (Thompson *et al.*, 1990). **It is anticipated that US news media will frame philanthropy as exceptional and praiseworthy, while Australian media will frame such behavior as normative. Australian articles may be more likely to downplay philanthropy's significance.**

Beneficiaries

Individualism and egalitarianism stances also differ on who deserves help. According to individualism, success and failure are determined by personal qualities, not the market, creating propensity to blame social ills on individual faults (Thompson *et al.*, 1990). Victims have to be seen as deserving and not causing their problems. Conversely, in egalitarianism, unequal social relations are sustained by social structures, rather than individuals' failings (Thompson *et al.*, 1990). Anyone considered part of the collective is not to blame for their situation and is worth supporting. However, this logic may not apply to those outside the collective, suggesting that group boundaries may be more important for determining beneficiaries than individual circumstances. **It is anticipated that US papers are more likely to emphasise or express approval of giving to beneficiaries whose unfortunate circumstances are not their own fault than Australian articles.**

However, cultural values are not homogenous or static. As each society member is uniquely positioned in relation to their broader socio-cultural context, individual values (and giving behavior) may deviate greatly from dominant cultural values (Schwartz, 2011). The degree of consistency in media framing provides an indication of value consensus (Schwartz, 2011). The presence of alternate perspectives and discursive shifts over time may provide insights in the dynamic interaction between personal and cultural values.

Data and analysis

Data were collected using Factiva.com, an interdisciplinary news/current affairs database. To assess the extent of US/Australian media coverage on philanthropy, a boolean search using the term 'philanthro*' was conducted across all dates for both American and Australian publications.[2] To assess the nature of philanthropic coverage, the term 'philanthropy is' was chosen as sentences that follow the form 'x is y' tell us something about the nature of x (Alston, 1963; Żełaniec, 1998). In a direct sense, these sentences convey the meaning of x, by asserting x is identical to y; indirectly, they imply qualities associated with x. Thus it was thought this search term would be most effective in collecting data about the nature of philanthropy. In 25 years, from 1986 - 2010 (the timeframe that a comparable dataset of philanthropic coverage could be amassed) this term appeared in 4,578 US and 535 Australian articles.

To build a manageable but data rich sample size, this dataset was refined further. Each country's top four newspapers[3] were chosen, resulting in a US sample of 505 articles from the *New York Times* (218), *The Wall Street Journal* (98), *Boston Globe* (96) and the *Washington Post* (93); and an Australian sample of 264 from *The Australian* (108), *Sydney Morning Herald* (69), *The Age* (68), and *The Courier-Mail* (19).[4]

As framing takes into account the broader socio-cultural context, a *directed qualitative* approach to content analysis was applied to analyse the resulting data, looking beyond a key word count to incorporate context (Altheide, 1996). Content analysis can be qualitative or quantitative and inductive or deductive. As Rosengren (1981) suggests, the technique covers a suite of analytic approaches ranging from intuitive and interpretive analyses to systematic, strict textual analyses. A directed qualitative approach (rather than the more strictly numeric approach of counting key words as in a summative content analysis) was used here because existing theory and background were available to focus the research question and allow for predictions about variables of interest. This prior research helped to identify key concepts and led to the operational definitions of what might be expected in both the individualistic and egalitarian frameworks. Three researchers audited the concepts and operational definitions to increase accuracy of categories being overlaid on the data.

Data management of the complete 769 articles was achieved via qualitative software program NVivo 8, which allows for easy text coding and retrieval. The paragraph containing the search term was selected for analysis. To analyse how the articles' affective and thematic

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[2] To capture all terms with the root 'philanthro' such as philanthropist, philanthro-capitalism, philanthropic, etc
[3] Based on a combination of philanthropic coverage and circulation.
[4] These US papers had a combined circulation of 9,998,654 in 2010 (based on US Audit Bureau of Circulations figures); while Australian papers had a combined circulation of 736,899 (Audit Bureau of Australia). Taking into account population differences, in both cases, that is the equivalent of one paper per 30 people.

framing, a purposive analysis was undertaken using a research protocol to identify whether the articles were positive, negative or neutral and to track the presence of individualistic and egalitarian cultural discourse(s) across the data using the attributes identified (Altheide, 1996; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Quotes are included in this analysis as data exemplars to allow validity of the themes interpretation to be assessed. These excerpts were selected because they were common across the data and most representative of the findings on each of the research questions. Where a quote reflects a smaller subset of the data, this is noted.

