What motivates mass opinions toward foreign aid in donor country publics? Many advocates of boosting development assistance blame the alleged shortfall in aid on racial resentment among donor publics and, in particular, the purported mass belief that the non-white, foreign recipients of aid are wasteful and underserving of aid. In contrast, aid skeptics claim that overly generous donor commitments are driven by widespread racial paternalism, whereby the poor recipients of aid are seen as unable to develop without the assistance of white, Western providers. We use a survey experiment of American whites that manipulates the purported race of aid recipients to explore which of these contradictory charges is true. We find that American whites are actually more supportive of aid to black Africans than they are to white Eastern Europeans, even when objective need of the recipients is equivalent across the two treatment groups. We show that a prejudicial racial paternalism that underestimates the economic agency of black Africans drives this surprising pattern of behavior. Our findings are some of the first in political science to show that mass racial prejudice may manifest as paternalism, rather than sheer resentment.

Racial Paternalism and Mass Support for Foreign Aid

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"the hand that receives is always under the one that gives."

— African proverb

In recent years, a number of public intellectuals, politicians, and even pop culture icons have waged an increasingly visible debate on the merits of foreign aid. Aid advocates want to increase funding for development assistance in order to “make poverty history,” while aid critics bemoan wasted tax dollars and even counterproductive outcomes in the fight against underdevelopment (Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009; Sachs 2005). In the throes of this Great Aid Debate, contenders often levy accusations of racial prejudice, attributing problems in the aid regime to chauvinisms of varying kinds. Many aid proponents blame the alleged shortfall in Western funding on racial resentment and, in particular, the widely held mass belief that the non-white, foreign recipients of aid are undeserving (Sachs 2005). In contrast, aid skeptics claim that donor commitments are driven by widespread racial paternalism, whereby recipients are seen as unable to develop without the assistance of white, Western providers (Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009). Overall, it seems that donor country publics are damned if they do and damned if they don’t.

These contradictory accusations touch on debates that exist within the literature on the psychology of racial prejudice, but ultimately neither side invokes empirical evidence to substantiate its allegations. Their charges thus raise important unanswered questions about the mass psychology of prejudice and redistributive policy preferences. Most specifically, does prejudice, of either the paternalistic or resentment variety, shape the way people reason about foreign aid? Scholarship in mass political psychology, the sociology of race, and behavioral economics has produced no evidence regarding the directional impact, if any, of prejudice on
mass attitudes toward government assistance for impoverished foreigners. More broadly, when do mass publics exhibit prejudice as paternalism toward an outgroup and when do they exhibit prejudice as resentment? The aid skeptics’ assertion that racism may manifest itself as paternalism, rather than sheer resentment, has received scant attention among scholars of mass opinion and prejudice.

In this paper, we test hypotheses related to these contradictory claims and allegations. We use experimental data from a survey conducted on a nationally representative sample of the U.S. public. We find that racial paternalism is a powerful driver of Americans’ willingness to devote resources to the foreign poor. In particular, our respondents were more supportive of aid to black African recipients than to white Eastern Europeans. Mediation analysis reveals that this disproportionate generosity toward black Africans is rooted in paternalistic biases that downplay their agency and ability to shape their economic fate in lieu of foreign assistance.

Our study contributes to existing scholarship in five main ways. First, it places rare emphasis on the idea that prejudice-as-paternalism can shape individuals’ policy preferences. Political scientists have levied accusations of racial paternalism in policy and institutional configurations (Soss et al 2011; VanDeVeer 1986), and small literatures examining the phenomenon of out-group paternalism exist in psychology (e.g. Fiske et al. 2002) and sociology (e.g. Jackman 1994). However, studies of mass prejudice as resentment are nearly non-existent in political science; scholarly thinking about mass bigotry has been dominated by the prejudice-as-resentment paradigm. We view this as a serious handicap to our discipline’s efforts to account for people’s attitudes toward “others.” By focusing so heavily on resentment, political scientists miss the opportunity to develop a fuller appreciation for the multidimensionality of prejudice and how it shapes policy views.
Second, our study moves the literature on how race shapes mass support for redistribution into the international sphere. To date, research in political psychology and the sociology of race has overwhelmingly focused on the effects of racial bias on support for domestic government assistance programs (e.g. Gilens 1999; Sniderman and Piazza 1993). An experimental study that manipulates the race of the foreign recipients of government assistance is thus long overdue and has an important conceptual payoff. By shifting the focus to a non-domestic recipient arena, we can isolate the impact of racial prejudice when inter-group contact and status competition are non-existent. Revealingly, we find that, when these factors are absent, prejudice manifests itself in paternalistic ways, not in resentful ways.

Third, we advance the miniscule theoretical literature on the causes of foreign aid attitudes by introducing race-of-recipient as an exogenous influence on mass support for development assistance. To date, research has largely pointed to citizens’ ideologies or foreign policy worldviews as the primary source of aid attitudes (Holsti; Hurwitz 1987; Kull and Destler 1999), yet these factors are potentially endogenous themselves—both to aid attitudes and important omitted variables. Efforts to identify exogenous influences on aid attitudes have been limited to information levels (Gilens 2001) and how aid is channeled to recipients (Milner and Tingley 2011). We add race-of-recipient as an important exogenous factor and use experimental methods to prove it.

