RACIAL PREJUDICE AND PATERNALISM IN MASS SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN AID

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The Great Aid Debate

Aid Advocates

“Pessimism about Africans’ ability to utilize aid is very deep, reflecting an amazing reservoir of deep prejudices”

Aid Skeptics

“The most infuriating thing … is how patronizing [aid advocates] 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”
## Types of Prejudice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prejudice as hostility/resentment</th>
<th>Prejudice as paternalism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indignation toward a racial out-group based on its perceived (1) unworthiness to receive and (2) misuse of beneficial treatments</td>
<td>The belief that a group, because of its childlike qualities, lacks agency in shaping its own fate and needs guidance from the superior in-group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Kinder and Sanders 1996) (Fiske et al. 1999; Jackman 1994; Vandeveer 1985)
Why racial *hostility* should matter for mass opinion on foreign aid

- Existing research demonstrates that whites are less generous toward non-whites than toward other whites.
  (e.g. Gilens 1999)

- More generally, prior work reveals antipathy felt by whites toward “others,” especially blacks.
  (e.g. Allport 1954, Kinder and Sears 1981, Peffley et al. 1997)
Why racial *paternalism* should matter for mass opinion on foreign aid

- Long history of paternalism
  - Hegel: Africa as “land of childhood”
  - Schweitzer: “the negro is a child”

- Western media coverage
  - “pornography of violence”
  - emphasis on immiseration and helplessness

- Absence of threat and contact
  - Factors promoting hostility/resentment of domestic out-groups are absent with foreign recipients
    - (On threat: Kinder and Sears 1981; On contact: Allport 1954)
Data

• Internet survey, representative sample of American whites

• Knowledge Networks
  Compliments of Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences

• N ≈ 2000

• Race-of-recipient experiment
  (Black Cameroonian vs. White Moldovan as recipients)

• Observational measures of paternalism and resentment toward foreign poor
Resentment vs. Paternalistic survey items

Resentment/hostility

Agree/Disagree…
- 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.
- Generations of colonialism and economic exploitation by rich countries have kept poor countries from becoming richer.

Paternalism

Agree/Disagree…
- *Big Push*: The only way poor countries could grow richer is with financial help from rich countries.
- Because of difficult economic circumstances, people in poor countries are unable to help themselves get richer.
- There is little that people in poor countries can do by themselves to improve their livelihoods.
Observational Data:
Paternalist sentiments are popular
Observational Data: Paternalism predicts support for aid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: Predictors of Aid Attitudes</th>
<th>Aid amount per person</th>
<th>US has moral obligation to aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paternalism index</td>
<td>5.991* (.570)</td>
<td>.512* (.037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resentment index</td>
<td>-7.004* (.654)</td>
<td>-.452* (.050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
<td>-1.691* (.448)</td>
<td>-.027 (.032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party ID</td>
<td>-.352 (.316)</td>
<td>-.034 (.021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-3.348* (1.304)</td>
<td>.089 (1.072)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-.247 (1.007)</td>
<td>-.013 (1.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational attainment</td>
<td>1.803* (.293)</td>
<td>.101 (.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-1.473 (1.191)</td>
<td>.023 (.076)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>37.112 (7.523)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients and robust standard errors in parentheses.
Racial frames/experiment

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 Cameroon families like the one pictured above.

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Experimental Data: Americans want more aid to Cameroonians than to Moldovans

Figure 3
Causal Mediation Analysis: What mediates the effect of race?

Indirect effect (ACME)

Paternalism

Race of recipient

Direct effect

Support for aid
Experimental Data: Paternalism mediates the race-of-recipient treatment effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator:</th>
<th>(1) Paternalism index</th>
<th>(2) Resentment index</th>
<th>(3) Aid is wasted</th>
<th>(4) Living standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cameroonian Treatment</td>
<td>.099* (.056)</td>
<td>-.037 (.045)</td>
<td>-.014 (.055)</td>
<td>-9.021* (1.142)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldovan Treatment</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.071 (.078)</td>
<td>-.019 (.061)</td>
<td>.266* (.073)</td>
<td>-7.347* (1.647)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Effect (ACME)</td>
<td>.057* (.034)</td>
<td>.028 (.030)</td>
<td>.010 (.037)</td>
<td>-.015 (.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Effect</td>
<td>.250* (.104)</td>
<td>.250* (.041)</td>
<td>.240* (.031)</td>
<td>.266* (.083)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key findings

• Paternalistic attitudes exist and our measures of it are reliable.

• Respondents were more supportive of aid to black Africans than to white Eastern Europeans …

• … and mediation analysis reveals that this disproportionate generosity toward blacks is rooted in paternalistic biases.
Appendix: Paternalism items

Big Push
“The only way poor countries could grow richer is with financial help from rich countries.”

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

Poor can do little themselves
“There is little that people in poor countries can do by themselves to improve their livelihoods.”
Appendix: Resentment Items

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.”

Poverty is due to foreign exploitation
  “Generations of colonialism and economic exploitation by rich countries have kept poor countries from becoming richer.”
Appendix: DV (a)

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
Appendix: DV (b)

Agree/disagree...

• The US has a moral obligation to help foreign poor countries.
Why race might not matter for mass opinion on foreign aid

• Americans’ attitudes may be shaped by other considerations than race.

• Notably, attitudes toward poverty and the poor might be more influential.
  Values such as individualism, personal initiative shown to influence policy attitudes
  (e.g. Feldman 1984)
  And attitudes toward the poor can shape attitudes toward spending
  (e.g. Nelson and Kinder 1996)