

Aiding Strangers: Generalized Trust and the Moral Basis of Public Support for Foreign Development Aid

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Why do publics in donor countries support development foreign aid? Focusing on material factors, ideology, and identities, the literature has largely neglected the moral basis of foreign aid attitudes. I argue that generalized trust, defined as the belief in the integrity and trustworthiness of people, is a crucial component of the moral calculus of publics in donor countries. Using data from independently conducted surveys of global (World Values Survey) and American mass publics (Core Values Project Survey), I show that generalized trusters are more likely to aid the have-nots of the world than those who lack trust in people. This finding indicates that the bonds of trust expand the boundaries of global justice. By illuminating the role generalized trust plays in shaping donor public attitudes towards development foreign aid, this study helps improve the political economy, ideology, and identity models of aid, contributing to the literatures on foreign aid and foreign policy attitudes, and to theories of cosmopolitan global justice.

Introduction

The 2014 Oxfam report indicates that “[t]he wealth of the world is divided in two: almost half going to the richest one percent; the other half to the remaining 99 percent.”¹ In its 2014 annual meeting, the World Economic Forum identified severe income inequality as the fourth top risk in the world. World leaders now consider “the pervasive challenge of inequality” as a major threat to global stability and human security.² Even a cursory glance at a few development statistics shows why income disparity constitutes a global risk. According to the World Bank, 1.28 billion people lived on less than \$1.25 a day in 2008, 7.5 million children died before their fifth birthday in 2010, and the disease of poverty (malaria) continues to kill about one million people in the world every year.³ The World Bank also projected that at least one billion people will still be in extreme poverty in 2015.⁴ The United

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¹<http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp-working-for-few-political-capture-economic-inequality-200114-en.pdf>. Accessed March 18, 2014.

²http://www3.weforum.org/docs/AM14/WEF_AM14_Public_Report.pdf. Accessed March 18, 2014.
http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalRisks_Report_2014.pdf. Accessed April 13, 2014.

³<http://data.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/wdi-2012-ebook.pdf>. Accessed March 18, 2014.

Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has estimated that about 870 million people in the world were suffering from malnourishment between 2010 and 2012.⁵ The World Economic Forum 2014 report indicates that “[a]round 1 billion people, one-third of the world’s urban population, live in slums—a number that has been increasing in the current era of high and widening income inequalities.”⁶ According to UNICEF, poverty threatens over one billion children across the world.⁷

Global redistribution in the form of foreign development aid is a critical means of addressing income disparity and poverty in the world (Collier 2007).⁸ Development aid constitutes a major source of income for developing and less developed countries.⁹ As critics have argued, aid is not a magic bullet (Mosley 1980; Bauer 1991; Boone 1996; Easterly 2001). Yet a number of independently conducted studies show that effective development aid facilitates economic growth, promotes development, and reduces poverty (Levy 1988; Chenery and Strout 1996; Burnside and Dollar 2000; Collier and Dehn 2001; Hansen and Tarp 2001; Stern 2002; Stiglitz 2002; Dalgaard, Hansen, and Tarp 2004; Roodman 2007).¹⁰ On average, aid aids.

Public opinion surveys show large individual differences in support for foreign development aid. However, the literature on public opinion and aid is surprisingly “thin” (Milner and Tingley 2013). Even though aid organizations and governments greatly care about public attitudes toward foreign aid, only a few studies have explored the foundations of mass support for foreign development aid (Stern 1998; Noel and Therien 2002; Chong and Gradstein 2008; Milner and Tingley 2010, Tingley 2010; Milner and Tingley 2011; Milner, Nilesen, and Findley 2012; Paxton and Knack 2012). Despite their valuable contributions, however, existing studies miss the moral dimension of support for development aid. Focusing on pocket-book calculations, ideology, and identity, the literature largely neglects the moral reasons underlying the donor public’s global redistributive generosity.¹¹

I argue that generalized trust, defined as the belief in the integrity and trustworthiness of people, is a crucial component of the moral calculus of publics in donor countries. Existing studies overlook that support for foreign aid is a particular moral choice. When individuals support foreign development aid and other global redistribution policies, they are choosing to help people with whom they have no connection. Foreign aid is foreign. For publics in donor countries, the have not of the world have no name or face, and their well-being has no tangible impact on donors’ lives. And unlike the recipients of redistribution at home, are fundamentally different in culture, tradition, appearance, and mores. They are strangers. Caring about their welfare therefore is a specific kind of humanitarianism. It reflects a moral decision and a sense of moral responsibility to extend the boundaries of justice to the world as a whole (Barry 1991; Nussbaum 1996; Pogge 1988; Beitz 1999a,b; O’Neill 2000; Pogge 2001; Altman and Wellmann 2004; Tan 2004; Caney 2005; Brown and Held 2010b). I argue that generalized trust moves individuals to make this decision. Generalized trust increases support for global redistribution because it leads an individual to feel connected to global others

⁴<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview#3>. Accessed June 24, 2014.

⁵<http://www.fao.org/home/en/>. Accessed March 18, 2014.

⁶http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalRisks_Report_2014.pdf. Accessed April 13, 2014.

⁷http://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/sowc05_chapters.pdf. Accessed June 24, 2014.

⁸In this paper, my focus is only on foreign development aid. Of course, there are other types of foreign aid, such as military and humanitarian aid. In cases I simply refer to aid, I do so for stylistic reasons.

⁹<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD>. Accessed June 24, 2014.

¹⁰Also see the World Bank report on aid effectiveness. <http://www1.worldbank.org/operations/aideffectiveness/documents/WorldBank&AidEffectiveness2011Final.pdf>. Accessed June 24, 2014.

