

Name: Anna Grace Calhoun

Year: 4

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Supporting Assignment 5:

After reading Tipper Scenario 2:

What were the hardest decisions for you to make? Why?:

Honestly, most of these decisions seemed more like “apparent moral dilemmas” (as Hugo Slim describes them) than actual moral dilemmas. For example, the situation where you had to decide whether or not to go into a tent when it may have women (whom you are not supposed to visit without a male guardian) seemed more like a tough choice with incomplete information – because I didn’t know if there were women in the tent. One of the hardest decisions for me was the first one about the headscarves, because I wasn’t sure how much the quality of them would impact their effectiveness at fighting the cold, particularly since people typically lose the most heat from their heads. I ended up deciding to go with the cheaper headscarves for all, because the certain ability to provide a better option for all the women seemed better than banking on the uncertain element of how much utility (beyond aesthetics) the nicer scarves would provide. In general, I tried to make choices that prioritized potentially lifesaving action, while maintaining order and stability (I did not choose anything I felt might cause unrest or conflict, like creating a separate lines for getting clothing).

What were some frameworks talked about in the Slim Introduction section that could help you make these kinds of ‘hard choices’?:

Slim talked about how most relief agencies are multi-mandate, so they operate based on a range of moral principles which will inevitably compete with one another in many situations. Something that could be helpful, which he references through his discussions of the need for ethical frameworks, is to try to come up with organizational procedures and definitions to help aid workers make tough choices. One way you could do this is outline common, likely to arise moral dilemmas (like, should we provide aid when we knowingly will be contributing to a war time economy?) and outline parameters that should be used to help make the decisions and which moral foundations the aid organization wants to elevate. This holds aid workers accountable to following the provided guidelines, but also may reduce their anxiety around having to make these “choiceless choices” completely independently. I think defining success could also really help when it comes to making these kinds of decisions. As Slim says, there are two very different viewpoints about what makes aid good: Are programs good simply because they include good deeds or are they good only when they produce good consequences at a wider level? Essentially, organizations should be clear about whether they use consequentialist success metrics and try to put some forethought into how the humanitarian principles can fit within a consequentialist framework.

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Is there anything else you would like us to know or to share with us about the course so far that we can take into consideration as we move into the second half of the semester? (optional question)

No! I'm really enjoying the class so far and am excited about the case studies, where I'm hoping we'll apply the broad concepts we've learned to more specific, complex scenarios.