Fourth, we isolate the effects of people’s views about poverty in general on their preference for redistributive policy. Some studies of white American racial prejudice have considered the role of attitudes toward the poor (e.g. Sniderman and Hagen 1985). Other works have focused on how the roots of poverty are perceived (Alston and Dean 1972; Will 1993). But the connections between these values and racial biases, especially paternalistic ones, remain
largely unclear. Here, we can parse out the way in which people view the poor—in either resentful or paternalistic terms—and we also manipulate race so that these different dimensions can be examined individually and interactively.

Finally, our findings could explain some as of yet unexplored empirical patterns. Do private donors give more to black-majority countries that suffer a natural disaster than to other types of countries? Do aid agencies seeking to raise private contributions from mass publics speak to paternalistic sentiments in how they appeal to potential donors? These questions could be answered with observational data, and we discuss these avenues for future research in the conclusion to this paper.

Racial Biases and Mass Policy Attitudes

Prejudice as Resentment

Racial prejudice-as-hostility has been the dominant framework in scholarly work on mass prejudice. Most work on racially heterogeneous societies, not just on the US case but in comparative work as well, centers on overt conflict (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Myrdal 1964). For example, Allport’s classic study of racial prejudice defined prejudice as “an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization…toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group” ([1954] 1979: 9). A large subsequent literature documented this antipathy toward racial out-groups (i.e. Kinder and Sears 1981; McConahay 1986; Peffley, Hurwitz and Sniderman 1997; White 2007).

This prejudice-as-hostility framework has been particularly important in work on how race and inter-group relations shape mass attitudes about government redistribution. In the U.S.

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1 See Jackman (1994: 23-58) for an intellectual history of inter-group conflict studies that backs this assertion about the literature.
case, studies of American whites’ attitudes toward African-Americans and the welfare state have largely focused on “racial resentment”—that is, indignation toward a racial out-group based on its perceived unworthiness to receive and/or misuse of beneficial treatments (Kinder and Sanders 1996). American whites, in particular, are often found to be less supportive of government spending programs when the recipients of financial assistance are described as black (Bobo and Kleugel 1993; Feldman and Huddy 2005).² The belief that blacks are lazier than whites and more likely to waste state benefits is a recurring stereotype revealed in this literature (Gilens 1999; Winter 2006). Comparative work takes a similar approach; a large literature demonstrates that government redistribution and public goods are less prevalent in racially diverse societies. Individuals are less willing to have their tax dollars redistributed to racial out-group members than to in-group members (Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote 2001; Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner, and Weinstein 2009).

To date, there has been no direct research on whether racial prejudice drives mass attitudes about foreign aid in donor countries, but some scholars have made ready use of the prevailing, racial resentment paradigm. Most notably, the aid activist community’s leading intellect, Jeffrey Sachs, attributes what he sees as a shortfall in aid funding to “an amazing reservoir of deep prejudices” toward Africans that has “become accepted as truths by the broad public” (Sachs 2005: 310, 309). Sachs mimics this alleged “conventional rich-world wisdom about Africa” with the following:

² Not all analyses uncover a negative predisposition toward providing government aid to out-group members. In fact, some experimental studies suggest a greater willingness among whites to offer government assistance to African-Americans than to whites (Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Pager and Freese 2004). Short of claiming that these results stem from imperfect survey instruments, scholars have offered no satisfying explanations for this finding (Huddy and Feldman 2009). We propose that aid skeptics may offer the answer to this puzzle when they level accusations of donors’ racial paternalism.
… if we actually gave [Africa more] aid, where would it go? Right down the drain, if the past is any guide. … Africa is corrupt and riddled with authoritarianism. It lacks modern values and the institutions of a free market economy needed to achieve success. In fact, Africa’s morals are so broken down that it is no surprise AIDS has run out of control (page 309).

Prejudice as Paternalism

In contrast to the prejudice-as-resentment paradigm, the scholarly voice forwarding the racial-prejudice-as-paternalism view—in foreign aid attitudes or otherwise—has been far quieter. The most important work on the topic has occurred in psychology, where research on “benevolent prejudice” has emerged in recent years (Fiske, Xu and Cuddy 1999; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick and Xu 2002; Fiske, Cuddy and Glick 2006). Some historical accounts of race in the American South highlight the pervasiveness of paternalism among whites toward blacks (Alston and Ferrie 1985; Johnson 1957; Myrdal 1964; Van den Berghe 1970). Media studies have also identified patterns of racial paternalism in contemporary news coverage (Meyers 2004; Ramasubramanian and Oliver 2007). Sociologists increasingly recognize paternalism as a meaningful dimension of racial prejudice (Dovidio, Glick and Rudman 2005; Jackman 1994; Trapagnier 2001).

For its part, work in political science has alleged that paternalism exists in social policy (Soss et al 2011; Van de Veer 1986). Ultimately, however, research by political psychologists on whether prejudice-as-paternalism may structure mass attitudes toward outgroups and toward racially-charged policies is non-existent. Moreover, existing scholarly work on paternalism reveals little about when individuals are likely to hold prejudices as paternalism and when they hold prejudice as resentment.