¹¹Even though Lumsdaine (1993) has highlighted the role of moral considerations in developed countries’ foreign aid policies, only Paxton and Knack (2012) have made an effort to take into account morality in mass foreign aid attitudes by including trust and religiosity in a multilevel model of individual and country-level factors affecting public opinion on aid. However, individuals’ moral motives are not the main focus of their study.

and see them as part of his or her “*moral community*” (Lumsdaine 1993; Uslaner 2002, 192, emphasis added). This psychological bond in turn results in a sense of moral responsibility to help reduce suffering in the world.

Using data from independently conducted surveys of global and American mass publics, I show that generalized trusters are more likely to support helping the have-nots in the world than those who lack trust. Trusting individuals are substantially more willing to aid strangers even when this help requires personal or national sacrifice. This finding indicates that the bonds of trust expand the boundaries of global justice. By illuminating the role trust plays in shaping public attitudes toward foreign development aid, this study helps improve the political economy and ideology models of aid, contributing to the literature on public opinion and foreign aid and to theories of cosmopolitan global justice.

In the following pages, I first review the literature and explain the importance of bringing in generalized trust to uncover the moral source of foreign development aid attitudes. I then present the theoretical argument and derive testable hypotheses. Next, using data from the World Values Survey (WVS) and the Core Values Project Survey, I provide statistical tests of my core claims. The final section concludes and summarizes the implications of my findings.

Public Support for Foreign Development Aid in Donor Countries

Even though literatures on public opinion (Almond 1950; Lippmann 1955; Converse 2006 [1964]; Mueller 1971; Page and Shapiro 1992; Zaller 1992; Aldrich et al. 2006) and foreign policy attitudes (Hurtwitz and Peffley 1987; Holsti and Rosenau 1988; Wittkopf 1990; Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis 1995; Herrmann, Tetlock and Visser 1999; Tomz 2007; Mansfield and Mutz 2009) are highly developed, there is surprisingly little work on public attitudes toward foreign aid and global redistribution more generally, as Milner and Tingley (2013) note in their review of the literature.

Fortunately, a handful of scholars have begun to advance our understanding of what moves masses to support foreign aid. There is growing evidence that material considerations influence attitudes toward foreign aid. Existing research has established that individuals with greater capital endowment hold more favorable attitudes toward development aid than those with lower capital, with capital endowment captured by education (Milner and Tingley 2010, 2011; Paxton and Knack 2012). Similarly, studies show that higher income individuals are more supportive of aid than lower income ones (Chong and Gradstein 2008; Paxton and Knack 2012). The logic here is need. Individuals with low capital (unskilled labor and low income) are less likely to support foreign aid because they need aid themselves in the form of social welfare. Those with high capital (skilled labor and high income) support aid because are sufficiently well-off. Combined, education and income suggest a political economy explanation for foreign aid.

Scholars have also found that liberals are more supportive of foreign development aid than conservatives (Lumsdaine 1993; Breuning 1995; Therien and Noel 2000; Fleck and Kilby 2006; Milner and Tingley 2010; Tingley 2010; Paxton and Knack 2012). Paralleling the conclusions of studies on attitudes toward social welfare (Shapiro and Young 1989; Skitka and Tetlock 1993; Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003; Jaeger 2006), this result is intuitive. Conservatives oppose large government and taxation. They also believe that individuals should take care of themselves. Liberals, conversely, are comfortable with larger government and favor social equality. It is likely that liberals export their opinions on the welfare state to the international realm, whereas conservatives see foreign aid as government intervention increasing the role of government (Noel and Therien 2002).

Even though political economy and ideology explanations dominate the literature, some scholars have also considered the role identity plays in shaping foreign

aid attitudes. Paxton and Knack (2012), for example, found that cosmopolitanism increases and nationalism decreases support for foreign aid. This finding is consistent with what some political philosophers theorists have argued all along. A central debate between cosmopolitan and communitarian schools of thought centers on the relationship between identity and global justice (Caney 2001; Blake 2008). Claiming that there are obligations of distributive justice owed to all people regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, race, or gender, cosmopolitan scholars argue that a cosmopolitan identity will extend the boundaries of distributive justice to the world as a whole (Barry 1989, 1991; Nussbaum 1996; Beitz 1999a, b; Pogge 2001). Conversely, communitarian scholars contend that national identity is essential for the efficacy of the welfare state and people have special obligations of distributive justice to their fellow nationals (Walzer 1983; Tamir 1993; Miller 1995, 1999; Kymlicka 2001). Empirical research suggests that the relationship between identity and social redistribution preferences is complex. While some studies found no statistically significant relationship between national identity and support for national redistribution (Martinez-Herrera 2004; Shayo 2009), other works have found an intricate link between national, racial, and other group attachments and support for the welfare state (Gilens 2000; Shayo 2009; Johnston et al. 2010; Wright and Reeskens 2013).

Material factors, ideology, and identity certainly influence publics' foreign aid attitudes. Yet by themselves, they offer a less than complete understanding of why publics endorse aid. Support for development foreign aid is a particular type of pro-social behavior. It is a moral choice to extend one's hand of compassion to strangers. Existing explanations do not fully explain what makes individuals direct their moral compass to the less fortunate in the world. Of course, political economy arguments have great merit. In the absence of sufficient economic resources, an individual will focus on the survival of the self. However, economic arguments only illuminate the material aspects of foreign aid attitudes, neglecting the normative reasons why individuals might support or oppose aid. The liberal-conservative divide undoubtedly plays a role in explaining support for foreign aid. However, ideology might not account for all the individual variation observed in opinion polls, and there might be other important moral considerations independent of ideology (Lumsdaine 1993). Cosmopolitan identity has long been associated with a sense of moral responsibility. Yet in a cross-national study, Bayram (2015) shows that cosmopolitan identity is not merely associated with moral values. Cosmopolitan identifiers are humanitarians, egoists, multiculturalists, and freedom seekers at the same time. Since cosmopolitan identity is compatible with values other than universal morality, there is every reason to explore alternative factors that might lead people to support foreign aid. Results of Paxton and Knack's (2012) cross-national study show that trust might lie at the core of a global sense of duty. But the concept of trust has thus far been neglected in the literature on public support for foreign development aid.

