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Understanding Public Support for Foreign Aid in China

Zhiming Cheng and Russell Smyth

ABSTRACT

Public support for foreign aid in donor countries is highly correlated with how much donor countries are willing to give. There is, perhaps surprisingly, relatively little evidence on the determinants of public support for foreign aid in donor countries. And the evidence that does exist is for donors that are developed democratic countries. In this study we examine the determinants of public support for foreign aid in China. China is a particularly interesting case because it is both a recipient and donor of foreign aid. Thus, one would expect that the public's perceptions of China's own development needs would influence its support for China donating to other countries. We find that while political ideology and sense of national identity are the most important determinants of support for foreign aid, several demographic characteristics are also important. We also find that those living in the lower income western provinces and in provinces with higher poverty rates express less support for giving foreign aid. We draw policy implications from the findings for better targeting engagement strategies designed to garner support for foreign aid.

Key words: China; public support; foreign aid; donor country

JEL classification: D70; F50; P33

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1. Introduction

A peculiar feature of foreign aid is that while it often forms a significant part of national income for recipient countries, it typically only constitutes a small part of the national income of donor countries (Chong & Gradstein, 2008). This raises the interesting question, why don't donor countries give more and what determines how much they give? Public opinion about foreign aid in the donor country is important in influencing how much countries give (Stern, 1998). This suggests that studying the factors that determine public opinion in donor countries can contribute to a better understanding of foreign aid from the perspective of the donor country.

In this study we address the question: What determines public support for foreign aid in China? In addressing this question we focus on China as a donor of foreign aid, rather than as a recipient of foreign aid.¹ China's foreign aid program is relatively small, but it is getting bigger, growing at an annual rate of 30 percent between 2004 and 2009 (Information Office of the State Council, 2011). In 2013 China's foreign aid budget was US\$6.4 billion, equivalent to 0.07 percent of the country's GDP (Brant, 2014). Between 2010 and 2012, China provided US\$14.4 billion of aid to 121 countries, including 51 in Africa, 30 in Asia, 19 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 12 in Europe and 9 in Oceania (Information Office of the State Council, 2014).

As a point of comparison with Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in terms of the amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) China increased from 16th in 2001 to 6th in 2012 and 2013.² China's bilateral aid is now approaching that of France and its foreign aid is expected to be on a par with the top five DAC members by 2015 (Kitano & Harada, 2014). China will also be the major financial underwriter of the New Development Bank, which is soon to be launched by the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), in a bid to challenge the existing institutions of international aid dominated by the West (The Economist, 2014).

China's growing foreign aid program poses a series of challenges to the existing nexus established by the OECD-DAC and the World Bank (Dreher & Fuchs, 2014; Dreher et al., 2013; Dreher et al., 2011). There has been extensive discussion on whether Chinese foreign aid, which allegedly does not impose political conditions on recipient countries, is a better alternative to western foreign aid in terms of fostering local capacity and good governance (Sorensen, 2010; Wang et al., 2014). Debate has centered on whether aid from China and other emerging donors has bolstered rogue states, fuelled corruption and increased the debt of poor countries (Woods, 2008).

¹ There has been a strong debate among China's geopolitical rivals that why aid is still being provided to a country that is now the world's second largest economy (see e.g. Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2011). In 2011, Japan provided US\$800 million in development aid to China; in 2013, the United States provided US\$28 million in development aid to China (Fish, 2013).

² China is not a DAC member and its aid does not easily fit into the OECD's ODC definition. However, Kitano and Harada (2014) use the ODA standard to redefine Chinese aid in order to compare China and DAC members. See also Wolf et al. (2013) for a comparison between differing definitions of aid in the OECD and China.

Most existing studies on China's foreign aid program have focused on one of three areas; the amount of foreign aid (e.g. Strange et al., 2014), the effectiveness of foreign aid (e.g. Renwick, 2014; Schiere, 2014) and the institutions underpinning the allocation of foreign aid (e.g. Watson, 2014; Xu et al., 2014; Xue, 2014). Recently, calls have been made to broaden the study of China's foreign aid program beyond these areas (Bräutigam, 2011; Kitano, 2014). In particular, research is needed on public opinion in China, given that this is likely to be an important determinant of China's foreign aid program in the future (Shimomura & Ohashi, 2013).