In the foreign aid literature, there are also the frequent (but empirically unsupported) accusations of racial paternalism that aid skeptics levy at aid advocates. William Easterly,
Sachs’s intellectual archrival, levels the paternalist epithet rather liberally. The title of his book, the *locus classicus* of aid skepticism, is *The White Man’s Burden*. It thereby evokes Kipling’s classic caricature of the racial paternalism behind U.S. imperialism and foreign policy. In it, Easterly asserts the following: “The most infuriating thing … is how patronizing they are (usually unconsciously). Here’s a secret: anytime you hear a Western politician or activist say ‘we,’ they mean ‘we whites’—today’s version of the White Man’s Burden” (Easterly 2006: 26). Many other aid skeptics besides Easterly, including some African intellectuals, point out that paternalistic attitudes and practices underlie foreign aid (Beran 2008; Holdt 2003; Mamdani 2009; Moyo 2009; Wainaina 2005).

**The Argument**

*Defining Paternalism*

In the small literature that does exist on prejudice as paternalism, applied definitions of the concept vary. Most hold the following two elements in common: (1) benevolence, and not strictly hostility or resentment, toward an outgroup along with some concern for its well-being\(^3\); (2) a belief that, because of its superiority, one’s ingroup can better promote the good of an outgroup than could the outgroup on its own.\(^4\) Importantly, the benefactor in this scenario claims to be better able than the beneficiary to judge what is in the beneficiary’s best interest.

We contend that a defining element of paternalism remains overlooked—that of the perceived agency of the outgroup. We define paternalism as the belief that a group, because of its perceived childlike qualities, lacks *agency* in shaping its own fate and, in turn, needs *guidance*

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\(^3\) Fiske, Xu and Cuddy 1999; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick and Xu 2002; Fiske, Cuddy and Glick 2006; Phalet and Poppe 1997; VanDeVeer 1986.

\(^4\) Jackman 1994; Fiske et al. 2002; VanDeVeer 1986; Fitzgerald 2011.
from the superior intellects and resources of the in-group. Ultimately, it is not benevolence that is constitutive of paternalism, but rather it is an underestimation of the outgroup’s ability to be an active participant in determining its own lot.5

Our definition clearly distinguishes outgroup paternalism from outgroup resentment. Resenters actually view an outgroup as having high agency, but they view the outgroup as exercising it poorly. From the resentful viewpoint, outgroups squander benefits and threaten the ingroup. They are thus ultimately resented because of how they exercise their agency, not because they lack it.

Finally, a fully non-prejudicial view would be one that views the outgroup as being able to exercise effective, high-quality agency and, if the outgroup is needy, deserving of benevolence. At its most extreme, a belief in the “helicopter-dropping-cash model” of financial assistance would prevail, whereby outgroups are trusted to effectively use the most liquid form of contributions. More typically, believe in granting contributions after receiving input from the recipients about what their needs are (Easterly 2006). Figure 1 clarifies these three types of orientation toward outgroups, with the perceived agency of the outgroup as the central characteristic.

[Figure 1 here]

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5 Our definition is also broader than the existing definition of paternalism in that it downplays benevolence as a defining element of the term. The notion of paternalism certainly invokes a sense of concern for the well-being of the outgroup, but this concern may not always manifest as benevolence. For example, slavery and some brutal forms of colonial exploitation were long justified in paternalistic terms (Reader 1997). Moreover, today paternalism is often used to defend restrictive fiscal policies toward outgroups, as the ingroup asserts that state benefits would only make the outgroup welfare-dependent, and thus even worse off (Jackman 1994). In the end, we also focus on benevolence, like much of the recent literature, but it is important to note that paternalism can and has manifested as brutality and miserliness.
We argue, in concert with the aid skeptics, that attitudes toward foreign aid in donor countries are more likely to be driven by racial paternalism than by resentment—that is, whites in donor countries should exhibit paternalism toward the dark-skinned foreign poor. First, explicit paternalism toward racially distinct foreigners has a long history, especially by whites toward Africans. Hegel referred to Africa as the “land of childhood” (Hegel 1837/2007: 91). Albert Schweitzer, although a renowned humanitarian to Africa, nonetheless believed “the negro” to be “a child.” Indeed, paternalistic considerations were often used to justify the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism: “…the paternalistic conceit of the colonial authorities [was] breathtaking. Africa was looked upon as the neglected child of the modern world, who must be nurtured and ‘civilized’ as a child is reared to adulthood” (Reader 1997: 611). Beyond Africa, a 16th century Spaniard advocating colonial dominion over New World natives wrote “[the natives] require, by their own nature and in their own interests, to be placed under the authority of civilized and virtuous princes of nations” (quoted in Young 1994: 59).

Second, while colonialism, slavery, and such explicit paternalistic references are now admittedly out of favor, disguised versions of the same sentiment may still exist, especially among mass publics. Coverage of the Third World, and especially Africa, by Western media tends to focus on sensationalistic stories, seeking the “pornography of violence” or occasionally disease and poverty: “When corporate media does focus on Africa, it seeks the dramatic, which is why media silence on Africa is often punctuated by high drama” (Mamdani 2009: 56, 19). Stories emphasize helplessness and immiseration and, in doing so, evoke pity and altruism while overlooking victims’ agentic capacities (Mamdani 2009; Ebo 1992). One African scholar asserts

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6 “The negro is a child, and with children nothing can be done without the use of authority” (quote by Schweitzer in Brabazon 2000: 254).
that when Western journalists write about Africa, they “leave the strong impression that without [their] intervention and [their] important book, Africa is doomed” (Wainaina 2005). Such portrayals could provide the building blocks of racial paternalism toward the poor and toward Africans in particular.