Results

It was proposed that the US would have more philanthropic coverage. In absolute terms, this is confirmed, twelvefold. In total, 301,135 US articles were found since 8 January 1969, compared to 25,168 Australian articles since 5 September 1986. However, in relative terms, Australia actually has more philanthropy related articles per head. This indicates that the US may *not* dominate Australia in the extent of philanthropic media coverage to the degree anticipated. Figure 1 tracks the philanthropy related articles for each country and the relative population comparisons.

Figure 1: Extent of philanthropic coverage in US and Australian news media
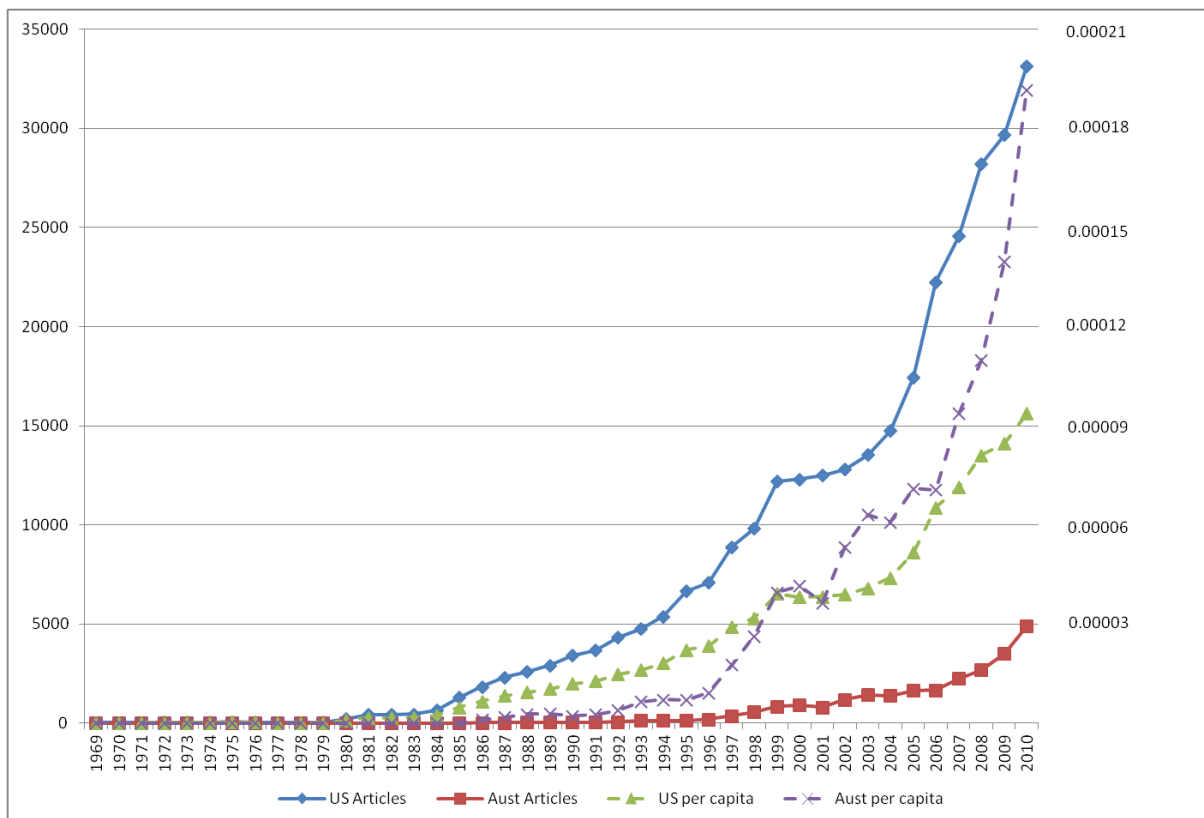
Prosociality

