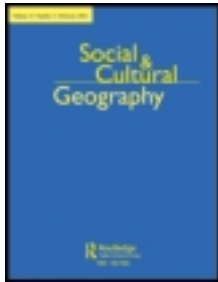


This article was downloaded by: [62.254.144.12]

On: 13 June 2014, At: 12:02

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office:  
Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Social & Cultural Geography

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rscg20>

### The spectacle of the poor. Or: 'Wow!! Awesome. Nice to know that people care!'

Michele Lancione<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Geography, Cambridge University, Downing Place,  
Cambridge, CB2 3EN, UK,

Published online: 11 Jun 2014.

To cite this article: Michele Lancione (2014): The spectacle of the poor. Or: 'Wow!! Awesome. Nice to know that people care!', *Social & Cultural Geography*, DOI: [10.1080/14649365.2014.916742](https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2014.916742)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2014.916742>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

# The spectacle of the poor. Or: ‘Wow!! Awesome. Nice to know that people care!’

Michele Lancione

Department of Geography, Cambridge University, Downing Place, Cambridge CB2 3EN, UK,  
[ml710@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ml710@cam.ac.uk)

*On the night of 14 November 2012, a police officer of the New York Police Department encountered a homeless person while performing his duties around Times Square. He gave him a pair of boots and while doing so, he was photographed by a tourist. The photo was posted on Facebook, receiving in a few days more than 1.6 million visits. The paper unfolds the reasons why this particular image and story have gone, as the media has put it, ‘viral’. The paper investigates the spaces that have emerged in the media elongation of DePrimo’s practice of care and, introducing the notion of ‘spectacle of the poor’, it argues that this specific case simplifies the dominant western framings around matter of ‘caring for the poor’. The political and cultural consequences of these framings are investigated, and reflections on how to tackle them provided.*

**Key words:** spectacle of the poor, care, homelessness, the Good Samaritan, NYPD, Facebook.

## Prologue

On the night of 14 November 2012, a police officer of the New York Police Department (NYPD) encountered a homeless person while on duty around Times Square. The homeless person was sitting on the ground, barefoot. The officer, moved by that vision, went and bought a pair of boots and gave them to him. Ms Jennifer Foster, a tourist from Arizona, witnessed the scene and took a photo of it with her mobile phone (Figure 1). A few days later, on Tuesday, 20 November, she sent the photo to the NYPD via email, ‘thinking of it as a sort of a compliment card’ (New York Times (NYT) 2012a). The NYPD contacted her and asked permission to report the event on its

official Facebook fan-page, to which she agreed. The story was published on Wednesday the 27th of November and by that night (NYPD 2012a), according to the New York Times, ‘the post had been viewed 1.6 million times, and had attracted nearly 275,000 “likes” and more than 16,000 comments’ (NYT 2012a). When I first read this story (reported in an Italian newspaper on 3 December 2012), the numbers had increased further: the post had received 609,687 likes, more than 47,800 comments and it had been ‘shared’ (on other Facebook’s pages) by almost 220,000 people.

When the photo was originally posted on the web the identity of the officer was still unknown but it eventually emerged. Following his identification, a new post was



**Figure 1** The first picture of DePrimo and Mr Hillman published on the NYPD's Facebook fan-page (NYPD 2012a). © Jennifer Foster. Reproduced by permission of Jennifer Foster. Permission to reuse must be obtained from the rightsholder.

added by the NYPD (on 30 November, NYPD 2012b). The post consisted of a photo portrait of police officer Larry DePrimo, aged 25, along with a quote from an interview he gave the day before when, speaking about the episode, he said: 'I didn't think anything of it'. Moreover, on 2 December 2012, the NYT—soon followed by many other newspapers and online blogs—published another article on the story. The piece revealed the name of the homeless person (Mr Jeffrey Hillman) and another interesting detail: Mr Hillman was barefoot again, and 'The \$100 pair of boots that Officer DePrimo had

bought for him at a Skechers store on Nov. 14 were nowhere to be seen' (NYT 2012b).

Besides Facebook, the story had also been reported and commented on in other social media such as Reddit and Twitter. Last but not least, newspapers published the photo of Officer DePrimo and Mr Hillman from Mexico City to Rome, from Sydney to Toronto. As many commentators had written at the time, the story went 'viral'.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The aim of this paper is not to question what Officer DePrimo did, but to investigate the outburst of emotional response that the above photo provoked. Thousands of people all over the world reacted to that image, feeling it necessary to share their points of view on the case thus creating the 'viral' phenomenon. Why has this story caused such a widespread reaction? What are the consequences and significance that this exposure brings to the fore? Scholars have begun to investigate the nature of these massive responses especially in relation to videos posted on YouTube or other online media. The reasons why certain videos rather than others 'go viral' (Southgate et al. 2010), as well as the effects that they have in particular domains such as that of public elections (Wallsten 2010), are under scrutiny. However, we know very little about why a case like DePrimo's can stir up such a reaction, and even less about the significance of it. The photo does not portray a glamorous VIP, a funny character or a unique moment in the history of humanity. Rather, it represents a tiny little gesture of *care*, which can be defined as the 'proactive interest of one person in the wellbeing of another'—represented by the officer stopping by the homeless person—and in the 'articulation of that interest (or affective

stance) in practical ways’—the former buying boots for the latter (Conradson 2003a: 508). ‘Care’ is, in this sense, definitely at the centre of this viral story.

Scholars have researched ‘care’ through many perspectives (Conradson 2003b; Milligan et al. 2007), paying particular attention to the ambiguity of practices that have effects not obvious at first sight (Mol 2008). The moral basis of care (Parr 2003; D. M. Smith 1998) as well as the spaces where care is enacted and performed (Conradson 2003a) has been questioned in the provision of services for homeless people (Johnsen et al. 2005a, 2005b), people with mental health problems (Parr 2000), refugees (Darling 2011) and in their role in affecting voluntarisms (Fyfe and Milligan 2003), to cite just a few. The case presented in this paper, although building upon this literature, presents, however, a different challenge. What is at stake in DePrimo’s story is neither the evaluation of a specific practice of care, nor the analysis of the context in which it took place. The practice—taken per se—is almost immaterial, provisional, and fluid. The news that this case provides lies in the exposure of that practice to a broader and foreign public (in the sense of not being directly involved in the matter), and the emotional outburst that such exposure provoked. The thesis of this paper is that DePrimo’s practice of care has been *translated*—by means of a photo, a social network, media releases, and by the rationales underpinning people’s comments (all *actants* in the course of action, Latour 2005)—into something different, something that at the same time encompasses and embraces the original act of caring.

The role of media in shaping practices of care has been already acknowledged. As John Silk puts it: ‘mass media and electronic networks play a significant part in extending the range of care and caring beyond the

traditional context of shared spatio-temporal locale and our “nearest and dearest” to embrace “distant others” (Silk 1998: 179). Here the focus is on how people care ‘for’ other (beneficence) by means of mediated interaction, showing the many different ways someone can possibly care for someone else beyond mere ‘face-to-face’ interaction (see also Silk 2000, 2004). At a first sight, DePrimo’s case could possibly be understood as a form of ‘caring at distance’. However, and here lies the novelty of this study, people commenting on DePrimo’s act are not strictly caring ‘for’, but they do more: they judge, they discuss, they share and in doing so they produce content that is neither strictly ‘beneficial’ for someone, nor its recipient could clearly be identified. In other words, the thousands of comments and hundred thousands of ‘likes’ examined in this paper are not means by which benevolence took place, but translators stretching the original space of care into a 2.0 network that spans ‘from the local to the global’ (Milligan and Wiles 2010: 736). Therefore, if ‘things such as listening, feeding, changing clothes [...] are implicated in the production of particular social spaces’ (Conradson 2003b: 415), DePrimo’s story shows that these spaces can be elongated beyond ‘care’ itself, consequentially bearing symbolic, political and moral consequences that need to be thoughtfully taken into account.