Third, whites in wealthy countries may find arguments that dark-skinned foreigners are paralyzed by the global economy and victimized by the histories of colonialism and slavery more compelling than related arguments employed in the domestic setting. Many whites could construe their domestic context as a more level and less discriminatory playing field toward racial minorities than the global economy. After all, the latter has far deeper income inequalities and more dramatically different institutional contexts than does any single country.

Finally, a non-hostile form of stereotyping may exist in the absence of competition, threat, and contact: “paternalistic stereotypes portray out-groups that are neither inclined nor capable to harm members of the in-group” (Fiske et al 2002: 879; Cottrell and Neuberg 2005). Because these three factors are largely absent in relations between donors and the foreign poor, we expect paternalism, rather than resentment or hostility, will shape attitudes toward foreign aid. Technically speaking, foreign aid *does* feature economic conflict over social expenditures, but in reality this is limited because foreign aid is such a small share of government expenditure. 7

Given these arguments, we expect to find that racial paternalism drives rich-country whites’ attitudes toward foreign aid and aid recipients. We posit several observable implications of these claims. First, whites in donor countries should be more supportive of foreign aid toward black African countries than toward white Eastern European countries, even when the material deprivation and needs across the two contexts are equivalent. Second, differential perceptions of

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7 In our experiment, we attempt to limit these concerns by informing our respondents of how miniscule US foreign aid spending is.
recipient agency should be the causal mechanism behind this race-of-recipient causal effect. In particular, whites in donor countries will view black Africans as having less capacity than white Eastern Europeans to help and materially improve themselves. This sentiment will in turn lead whites to support more foreign aid for black recipients than for white recipients.

**Research Design**

In this paper, we address whether racial paternalism or resentment drives Americans’ beliefs about the aid their government gives to poor foreigners. The heart of our inquiry is a survey experiment that manipulated via random assignment the race of some exemplary recipients of foreign aid, and then measured respondents’ attitudes about foreign development assistance. The survey was conducted over the internet by Knowledge Networks to a nationally representative sample of white, non-Latino Americans in April and May of 2011. A total of 2,031 respondents completed our short online questionnaire.

The survey questionnaire began with a sentence that defined foreign aid and then gave an example of a country or type of country to which American aid is distributed. The race-of-recipient experimental manipulation lay in the country mentioned. One treatment mentioned the African country of Cameroon and the other the East European nation of Moldova. The prompt

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8 Knowledge Networks (KN) uses probability-based sampling that selects thousands of potential respondents, called panel members, via random digit dialing and addressed based sampling. KN invited 3,031 of its panel members (chosen randomly) to participate in our survey, and 2,031 did so for a response rate of 67%. All analyses are conducted with survey weights that were provided by KN to correct for a variety of deviations from random selection into the final sample, including panel attrition, non-response, and oversampling of minorities. More information about KN’s methodology can be found at http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/knpanel/KNPanel-Design-Summary.html
informed respondents of the race of each country’s citizens by showing a photograph of a poor Cameroonian or Moldovan family and referring to the family in the text by its nationality.\footnote{Pictures were photo-shopped so that only heads and skin color differed. Clothing, family size, and housing background were the same for both families (Mutz 2011). We pretested the experiment with the photos extensively to ensure they were evoking poverty and to make sure respondents could not detect the photo-shopping.}

We chose to work with these specific countries—rather than, say, with two other countries or with Africa or Eastern Europe in general—for two important reasons. First, both countries are surely unknown to the vast majority of our respondents, so any experimental effect we observe should be shaped strictly by racial or continental stereotypes and not by respondents’ private information about the politics or economics of either country. Second, fixing on these two countries allowed us to hold objective need constant. Moldova is the poorest white-majority country in the world, and Cameroon has a very similar GDP per capita. Our prompts thus (truthfully) described the average family in each country as “surviving on the US equivalent of $5 per day.” Again, this means that if respondents impute greater or lesser material need to one of the two countries, it is because of their own racial or continental stereotypes and not because of real-world income differences.

There was also a control group that received no mention of a specific country (and no photo) but was still told to think about aid to countries where the average person survives on $5 per day. All told, the opening prompt for the two racial treatment groups plus the control group read as follows:

Foreign aid is money that the U.S. government sends to poor countries to help them fight poverty. A lot of the aid money that we send overseas goes to poor [poor African countries like Cameroon / poor Eastern European countries like Moldova / poor countries], where the average person survives on the US equivalent of $5 per day. (That would be like living on $1,800 per year in the US.) The aid money is often used by [poor Cameroonian families like the one
pictures above / poor Moldovan families like the one picture above / poor families].

The experiment was administered according to a randomized block design with the seven-point ideological self-placement scale (which runs from extreme liberal to extreme conservative) as the blocking variable. In other words, randomization of the treatments occurred within each ideological category. Blocking on a variable that is expected to be highly correlated with the dependent variable of interest can dramatically boost statistical efficiency.

The experimentally manipulated opening text and (when applicable) photo were then followed by about a dozen questions that gauged our outcome variable of interest—support for foreign aid—and some variables that we hypothesized to be mediators between race-of-recipient and support for aid.

There was a second experimental dimension (perfectly orthogonal to the race dimension) that added a sentence at the end of this text. This dimension manipulated whether recipients’ use of aid was dictated by an “American aid expert.” Our purpose with this manipulation was to try to tap the “guidance” element of our paternalism definition. This manipulation allowed us to test whether guidance by a white Westerner boosted support for aid, and, if it did so, whether it boosted support more for the African treatment than for the East European treatment.