As anticipated, both countries were more inclined to portray philanthropy as positive. Philanthropy was described similarly as '*a vehicle for good work*'[5] in the American articles and '*a good thing*'[6] in Australian media. This suggests that philanthropy is generally

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[5] Small LM. 2001, 31 May. Mr. Smithson's Was the First. *The Washington Post.* Editorial; A25.
[6] Turner B. 1996, 2 October. Courting The Arts Dollar**.** *Sydney Morning Herald.* News And Features; 17.

perceived by both nation's media as prosocial behaviour. However, there were several negative articles. Negative framings largely related to 'questionable' motives behind philanthropy. Both countries' media expressed a highly cynical view of motivations for philanthropy blatantly driven by reputational, psychological or taxation gains. Corporate philanthropy was especially criticised as a marketing device. Philanthropy characterised as 'selfless', 'anonymous' and 'without strings' was held in highest esteem.

Responsibility

As anticipated, the US newspaper articles reflected a strong sense of individual responsibility, particularly related to wealthy individuals. Less than one in 10 of the US articles that framed philanthropy in terms of individual responsibility highlighted the giving of everyday Americans. The vast majority of articles emphasised the affluent role, explicitly or implicitly through examples of gifts well beyond the everyday American's scope. Notions of wealth generation and free markets appeared closely linked to this American sense of individual responsibility:

> *Private philanthropy is the organized expression of the highest of American ideals: the belief that Americans can create wealth, and then use it generously to establish organizations that act in good faith and have the wisdom, compassion and initiative to help others, without undue reliance on government* (US).[7]

Australian articles expressed a much stronger collective responsibility, especially by government, but also in terms of individuals. One in four Australian articles relating to individual philanthropy explicitly advocated the role of everyday Australians. Proportionately, this is two-and-a-half times greater than in US articles. Overall though, Australian articles largely emphasised the government in social services provision.

> *I don't think it is the task of philanthropy to make up shortfalls in government spending* (Australia).[8]

> *Governments are still responsible for social programs and funding, and need sufficient revenue for the job* (Australia).[9]

> *…the promotion of democracy presupposes the central role of governments in provision of fundamental resources for all* (Australia).[10]

The US articles reflected much less discourse on government responsibility.

> *Philanthropy is also peculiarly American because of the nation's roots in civil society: Individual communities were forged long before a strong central government* (US).[11]

> *Philanthropy is a better means of redistributing the nation's wealth than*

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[7] Higgins HR. 2005, 4 April. Death by Bureaucracy. *The Wall Street Journal.* A15.

[8] Bone P. 1997. Picking Up The Pieces. *The Age*. Saturday Extra; 3.

[9] Horin A. 1999, 21 June. Miracle Working. *Sydney Morning Herald.* Spectrum; 1.

[10] No author. 2006, 3 July. Letters & emails. *The Age*. News; 12.

[11] No author.1998, 20 December. A time of giving... *The Boston Globe*. Editorial; C6

higher taxes on the rich (US).[12]

US newspapers though were much more likely to construct private philanthropy and government as complementary versus competitive. Australian philanthropy views were different, focusing on an increase in one source leading to a decrease in another.