The elongation of the original space of care—with its charged affective atmosphere (Anderson 2009), underlying rationale and political interests—is all but neutral. It is, on the contrary, productive: of personal engagement/disengagement, of peculiar characterisations of care and of the ‘poor’, and of new relations of power. Following the developments of DePrimo’s case, both in the media and on Facebook, one can trace the consti-

tution of these productive forces and tell an interesting story about how ‘care’ and the ‘poor’ are canonically perceived and framed in the contemporary western world (Amin 2012).

First, comments provide first-hand evidence in investigating the discursive rationale and moral ethos that *move* people in responding to a case such as DePrimo’s. In this sense, they offer a way to unravel the underlying frameworks ‘operating at the level of the individual or wider society, and in public or private spheres’ that shape how care is conceived (Milligan and Wiles 2010: 738). However, those same comments, once posted online and rendered public, affect the same frameworks from which they came—either challenging them or reinforcing them further. The second point of interest in their analysis is, then, to show how they contribute to the constitution of the ‘wider social world’ where the categorisation of the ‘poor’ into the aforementioned domains takes place (Parr 2000: 229). From the analysis of these comments and of related media releases, I therefore identified three specific spaces—which are elongations of the original practice of care—that are *shaped by* and are *contributing to* particular understandings of ‘care’ and the ‘poor’. The first space elongates care by *capturing* it, and it is represented by Ms Foster’s act of taking a photo and its NYPD’s online appropriation. The second elongates care by *viralising* it, namely bringing DePrimo’s photo into a vortex of online sharing, liking and commenting. Lastly, the third space elongates care via *revealing* it through the insertion of elements missing from the original depiction of the story. The main aim of the paper is, in the end, to question these spaces interrogating the political and cultural matters they bring to the fore.

The paper is organised as follows. The next section presents the methodology adopted in the analysis of the case, while also providing a first snapshot of its content. The Elongated spaces of care section shows the peculiar spaces that emerge as an elongation of the original act of care, analysing them in terms of their content and underlying logic. Then, the following section comments upon these spaces reading them as the *spectacle of the poor*—a terminology that I use to show their criticality. Finally, the Concluding remarks section highlights the political issues raised by the analysed case, and offers suggestions for further reflection.

### Case study and methodology

The analysis that follows is based on two main sources of data: the comments posted under the first photo published on the NYPD’s Facebook fan-page, and articles which appeared in various newspapers on the following days. According to the privacy setting chosen by each user, comments on Facebook can either be private or public. Since the latter applies by default, the vast majority of the comments posted under DePrimo’s photo are freely available to anyone (incidentally, this is one of the ways various businesses are able to analyse comments, capture the most used keywords and post ad hoc advertising alongside the ‘wall’ of each Facebook’s user, Curran et al. 2011). In this paper, I consider the comments published from 27 November 2012 to 10 January 2013—a period that comprises the rise, expansion and decline of public attention to the story. One of the main challenges of dealing with online based material is related to downloading it in a form able to be managed and analysed. At first, I decided to

copy each one of the comments manually, from the web page to a text editor. However, this has been deemed impossible by the fact that Facebook loads comments on a 50 by 50 basis (one click: 50 comments), and by the fact that the more text one loads in a page, the more the page becomes heavy and terribly slow. After several attempts, and several crashes of my system, I desisted. I thereby decided to use an established software called ‘NextAnalytics’, which main scope is precisely that of downloading comments from various social networks in a spread sheet form ready to be analysed. The software managed to download 44,753 comments out of 48,284 (the difference consisting of private comments that have not been downloaded). The texts have thus been anonymised and exported, along with date of publications, in a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software.

The first step in the analysis of the data consisted of the open-ended codification of selected comments—one every 100—into

emerging categories (Crang 2005), as well as in running specific queries aimed at capturing the most used words, or groups of words, in each comment. Following this, another round of selecting coding has been done on the comments containing the most frequent words to understand their association and retrieve their contextual usage. The outcomes of this first and broad analysis are reported in Table 1 and show the topics around which the conversation has been laid out. Relatively few comments address ‘homelessness’ as a topic, or speak directly of the homeless person (only 4.08 per cent; even fewer mention Mr Hillman by name, 0.02 per cent). Rather, the vast majority of the comments are focused on showing support of DePrimo’s actions following specific discursive repertoires—‘building blocks speakers use for constructing versions of actions, cognitive processes, and other phenomena’ (Wetherell and Potter 1988: 172). These include relevant references to ‘God’ and religion (22.14 per cent); admiration for the ‘goodness’ of the story and of the

**Table 1** Most common words or group of words.

Name	Number of coding references	Total comments (%)
Total comments	44,753	100.00
God (God bless/like God/etc.)	9,910	22.14
Officer	8,711	19.46
Bless and Officer	5,825	13.02
Good (good job/good hearted/good person)	5,709	12.76
NYPD (or ‘New York’s f nest’)	2,437	5.45
Love	2,370	5.30
Shoes (or ‘boots’)	2,177	4.86
De Primo (or ‘deprimo’)	1,927	4.31
Homeless (or ‘homelessness’)	1,828	4.08
Com passion	1,123	2.51
Jesus (or ‘Christ’ or ‘Saviour’)	613	1.37
G o o d S a m a r i t a n	105	0.23
Bless and home less	65	0.15
Jeffrey Hillman (or only ‘Jef frey’)	8	0.02

*Source:* Elaboration of the author on Facebook public data, 2012.

*Notes:* The search included stemmed words. A search with ‘care’ has not been included since ‘care’ is used in many different ways in the comments (from ‘caring person’ to ‘no one cares’).



officer's action (12.76 per cent); appraisals of DePrimo himself (referencing him either as 'Officer', 19.46 per cent, or as 'DePrimo', 4.31 per cent); and (mainly) positive characterisation of the NYPD (5.45 per cent). The word cloud reported in Figure 2, showing the most used words and their relative associations, confirms the positive and supportive tone that emerges from the comments. However, if this first analysis is able to tell us where Facebook's discussion was heading, it falls short in telling us something specific about its trend and specific content. Did the discussion change during the analysed period? If yes, how and why?

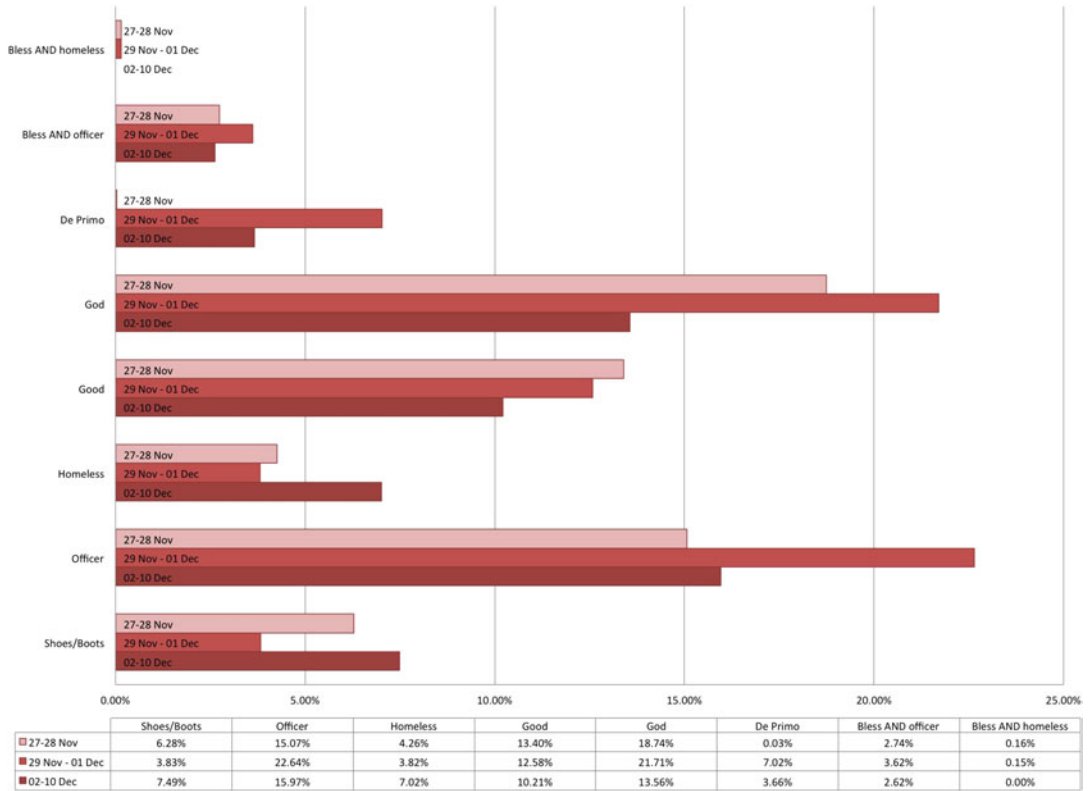
The second main step of analysis consisted in dividing the original data-set into three main periods, which represent the changes occurring in the progressive unfolding of the story. In the first period, i.e. from 27 to 29 November, the name of the officer was still unknown and 16,588 comments were posted. In the second period, 2 November to 1 December, the name