This dimension had three treatments. For the “positive guidance frame” treatment groups, respondents read an extra sentence after the text given above that said “an American aid expert is often on hand to tell the poor how to use the aid to improve their lives.” This experimental treatment was reinforced by doctoring the photo of the family so that a smiling and friendly-looking white man in casual dress stood aside the family. The “negative guidance frame” treatment group instead read “an American aid expert is often on hand to instruct but sometimes limits the choices that poor recipients of aid can make.” This statement was reinforced by showing a stern, more professionally dressed white man next to the family. The third group, a “no guidance frame” treatment, received no mention of an aid expert’s presence and saw a photo of just the family.

Counter to our expectations, the positive guidance frame had no statistically significant effect on support for aid. We can think of two possible conclusions for this null effect. (1) Our operationalization of guidance was too subtle to evoke a response. (2) The perceived benefits of guidance were counterbalanced by a reaction against the perceived financial wastefulness of having an American on the ground. The negative guidance frame did have statistically significant, but negative, effect on support for aid. We are implementing a second survey experiment with alternative operationalizations of the guidance dimension to further explore this dimension. Because of the failings of this treatment, we focus strictly on the manipulation of race-of-recipient in this paper.
Results

Causal Effect Estimates

What is the impact of the purported race of recipients? Recall that our experiment had three different race-of-recipient treatments: black Cameroonians, white Moldovans, and a control group in which no specific country or racial group is mentioned. If racial paternalism holds sway, then an initial observable implication is that our respondents were more positively inclined toward aid when prompted to think about black Cameroonians than when prompted to think about white Moldovans or when not prompted to think of any country in particular.

To measure our dependent variable of interest, public opinion about foreign development assistance, we create an Index of Support for Foreign Aid that is the shared variation of three variables. The first is Preferred aid amount per American and gauges how much per American per year the respondent thinks the US government should devote to foreign aid. Respondents chose dollar figure ranges (e.g., $20 to $39) arrayed on a seven-point ordinal scale after being told that the actual average is $40. For analysis, we converted each ordinal response to dollar figures using the midpoint of each interval. The second is Preferred aid amount in treatment country(ies), a seven-category variables that measures whether respondents believed aid should increase, decrease (and by how much), or stay the same in the country or countries of their treatment group (Cameroon, Moldova, or poor countries where the average person’s income is $5). The final is US has moral obligation to aid, a five-category variable that gauges agreement with the following statement: “The US has a moral obligation to help foreign poor countries.” Our index is the first component from a principal components analysis calculated from the
polychoric correlations among the three variables. The three items have a Cronbach’s alpha of .87.

Figure 2 shows the simple causal effects (with 95% confidence intervals) of race-of-recipient. These are calculated from regression analyses that control for all experimental conditions (both the race treatments and the frames) as well as the ideology blocking variable (which is parsed out into six dummy variables). Aside from that, there are no control variables, and indeed no control variables are needed because the main X’s of interest are truly fixed; one need not be concerned about omitted variables in an experiment (Mutz 2011). The reference category in the figure, corresponding to the horizontal line at 0, is the Moldovan treatment group. Confidence intervals that span this line correspond to an experimental group whose mean is not statistically distinguishable from the mean for the Moldovan treatment group.

[Figure 2 here]

Panel A of Figure 2 shows the causal effect of race on the index of support for foreign aid. The results show a strong race-of-recipient effect, and one that is different from anything that has been found in most experimental studies of racial attitudes. Respondents were substantially and statistically significantly more supportive of boosting aid when the target country was Cameroon than when it was Moldova (and, for that matter, when it was the control group). The Cameroonian treatment created a statistically significant effect on support for foreign aid while the control condition did not. The effect size is about .25 for a variable whose standard deviation is 1.4, so the effect is almost one-fifth of a standard deviation.

To give a slightly more intuitive sense of the substantive impact of race-of-recipient, we report the causal effect sizes in a slightly different way. Panel B of Figure 2 reports the causal effect size when the dependent variable is the Preferred aid amount per American, allowing us to
report the substantive impact of race-of-recipient as an actual dollar figure. The mean impact is $2.67 per American, which is statistically significant and amounts to a 10% difference in desired aid outflows over respondents in the Moldovan treatment. Stated differently, respondents in the Moldovan treatment preferred, on average, aid outflows of $27.75 per American per year, while those in the Cameroonian treatment group preferred, on average, aid outflows of $30.42 per American per year. The actual amount, respondents were told, is $40, so Americans are feeling stingier than their government these days. In thinking about Africans, however, they prefer a cut of less than one quarter; in thinking about East Europeans, the preferred reduction is almost one third.