A better understanding of public opinion about foreign aid is important. In traditional donor countries public opinion has had a significant influence on aid policy through the electoral system (Lancaster, 2006; Shimomura & Ohashi, 2013). There is, however, little research on the extent to which the Chinese public support China's foreign aid program (Shimomura & Ohashi, 2013).

The existing evidence is piecemeal and has varied in its major conclusions. On one hand, a few articles have noted that segments of the Chinese public have criticized the Chinese government for giving foreign aid to other countries when development challenges remain significant within China (Branigan, 2013; Brant, 2013).³ Based on observation of online responses to China's donation of 23 school buses to Macedonia, ten days after a school bus crash in Gansu province with a death toll of 19 preschool children, Brant (2013) asserts: 'It is hard for the Chinese to be open about foreign aid, especially when they are giving it to countries that may have a GDP per capita higher than China's own.' On the other hand, a recent survey found that 46 per cent of urban citizens favor China providing foreign aid to developing countries (InterMedia, 2012). This was the second largest share among the five surveyed countries (i.e. China, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States).

In examining the determinants of Chinese public opinion on China's foreign aid program and the extent to which the Chinese public believe that its government should be prioritizing domestic development vis-à-vis financing foreign aid, this study contributes to the existing literature on foreign aid in multiple ways.

First, this study contributes to the sparse literature on public opinion about aid in donor countries (Milner & Tingley, 2013). There is limited research on mass attitudes towards aid in recipient and donor countries (Chong & Gradstein, 2008; Goldsmith et al., 2014; Knack & Paxton, 2008). These studies only examine donors that are developed countries. This study is the first to examine public opinion towards foreign aid in a developing country, which is both a recipient and donor of aid.

Second, we contribute to the study of public opinion on foreign aid in an authoritarian regime in which there is no electoral mechanism. Existing studies have studied how public opinion influences foreign aid in democratic donor countries.

³ For instance, in 2012 nearly 99 million rural residents were still under the Chinese official poverty line (The Economist, 2013). In 2013 China's Human Development Index ranked 91st of 187 countries or territories (United Nations Development Programme, 2014).

While China does not have an electoral mechanism, this is not to say that the government is not responsive to public opinion. In China the influence of public opinion on foreign policy formulation has evolved over time (Reilly, 2011). At the same time, the Chinese government has become increasingly consultative in making foreign policy (Williams, 2014) and has exhibited a willingness to cooperate with DAC members (Xu & Carey, 2014). However, because of limited data availability and political sensitivities, there are few studies of the impact of public opinion on foreign affairs in China. Existing limited studies on China's foreign policy have centered on public opinion regarding China's policy towards Japan (Reilly, 2011) and foreign countries and the impact of globalization (Lee et al., 2014).

2. Data and method

This study uses data from two surveys of the Chinese populace. The first dataset contains 1,991 respondents from the 2007 World Values Survey (WVS), which was administered in 23 provinces in China.⁴ The second dataset contains 10,151 respondents from the 2006 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS), which was a nationally-representative survey, administered in 27 provinces.⁵

[Tables 1 and 2 here]

Tables 1 and 2 contain descriptive statistics for both surveys. In the WVS, the key question asked: 'Should the Chinese government give top priority to assist reducing poverty in the world or to solve your own country's problems?' Respondents answered on a 10-point scale, in which 1 denoted giving top priority to solving domestic problems and 10 denoted giving top priority to solving the world's problems. In the WVS, most respondents believed that priority should be given to addressing China's domestic problems over giving to other countries (mean score: 2.70).

In the CGSS the three key questions asked respondents whether China should expand its economic aid to other developing countries, expand medical aid to Africa and send troops to participate in United Nations peacekeeping.⁶ Overall, 77-85 per cent of respondents supported the expansion of the three types of aid.

It is essential to distinguish factors potentially influencing support for foreign aid at the individual level from those at the aggregate level. In a large country, such as China, provinces vary in terms of political, economic and cultural characteristics, which could influence individual support for aid (Paxton & Knack, 2012). Only a few studies (e.g. Hudson & vanHeerde-Hudson, 2013; Paxton & Knack, 2012) consider

⁴ For more details about the WVS, see www.worldvaluessurvey.org.