was revealed and 25,915 interventions were produced. The third period, 2–10 December, begun with the NYT's article reporting that Mr Hillman was no longer in possession of the boots and presents 1,910 comments.<sup>2</sup> The data-sets thus divided have been analysed according to the following steps. First, a query was run to identify the most common words or group of words used per period. The results have confirmed the repertoires presented in Figure 2. Second, comments were clustered around each one of these words using respective nodes (e.g. The node 'DePrimo' containing all the comments including that word), and third, trends in their usage were calculated. The outcomes of this analysis are presented in Figure 3, showing patterns that can be summarised as follow:

- References to 'God' or other religious terminologies, as well as the characterisation of DePrimo's act as 'good', are consistent in the whole period but they decline in the third segment;



**Figure 2** 'Word cloud with most common words and association of words,' elaboration of the author on Facebook public data, 2012. *Notes:* The size indicates the frequency of single words in the comments. Colours indicate the most common association of words (e.g. 'God Bless'; 'Good Officer'; 'Awesome story'). The words 'shoes' and 'boots' are not presented in the cloud because they reach consistency only if their value is combined.



**Figure 3** ‘Evolution of discussion topics in the three analysed periods,’ elaboration of the author on Facebook public data, 2012. *Notes:* The percentages are referred to the total comments for each period, which varies. Comments on 27–28 November were 16,588; 29 November–01 December, 25,915; and 2–10 December, 1,910. Despite the different number of comments, calculating the percentage on the basis of each period grant an absolute value that can thus be compared. For example, ‘Officer’ is mentioned 2,499 times during the period 29 November–1 December, which gives 22.64% ( $5,868/25,915 \times 100$ ); and 305 times in the period 02–10 December, which gives 15.97% ( $305/1,910 \times 100$ ). These two values give a sense of the weighted importance of the topic ‘Officer’ in the two different periods.

- Direct references to the ‘Officer’ and to ‘DePrimo’ indicate a sharp increase in the second period, coherent with the unfolding of the story, but they consistently decline in the third sector;
- References to ‘homeless’ or ‘homelessness’ have a sharp increase in the third period;
- References to the words ‘shoes’ and ‘boots’ are consistent in the whole period, although their characterisations change (explained later in the text);
- Although the combination of the words ‘bless’ and ‘Officer’ remains stable in the whole period, the already scarce presence of the combination ‘bless’ and ‘homeless’ in periods 1 and 2 (0.16 per cent and 0.15 per



cent) amounts to zero in the third sector. The third and last step in the analysis of data has been devoted to capturing the intrinsic characterisation of the trends just outlined. This has been done through the analysis, based on each of the three periods, of the content of the nodes ‘God’, ‘Officer’, ‘DePrimo’, ‘homeless’ and ‘shoes/boots’. A consistent amount of comments contained in each of these groups has been codified looking for analytical themes, which have been grouped around thematic clusters (such as ‘Positivity of the story’, ‘Praising the Officer’, ‘Homeless as fraud’, etc.). The emerging themes have been confronted with the consulted literature on care and homelessness, building therefore the following specific theoretical understanding, around the elongated spaces of care.

### Elongated spaces of care

The following spaces can be read as a specific spatio-temporal momentous of DePrimo’s viral story. They comprise different ‘subjects’ and ‘objects’ that, aligning in particular ways by means of how the story unfolded, came to characterise the investigated elongations of care (Thrift 1996). The first space represents the encounter between DePrimo, the homeless person, the tourist from Arizona, and the NYPD. The second represents the story in its media exposure. Here the encounter is between the picture, the NYPD and a plethora of Facebook users (and newspapers readers) commenting on it (the analysis is based upon the comments during the period from 27 to 29 November, and the ones from 30 November to 1 December, when DePrimo’s identity was revealed). The third space is characterised by the emergence of a relatively new figure in the story—that of Mr Hillman, who at this point has an identity and a story to tell (the analysed

comments are that of the third segment, 2–10 December).

#### *First space: capturing care*

The first elongation of DePrimo’s act of care took place in Ms Jennifer Foster’s hands, when she took her mobile phone and shot the picture reported in [Figure 1](#). In doing so, Ms Foster translated (Callon 1986) the officer’s act from being a momentary practice of care, to its perpetual representation (Rose 2007). The account that Ms Foster gives of her gesture helps to understand the rationale behind it:

Right when I was about to approach, one of your officers came up behind him. The officer said, ‘I have these size 12 boots for you, they are all-weather. Let’s put them on and take care of you.’ The officer squatted down on the ground and proceeded to put socks and the new boots on this man. The officer expected NOTHING in return and did not know I was watching. I have been in law enforcement for 17 years. I was never so impressed in my life. I did not get the officer’s name. It is important, I think, for all of us to remember the real reason we are in this line of work. The reminder this officer gave to our profession in his presentation of human kindness has not been lost on myself or any of the Arizona law enforcement officials with whom this story has been shared. (NYPD 2012a; capitalisation in original)

The picture that Ms Foster took could have remained on her mobile phone, or being shared just among her friends. However, she decided to send it to the NYPD because she had been ‘in law enforcement for 17 years’ and DePrimo’s gesture represented, to her, the moral values of why she and others law enforcers ‘are in this line of work’. Sending that picture to the NYPD was, therefore, a political statement: a state-

ment about how law enforcement should operate, or at least about giving an example of a behaviour that Ms Foster deemed worthy of appraisal. The political charge of this space was further amplified by the NYPD's decision to post that photo on its Facebook fan-page. It is important to highlight that these two translations—one from Ms Foster's photography, the other from the NYPD appropriating that representation—are charged with power: they have a rationale, and an unconscious emotional background (Thrift 2004), whose relevance becomes evident looking at the spaces that subsequently emerged.

### *Second space: 'viralising' care*

The second elongated space concerns the exposure of DePrimo's act to a broader audience. As said, Facebook's users turned the photo and the story into a viral phenomenon in a matter of hours. A close reading of the comments posted in the first phase shows their discursive characterisation under a set of defined repertoires, which has been reported in Table 2. Religious themes, the goodness of the officer and of the story, as well as a good wealth of 'emulative' stances, are the positive viewpoints characterising this space.