*Potential Mediating Variables*

Why does this race-of-recipient effect, one that is different from most observed in experiments on racial attitudes toward compatriot others, exist? We explore three possible causal channels through which race-of-recipient might affect opinions about foreign aid. First, we test whether paternalism is the causal mediator. We asked three survey questions to tap paternalistic attitudes. The first two items tap perceptions of agency among the foreign poor. The *Circumstances mean the poor can't help themselves* variable measures agreement with this statement: “Because of difficult economic circumstances, people in poor countries are unable to help themselves get richer.” A closely related item, *Poor can do little themselves*, gauges support for the following statement: “There is little that people in poor countries can do by themselves to improve their livelihoods.” We call the third item the *Big push* variable. The “Big Push” reflects a view among some development experts, including Sachs, that Third World countries are stuck in a poverty trap and can only escape this trap with infusions of foreign capital and aid (Sachs
As noted above, critics of this idea allege that it is based on a presumption that only white Westerners and their money can develop the Third World. Ultimately, the Big Push notion and our question wording taps into sentiments about guidance and agency: “The only way poor countries could grow richer is with financial help from rich countries.” Respondents registered their opinion of the three statements by choosing for each one of the following options: (1) disagreed strongly, (2) disagreed somewhat, (3) neither agreed nor disagreed, (4) agreed somewhat, or (5) agreed strongly.

Figure 3 shows the marginal distribution of each one to convey how prevalent these paternalistic sentiments are. The darkened bars represent paternalistic responses, namely those that express some level of agreement with each of the three statements. The percent agreeing with paternalistic sentiments ranges from 25 to 45, with the percent disagreeing falling into a similar range. They have high inter-item correlations and a Cronbach’s alpha of .79, so we created a Paternalism index from the shared variation among the three paternalist items. We conclude from these univariate and multivariate distributions that our questions are reliable and that there is something real to these attitudes: paternalism and, in particular, a severe underestimation of the agency of the foreign poor to shape their economic fate are widespread sentiments among American whites. Given our theoretical argument, we expect paternalism to be the primary mediator between race-of-recipient and aid attitudes.

Second, we test for a mediating effect of resentment-related variables. We took two questions from a standard battery of items used to capture racial resentment in the U.S. context and tweaked their wordings so as to apply to the foreign poor. We also created a new question wording about the wastefulness of aid. Our items capture whether respondents attribute agency,
but of low quality, to the foreign poor, as they are questions about whether respondents blame global poverty on the poor themselves. The first item gauged agreement with a statement that the *Foreign poor do not try hard enough*: “It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If people in poor countries would only try harder, they could be just as well off as the United States.” The second item gauged agreement with a statement that global *Poverty is due to foreign exploitation* by wealthy countries: “Generations of colonialism and economic exploitation by rich countries have kept poor countries from becoming richer.”

Respondents registered their opinion of these two statements on the same five-point scale introduced above (from 1 = disagreed strongly to 5 = agreed strongly), although in all analyses below the coding of the second variable is flipped so that higher values indicate greater resentment. The third variable is *Amount of aid that is used well*, and it gauges on a five-point scale the share of aid (all, most, half, a little, none) that respondents think is not wasted and is used well. We create a *Resentment index* from a polychoric principal components analysis of these three variables. Their Cronbach’s alpha is .39.

Despite the focus on resentment in the existing literature, a look at the marginal distribution of these variables shows that resentment-related sentiments are not more widespread than paternalistic attitudes. They may even be less widespread. Figure 4 shows the marginal distributions, again darkening in the resentful responses, and the percent of respondents registering these responses range from 20 to 40%. It is also important to add that resenterse tend not to be paternalists. The two indices correlate at -.56.

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11 The first two items are adaptations from the American National Election Studies battery of racial resentment toward African-Americans. The original items are “It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.” and “Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.” (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995).
It is important to note that these findings on paternalism and resentment say nothing about race or racial attitudes. They merely point out the prevalence of paternalism and resentment toward the foreign poor regardless of their race, since these survey items were stripped of racial content. We could have been more explicit about race in these questions, but surely answers to such questions would have subject to social desirability bias. To identify whether racial paternalism and racial resentment are present, we instead consider whether these factor mediate the experimental effect of race-of-recipient on support for foreign aid.

The third and final mediator we consider is *Perceived living standards*. Americans may think that Cameroonianians are on average poorer than Moldovans and thus more deserving of foreign aid. In reality, the two have similar GDP per capita, and our respondents were even told this. However, Moldovans clearly sit in a richer world region and are of a race that tends to be much better off. Stereotypes about racial and continental wealth may be the mediating factor. We asked respondents to guess the percent of citizens in their treatment country(ies) that had at least two meals per day and indoor plumbing. The mean of these two percentages is our perceived living standards variable.

**Mediation Analysis**

We posit the following causal model of foreign aid attitudes among U.S. whites:

\[ T \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y, \]  

where \( T \) is *Cameroonian treatment*, \( Y \) is *Index of support for foreign aid*, and \( M \) is *Paternalism index*, the mediator variable. In other words, we expect to find that paternalistic sentiments mediate the relationship between race-of-recipient and foreign aid attitudes: Being prompted to
think about black Africans makes American whites feel more paternalistic toward the foreign poor, which in turn boosts their support for foreign aid. If true, then at least two conditions will hold. First, the Cameroonian treatment will have produced a positive and statistically significant impact on the paternalism index among our respondents. This can be tested by running the equation $M = f(T)$, which corresponds to the first arrow in equation 1—that is, a regression in which the left-hand-side variable is $M$ (paternalistic attitudes) and the right-hand-side contains $T$ (the Cameroonian treatment dummy) plus some control variables. Second, the effect of the Cameroonian treatment $T$ on $Y$ (foreign aid attitudes) will be smaller when controlling for $M$—in the equation $Y = f(T, M)$—than when not controlling for $M$—in the equation $Y = f(T)$. The total causal effect of $T$ on $Y$ is about .25 and was reported in figure 2. This can be thought of as the coefficient on $T$ when not controlling for $M$. When introducing $M$ into the equation, however, the coefficient on $T$ will decline if part of its effect on $Y$ is mediated through the variable $M$.