Generalized Trust and the Moral Basis of Public Support for Foreign Development Aid

Generalized trust is a dispositional attribute of individuals. It refers to one's belief in the trustworthiness and goodness of others (Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994; Sztompka 1999; Uslaner 2002). Generalized trust originates from optimism about the morality and integrity of people (Rotter 1980; Seligman 1991, 1997; Messick and Kramer 2001; Yamagishi 2001; Uslaner 2002; Hardin 2006). It is moralistic, embodying a positive worldview about the goodness of human nature (Rotter 1980; Fukuyama 1995; Uslaner 2002).

Generalized trust is markedly different from strategic trust (Uslaner 2002; Kydd 2005; Hardin 2006). Strategic trust is based on the structural characteristics of one's interaction with others. In particular, it emerges when an actor acquires

information that others can be trusted. Conversely, generalized trust is dispositional rather than situational, namely not conditional upon the actions or identity of a specific cooperative partner. It marks faith in strangers (Rotter 1980; Uslaner 2002; Hardin 2006; Rathbun 2011). Generalized trust is also distinct from particularized trust. Particularized trusters trust those with whom they share a common identity. They trust the individuals in their in-group. Contrariwise, generalized trusters trust insiders and outsiders alike. Their trust is not contingent on shared group membership (Uslaner 2002; Nannestad 2008).

Research in psychology, political science, and behavioral economics has convincingly demonstrated that generalized trust promotes cooperation among individuals and groups (Luhmann 1979; Rotter 1980; McClintock and Liebrand 1988; Putnam 1993; Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994; Sztompka 1999; Yamagishi 2001; Brewer, Gross, and Willnat 2004; Gaechter, Herrmann, and Thoeni 2004; Mercer 2005; Kydd 2005; Hardin 2006; Rathbun 2011; Thoeni, Tyran, and Wengstrom 2012; for a useful review, see Nannestad 2008). Generalized trust evokes concern about the welfare of others and thus generates social capital, leading to redistributive generosity, egalitarianism, and helping behavior (Putnam 1993; Fukuyama 1995; LaPorta et al. 1997; Newton 1997; Levi 1998; Rothstein 2002; Uslaner 2002; Cook and Cooper 2003; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005).

Generalized trust facilitates individuals' support for global redistribution because it broadens one's sense of community. Generalized trusters have a broad and open sense of community (Uslaner 2002; Rathbun 2012). Raiser (1999) calls generalized trust "extended" trust. In the case of global redistribution, generalized trust leads individuals to feel a bond with people in need in developing and less developed countries. This connection in turn leads them to have a sense of moral responsibility to supply aid to help alleviate poverty. Uslaner writes that (2002, 192) "since generalized trust has a moral basis, trusters feel a moral responsibility to help people who have less through no fault of their own." Because it expands the bonds of community to include strangers, generalized trust extends the bonds of justice among people in the world.

Uslaner (2002, 26–27) explains that what differentiates generalized trust from particularized trust is the inclusiveness of one's moral community. Particularized trusters trust those who they know—or think they know—are trustworthy and will reciprocate their good deeds. They trust specific others in their in-group, leading to a restricted sense of moral community. In contrast, generalized trusters have an open sense of moral community. They trust most people most of the time. Of course, generalized trusters may well display higher redistributive generosity to particular others such as their family members, friends, or the less fortunate in their close circle. They may also distrust particular others if they think their help will be exploited. But the compassionate hand of generalized trust does not require a shared in-group identity such as national identity. Generalized trust enables individuals to reach out to those outside their apparent identity community.

Although generalized trust and cosmopolitan identity both imply an extended sense community, these concepts are clearly distinct. Generalized trust is a dispositional attribute of individuals, embodying a broad and open sense of moral community that includes people in general. In contrast, cosmopolitan identity is a role engendered by a cognitive process of categorization. It refers to an individual's understanding of him or herself as a citizen of the world. As recent research shows, this sense of world citizenship may have a moral dimension for some individuals, but it could also be associated with instrumental motives. Cosmopolitan identity does not necessarily lead to the inclusion of all human beings in one's moral community (Bayram 2015). Conversely, because generalized trusters have an extended sense of moral community, their generosity extends to the global

community as a whole. Generalized trust creates a “transmission belt” of justice from one’s immediate community to the global community (Uslaner 2002).

Generalized trustees are not naive. In the context of cooperation, they expect diffuse reciprocity (Rotter 1999; Sztompka 1999; Yamagishi 2001 Mercer 2005; Rathbun 2011). Constant defection by others will lead them to respond in kind. In the context of domestic redistribution, ineffective social welfare programs, rising income inequality in the country, and personal economic hardship might curb their support for helping the poor. In the context of global redistribution, generalized trustees will hope that foreign aid is used well. But because generalized trustees trust moralistically, they start out generously compared to particularized trustees. Particularized trustees will support income redistribution and welfare programs when they *know* that the recipients of help are deserving and that help actually helps. In contrast, generalized trustees give even though they lack information about the trustworthiness or deservingness of others because they give moralistically. They take a leap of faith. The central hypothesis that follows from this theoretical framework can be stated as follows:

Hypothesis 1: *Generalized trustees are more supportive of foreign development aid than nontrusters.*

World Values Survey

To test my argument cross-nationally, I use data from the 2005 wave of the WVS covering OECD countries.¹² The countries included in the analysis are Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Since my focus is on public attitudes toward foreign development assistance, the unit of empirical analysis is the survey respondent.

The dependent variable is support for foreign development aid. It is measured with two questions. First, respondents are asked whether the leaders of their country should give top priority to reducing poverty in the world or to solving one’s own country’s problems and requested to indicate their position on a ten-point scale. Response categories for the variable *Reduce Global Poverty* are anchored by “Top priority to help reducing poverty in the world” (coded 10) and “Top priority to solve my own country’s problems” (coded 1). Second, respondents are asked whether they would be willing to pay higher taxes in order to increase their country’s foreign aid to poor countries. *Tax* is a binary variable coded “1” if the respondent is willing to pay higher taxes and “0” if he or she is unwilling. Because both of these questions present a tradeoff between helping strangers and protecting the interests of one’s country or family, they have the advantage of capturing how serious a respondent is about helping others in the world.