These comments rely on two frameworks—about understanding 'care' and the 'poor'—that, if brought to the fore, can shine a light both on why the story went viral and on its meanings. The first of these frames is related to what people think of the couplet 'police officer–homeless man' and, more generally, of the view they have of the NYPD. Geographers have investigated for a while the role played by police, public policies and the law in 'harassing', 'annihilating' and 'punishing' homeless people (Mitchell 1997; N. Smith 1998). Besides the limitations of this literature—

which mainly sees 'the homeless' as an homogeneous group (DeVerteuil et al. 2009) and is unable to recognise the more supportive spaces that populate the homeless city (Cloe et al. 2010; DeVerteuil 2006)—it is ineluctable that, especially in the USA, law enforcement has drastically limited street dwellers' 'right to the city' (Mitchell and Heynen 2009). DePrimo's story stands, in a sense, as an exception. The photo portrays a gesture of care that seems surprisingly 'good' precisely because the underlying assumption framing the couplet 'police officer—homeless man' is a negative one. The following comments vividly highlight this tension (emphasis added):

Why is this such a big deal ... Why are there no pictures of other volunteers that serve the homeless everyday. Where is there notoriety and recognition. This is ridiculous, *if he was not in a police uniform this would have absolutely no coverage.*

Despite of NYPD Stupidity, this is something very rare to see. Very little officers even act kind hearted and very few will even give Boots to a homeless man like him.

Giving shoes to a homeless person? I've done this. It's not a big deal. It's not a newsworthy story. It's common decency. Why, then, is such a big deal being made about this? Would people be this excited if the shoes came from a student? How about a nurse or a teacher? Fireman? Business person? Et cetera? I doubt it. *It's because it's a cop* and police have a well-earned reputation as being less kind than, not more kind than, people who aren't cops.

In a way, DePrimo's act is perceived as increasing homeless people's spaces of survival—the same spaces that the dominant narrative expects DePrimo to seize and control (another comment reads: 'And tomorrow the

Table 2 Most common comments in the second space.

Topic	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Example 5
Reference to God or religion	In the Holy Bible a Good Samaritan helped a poor man, This officer has done the same Luke 10:33 He will be blessed in doing so	Talk about seeing God in surprising places! This officer saw God in a dirty homeless man most of us would cross to the other side of the street to avoid. God bless them both and shame on the rest of us!	Officer DePrimo, thank you for helping this homeless man. He was really JESUS, You have no idea the BLESSING that is coming to you. God Bless U my brother.	the true love, Jesus preached this kind of love: luke 4:25-37. God bless this Officer	Angels are everywhere and in disguise. God bless this officer, and all NYPD
On DePrimo	So beautiful! What an amazing officer! God bless the NYPD < 3	Officer DePrimo is a hero in my eyes, he is the epitome of what humanity with heart and soul should represent. Officer DePrimo I salute you < 3	What a nice gesture done by this officer, hard to find these days!)	Larry DePrimo, words can not describe the generosity that comes from your heart. You a true inspiration. Thank you	Officer Lawrence DePrimo is a wonderfully kind mad. Great good deed What a hero!!
On the story	One of the greatest stories of kindness I have heard in a long time. Thank you kind officer	I loved this story—it made me cry!	That is such an amazing story. That just goes to prove that people still have a heart; and this Officer went Above and Beyond for one homeless person!	I was very moved when I read the story of Lawrence DePrimo reaching out to the homeless man.	I absolutely LOVE this story! It restores my faith in humanity
Reporting own experiences or wishing to emulate	I would have done the same thing and so would my mom	If that was me saw him with no sock or no shoes, I do the same way that the police man did	Great work man, I drive a NYPD cruiser on London streets and see many homeless people I was pull over to give them coffee	I have given clothes to the homeless in my community many times	I gave a homeless man in Harlem a warm meal In January and it does feel good! Doesn't have to cost much to help people in need!
Emulation will bring change	Let's all go out and do a random act of kindness tonight, today, this week, this month, imagine the power of each of us doing just 1 random act of kindness per day, wk or month ...	Well what are YOU waiting for ! I do it how about you, let's all make a difference. If you want to make even more of a stand, try what I did once ... Bring a homeless person out to lunch, inside a restaurant	True Hero!!! Such a huge heart. Now if EVERYONE who sees this could do at least one kind thing for a homeless person, wouldnt that just be awesome	Officer DePrimo is an inspiration and my hero. There are 312 million of us in this country--we could END HOMELESSNESS in five minutes if we wanted to	Wonderful! Now if ALL people stepped up to the plate and helped the homeless THAT in itself would be wonderful! Step up to the plate people!:-)

Source: Elaboration of the author on Facebook public data, 2012.

Notes: The second space includes comments from two periods, 27–28 November and 29 November–01 December. Grammar mistakes in comments have not been edited to preserve their original form.

officer goes back to enforcing the system that keeps this man homeless'). The novelty is then related to a momentarily de-framing of the dominant frame (Lancione 2013a)—but it is precisely the presence of the dominant frame that allows for the positive emotional outburst specifying the story's exposure.

The second framing is even more revealing in this sense. This is directly related to the high number of comments referring to 'God' and religious themes, and involves unconscious (but sometimes also explicit—see Table 2) references to the parable of the 'Good Samaritan' found in Luke's Gospel. This is one of the most well-known and powerful tales illustrating how a Christian is supposed to 'love' other human beings. The Good Samaritan is a tale, in this sense, around the two basic tenets of Catholic social interventionism: 'agape' and 'caritas', where the former typifies a form of 'unconditional' love for the other that fuels love-oriented acts of generosity (Cloke et al. 2010; for a critique, Lancione 2014). However, the parable not only lies at the heart of catholic social interventionism, but it has become synonymous with someone who helps someone else perceived as less advantaged, exemplifying an act of mercy that people of different cultural and religious backgrounds consider admirable. In the parable, a Samaritan—who represents the archetypical 'stranger', the 'foreigner'<sup>3</sup>—offers his help to a man, who has been beaten and dispossessed, and lying in the street (see Luke 10:30–37 for the full text).<sup>4</sup> The message carried by this tale is that we should *love* our *neighbours*—where the former implies not only an emotional attitude but also some concrete practices of care: 'he went to him and bandaged his wounds'; 'he put the man on his own donkey'; 'he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper'; etc. DePrimo's case shares many aspects with

this parable, even with its pictorial representation (Figure 4): the dispossessed man (Mr Hillman) is given material support (the boots) by a foreigner (DePrimo), who does not ask anything in return. However, there is more than simple comparability. In the parable, the



**Figure 4** 'Parable of the Good Samaritan' (detail), Jan Wijnants 1670. Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Photo by Vladimir Terebenin. Permission to reuse must be obtained from the rightsholder. Note: Compare Wijnants' representation of the Good Samaritan with DePrimo's picture reported in Figure 1. The two Samaritans bend towards a man providing material help, typifying a specific take on the 'care for the poor'.

relation between the Samaritan and the robbed man follows a one-way route: it is the Samaritan who loves the robbed man; it is he who cares and it is he who defines the tempo of the encounter. At no point in the parable is the robbed man given voice. We do not know—since Jesus is silent on these points—if he has appreciated what the Samaritan did; what he thinks about the whole affair and we can only assume his emotional response. Similarly, in DePrimo's case, the homeless person is neither given name nor fully voiced. We hear him talking only through two reported speeches by the officer. In the first, we hear the homeless person saying: 'I never had a pair of shoes in my life' and in the second, while asked by DePrimo if he would also like a coffee, we hear: 'No Officer, you've done enough, I love the Police, God bless you' (New York Post, NYP 2012). We do not know what he thinks of the boots, what use he is going to make of them and we cannot know much about the emotional encounter between the two. Why had he not a pair of shoes in his life? Why did he not want to have a hot coffee during a cold night? We cannot have an answer to those questions because they have never been asked. In this sense, the two stories typify a paradigmatic understanding of care dominant in the west: one based on relations of verticality where one actor is dependent on the other, and where the tenets of that dependency are never discussed (Fine and Glendinning 2005; Green and Lawson 2011; for a different and more dialogical approach see Lawson and Elwood 2014).