> *Philanthropy is "private initiatives for the public good, focusing on quality of life," whereas government is "public initiatives for the public good, focusing on law and order." Both work for the "public good," but by complementary means... The appropriate relationship between government and philanthropy is partnership, each doing what it does best, for the public good. Since neither one, nor both together, can ever fully meet society's needs, they cooperate for the greatest efficiency and productivity* (US).[13]

> *Wealthy donors do not share the idea that philanthropy is a substitute for government action. In their view, social responsibilities should be divided between the public and philanthropic sectors* (US).[14]

> *There is a growing perception that philanthropy is important today because governments are retreating from traditional community services - such as basic healthcare, education, supporting cultural institutions and providing for the disadvantaged. But philanthropy can never replace the role of government in providing such a range of services. All of Australia's annual philanthropic giving would not keep the national health system going for even a week* (Australia).[15]

Conceptualisations of responsibility reflected individualist and egalitarian cultures, but not homogenously. Several US articles criticised individualistic values, questioning affluent power over policy and public services decisions. Particularly, they queried philanthropic funding of elite education and arts institutions over social services, potentially propelling inequality. This perspective was particularly triggered by the Pledge (http://givingpledge.org).

> *Philanthropy is too busy spending money on opera and museums of fine art to make their resources available to minority and low-income communities* (US).[16]

In Australia, a strong shift in responsibility discourse emerged from the mid-1990s towards more emphasis on the role of private individuals and corporations, corresponding to a Prime Ministerial appeal, which suggested, 'we must move away from a culture of Government reliance to one of corporate and personal philanthropy'[17]. Media portrayals of this shift were divided, with some articles supportive of increased individual and corporate social responsibility and others against the implied reduction in government responsibility. This demonstrates that cultural values are continually redefined.

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[12] Uchitelle L. 2006, 27 November. Very Rich Are Leaving the Merely Rich Behind. *The New York Times.* National Desk; 1.

[13] McCully G. 2002, 14 April. Tax Break For Giving Is An Incentive Worth Saving. *The Boston Globe.* Business; C.3.

[14] Ostrower F. 1996, 11 January. The Rich Won't Give Block Grants. *The New York Times.* Section A Editorial Desk; 25.

[15] Cham E. 2002, 11 March. New way of giving for a new world. *The Australian.* 13.

[16] No author. 2008, 26 July. Shaking Down Philanthropies. *The Wall Street Journal.* Review &Outlook (Editorial); A8.

[17] Trioli V. 1998, 14 November. Philanthropy Limited. *The Age.* News Extra; 10.

Helping behavior

The data supported the anticipation that philanthropy was more likely to be framed as respectively exceptional (US) or normative (Australia). In the US, zealous descriptions were sometimes employed, describing philanthropy as evangelical or sacrilegious. One article commented: '*Philanthropy is so sacred and so important*'[18]. This signifies the high esteem given to philanthropy in the US and accords with a view of giving as exceptional (and therefore praiseworthy), in line with individualistic values.

Australian data expressed a clear normative expectation when it came to disaster giving, and was often described as 'crisis-based'.

> *The victims of domestic crises such as floods, bushfires and more recently drought, and foreign disasters such as earthquakes and famine have long benefited from an Australian philanthropic tradition that is, in a sense, crisis-based. While private philanthropy is much more an American phenomenon, since the 19th century Australians have rallied quickly to event-based appeals* (Australia).[19]

The significance of helping behavior, especially in times of crisis was downplayed as 'what anyone would do'. This may be an indication of normative attitudes towards such behavior, and is consistent with egalitarian perceptions whereby individuals lack the authority to speak for the group. Publicising such behavior is likely to be seen as self-promotion, which is not as accepted in a collective society as in an individualistic one. Australian articles consistently described philanthropy as limited, immature or somehow lacking. The absence of exceptionalism is supported by a strong reluctance to take on the 'philanthropist' title, as evidenced by this quote: '*It sounds like you're a wanker*'[20]. Further, Australian articles reflected discomfort with wealth and self-promotion:

> *Unlike the US, where philanthropy is celebrated, in Australia there is a tendency for wealthy people to keep their heads down in the face of a suspicious public asking: "Where did they get all that from?" and "what's in it for them?"* (Australia).[21]

Beneficiaries

Both countries' media refer to 'good' causes, suggesting evaluation criteria for 'worthiness' of potential beneficiaries. However, these criteria were not clear from the data. The concept received very little coverage, below one percent in both cases. As such, it was difficult to assess similarities and differences in beneficiary perceptions. Possible explanations for this limited coverage may include the search term's emphasis on philanthropy versus nonprofit organizations/beneficiaries. It may also be that worthiness evaluations happen long before a gift is reported on, or that any critical reflections in the media are more easily directed to the giver motivations than receiver merits.