Generalized trust is hypothesized to shape the moral basis of support for aid. It is measured through response to the question, “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?” This conventional indicator leads to the binary variable of *Trust* coded “1” for “Most people can be trusted” and “0” for “Need to be careful.”

To isolate the effect of generalized trust on attitudes toward foreign aid, I take into account capital endowment, ideology, and national and cosmopolitan identities. Political economy models posit that those with higher income and education have more favorable positions on aid. Participants are asked to indicate the level of their household income in deciles on a ten-point scale, ranging from “lowest” (coded 1) to “highest” (coded 10). The variable *Income* measures household income as reported by participants. To capture education, I rely on two questions.

¹²World Value Survey 2005 official data file. New release version v.20090901. World Values Survey Association at www.worldvaluessurvey.org. More information on survey methodology and weighting can be found on the official website of the WVS. WVS used random and stratified sampling to obtain representative national samples.

The first asks respondents the highest level of education they have attained. Response categories for this item range from “No formal education” to “University education with degree.” The second asks participants to indicate when they have completed their education. Derived from these questions, the *Education* variable measures a respondent’s education in years (from twelve or less to twenty-one or more). To fully represent the role pocketbook considerations play in shaping foreign aid attitudes, I also control for respondents’ satisfaction with their financial situation and their employment status (Paxton and Knack 2012). “How satisfied are you with the financial situation of your household?” measures *Financial Satisfaction* (coded “1” for dissatisfied and “10” for satisfied). Participants are also asked whether the chief wage earner of their family is employed. *Employment* is a binary variable coded “1” if the main bread earner is employed and “0” if unemployed.

Previous studies have established that liberals are more supportive of development aid than conservatives (Chong and Gradstein 2008; Milner and Tingley 2010, 2011; Paxton and Knack 2012). *Right/left* is a measure of political orientation based on the question that asked individuals to place themselves on a ten-point political spectrum scale anchored by left (coded 10) and right (coded 1). Higher values indicate stronger left orientation. To consider the role of identity, I include national and cosmopolitan identities. Respondents are asked about the extent to which they agree with the statements “I see myself as a member of the [...] nation” and “I see myself as a citizen of the world.” Measured on four-point scales, ranging from “Strongly agree” (coded 4) to “Strongly disagree” (coded 1), *National Identity* and *Cosmopolitan Identity* tap national and cosmopolitan attachments.

To rigorously test the extent to which support for foreign aid is predicted by the moral pull of generalized trust, it is important to consider other normative factors that can plausibly relate to attitudes toward foreign aid. Universalism is a personal value orientation characterized by sociotropic motives (Schwartz 1992, 1994; Schwartz and Wolfgang 1987). Individuals who score high on universalism care about the well-being and interests of other people and value equality, social justice, and protecting the environment. It is possible that universalism positively associates with foreign aid. The 2005–2008 wave of the WVS for the first time included measures of values derived from Shalom Schwartz’s seminal work, considered to be most systematic framework of values (Rohan 2000; Feldman 2003; Hitlin and Piliavin 2004). Participants are offered a series of descriptions and asked to indicate how much the person portrayed in a description resembled them. Responses are measured on a five-point scale ranging from “Very much like me” (coded 5), “Like me,” “Somewhat like me,” “Not like me,” or “Not at all like me” (coded 1). Looking after the environment is important to this person, to care for nature, tapped *Universalism*.¹³

Existing studies have found that religious individuals are more supportive of foreign aid than nonreligious ones (Paxton and Knack 2012). Religiosity has also been shown to facilitate altruism, broadly defined (Wuthnow and Hodgkinson 1990; Jackson et al. 1995; Wilson and Janoski 1995). Participants are asked to indicate the importance of religion in their lives on a four-point scale. The variable *Religion* measures the importance of religion in a respondent’s life ranging from “Very important” (coded 4) to “Not at all important” (coded 1).

I also control for attitudes toward income equality and social welfare. It is possible that individuals who favor income equality and social welfare at home also

¹³The validity and reliability of Schwarz’ value questions have been supported in over 300 hundred independently conducted empirical tests over the decades. See, for example, Rocca and Brewer (2002) on social identity complexity; Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione (2010) on political attitudes; Feather (2004) on gender attitudes; and Olver and Mooradian (2003) on personality.

care about redistribution in the world. But it is also conceivable that advocates of domestic redistribution are weary of global redistribution because they see a trade-off between helping their fellow citizens and global others. Participants are asked to place their views on a ten-point scale and told that the extreme points represent complete agreement and complete disagreement. The variable *Income Equality* is measured by this scale, anchored by “We need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort” (coded 1) and “Incomes should be made more equal” (coded 10). Measured on the same scale, the variable *Government Welfare* captures a respondent’s agreement with either “People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves” (coded 1) or “The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for” (coded 10) representing the end points.

Finally, I control for interest in politics, gender and age of the respondent. Individuals who are generally interested in politics might be more supportive of foreign aid because they are aware of the plight of the world’s have-nots. “How interested would you say you are in politics” measures *Political Interest*, ranging from “Very interested” (coded 4) to “Not at all interested” (coded 1). Variables *Gender* (coded 1 for males 0 for females) and *Age* (age in years) capture the gender and age of the respondent.