Since no proper account of the robbed/homeless man is given, the idea that we get of the encounter is not derived from the encounter itself, but from its partial representation. Still, we perceive it as 'just', 'good', 'awesome', etc., precisely because the two

underlying frameworks just outlined shape our understanding. These are reinforced by the fact that DePrimo's photo has been posted in a place where only exemplary acts are portrayed. He became therefore *good* almost by definition, as much as the Samaritan is ('The Good Samaritan'). The officer has also been honoured by the NYPD with 'a special set of cuff links' (Newsday 2012). The narrative surrounding DePrimo's photo is then so strong and so engrained in its own domains to become almost inescapable: no comment indeed criticises what DePrimo did. This provides also the basis for its accessibility. The story has become so popular because it is easy to follow and does not require much engagement from the listener: we are not asked to question, to evaluate or to listen to the stranger but simply to follow the example of the Samaritan (the numerous 'emulative' comments are a clear testimonial of this—see Table 2). Both framings, that of the non-punitive policeman and that of the Good Samaritan, tell the same captivating story: one that does not require us to meaningfully encounter the 'poor' (Valentine 2008), but only to 'care' for them in ways canonically thought to be right (Mol 2008).

### *Third space: revealing care*

On the 2nd of December, the NYT published an article titled 'Homeless Man Is Grateful for Officer's Gift of Boots. But He Again Is Barefoot' (NYT 2012b). The article reported that Mr Hillman was grateful for what DePrimo did, and that he also appreciated 'everyone that got onto this thing. [...] It meant a lot to me'. However, the article highlighted also the fact that at the time of the interview, Mr Hillman was once again barefoot. Moreover, other interventions on the



web started to question his condition as 'homeless'. In particular, an article in the New York Daily News (NYDN) read:

The barefoot homeless man who received new shoes from a kind-hearted NYPD cop isn't actually homeless—and has a sad history of refusing help from loved ones and the government. (NYDN 2012)

Confronted, for the first time at close distance, with 'the barefoot homeless' that may not have even been 'homeless', we are suddenly confused. Why is he still barefoot? Interrogated on this specific point, Mr Hillman replied:

'Those shoes are hidden. They are worth a lot of money [...] I could lose my life.'

Moreover, he added:

I was put on YouTube, I was put on everything without permission. What do I get? [...] This went around the world, and I want a piece of the pie. (NYT 2012b)

These two speeches give us, for the first time, the opportunity to reconsider the encounter between the homeless man and DePrimo. Mr Hillman is grateful for the donation he received but at the same time he feels the gift may put his life at risk (ironically enough, he risks being beaten and dispossessed...). Moreover, although he appreciates the attention he received and what the officer did, he also feels that he did not gain much out of it. His identity was spoiled, without his permission, and he apparently did not like this very much (besides the photo published on Facebook, the NYDN article cited above posted pictures of him as a young man, essentially reconstructing and thus exposing

his life history). If the DePrimo case is read not from the frames outlined above—where we are faced with a partial depiction of the story—but from the encounter itself—where we hear all the voices—the affective atmosphere with which we are confronted considerably changes. Implicitly, invariably, our emotional response also changes. Commentators on Facebook started to question the actions and speeches of Mr Hillman and, for the most part, they did not seem to like them. Comments on the topic read: '[S]oon after, the bum sold the boots ... he claims he's "hidden" them ... suuure buddy' or 'I see the homeless man now wants a piece of the pie that his image is creating, what a dick ... '. There is more in this vein (Table 3).

Although this third space is still characterised by comments that praise DePrimo's act and refer to religious themes, their relative importance diminish (Figure 3). The few comments 'blessing' the homeless person disappear, and there is a surge in the amount of comments speaking about 'homelessness' and about the 'shoes/boots' DePrimo had bought. The latter, in particular, move from being glorified as the medium through which care has been delivered, to symbolising the deprived life that Mr Hillman (and street dwellers like him) supposedly lives: 'The guy is still on the streets barefoot. Where are the shoes? Delivered for a bottle of Schnapps??' As soon as a voice is given to 'the poor' man, the whole framings of the 'Good cop' and the 'Good Samaritan' risk falling into pieces. In a sense this is unavoidable because by inserting Mr Hillman into the equation we are actually forced to encounter him, and what he says may not fit very easily with the representation originally given. In other words, it does not occur to us that Mr Hillman may use that spot as a street-based 'space of sustenance' (DeVerteuil and Wilton 2009) about which



Table 3 Most common comments in the third space.

Topic	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Example 5
Ungratefulness of homeless man	I just read a story that the homeless man wants money for the pic being disclosed without permission ... How ungrateful!	Are you kidding me, the update on this guy is ridiculous! [...] this man has chosen to be homeless & do whatever it is he's doing to put him there. sorry, but i will totally think twice before i give them anything	Seems this guy is very ungrateful now and wants his piece of the pie because his picture was posted online without his permission. Should be arrested for loitering now	What a great officer to help, now this homeless man 'Wants a piece of the pie' for the photo, what a loser, he should just be grateful for the boots but he wants a handout, what a loser	It was on the news today that unfortunately this man isn't homeless, he lives in an apt in Brooklyn or the Bronx? So sad to hear this amazing and good deed went to someone selfish
Homeless is a fraud	Turns out the man is not homeless and won't wear the boots because they are worth a lot of money to him! Geez!	HE ISN'T HOMELESS!!! FRAUD!!! FRAUD!!!	For those who don't know, this man is not homeless, it's a choice	He's Not Homeless!!!!	this man is NOT homeless at all. for the last 3 years he has been pooling this but i have seen him dressed better then most. His hustle will always be this.
Like the story 'despite'	I heard the homeless guy was a 'scammer'. It was all over the news. Still, that was very nice of that Officer	Listen if its in your heart to help people like this homeless man or anyone else for that matter, it doesn't matter what he does after you did ur deed. As long as you did what you felt was right	No matter what happened to the boots once officer DePrimo gave them to the gentleman, it doent matter. We are supposed to help those that cannot help themselves	It isn't even about the boots. It is about a police officer that showed the world how to be like Jesus. Thank you so much officer for [...] telling us by your act of kindness that Jesus still lives in the heart of man.	Even with all the new details that have come out concerning the homeless man, your compassionate heart for action is what makes you a hero!
Linking 'barefoot again' news	The homeless guy is bare foot again! <a href="http://news.yahoo.com/bl-ogs/lookout/nypd-homeless-man-boots-tillman-134758145.html">http://news.yahoo.com/bl-ogs/lookout/nypd-homeless-man-boots-tillman-134758145.html</a>	Those shoes are hidden, Jeffrey Hillman, the 54-year-old homeless man, told the New York Times. 'They are worth a lot of money.' <a href="http://news.yahoo.com/bl-ogs/lookout[...].age">http://news.yahoo.com/bl-ogs/lookout[...].age</a>	<a href="http://thestir.cafemom.com/in_the_news/147491/homeless_man_barefoot_again_after?utm_medium=sm&amp;utm_source=facebook&amp;utm_content=thestir_fanpage">http://thestir.cafemom.com/in_the_news/147491/homeless_man_barefoot_again_after?utm_medium=sm&amp;utm_source=facebook&amp;utm_content=thestir_fanpage</a>	OLD NEWS .... and the latest was NY TIMES caught up to homeless man, who was barefoot again	<a href="http://news.yahoo.com/bl-ogs/lookout/homeless-man-boots-nypd-apartment-155517489.html">http://news.yahoo.com/bl-ogs/lookout/homeless-man-boots-nypd-apartment-155517489.html</a>
Getting more viral	Respect fm Russia! Policeman is a good man. Let God bless him!	This news was published along with picture in Pakistan's newspaper (DAWN) today? [...] we appreciate this act of kindness for Allah is kind to human being	A good samaritan in our time! Bless you! Greetings from Norway	Hi I'm from Sydney Australia I can't believe what this police officer he is so kind not like the up your self cops in Sydney good on you officer your number 1	im from Ukraine, its a good policeman, good man with big heart

Source: Elaboration of the author on Facebook public data, 2012.