We run a mediation analysis that parses the “total effect” (.25) of $T$ on $Y$ into two parts: the “mediated effect” of $T$ that runs through $M$, and the “direct effect” of $T$ that does not run through $M$. Using simulations techniques, we generate an estimate of the size of each of these and calculate a confidence interval for the mediated effect to see if it is statistically distinguishable from zero\(^{12}\) (Imai, Keele, Tingley, and Yamamoto Fortchoming). Table 1 reports the mediated effect as the “average causal mediation effect (ACME)” (averages over 1000 simulations). It also reports the results of equations $M = f(T)$ in columns headed by (a) and $Y = f(T, M)$ in columns headed by (b). The shaded entries in the table are those that would be equal to the total effect (.25) if the proposed mediator is not doing any mediating whatsoever. To test

\(^{12}\) We used Hicks and Tingley’s “Causal Mediation Analysis” software for Stata.
alternative hypotheses, the table reports mediation analyses for (1) paternalism as the mediator, (2) resentment as the mediator, and (3) perceived living standards as the mediator.

[Table 1 here]

Column 1a one considers the first condition for our paternalism argument to hold: whether our respondents in the Cameroonian treatment group were more paternalistic than those in the Moldovan treatment group. Indeed they were, as evidenced by the statistically significant coefficient on T in column 1a. In turn, the coefficient on T in column 1b, when controlling for the paternalism mediator, is a good deal smaller than the total causal effect of .25. The last row of column one shows that the estimated effect of the race-of-recipient treatment that is mediated through paternalist attitudes (the ACME) is a statistically significant .077, nearly one-third the total treatment effect.

In contrast, the mediation analysis shows unequivocally that resentment does not mediate the treatment effect. In column 2a, the coefficient on T is not statistically significant, so this variable does not even pass the first test for playing a mediating role: it is not influenced by race-of-recipient. Counter to the accusations of many aid advocates, prompts about Cameroonians induced our respondents to be less resentful than prompts about whites, but the coefficient is not statistically significant. The ACME reported at the bottom of column 2 is also not statistically significant, demonstrating that virtually none of the race-of-recipient treatment effect is attributable to resentment attitudes.

The test of perceived living standards as a mediating variable also fails. It does pass the first test: our respondents in the Cameroonian treatment graded living standards much lower than did those in the Moldovan treatment. Respondents did apply a stereotype about poverty in black Africa relative to white Eastern Europe. On average, respondents thought that Cameroon
featured nine percent fewer households eating two meals per day and having indoor plumbing than Moldova. This was so despite their having been told the average incomes in each country, which are equivalent. Nonetheless, this discrepancy does not account for the race-of-recipient treatment effect. The ACME is actually negative, and the effect of $T$ when controlling for $M$ actually increases. In the end, it is paternalism—the perceived lack of agency on the part of black Africans to help themselves—that explains the treatment effect.

**Conclusion**

Most observational and experimental studies on outgroup prejudice, as well as those on the role of racial differences in government redistribution, operate within a resentment paradigm, arguing that individuals are stingier and more vitriolic toward ethnic and racial others than toward fellow members of their ingroup. Ours is one of the first studies to find a scenario in which individuals want their government to be more generous with a racial outgroup than with a racial ingroup. We find that American whites are more supportive of foreign aid when they are prompted to think about aid to Africa than when thinking about aid to Eastern Europe. We do not argue, however, that we have pinpointed a realm in which there is an absence of racial prejudice. Rather, we confirm many of the claims and fears of foreign aid skeptics: Citizens of wealthy donor countries view the foreign poor of darker skin through a paternalistic lens that underestimates their agency and devalues their efforts at self-improvement. We find that a prejudicial racial paternalism underlies Americans’ increased generosity toward foreign black Africans.

Our argument represents a novel empirical contribution to a heated and high profile international debate about the merits of international development assistance, but it also stands in
contrast to domestic studies that link paternalism to more restrictive attitudes toward policies meant to support minorities (Jackman 1994). When out-group beneficiaries reside outside the United States, paternalists adopt a more magnanimous quality, and we suspect the reason is because domestic findings are driven by inter-group competition (for status, resources, etc.) rather than simple racial stereotyping.

Finally, although this surely awaits future research, our findings can explain some poorly understood empirical patterns. Racial paternalism can explain why natural disasters in less developed countries with black majority populations tend to receive more media attention and attract more private charitable contributions. Most notably, the Haitian earthquake of 2010 attracted several times the attention and private contributions that the just-as-devastating Pakistani floods did later that year. Similarly, our findings could account for why, at least by our early impression, NGOs that seek private contributions tend to feature children of dark skin color in their marketing materials.
References


Table 1: Mediation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator:</th>
<th>(1) Paternalism Index (M)</th>
<th>(2) Resentment Index (M)</th>
<th>(3) Perceived Living Standards</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left-hand-side Variable:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Control</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Party ID</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly liberal</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slightly conservative</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme conservative</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mediated effect: Impact of treatment through mediator: .077* (.033 - .014)
Direct effect: Unmediated effect of treatment: .169* (.060 - .071)