Results

Table 1 shows the results of regression analysis with the dependent variable *Reduce Global Poverty*. Given the cross-national nature of the data, I have included dummy variables to capture possible country effects. If individuals in different countries systematically vary in their sense of trust, religiosity, ideology, or other beliefs, these dummy variables will capture these differences. The effect of generalized trust on support for reducing poverty in the world is highly statistically significant in all models.¹⁴ Model 1 shows the effect of generalized trust, controlling for a set of normative and political factors and demographics. As hypothesized, generalized trust is positively associated with support for global poverty reduction. Universalism, religiosity, belief in income equality and government welfare, and interest in politics are also positively associated with support for reducing poverty in the world. Their substantive effects are roughly comparable to the influence of generalized trust. According to Model 1, there is not a statistically significant difference in support for reducing poverty between men and women. However, younger people are more supportive of helping the poor. Overall, trust and the other factors included in Model 1 account for 12 percent of the total variance in attitudes on reducing poverty in the world.

Model 2 introduces the political economy variables of income, education, financial satisfaction, and employment status into the analysis. Individuals who have higher levels of income, are better educated, and are generally satisfied with their financial well-being hold more favorable attitudes toward reducing poverty in the world. This finding lends credence to the political economy explanations of foreign aid attitudes. Interestingly, individuals who are unemployed are more supportive about helping the poor than those who are employed. One possible explanation for this could be sympathy. Those who are unemployed may sympathize with the plight the poor, leading them to care about their well-being. The positive and highly statistically significant effect of generalized trust on support for aid is

¹⁴The ordinary least squares regression models estimated using the dependent variable *reduce global poverty* are largely robust to diagnostic tests. In particular, the models do not suffer from any serious degree of multicollinearity, as tested by the variance inflation factor (VIF). There are no VIF values higher than 2.11 and the average VIF is 1.46 in the full model. The correlations between the political economy variables, namely income, education, employment, and satisfaction with financial status range from 0.11 to 0.38.

Table 1. Global public attitudes on reducing poverty in the world

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	β (s.e.)	b	β (s.e.)	b
Trust	0.58 (0.04)****	0.12	0.02	0.57 (0.08)****
Income		0.08 (0.01)****	0.08	0.08 (0.01)****
Education		0.07 (0.02)****	0.06	0.07 (0.02)***
Financial satisfaction		0.04 (0.02)**	0.04	0.04 (0.02)**
Employment		-0.28 (0.11)**	-0.05	0.00
Right/left ideology				-0.24 (0.11)**
National identity				0.12 (0.02)****
Cosmopolitan identity				0.10
Universalism	0.19 (0.02)****	0.08	0.01	0.23 (0.03)****
Religion	0.09 (0.02)****	0.04	0.00	0.15 (0.04)****
Income equality	0.06 (0.01)****	0.06	0.00	0.06 (0.01)****
Government welfare	0.04 (0.01)****	0.05	0.00	0.06 (0.01)****
Interest in politics	0.23 (0.02)****	0.08	0.0	0.16 (0.04)****
Gender	0.04 (0.04)	0.00	0.0	0.29 (0.09)***
Age	-0.01 (0.01)****	-0.10	0.01	-0.01 (0.001)****
Constant	3.62	0.88		-0.12
R ²	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.17
N	11804	3506	3179	3072

Notes: Entries in the first column are ordinary least square regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Entries in the second column are standardized coefficients and effect sizes (partial eta square). Country dummies are committed from the table. Gender is a dummy variable with male coded as 1. The dependent variable ranges from 1 to 10 with 10 indicating higher support for reducing poverty in the world.

* $p \leq 0.10$.
** $p \leq 0.05$.
*** $p \leq 0.01$.
**** $p \leq 0.001$.

robust to the addition of the political economy variables into the analysis. Together, the material factors account for 2 percent of the total variance.

Model 3 introduces ideology into the analysis. Individuals who lean left endorse helping the poor in the world more than those who lean right. The inclusion of ideology significantly improves the previous model, explaining 2 percent of the total variance. The substantive effect of ideology on helping the poor is roughly comparable to that of generalized trust. This supports the argument that the liberal-conservative divide structures the donor public's foreign aid attitudes. Model 4 adds the identity variables. Cosmopolitans are supportive of reducing poverty in the world, but nationalists are not. Jointly, identity variables marginally improve the previous model, accounting for about 1 percent of the total variance.

The fact that generalized trust has a significant substantive effect in each of the models implies that one's belief in the integrity and trustworthiness of people is an important moral reason underlying the donor public's interest in aiding strangers.

Table 2 shows the results of a logistic regression analysis with the dependent variable *Tax*. The results are in line with the previous findings.¹⁵ Model 1 focuses on the effects of generalized trust and a series of normative and political factors on respondents' willingness to pay higher taxes to increase foreign aid spending, controlling for individuals' demographic attributes. Models 2, 3, and 4 introduce the political economy, ideology, and identity variables, respectively. Generalized trust has a positive effect on participants' willingness to sacrifice for strangers in each of the models, supporting my core claim. According to Model 1, predicted probability of agreeing to pay higher taxes for generalized trustees is 0.44. For nontrusters, it declines to 0.31. This is a 13 percentage points decrease. Universalism, religiosity, support for income equality and government welfare, and interest in politics also increase the likelihood of support for foreign aid. Among these factors, universalism has the largest substantive influence. Males and younger people are more likely to support paying higher taxes, but the effects of gender and age are substantively small, and this finding is replicated in each of the models. As Model 2 shows, generalized trustees are 13 percentage points more likely to agree to pay higher taxes relative to nontrusters when material considerations are included into the analysis. With the exception of employment status, the political economy variables of income, education, and financial satisfaction have statistically significant effects on aid willingness. The substantive effect of income is moderate. Going from the minimum to the maximum reported income, the predicted probability of favoring higher taxes for the sake of foreign aid spending increases by 8 percentage points. Education and financial satisfaction have larger effects. Moving from the lowest to the highest scores on education and satisfaction with financial status, the likelihood of aid willingness increases by 19 and 18 percentage points, respectively. This finding lends support to the political economy models.