Notes: The third space includes comments from one period, 2–10 December. In this period, comments on 'God' and on the 'DePrimo' were still largely present (see Table 2). Grammar mistakes in comments have not been edited to preserve their original form.

he—and only he—can tell us something, because the underlying frameworks from which we read the story do not involve the poor as an active character. Commentators are unconsciously aware of this and they attack Mr Hillman in order to remove him from a narrative in which he no longer fits, from a story that they—‘despite’ what happened (Table 3)—still wish to like. Mr Hillman’s removal takes place through his re-characterisation. He is no longer the ‘dispossessed’ and ‘deserving’ poor—but an ungrateful and ‘undeserving’ being (Johnsen et al. 2005a: 324). Since he does not want to wear the boots, he is seen as responsible for his plight, and therefore undeserving of Officer DePrimo’s care.

### The spectacle of the poor

The analysis of the spatial elongations of DePrimo’s practice of care has given insights into the discursive and moral domains surrounding the story. However, if taken as a whole, these spaces form also what I would like to call the ‘spectacle of the poor’: a powerful representation that reinforces the framings around ‘care’ and the ‘poor’ as revealed by the analysis. The ‘spectacle of the poor’ is relevant because the carer and the recipient of care are not given, but socially constructed (Green and Lawson 2011). Goffman has pictured this process very clearly:

The normal and the stigmatised are not persons, but rather perspectives. These are generated in social situations during mixed contacts by virtue of the unrealised norms that are likely to play upon the encounter. (Goffman 1963: 164)

The productive and two-way relation that occurs between the ‘social’ and its frames is

sustained by a logic that encompasses the analysed case. Images such that of DePrimo, or videos such as those produced by the ‘Kony 2012’ campaign,<sup>5</sup> share the capacity to maintain ‘the distance which separates Us from Them, from their reality’ (Žižek 2002: 13). The ‘spectacle’ does not ask its viewers to engage, but only to accept the given domain on which it relies. The framework/domain can either be carefully designed, as in the ‘Kony 2012’ case, or it can be derived from religion and popular culture and then appropriated, as the NYPD did. In any case, it sets the logic of the show, where we experience the ‘Other’ (the poor) only as ‘deprived of its Otherness’ (Žižek 2002: 11). In this sense, the spectacle of the poor does not serve to confront the poor but precisely to avoid the phenomena of poverty.

The spectacle is successful because it works as a powerful *desiring machine*. This is a concept derived from Deleuze and Guattari which, in its most basic terms, could be understood as a set of elements (discursive or not) that, once connected to each other, are productive of engagement with the self at the emotional, physical and psychological level.<sup>6</sup> The spectacle is a *desiring machine* because it connects things, it makes us feel good (and wish to be good) and it contributes in producing ‘what we take to be reality’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2009; Holland 2010: 68). At its most basic level, the spectacle elicits the masses in the affective atmosphere it creates, similar to a collective experience that keeps everybody alive for a few seconds. *Assembling* with the machine, we became part of it, of its discursive mantra and material form, and we contribute to its stabilisation: the machine territorialises and becomes stable, acceptable and non-questionable. The more the spectacle grows, the more we feel the desire to be part of it, because we

perceive it as an *event* worth joining (see Table 3, last row). However, if an ‘event’ can be defined as ‘a rare surprise that breaks with how the background is organized’ (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 21), DePrimo’s act and the attention that it attracted cannot be considered an ‘event’. Instead, they fit precisely into the background of how Westerns canonically approach care for ‘the homeless’—as someone in need who depends on someone else caring for her/him (Lancione 2014). The spectacle thus disguises a non-event as a seductive powerful narrative, and this is why the desiring machine is powerfully able to entangle the self within its logic. It is a machine that does not ask to question its premise, but only to accept its comfortable tale. The real *event* arose when Mr Hillman walked into the scene, speaking for the first time, still wearing no shoes. In that moment, the *desiring machine* cracked, allowing one to see behind the scenes, to being captured in the *event of the poor*, and forced to face the heterogeneous experience of homelessness rather than its simulacra (Desjarlais 1997; Gowan 2010; Robinson 2011). This line of flight, however, soon becomes re-territorialised. The machine restored its balance by banishing Mr Hillman from the story: the show must go on—‘despite’ Mr Hillman’s behaviour.

The ‘spectacle of the poor’ speaks, moreover, to the concerns related to the ‘visibility/invisibility’ of poverty. Exposing a specific practice of care to a broader audience, the spectacle illuminates its characters: a ‘good cop’ and either a deserving or undeserving homeless man. If the latter is true, the spectacle reproduces a canonical take on the poor’s ‘productivity, dangerousness and personal culpability’ (Takahashi 1996: 292), which stigmatises them and contributes to widen the distance between ‘us’ and ‘them’ of

which Žižek is talking about. If not, ‘the poor’ is seen sympathetically, as an unfortunate being, or just ignored. In this sense, the dynamics underlying the spectacle of the poor shows us that the visibility/invisibility of ‘the poor’ is not necessarily relevant *taken per se*. What is relevant is *how* ‘the poor’ are rendered as such, and *if* their visibility/invisibility status is able to challenge the dominant frames. The literature provides examples in which a positive affirmation of visibility is possible—for instance in the Food not Bombs initiative in the USA, where homeless people choose to expose their condition in order to reclaim their right to the city (Heynen 2010). The analysed case, however, shows exactly the opposite. Here, visibility goes bad not only because people do not want ‘unsolicited reminders of the problems endured by others’ (Johnsen et al. 2005b: 332), but also because that visibility is achieved through expropriation, violent media reverberation and a pitiful language that knows nothing of *how* Mr Hillman is, what he thinks or desires (Lancione 2013b).

### Concluding remarks

This paper has shown how a simple act of care can be elongated beyond itself, creating wider relational spaces that, if considered altogether, form a critical spectacularisation of poverty (and of care itself). In the analysed case, the NYPD has appropriated DePrimo’s story as much as Jesus did with the Samaritan. They both became a parable: a discursive and moral allegory carrying an affective dimension, which also defines its (bio)political power (Anderson 2012). That is a power working mostly at the unconscious level, which does not need careful designing in order to take place. However, it does work

and it does take place, establishing a spectacle that distracts from the real issue at stake, urban poverty itself. The cultural danger in this passage is clear: we think we know what helping a homeless person means not through any encounter with them, but through the representation of this specific meeting, which in the end only causes further stigmatisation.

The case analysed in the paper differs from traditional studies of ‘care’ under many perspectives. Canonical political economy approaches have shown how allegedly policies of ‘caring for’ are used to control and annihilate the space of survival for ‘the poor’ in the city (Amster 2008; Mitchell 1997; N. Smith 1998); feminist scholarship has unfolded the subtle dynamics of care and the uneven gender balance they produce (England and Lawson 2005; Gilligan 1982; Lawson 2007) and more recent ‘performative’ approaches have cast a new and less apocalyptic light upon the nuanced spaces where caring for ‘the poor’ takes place (Clope et al. 2010; Darling 2011; DeVerteuil 2012). However, these contributions have mainly sought to understand care within its internal boundaries, through the study of its ‘inner’ spaces, where ‘giver’ and ‘receiver’ meet. To a certain extent, as I have argued, this is true also for those works that have engaged with complex and stretch out networks of care (Silk 1998): the focus is mainly between the parts and their functional role, not upon the wider and extended ‘ecologies of intelligence’ (Thrift 2005: 469) within which care is constituted in its multiple facets. The case analysed in the paper has added a layer of complexity to the aforementioned works showing the ‘elongations’ of care beyond itself. What spaces of engagement/disengagement does care produce once it is massively broadcast to distant others? What are the

emotional bases that grant reaction to apparently insignificant gestures of benevolence, and what is their rationale? More importantly, what form of power is at play in the exposure of care through the media, and in particularly the web? What politics is at stake?