⁵ See Bian and Li (2012) for details on sample design, data collection and quality control in the CGSS.

⁶ Medical aid is an important part of China's foreign aid program (Liu et al., 2014). From 2010-2012, China dispatched 55 medical teams, comprising 3,600 medical personnel to 54 countries, treating nearly seven million patients (Information Office of the State Council, 2014). In 2013 China dispatched 2193 personnel (173 police, 37 military experts, and 1993 troops) to UN peacekeeping; China's rank in the contribution to UN peacekeeping jumped from 46th in 2000 to 14th as of June 2014 among 123 contributors (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2014).

the hierarchical structure of determinants of support for aid, even though such need is explicitly emphasized (Prather, 2011).

We employ a multi-level mixed (MLM) model containing both fixed and random effects. It specifically takes into account that respondents are selected in different provinces with different levels of socioeconomic development. Following the existing literature (e.g. Steenbergen & Jones, 2002), the level-1 model is in the form of:

$$y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}x_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (1)$$

where y_{ij} is the dependent variable for an individual i ($= 1, \dots, N_i$) nested in a province j ($= 1, \dots, J_j$); x_{ij} is the level-1 vector of independent variables (e.g. characteristics and attitudes of the individual); and ε_{ij} is a level-1 disturbance term. The fixed effects at level-1 units are analogous to standard regression coefficients. The random effects of regression parameters vary across level-2 units (i.e. provinces). Therefore the variation of level-1 parameters can be modeled as a function of level-2 predictors:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}z_{ij} + \delta_{0j} \quad (2)$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}z_{ij} + \delta_{1j} \quad (3)$$

where the γ -parameters are the fixed level-2 parameters and z_{ij} denotes a vector of level-2 predictor for an individual i ; and the δ -parameters are disturbances, implying that the level-2 predictors are not assumed to account perfectly for the variation in the level-1 parameters. The level-1 model (equation 1) and level 2 model (equations 2 and 3) can be combined into a single equation. This can be represented as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} y_{ij} &= (\gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}z_{ij} + \delta_{0j}) + (\gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}z_{ij} + \delta_{1j})x_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \\ &= \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}z_{ij} + \gamma_{10}x_{ij} + \gamma_{11}z_{ij}x_{ij} + \delta_{0j} + \delta_{1j}x_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

where γ_{00} is the constant; γ_{01} is the effect of the level-2 predictor; γ_{10} is the level-1 predictor; and γ_{11} is the effect of cross level interaction between level-1 and level-2 predictors; among the random parameters, δ_{0j} is the residual level-2 variation in the level-1 intercept that remains after controlling for z_{ij} , δ_{1j} is the residual level-2 variation in the level-1 slope for x_{ij} after controlling for z_{ij} , and ε_{ij} is the level-1 disturbance. The level-2 predictors include provincial data on population size, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, foreign direct investment (FDI) per capita, average annual GDP growth rate over the past five years, poverty rate and whether the province is eligible to receive domestic aid and transfers under the Western Development Program.⁷ These factors matters for public support for domestic and international policies (Ali et al., 2014; Mahler et al., 2000; Paxton & Knack, 2012).

⁷ Statistics on population size, GDP, FDI and average growth rate are obtained and calculated from the China Statistical Yearbook (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2007); the poverty rate is calculated from the CGSS data using a relative poverty line (20 per cent of provincial median income). Western region includes Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Sichuan, Chongqing, Guizhou, Yunan, Guangxi, Inner Mongolia and Tibet.

3. What explains public support for giving foreign aid?

Previous research suggests that public support for foreign aid is influenced by political, religious and social participation and views; trust in government and other state institutions; satisfaction with one's lot in life and financial status; social status; trust in others and demographic characteristics in level-1; as well an array of provincial/state level characteristics in level-2. In this section, we consider each of these factors in turn and discuss the measurement of some key constructs.

Political, Religious and Social Participation and Views

We examine several variables related to religious, social and political participation and views. Participation in political and social organizations is likely to be at least partly motivated by altruistic considerations. Such individuals are likely to be more community minded and this is likely to be motivated by a desire to assist others (Paxton & Knack, 2012). Being religious is also likely to be positively correlated with altruism, philanthropy and trust. Most religions promote a compassionate outlook toward others and encourage empathy toward those less fortunate (Paxton & Knack, 2012). The WVS contains a response: 'People in society treat me fairly'. Based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), we expect that people who perceive that others treat them fairly are likely to reciprocate and feel altruistic toward others. Such people, consequently, are more likely to support foreign aid.