Model 3 adds ideology to the analysis. The effect of generalized trust on aid willingness remains robust. Individuals who trust others are over 12 percentage points more likely to pay higher taxes to increase foreign aid spending. While income, education, financial satisfaction, universalism, religiosity, support for income equality and welfare, and interest in politics remain important predictors of foreign aid, ideology improves the previous model considerably. Individuals on the very left side of the ideological continuum are 25 percentage points more likely to support aid than those on the very right. Model 4 adds the identity variables. Consistent with the previous findings, the predicted probability of supporting higher taxes to help the poor in the world is about 12 percentage points

¹⁵The logistic regression models estimated using the dependent variable *tax* are largely robust to diagnostic tests. Multicollinearity does not seem to constitute a serious concern. In the full mode, the largest VIF value is 1.61 and the average VIF is 1.23.

Table 2. Global public attitudes on paying higher taxes to increase foreign aid spending

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	Odds ratio (s.e.)	Pr (Min->Max)	Odds ratio (s.e.)	Pr (Min->Max)
Trust	1.76 (0.08)***	0.13	1.77 (0.16)***	0.13
Income			1.04 (0.02)**	0.08
Education			1.12 (0.02)***	0.19
Financial satisfaction			1.09 (0.02)***	0.18
Employment			0.86 (0.10)	0.42
Right/left				1.13 (0.02)***
National identity				0.25
Cosmopolitan identity				0.89 (0.06)
Universalism	1.28 (0.02)***	0.41	1.37 (0.06)***	0.42
Religion	1.13 (0.02)***	0.08	1.22 (0.02)***	0.13
Income Ef. quality	1.02 (0.01)**	0.04	1.04 (0.02)**	0.09
Government welfare	1.03 (0.01)***	0.06	1.05 (0.02)***	0.10
Interest in politics	1.35 (0.03)***	0.20	1.27 (0.06)***	0.15
Gender	1.07 (0.03)*	0.01	1.26 (0.12)**	0.05
Age	0.98 (0.001)***	-0.2	0.97 (0.003)***	-0.29
Log likelihood	-6037.8095		-1665.9814	-1544.9387
Wald chi2	1021.39***		3991.16***	384.44***
Pseudo R2	0.0905	9975	0.1283	0.1367
N		2926		2724
				0.1351
				2635

Notes: Entries in the first column are logistic regression odds-ratios. Values above 1 indicate a positive relationship and below 1 a negative relationship. Entries in the second column are predicted probabilities when a variable changes from its minimum to its maximum. Country dummies are committed from the table. Gender is a dummy variable with male coded as 1. The dependent variable is a binary variable coded 1 if a respondent is willing to pay higher taxes to increase foreign aid 0 otherwise.

* $p \leq 0.10$.

** $p \leq 0.05$.

*** $p \leq 0.01$.)
**** $p \leq 0.001$.

higher for generalized trusters. While the effects of other variables remain stable, the coefficient for attachment to the nation is not statistically significant. However, cosmopolitan allegiance has a significant positive effect on support for foreign aid. Moving from the lowest to the highest score on cosmopolitan identity, the likelihood of aid willingness increases about 11 percentage points.

Skeptics might wonder whether trust and cosmopolitan identity exert independent causal effects on individuals' attitudes toward foreign aid. If trust and cosmopolitan identity separately shape foreign aid attitudes, the causal paths from these variables to the outcome variable should be direct (Imai, Keele, and Tingley 2010; Imai et al. 2011). That is, the effect of trust on foreign aid attitudes should not be transmitted through identity and vice versa. Results of a series of causal mediation analysis with sensitivity tests (Hicks and Tingley 2011) indicate that generalized trust and cosmopolitan identity largely exert independent effects on individuals' attitudes toward foreign aid, controlling for ideology and capital endowment. I estimate two causal mediation models for the WVS data. The first inspects whether the causal effect of trust is transmitted through identity (Is identity a mediator?). The second model examines whether the causal effect of identity on the outcome variable is transmitted through trust (Is trust a mediator?). Findings show that neither operates as a mediator. The effect of trust on support for giving top priority to foreign aid spending is direct. Only 0.04 percent of the total effect of trust is transmitted through identity. In the same vein, the effect of identity on support for foreign aid is direct. Only 0.071 percent of the total effect of identity is transmitted through trust. The [online appendix](#) provides a detailed discussion of the mediation models and reports the sensitivity tests.

Overall, the analyses indicate that individuals who believe in the integrity and trustworthiness people are more likely to support foreign development aid than those who are cynical of human nature. When there is trust, the have-nots of the world cease to be strangers; they are included in one's moral community. Helping them therefore is perceived as a moral responsibility. Further, the importance of universalism, religion, belief in income equality and social welfare across all the models suggests that morality is a significant component of helping the poor in the world. Support for global poverty reduction also has ideological, economic, and cognitive sources, but the above analysis indicates that ideology, pocketbook considerations, and interest in politics only present part of the picture. Nationalism and cosmopolitanism relate to attitudes toward reducing global poverty in predictable ways. The concerns of cosmopolitan scholars about the negative impact of nationalism on support for global common goods seem justified. A sense of world citizenship, conversely, is associated with an interest in helping the poor. Yet the inclusion of the poor in one's moral community inspired by generalized trust appears more important than their place in one's identity community.

Core Values Project

To further test the trust hypothesis, I use data from the Core Values Project's survey of the American mass public. If I can demonstrate the effect of trust on global redistributive generosity using a different dataset and a different instrument, we should have more confidence in the findings. The data were collected by YouGov/Polimetrix in January 2011, employing matching and weighting techniques to obtain a sample that largely represents the broader American public on a number of demographic characteristics.¹⁶ The sample was drawn from a non-random group of internet users who had registered to participate in online surveys. However, individual participants were recruited to match the characteristics of a nationally representative sample. The final sample was further weighted to

¹⁶I am thankful to Jason Reifler, Bill Chittick, and Brian Rathbun for sharing the data.

render it comparable to the population on a number of variables. Because respondents in the sample pool self-select themselves to online studies, we have reason to expect that they are more educated, younger, and more tuned to politics than the average public. But matching and weighing techniques allow us to largely treat the final sample as if it is representative (Vavreck and Rivers 2008; Rivers and Bailey 2009; Rathbun 2014).