The paper offers some provisional answers to these questions. Analysing the hundreds of thousands of interventions in DePrimo’s case, I have argued that the elongation of care takes place in particular spaces, where care is *captured, viralised and revealed*. These spaces, if taken altogether, can be understood as a peculiar kind of spectacle around poverty and care. The political relevance of this spectacle consists in its power of reproducing the framing upon which it is based, thus constituting a subtle *desiring machine* hard to escape. The question then is no longer to show how the machine works—which it has been done—but to find a way of fighting it, in order to reduce the possibility of assembling again in the same way (Patton 2000). The spectacle as a desiring machine is made up of heterogeneous matters that, if disentangled and plugged in different ways, could change the spectacle itself. These things operate from the molar to the molecular (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). They comprise Facebook and other media, which should be deemed responsible for the powerful space they provide and occupy. There is the NYPD, and other similar institutions, which should be more careful in their usage of social media as marketing tools. However, waiting for a change from the molar level is at best myopic. The molecular, the level of the ‘click’ on the ‘like’ button is, then, the political context to be explored. This is the field where a *phronetic* form of ethics is possible, a molecular moral practice that emerges from knowing what is at stake in the particular contexts of action:

The person possessing practical wisdom (*phronimos*) has knowledge of how to behave in each particular circumstance that can never be equated with or reduced to knowledge of general truths. *Phronesis* is a sense of the ethically practical rather than a kind of science. (Flyvbjerg 2001: 57)

Each of the investigated spaces can help us reflect on the contextually based consequences of dealing with the couplet ‘care–poor’ on the street, in translating it into static representations, or in joining the crowd commenting on its exposure. New and relevant research questions arise from taking a *phronetic* approach to the analysed spaces: why do we photograph care and poverty? What is the meaning of showing ‘the poor’ without actually encountering them? What is at stake in appropriating and posting, celebrating and condemning? How does the agency of contemporary social networks intervene in our understanding of ‘caring for the poor’? How could we practically enact the proposed ethical praxis, or what else could be imagined to challenge the power of the spectacle of the poor? Mobile phones, comments, Facebook, etc. are all mediators in a social field we have the power to translate in a sense or another. These—largely taken-for-granted—things need urgently to be taken into account by scholars and practitioners interested in building a non-vertical, liberating and attentive understanding of caring for ‘the poor’.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Leo, Ash and Francesca for the support and Russell for the invaluable help. Thanks also to Stewart Clegg, Geoff DeVerteuil, David Conradson and the anonymous reviewers for the helpful comments provided.

### Notes

1. Moreover, supporters advocated for Officer DePrimo as ‘Time’ person of the year and an ad hoc Facebook fanpage was created for this purpose.
2. Although comments in the third period are considerably less than in the other two, they still contribute actively to characterise the overall discussion and are a fundamental source of information to understand what happen after the NYT’s article on Mr Hillman.
3. The Samaritan is ‘foreigner’ since the Jews, at the time of the Parable, were forceful enemies of the Samaritans.
4. An online version of the parable is available at: <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A25-37&version=NIV> (retrieved January 2013).
5. A short film produced by Invisible Children, Inc., to promote the arrest of the African militia leader Joseph Kony. The video can be watched at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4MnpzG5Sqc> (retrieved August 2013).
6. The distinction between these levels is obviously purely analytical and it serves the purpose of introducing a ‘heavy’ concept (the ‘desiring machine’) in the most accessible way.

### References

- Amin, A. (2012) *Land of Strangers*. Cambridge: Polity press.
- Amster, R. (2008) *Lost in Space: The Criminalization, Globalization and Urban Ecology of Homelessness*. New York: LFB Scholarly.
- Anderson, B. (2009) Affective atmospheres, *Emotion, Society and Space* 2(2): 71–81.
- Anderson, B. (2012) Affect and biopower: towards a politics of life, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37(1): 28–43.
- Anderson, B. and Harrison, P. (2010) The promise of non-representational theories, in Anderson, B. and Harrison, P. (eds) *Taking-Place: Non-Representational Theories and Geography*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Callon, M. (1986) Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay, in Law, J. (ed.) *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Cloke, P., May, J. and Johnsen, S. (2010) *Sweet Up Lives? Re-envisioning the Homeless City*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Conradson, D. (2003a) Geographies of care: spaces, practices, experiences, *Social & Cultural Geography* 4(4): 451–454.
- Conradson, D. (2003b) Spaces of care in the city: the place of a community drop-in centre, *Social & Cultural Geography* 4(4): 507–525.
- Crang, M. (2005) Analysing qualitative materials, in Flowerdew, R. and David, M. (eds) *Methods in Human Geography*, 2nd edn. Edinburgh: Pearson.
- Curran, K., Graham, S. and Temple, C. (2011) Advertising on Facebook, *International Journal of E-Business Development* 1(1): 26–33.
- Darling, J. (2011) Giving space: care, generosity and belonging in a UK asylum drop-in centre, *Geoforum* 42(4): 408–417.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus*. New York: Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2009) Balance-sheet for ‘desiring-machines’, in Lotringer, S. (ed.) *Felix Guattari. Chaosology. Texts and Interviews 1972–1977*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).
- Desjarlais, R. (1997) *Shelter Blues: Sanity and Selfhood Among the Homeless*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- DeVerteuil, G. (2006) The local state and homeless shelters: beyond revanchism?, *Cities* 23(2): 109–120.
- DeVerteuil, G. (2012) Does the punitive need the supportive? A sympathetic critique of current grammars of urban injustice, *Antipode*. doi:10.1111/anti.12001.
- DeVerteuil, G., May, J. and von Mahs, J. (2009) Complexity not collapse: recasting the geographies of homelessness in a ‘punitive’ age, *Progress in Human Geography* 33(5): 646–666.
- DeVerteuil, G. and Wilton, R. (2009) Spaces of abeyance, care and survival: the addiction treatment system as a site of ‘regulatory richness’, *Political Geography* 28(8): 463–472.
- England, K. and Lawson, V. (2005) Feminist analyses of work: rethinking the boundaries, gendering and spatiality of work, in Nelson, L. and Seager, J. (eds) *A Companion to Feminist Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 77–92.
- Fine, M. and Glendinning, C. (2005) Dependence, independence or inter-dependence? Revisiting the concepts of ‘care’ and ‘dependency’, *Ageing and Society* 25(4): 601–621.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2001) *Making Social Science Matter. Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fyfe, N.R. and Milligan, C. (2003) Out of the shadows: exploring contemporary geographies of voluntarism, *Progress in Human Geography* 27(4): 397–413.
- Gilligan, C. (1982) *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1963) *Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. London: Penguin.
- Gowan, T. (2010) *Hobos, Hustlers and Back-Sliders: Homeless in San Francisco*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Green, M. and Lawson, V. (2011) Recentring care: interrogating the commodification of care, *Social & Cultural Geography* 12(6): 639–654.
- Heynen, N. (2010) Cooking up non-violent civil-disobedient direct action for the hungry: ‘food not bombs’ and the resurgence of radical democracy in the US, *Urban Studies* 47(6): 1225–1240.
- Holland, E. (2010) Desire + social-production, in Parr, A. (ed.) *The Deleuze Dictionary*, Revised edn. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Johnsen, S., Cloke, P. and May, J. (2005a) Day centres for homeless people: spaces of care or fear?, *Social & Cultural Geography* 6(6): 787–811.
- Johnsen, S., Cloke, P. and May, J. (2005b) Transitory spaces of care: serving homeless people on the street, *Health & Place* 11(4): 323–336.
- Lancione, M. (2013a) Homeless people and the city of abstract machines. Assemblage thinking and the performative approach to homelessness, *Area* 45(3): 358–364.
- Lancione, M. (2013b) How is homelessness?, *European Journal of Homelessness* 7(2): 237–248.
- Lancione, M. (2014) Entanglements of faith: discourses, practices of care and homeless people in an Italian city of saints, *Urban Studies*. doi:10.1177/0042098013514620.
- Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lawson, V. (2007) Geographies of care and responsibility, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97(1): 1–11.
- Lawson, V. and Elwood, S. (2014) Encountering poverty: space, class, and poverty politics, *Antipode* 46(1): 209–228.
- Milligan, C. and Wiles, J. (2010) Landscapes of care, *Progress in Human Geography* 34(6): 736–754.
- Milligan, C., Atkinson, S., Skinner, M. and Wiles, J. (2007) Geographies of care: a commentary. *New Zealand Geographer* 63(2): 135–140.
- Mitchell, D. (1997) The annihilation of space by law: the roots and implications of anti-homeless laws in the United States, *Antipode* 29(3): 303–335.