Hudson and vanHeerde-Hudson (2013, p.3) suggest that 'as a policy issue, development aid is characterized by low salience, low knowledge and strong opinions'. The notion of low-information rationality suggests that 'citizens use information shortcuts to form opinions on politics even when they lack expert knowledge' (Paxton & Knack, 2012, p. 174). If individuals feel that the poor are lazy, or can easily escape poverty, then they are unlikely to support aid (Paxton & Knack, 2012). In the CGSS, we use several measures of attitudes towards poverty; namely, the poor lack adequate education, people are in poverty because they are lazy, the government is responsible for poverty and the government should tax the rich to help the poor. If people perceive that the poor are lazy or do not want to work they will oppose foreign aid on the basis that either the poor cannot be helped or are undeserving of assistance. However, if people believe that the poor lack human capital, this can be addressed by expenditure on education and they will support foreign aid.

People's positions on the left-right political spectrum, and their attitudes about the poor in general, can help predict their attitudes about the provision of foreign aid. Foreign aid represents a form of government intervention in the international marketplace. Thus, in western countries conservatives are typically opposed to economic aid. However, it is important to realize that the left-right political spectrum has a different interpretation in China than in western countries. Relatively speaking, leftists/conservatives tend to uphold Maoist ideals, be more egalitarian and support nationalism, while opposing globalization and western-style democracy. Meanwhile, rightists/liberals tend to oppose government interference, embrace western culture,

agitate for universal values of human rights and freedoms and support the introduction of representative democracy (Carter, 2010).

We expect that the more conservative one is in China, the more supportive of foreign aid one should be because foreign aid promotes socialist ideals of support for the less well-off and is often used to further nationalist/strategic interests (as in foreign aid to Africa since the Maoist era). Giving foreign aid may also improve the image of the donor (Goldsmith et al., 2014), which may appeal to the nationalistic sentiments of conservatives in China. The corollary is that more liberal one is, the less supportive of foreign aid one can be expected to be because in an authoritarian state, like China, the foreign aid program lacks transparency and accountability. As a consequence, liberals see it as potentially fueling corruption and abuse of funds.

The WVS contains questions on whether taxing the rich to help the poor is an essential characteristic of democracy, whether China's needs a democratic system and the importance of democracy to China. Higher scores on answers to these questions indicate more liberal attitudes. The specifications with the CGSS use variables based on a principal components analysis of questions that capture the political ideology dimension of the left-right scale. We constructed a variable of factor scores for respondents' support for fighting for self-interest through public gatherings, marching and protesting, striking and petitioning (*xinfa*ng). With the exception of strikes, these rights are legally recognized in China, but the government views them as disruptive (King et al., 2013, 2014; Li et al., 2012). A higher factor score indicates a more conservative attitude toward challenging the state and expressing self-interest through these activities. Drawing this discussion together, we expect that those who are more conservative, and more nationalistic, will be more supportive of foreign aid.

Attitudes towards Institutions

Trust in government has been used to predict foreign aid preferences (Chong & Gradstein, 2008; Milner & Tingley, 2008; Paxton & Knack, 2012; Prather, 2011). Based on the political legitimacy theory, those who have trust in governments, authorities, institutions and social arrangements can be expected to be more supportive of *any* government activity (Ali et al., 2014; Tyler, 2006). Hetherington and Globetti (2002) suggest that having trust in government is particularly important for supporting policies that involve allocation of funds to others, such as foreign aid. In China, state institutions include not only government, but also include the print media, television and other state-controlled media. The WVS contains a variable on who should be responsible for deciding foreign aid between governments of nation states, regional organizations or the United Nations. Those that believe governments of nation states should decide foreign aid are more likely to support foreign aid.

For the analysis using the CGSS, we constructed three factor score variables denoting trust towards the government, state-controlled central media and private sources of information, with higher scores indicating higher level of trust. Because the specific forms of aid are closely identified with China's reputation or identity (e.g. helping

African friends or assisting United Nations peacekeeping), higher levels of trust towards state institutions can be expected to have a positive correlation with support for aid. Therefore, we expect that those with higher trust in state-controlled media and the government are more likely to support aid because they are more supportive of state institutions, and that those with more trust in private sources of information have less trust in state institutions and are less likely to support aid.