The dependent variable *Surplus* taps global redistributive generosity. Respondents are presented with a six-point forced-choice scale anchored by "U.S. agricultural surpluses should be given for free to the have-nots of the world" (coded 6) on one end and "Countries needing our agricultural surpluses should pay for them instead of getting something for nothing" (coded 1) on the other. For the independent variable of generalized trust, respondents are asked: "Generally speaking, how often can you trust other people." Response options for the variable *Trust* range from "Always" (coded 5) to "Never" (coded 1). The political economy variables used in the analysis include income and education. The variable *Income* measures a respondent's yearly family on a fourteen-point scale anchored by "less than \$10, 000" (coded 1) and "\$150,000 or more" (coded 14). Other response categories on the income scale reflect \$4,999 increments. To tap a respondent's level of education, I rely on a question that asked participants to indicate the highest level of education that they have obtained. Response categories range from "no high school" to "post-graduate." I use two measures to examine the effect of education. First, I include categorical dummy variables for different levels of education. Second, I employ an interval measure of years of education derived from the categorical variable. The variable *Education* measures respondents' level of education, ranging from "12 years or less" (coded 1) to 21 years or more (coded 6). For ideology, the variable *Right/left* captures a respondent's ideological orientation coded "7" for "Very liberal" and "1" for "Very conservative."

I also control for the normative and political factors used in the previous analysis. Two questions are used to generate an index of universalism: "He/she thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life" and "He/she wants everyone to be treated justly, even people he/she does not know. It is important to him/her to protect the weak in society." The variable *Universalism* is the average of scores on these questions coded "1" for the lowest final score and "6" for the highest. The variable *Religion* ranges from "Very important" (coded 5) to "Not at all important" (coded 1), tapping the importance respondents' place on religion in their lives. Emphasis placed on *Income Equality* is measured by a six-point scale anchored by "The government should do more to reduce income inequality" (coded 6) and "The government should get out of the business of trying to promote income equality" (coded 1). For support for government welfare, participants are given the following prompt: "If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, for which of the following programs would you like to see spending decreased and for which would you like to see spending increased?" They are then asked: "How about federal spending on welfare." *Government Welfare* is a variable coded "5" for "Increased a lot" and "1" for "Decreased a lot."

Mean rating of the following four items captured attachment to the nation: "I am proud to be an American," "I believe in the motto; my country, right or wrong," and "The United States is generally on the side of the good against the powers of evil in the world." The *National Identity* variable ranges from "1" to "7" with higher values indicating stronger national allegiance. Unfortunately, the Core Values Survey does not include a direct measure of cosmopolitan identity. Nevertheless, it includes indicators for the construct of cooperative internationalism found to be positively associated with cosmopolitanism (Holsti and Rosenau 1988; Wittkopf 1990; Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis 1995; Rathbun 2014). To

capture cosmopolitan orientation, I use a question that inquired about participants' views on the power of the United Nations. *Cosmopolitanism* was measured on a six-point scale with "Expand the power of the United Nations" (coded 6) on the one end and "Reduce the power of the United Nations" (coded 1) on the other. Since the United Nations could also be seen as an agent of the world community (Thompson 2006), this is an acceptable proxy. Respondents were also asked about their interest in news and public affairs. Response options for the variable *Interest in News and Public Affairs* range from "Most of the time" (coded 4) to "Hardly at all" (coded 1). Finally, the variables *Gender* and *Age* respectively capture a respondent's gender and age in years.

Results

Table 3 shows the results of regression analysis. Following the logic used earlier, the analysis starts with the baseline model centered on trust and a set of control factors, sequentially adding economic, ideology, and identity variables. The effect of generalized trust on support for giving the US agricultural surplus to the poor in the world free of charge is statistically significant in all four models.¹⁷ Those who score high on generalized trust are much more willing to display redistributive generosity than those with lower scores. Paralleling the previous findings, universalism and support for income equality and government welfare also have significant positive effects on development aid willingness. Religion, interest in news and public affairs, and the demographic variables of gender and age do not have statistically significant effects. It is conceivable that religion and political interest did not reach statistical significance because of the nature of the sample. Since participants self-select themselves into the study, they may differ from the general mass public on these variables.¹⁸

The inclusion of income and education into the analysis makes little difference, as Model 2 shows. Neither variable reaches statistical significance. Auxiliary analysis using indicator variables for different levels of education ranging from "No High School" to "Post-graduate Education" shows that individuals with graduate education are more supportive of donating the US agricultural surplus than those with high school education. However, neither individuals who earned a college degree nor those who failed to finish high school significantly differ from those with a high school education. This finding lends partial support to political economy models. Since those with graduate education have the highest capital endowment, they are willing to help the poor.

Consistent with the previous analysis, ideology improves the explanatory capacity of the model by about 2 percent. Liberals are considerably more willing to give away agricultural surplus to the less fortunate in the world than conservatives. This supports ideology-based explanations of foreign aid. However, the effect of generalized trust on aid willingness remains robust. Model 3 introduces nationalism and cosmopolitanism into the analysis. Identity variables jointly improve the model fit by 3 percent. Nationalism is strongly and negatively associated with support for foreign aid, while cosmopolitanism is strongly and positively related. High national identifiers are opposed to donating the US agricultural surplus to the poor. Cosmopolitans are in favor. Results of causal mediation analysis replicate the findings reported earlier. Both generalized trust and cosmopolitan identity exert discrete independent effects on foreign aid attitudes. Controlling for an

¹⁷The ordinary least squares regression models estimated using the dependent variable *surplus* are mainly robust to diagnostic tests. As is the case with the previous estimations, multicollinearity does not appear to be a concern. The highest VIF value is 1.95 and the mean VIF is 1.39 in the full model. The correlation between the income and education variables is 0.37.