- Mitchell, D. and Heynen, N. (2009) The geography of survival and the right to the city: speculations on surveillance, legal innovation, and the criminalization of intervention, *Urban Geography* 30(6): 611–632.
- Mol, A. (2008) *The Logic of Care: Health and the Problem of Patient Choice*. London: Routledge.
- Newsday (2012) *Larry DePrimo honored by NYPD*. <http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/larry-deprimo-honored-by-nypd-1.4276919?firstfree=yes> (accessed December 2012).
- NYDN (2012) *Barefoot homeless man immortalized in photo isn't actually homeless*, <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/homeless-shoe-guy-history-rejecting-article-1.1212779> (accessed December 2012).
- NYP (2012) *Officer's inspiring kindness is NYC at its finest*, <http://nypost.com/2012/11/30/officers-inspiring-kindness-is-nyc-at-its-finest/> (accessed December 2012).
- NYPD (2012a) *New York police department Facebook's fan page—first photo of DePrimo*, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=388162557927199&set=a.274991665910956.65258.262068223869967&type=3&theater> (accessed December 2012).
- NYPD (2012b) *New York police department facebook's Fan Page—second photo of DePrimo*, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=388820624528059&set=a.267916766618446.63768.262068223869967&type=1&theater> (accessed December 2012).
- NYT (2012a) *Photo of officer giving boots to barefoot man warms hearts online*, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/29/nyregion/photo-of-officer-giving-boots-to-barefoot-man-warms-hearts-online.html?\\_r=3&](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/29/nyregion/photo-of-officer-giving-boots-to-barefoot-man-warms-hearts-online.html?_r=3&) (accessed December 2012).
- NYT (2012b) *Homeless man is grateful for officer's gift of boots. But he again is barefoot*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/03/nyregion/barefoot-homeless-man-says-hes-grateful-for-boots.html> (accessed December 2012).
- Parr, H. (2000) Interpreting the 'hidden social geographies' of mental health: ethnographies of inclusion and exclusion in semi-institutional places, *Health & place* 6(3): 225–237.
- Parr, H. (2003) Medical geography: care and caring, *Progress in Human Geography* 27(2): 212–221.
- Patton, P. (2000) *Deleuze & the Political*. London: Routledge.
- Robinson, C. (2011) *Beside One's Self. Homelessness Felt and Lived*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Rose, G. (2007) *Visual Methodologies*. London: Sage.
- Silk, J. (1998) Caring at a distance, *Philosophy & Geography* 1(2): 165–182.
- Silk, J. (2000) Caring at a distance: (im)partiality, moral motivation and the ethics of representation - introduction, *Ethics, Place & Environment* 3(3): 303–309.
- Silk, J. (2004) Caring at a distance: gift theory, aid chains and social movements, *Social & Cultural Geography* 5 (2): 229–251.
- Smith, D.M. (1998) How far should we care? On the spatial scope of beneficence, *Progress in Human Geography* 22(1): 15–38.
- Smith, N. (1998) Giuliani time: the revanchist 1990s, *Social text* 57: 1–20.
- Southgate, D., Westoby, N. and Page, G. (2010) Creative determinants of viral video viewing, *International Journal of Advertising* 29(3): 349.
- Takahashi, L.M. (1996) A decade of understanding homelessness in the USA: from characterization to representation, *Progress in Human Geography* 20(3): 291–310.
- Thrift, N. (1996) *Spatial Formation*. London: Sage.
- Thrift, N. (2004) Intensities of feeling: towards a spatial politics of affect, *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography* 86(1): 57–78.
- Thrift, N. (2005) From born to made: technology, biology and space, *Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers* 30: 463–476.
- Valentine, G. (2008) Living with difference: reflections on geographies of encounter, *Progress in Human Geography* 32(3): 323–337.
- Wallsten, K. (2010) 'Yes we can': how online viewership, blog discussion, campaign statements, and mainstream media coverage produced a viral video phenomenon, *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 7(2-3): 163–181.
- Wetherell, M. and Potter, J. (1988) Discourse analysis and the identification of interpretative repertoires, in Antaki, C. (ed.) *Analysing Everyday Explanation: A Casebook of Methods*. London: Sage.
- Žižek, S. (2002) *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!* London: Verso.

### Abstract translations

*Le spectacle du pauvre. Ou: « Wow !! Formidable. C'est bon de savoir que les gens se sentent concernés ! »*

La nuit du 14 novembre 2012, un policier du service de police de la ville de New York (NYPD) a

rencontré un sans-abri pendant qu'il était de service dans les alentours de Times Square. Il lui a donné une paire de bottes et pendant qu'il accomplissait cet acte, il a été photographié par un touriste. La photo a été publiée sur Facebook et a reçu plus de 1.6 m de visites en l'espace de quelques jours. Cet article examine les raisons pour lesquelles cette image et cette histoire en particulier se sont propagées, ainsi que les médias le disent, comme un « virus ». L'article enquête sur les espaces qui ont émergé dans le prolongement des médias sur le programme de santé de Deprimo et, introduisant la notion de « spectacle du pauvre », il argumente que ce cas particulier simplifie les cadres dominants occidentaux au sujet des questions de « soins » et des « sans-logis ». Les conséquences politiques et culturelles de ces cadres sont examinées et des réflexions sur la façon de les aborder sont présentées.

**Mots-clefs:** Spectacle du pauvre, soins, sans-logis, le bon Samaritain, NYPD, Facebook.

*El espectáculo de los pobres. O bien: "¡Guau! Impresionante. ¡Es bueno saber que a la gente le importa!"*

En la noche del 14 de noviembre de 2012 un oficial de policía del Departamento de Policía de Nueva York se encontró con una persona sin hogar mientras desarrollaba funciones alrededor de Times Square. Él le dio un par de botas y, al hacerlo, fue fotografiado por un turista. La foto fue publicada en Facebook y, en tan solo algunos días, recibió más de 1.6 millones de visitas. El documento revela las razones por las cuales esta historia e imagen en particular se han hecho, como los medios de comunicación lo han expresado, "virales". El trabajo investiga los espacios que han surgido en la amplia cobertura de medios de comunicación de la práctica de cuidado de Deprimo e, introduciendo la noción de "espectáculo de los pobres", sostiene que este caso específico simplifica los marcos occidentales dominantes alrededor de la materia de "cuidado" y de "la falta de vivienda". Se investigan las consecuencias políticas y culturales de estos marcos, y se ofrecen reflexiones sobre cómo hacerles frente.

**Palabras claves:** Espectáculo de los pobres, Cuidado, Falta de vivienda, El buen samaritano, NYPD, Facebook.