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[18] Smith L. 2003, 16 March. The TWIG Bears Plentiful Fruit for Alexandria Hospital. *The Washington Post.* Metro;CO4.

[19] No author. 2005, 11 January. Give until it hurts . . . and then some . The Age. News; 12.

[20] Schmidt L. 2007, 30 March. Meet the Myers. *The Age.* The Melbourne Magazine; 38. Note 'wanker' is a slang word for a show-off.

[21] Yallop R. 2003, 29 March. A funny business. *The Australian;* 36.

Examining the broad cause areas in each dataset provided further insights. In both countries' newspaper articles, arts and culture, education, health, and welfare/community services were most commonly mentioned. While these were reasonably balanced in the US data, with each appearing in between eight and 10 percent of articles; arts and culture clearly dominated the Australian data. This cause appeared in more than 20 percent of Australian articles, and was more than twice as frequent as the next most commonly cited cause area (education). This could reflect Australian assumptions that education, health and welfare are the government responsibilities. However, it may also reflect the formation of two government subsidised entities to increase arts giving from private sources, and the existence of regular arts feature pages.

Overall, Americans were no more focused on the deservedness of beneficiaries than Australians.

Discussion and conclusions

Both countries' media coverage of philanthropy was largely positive, reflecting social approval in both contexts. However, the nature and extent of approval varied greatly, suggesting conceptions of philanthropy do vary cross-culturally. In this study, US cultural values around philanthropy were found to be largely consistent with individualism, while Australian cultural values predominately reflected egalitarianism. However, there were deviations from these dominant ideologies. Some of these divergences were consistent across the data, demonstrating cultural values are not homogenous; while others represented a significant pinpointable shift in the discourse, showing how cultural values are not static.

Reflections of responsibility reflect historical narratives. In both nations, early colonial experiences in the 'bush' or on the 'frontier' shaped national culture. As a convict colony, government presence was constant in Australia, creating dependency and a sense of government responsibility. Early (European) Australians worked as wage labourers and a strong sense of 'mateship' or collectivism developed in the harsh conditions (Teo and White, 2003). Conversely, early US settlers sought freedom from state institutions and had little expectation of government support, resulting in a culture of individual enterprise (Liffman, 2008; Teo and White, 2003). These narratives were interwoven and respectively reflected in print media. Australian articles emphasised the role of government in services provision, while US articles emphasised wealthy individuals. That Australian giving is shaped by its historical and political leanings toward the welfare state is documented (e.g. Lyons, 1993). So too, the unique tradition of individual philanthropy that sees a plurality of subsidy for US causes that government supports in other nations is noted academically (Scheff, 1998).

A key difference was found in the framing of helping behavior. Despite a higher US giving level, philanthropic acts were deemed exceptional and more likely celebrated (Kemmelmeier *et al.*, 2006). There was an acknowledgement that generosity should be recognised and rewarded to encourage further generosity (Hatfield and Sprecher, 1983). In contrast, Australian articles routinely undervalued giving behavior, which was much less likely to be acknowledged, let alone celebrated, suggesting that some philanthropic behavior is potentially going unnoticed. In egalitarianism, there is a strong reluctance to stand out from the collective, for fear of being perceived as 'tooting one's own horn', potentially restricting philanthropic leadership in egalitarian cultures such as Australia. This feature of egalitarianism was supported by the data. In Australia, it is anecdotally known as the "Tall Poppy Syndrome", a desire to see 'tall poppies' or high achievers cut down to size (Feather,

2005). Another plausible explanation for the undervaluing of giving behavior in the Australian media is the phenomenon of cultural cringe, whereby 'Australians tend to devalue the products and achievements of their own culture relative to other cultures' (Feather, 2005).