¹⁸Over 50 percent of the respondents in the sample reported that religion is either somewhat important or not too important in their lives. Over 77 percent of the participants reported that they are interested in news and public affairs.

Table 3. American public attitudes on donating the US agricultural surplus to poor countries

	Model 1 β (s.e.)	Model 2 b ηp^2 β (s.e.)	Model 3 b ηp^2 β (s.e.)	Model 4 b ηp^2 β (s.e.)
Trust	0.15 (0.04)***	0.08 0.01 -0.001 (0.01)	0.14 (0.05)*** -0.002 (0.01)	0.08 0.01 -0.00 0.00
Income		0.045 (0.03)	-0.04 0.00 0.037 (0.03)	-0.00 0.00 0.03 0.00
Education			0.14 (0.03)***	0.16 0.01 0.072 (0.03)*
Right/left				-0.19 (0.04)***
National identity				-0.15 (0.02)
Cosmopolitan identity				
Universalism	0.18 (0.04)*** -0.03 (0.040)	0.14 0.01 -0.02 0.00	0.22 (0.04)*** -0.02 (0.04)	0.16 0.02 -0.01 0.00
Religion		0.12 (0.03)***	0.15 0.01 0.11 (0.03)***	0.04 (0.04) 0.13 0.01
Income equality		0.25 (0.04)***	0.19 0.03 0.02 0.00	0.251 (0.05)*** 0.019 (0.06)
Government welfare		0.03 (0.05)	0.02 0.00 -0.02 0.00	0.215 (0.05)*** -0.005 (0.09)
Interest in news and public affairs		Gender	0.00 (0.002)	0.01 0.00 -0.00 0.00
Gender		Age	0.00 (0.002)	0.002 (0.03)
Age		Constant	0.787	0.440 0.15
Constant		R2	0.15	0.067 0.17
R2		N	1085	971 975
N				965

Notes: Entries in the first column are ordinary least square regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Entries in the second column are standardized coefficients and effect sizes (partial eta square). Gender is a dummy variable with male coded as 1. The dependent variable ranges from 1 to 6 indicating the highest degree of support for giving US agricultural surplus to the poor in the world for free.

* $p \leq 0.10$.

** $p \leq 0.05$.

*** $p \leq 0.01$.
**** $p \leq 0.001$.

individual's personal capital endowment and ideology, the model testing whether identity is a mediator shows that the effect of trust on support for donating the US agricultural surplus for free is not mediated by identity. Likewise, the model testing whether trust mediates the impact of identity demonstrates that only 0.048 percent of the total effect of identity is transmitted through generalized trust. In sum, the results show that generalized trust is a crucial component of the moral calculus of publics in donor countries.

Conclusion

The results indicate that generalized trust helps shape the moral foundation of donor publics' support for development foreign aid. Support for foreign aid is a normative decision to help strangers. Generalized trust facilitates this decision. Generalized trusters are substantially more willing to extend redistributive generosity to the less fortunate in developing countries than those who lack faith in the goodness of people. This finding suggests that support for foreign aid is not simply an ideological or an economic issue. Liberals and those with higher personal capital endowment (income and education) are more supportive of foreign aid, but ideological predisposition and material calculations are not the only drivers of foreign aid attitudes. The findings also show that generalized trust motivates individuals to extend a helping hand to those outside their apparent identity community. Nationalism impedes support for global redistribution while cosmopolitanism is associated with favorable attitudes toward redistribution. However, foreign aid attitudes also have a moral basis that is unrelated to identity. Generalized trust promotes global redistribution independently of identity considerations. Commitment to aiding strangers is also a function of trusting them.

This study contributes to a number of different literatures. First, it makes a contribution to the growing literature on mass attitudes toward foreign aid. Existing studies have predominantly explained the donor public's attitudes toward foreign aid by pocketbook calculations and ideology, ignoring the role that moral factors play in foreign policy attitudes. The concept of trust has thus far been neglected in the literature on foreign aid. By showing the effect of generalized trust on attitudes toward foreign aid, this paper leads to an improved understanding of the donor public's motivations, refining the political economy and ideology models of mass foreign aid attitudes.

Second, this study adds to the literature on global justice, which has largely been occupied with the relationship between group identity and preferences over redistribution, overlooking the other normative factors that could facilitate global redistributive generosity. This paper demonstrates that bonds of trust among human beings expand the boundaries of global social justice independently of cosmopolitan identity.

Lurking behind many of the global ills, the gap between the rich and the poor in the world continues to widen. Global redistribution in the form of foreign development aid is a key of strategy of addressing poverty and income inequality in the world. However, governments and aid agencies both watch the tenor of public opinion on foreign aid. Reluctant publics often provide governments with an excuse to curb assistance. Suboptimal levels of aid in turn limit the menu of policies available to aid agencies, obstruct the efficiency of aid delivery, and generally decrease the overall effectiveness of development assistance. Therefore, understanding the moral basis of donor publics' support of foreign aid has important policy implications. It is also not uncommon that governments use aid as a strategic foreign policy instrument. Donor publics, however, may be motivated by noninstrumental reasons or not at all support aid. Gaps between donor governments' and publics' motivations for caring about foreign development assistance raise crucial theoretical and policy questions about global redistribution. While in such countries as Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Finland, the level of development aid as a percentage of the donor country's gross

national income largely matches the level of public support for aid, in the case of Italy, Spain, Japan, and the United States, there seems to be a mismatch between public and government preferences.¹⁹ Future works that explore the relationship between governmental and public aid preferences will make important contributions.

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¹⁹This information is based on comparing OECD data on donor contributions in 2003 and mean levels of public support for giving top priority to helping poor countries based on the WVS data used in this study. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/data.htm>. Accessed December 23, 2014.

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