Subjective Indicators

Following existing studies (Chong & Gradstein, 2008; Milner & Tingley, 2008; Paxton & Knack, 2012; Prather, 2011), we also control for a set of subjective indicators. These include: one's trust towards other people (in the WVS only), satisfaction with one's financial situation, satisfaction with one's life and self-perceived social class. Generosity towards others increases with trust (Bekkers, 2007). Trust and satisfaction with one's financial situation and satisfaction with one's life are linked to altruism and have been found to be positively correlated with support for foreign aid (Paxton & Knack, 2012). In addition, existing studies for developed countries suggest that individuals from higher social classes should support foreign aid on the assumption that they are better placed to reap the benefits from foreign outreach (Chong & Gradstein, 2008; Milner & Tingley, 2008; Prather, 2011).

Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

Finally, we control for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, which are likely to be related to preferences for altruism and economic self-interest. These characteristics include age, gender, having a child, health, education and income.

Some research suggests that younger people tend to be more supportive of foreign aid (Paxton & Knack, 2012; Prather, 2011; van Heerde & Hudson, 2010). However, these studies treat support for foreign aid as a linear function of age and do not test whether there is a U-shaped relationship between age and support for foreign aid. There is some evidence that older people are more likely to support charitable causes. For instance, a study on adult age-related differences in altruism finds that older adults were more likely to donate money to a good cause, to report valuing contributions to the public good and to behave altruistically compared with younger and middle-aged adults (Freund & Blanchard-Fields, 2014). We expect that support for foreign aid will be non-linear; ie. higher among younger and older people.

We expect there to be gender differences in support for foreign aid. Specifically, we expect that women will be more supportive of foreign aid than men. Women tend to be more altruistic than men because women are socialized to take care of one another (Paxton & Knack, 2012). Men are mainly socialized to be in competition with each other (Dietz et al., 2002). In the United States, women have been found to be more 'liberal' than men (Edlund & Pande, 2002). Individuals with liberal values (in a western democratic sense) are more likely to support foreign aid.

The effect of having a child on support for foreign aid is unclear. On the one hand, it may be that having a child broadens one's perspective, engendering empathy toward others and, thus, by extension, support for foreign aid (Paxton & Knack, 2012). There might be spillover effects from child to parent if the parent learns more about development needs overseas through *de facto* exposure to the child's curriculum (Henson & Lindstrom, 2013). On the other hand, from the perspective of economic self-interest, parents may feel that their government should allocate more resources to their children's future rather than on foreign aid (Knack & Paxton, 2008).

The effects of health, income and human capital endowment on support for foreign aid are also uncertain. On the one hand, those who have higher incomes, might be more flexible in their attitude toward risk taking and this might encourage altruism (Paxton & Knack, 2012). Those who are better educated are more likely to hold progressive views on social issues and be more international in outlook (Hudson & vanHeerde-Hudson, 2013), both of which are likely to be correlated with increased support for foreign aid. Research suggests that altruistic emotions and behaviors are associated with better health (Post, 2005). Therefore, people with better health might be more likely to support foreign aid. On the other hand, there may be a negative relationship between the economic endowment variables and foreign economic aid. Education, health status and income are correlated. Individuals with better health, higher education and income pay a greater share of taxes and, thus, may be less enthusiastic about giving aid to foreign countries (Prather, 2011).

Provincial Characteristics

We expect that provinces with a larger population are more likely to support aid because of better information flow, which may lead to greater exposure to international affairs.

Provincial GDP, FDI per capita and annual growth rate are included as measures of aggregate level economic conditions, openness and exposure to foreign affairs. Similar to the effect of income at the individual level, the directions of their effects are uncertain.

To address the increasing disparities between eastern and western regions and the discontentment of western provinces towards poverty and unbalanced regional development, in 2000 the Chinese government initiated the Western Development Program, which has provided preferential policies for economic development and massive funding for infrastructure, environment protection, human capital and social welfare (Lai, 2002). The program may have helped reduce regional disparities and poverty, but they remain pronounced (Xie & Zhou, 2014). In the first ten years of the program more than US\$325 billion were invested on projects, and in recent years the Chinese government continues to invest more than US\$50 billion per year on new projects in the western region (Edwards, 2012). It is anticipated that people from western provinces, or provinces with higher poverty rates, are less likely to support foreign aid while their own needs for development support remains very strong.