All statistical significant tests are one-tailed, p < .05.
Figure 1: Three Orientations toward Outgroups
Figure 2: Causal Effect of Race-of-Recipient on Mass Support for Foreign Aid

Panel A: Dependent Variable is Index of Support for Foreign Aid

Panel B: Dependent Variable is Preferred Aid Amount per American
Figure 3: Marginal Distributions of Items in the Paternalism Index

Proportion of Responses

- Big push
- Circumstances mean the poor can't help themselves
- Poor can do little themselves

Responses:
- D strongly
- D somewhat
- Neither A nor D
- A somewhat
- A strongly
Figure 4: Marginal Distributions of Items in the Resentment Index

- **Foreign poor do not try hard enough**
- **Poverty is due to foreign exploitation**
- **Amount of aid that is used well**

Proportion of Responses

- D strongly
- D somewhat
- Neither A nor D
- A somewhat
- A strongly
- D strongly
- D somewhat
- Neither A nor D
- A somewhat
- A strongly
- All
- Most
- Half
- A little
- None
Appendix: Survey details

TREATMENT GROUPS

(1) Cameroon/Paternalism, Positive Valence

1. Foreign aid is money that the U.S. government sends to poor countries to help them fight poverty. A lot of the aid money that we send overseas goes to poor African countries like Cameroon, where the average person survives on the US equivalent of $5 per day. (That would be like living on $1,800 per year in the US.) The aid money is often used by poor Cameroonian families like the one pictured above. An American aid expert (like the one pictured above) is often on hand to tell the poor how to use the aid to improve their lives.

(2) Cameroon/Paternalism, Negative Valence

2. Foreign aid is money that the U.S. government sends to poor countries to help them fight poverty. A lot of the aid money that we send overseas goes to poor African countries like Cameroon, where the average person survives on the US equivalent of $5 per day. (That would be like living on $1,800 per year in the US.) The aid money is often used by poor Cameroonian families like the one pictured above. An American aid expert (like the one pictured above) is often on hand to instruct but sometimes limits the choices that the poor recipients of aid can make.

(3) Cameroon/No Paternalism

3. Foreign aid is money that the U.S. government sends to poor countries to help them fight poverty. A lot of the aid money that we send overseas goes to poor African countries like Cameroon, where the average person survives on the US equivalent of $5 per day. (That would be like living on $1,800 per year in the US.) The aid money is often used by poor Cameroonian families like the one pictured above.
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(7) Control

Foreign aid is money that the U.S. government sends to poor countries to help them fight poverty. A lot of the aid money that we send overseas goes to poor countries where the average person survives on the US equivalent of $5 per day. (That would be like living on $1,800 per year in the US.) The aid money is often used by poor families.

QUESTIONS used in analysis

Aid amount per person (DV)
Now we'd like to ask your opinion about foreign aid in a slightly different way. What about aid to Cameroon, Moldova, poor countries where the average person survives on the US equivalent of about $1,800 per year, of which about $50 comes from wealthy foreign countries as aid. Do you think that U.S. spending on foreign aid to Cameroon/Moldova/poor countries should increase, decrease or be kept about the same? If you think it should increase or decrease, please specify by how much.
Select one answer only
Options: It should decrease to zero, It should decrease a lot, It should decrease a little, It should stay the same, It should increase a little, It should increase a lot, It should increase by a huge sum

Agree/Disagree items
Keeping in mind the poor countries of Africa/ Keeping in mind the poor countries of Eastern Europe/ Keeping poor countries in mind, read each of the following statements and then decide how much you agree or disagree with each one:
[Options: Agree strongly, Agree somewhat, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree somewhat, Disagree strongly]

US has moral obligation to aid (DV)
The US has a moral obligation to help foreign poor countries.

Big Push (Paternalism)
The only way poor countries could grow richer is with financial help from rich countries.

Circumstances mean the poor can’t help themselves (Paternalism)
Because of difficult economic circumstances, people in poor countries are unable to help themselves get richer.

Poor can do little themselves (Paternalism)
There is little that people in poor countries can do by themselves to improve their livelihoods.

Foreign poor do not try hard enough (Resentment)
It’s really a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If people in poor countries would only try harder, they could be just as well off as the United States.

Poverty is due to foreign exploitation (Resentment – when coding reversed)
Generations of colonialism and economic exploitation by rich countries have kept poor countries from becoming richer.

Aid is wasted
There are also different opinions about how well foreign aid is used by the poor people and countries it is supposed to benefit. Do you think that foreign aid is used in Cameroon/Moldova/[none] to genuinely improve the lives of poor people or is it wasted? Please indicate below the amount of all foreign aid that you think is used well in Cameroon/Moldova/poor countries.
Select one answer only
Options: All of it is used well, none of it is wasted; Most of it is used well, a little of it is wasted; Half is used well, half is wasted; A little of it is used well, most is wasted; None of it is used well, all of it is wasted

Perceived living standards
At least two meals per day
...we'd like to get your view on what quality of life is like in poor countries. In Cameroon./Moldova./a poor country where the average person survives on the US equivalent of $1,800 per year ($5 per day), about what percent of households have the following?
At least two meals per day.
Select one answer only
Options: 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 100%

Indoor plumbing
In Cameroon./Moldova./a poor country where the average person survives on the US equivalent of $1,800 per year ($5 per day), about what percent of households have the following?
Indoor plumbing (i.e., flushing toilets and working water faucets).
Select one answer only
Options: 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 100%