The Australian emphasis on disaster giving could be taken as an indication of the importance of 'innocent' victims or it could be a seen as a psychological repositioning of group boundaries after a crisis to include humanity at large.

Previous philanthropic research has sought to identify which values are more or less positively correlated with giving (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2010, p.18), without necessarily trying to understand why or in what ways those values differ. Rather than debate which is more conducive to philanthropy, individualism or egalitarianism, this exploratory study sought to unpack some of the attributes associated with these value systems to offer insights into two national giving cultures. This research found that cultural values can simultaneously encourage and stifle giving – but in different ways.

To the study giving mechanisms, this research offers a fresh perspective on values by refocusing attention from the personal to the cultural level. It expands conceptualizations of values previously utilized in philanthropic research and incorporates cultural and media studies theory. This study has only just begun to explore the dynamic relationship between cultural values and giving mechanisms. Principally, it has highlighted several areas warranting further investigation.

An unexpected finding worth highlighting is the amount of media coverage that contextualizes Australian giving against the US backdrop of greater giving. An increasing amount of coverage adopts the theme of Australia's affluent being stingy compared with their US counterparts, and questions why Australia does not have the same expectations of high net worth giving. Some articles recognize the different welfare and taxation systems that mitigate some of this difference but mostly the message is that Australia as a nation lacks a giving ethos, particularly amongst its affluent.

Practical applicability for fundraising professionals
Many people in the philanthropy landscape have a role in communication messages, dispelling myths and ultimately, moulding a positive philanthropy culture. Fundraisers, industry peak bodies, governments and community leaders are all stakeholders here. For many everyday people, the media may be the only way they engage with philanthropy. Thus the potential media impact on public perceptions is considerable. Given the findings of this study, fundraising professionals and other stakeholders should aim to increase the overall volume (and in turn salience) and positivity of philanthropy in the media. While most articles were positive, critiques generally related to perceptions of self-interested giving. This tainted slant risks discrediting the whole concept of philanthropy for the reader but it is unrealistic to constrain media coverage to purely altruistically motivated giving examples. It is clear that as Lombardo (1995) noted, such distinctions between self-centred and selfless giving may be ultimately unhelpful as, 'the tendency to juxtapose altruism and self-interest as mutually incompatible is inconsistent with the complexity of human and organizational motivation'. It denies the role of corporate giving and its different rationale.

One particular value of this study is the finding that media coverage reflected dominant cultural values as well as conventional discourses on philanthropy. Philanthropy professionals and those wishing to grow philanthropy need to be armed with a good

understanding of cultural values (as well as common points of divergence and trends) so that messages have best chance of being acted upon. Trying to inculcate a culture of philanthropy in Australia for instance that mirrors the US promotion of the individual approach is likely to prove fruitless. Philanthropic promotion and leadership are a key point of difference between the two nations. Couching philanthropy in terms of voluntarism, self-actualisation, and deserving reward is more likely to appeal to the US public than the Australian public. Conversely, in Australia, philanthropic discourse is likely to be better received when it is described in terms of communal responsibility and social justice. As philanthropy is newer to Australia, and relatively undefined, there is potentially greater scope for it to be shaped by fundraising professionals, however, it still needs to be culturally relevant or it will not resonate publicly. Some individualistic high net worth Australians may be an exception.

Australian fundraising professionals also need to clearly assess the use of a deficit-based approach in their communication about philanthropy. While this can be used to argue a need for increased philanthropy, perpetual narratives focusing on the (comparative) lack of philanthropic culture in Australia risk alienating the audience from the philanthropy concept and undermining the giving behavior that does exist. A recasting is needed, as above.

It can be concluded from this study that giving drivers may have antecedents. In this case, personal values can be seen to be potentially influenced by a distinct flavour of national ethos resulting in different giving behavior between seemingly similar nations. Further research into the power of national culture is possible and warranted, drawing on the many disciplines beyond media and cultural studies that may offer insights to the complex human behavior of giving.

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