5. Results

Results from the WVS

Table 3 presents the results from the WVS using two-level linear mixed models with fixed effects at the individual level and random effects at the provincial level. The interclass correlation (ICC) demonstrates that about 7 per cent of the total variance in the support for prioritizing international poverty reduction can be attributed to between-province differences. In each of the four specifications, the likelihood ratio tests for the mixed model against a single-level linear regression indicate that the mixed model with province random effects at level-2 perform better than the single-level regression model.

[Table 3 here]

Our analysis focuses on Model 4, which contains a full set of variables and has the smallest Akaike information criterion (AIC) value, indicating that it has relatively better fit. Among the demographic and socioeconomic indicators, individual support for foreign aid exhibits a non-linear U-shaped relationship in which support bottoms out at 45 years of age. Men are less likely to support foreign aid than women. The coefficient on having a child is statistically insignificant. The findings for the endowment variables are mixed. We find no significant relationship between health or education and support for foreign aid. We find a negative relationship between income and support for foreign aid, which is consistent across all four models. A one-unit increase in the income decile decreases support for foreign aid by 0.127 points.

Among the subjective indicators, we find that the coefficients on trusting others and satisfaction with one's financial position are statistically insignificant, while support for aid decreases by 0.281 points for each one unit increase in level of life satisfaction. The coefficient on life satisfaction, however, is only weakly significant. Support for foreign aid increases by 0.217 points for each one-unit increase in social class.

Among the different types of participation in organizations, we find that political and religious participation increases support for foreign aid. The magnitude of the effect of religious participation (0.390 points) and political participation (0.327 points) are relatively large. However, other forms of community and sports participation are statistically insignificant. Among the variables denoting socio-political views, those who perceive that others treat them fairly are less likely to support foreign aid, although the coefficient is only weakly significant. Those who are more rightist/liberal (i.e. regard taxing the rich to support the poor as an essential characteristic of democracy; that China needs a democratic system and perceive democracy to be important) are less supportive of aid. Those who have higher trust of the print media are less likely to support aid. However, those with more trust of television are more likely to support aid. Compared with individual governments, those who believe that the United Nations should decide aid are less likely to support the Chinese government prioritizing international development.

The parameters at level-2 indicate that the effects of population size, GDP per capita and FDI per capita on support for foreign aid are statistically insignificant. Meanwhile, the annual growth rate has a positive effect while the poverty rate and living in a western province has a negative effect on support for foreign aid.

Results from the CGSS

Models 1-3 in Table 4 present the results from the CGSS using logit two-level mixed models for three types of aid (economic aid, medical aid to Africa and UN peacekeeping). Model 4 presents the results using a Poisson two-level mixed model, in which the dependent variable is the number of foreign aid types that the respondent supports. The ICCs of models 1-3 show that approximately 4 per cent of total variance in the support for foreign aid can be attributed to between-province differences. The likelihood ratio tests show that all mixed models perform better than single-level models.

[Table 4 here]

The variables denoting demographic and socioeconomic characteristics are largely insignificant across Models 1-4. In Model 3, men are more likely than women to support participation in UN peacekeeping. This result is not totally unexpected. Women tend to be less militaristic and more opposed to spending on war or military conflicts overseas compared with men (Greeno & Maccoby, 1993). Findings for the United States suggest that men are more likely to support foreign spending on the military than women, while women are more likely than men to support foreign spending on humanitarian causes (Milner & Tingley, 2013).

There are mixed results for the effect of endowments on public support for foreign aid. Health is statistically insignificant in Models 1, 2 and 4 and has a weakly positive effect on support for participation in United Nations peacekeeping in Model 3. Consistent with the WVS results, income has a negative effect on support for economic aid in Model 1, but is statistically insignificant in the other three models. There are strong effects of education in Models 1 and 2. Compared to those with no qualifications, all other groups except those with a postgraduate degree are more likely to support economic aid and medical aid to Africa.

Among the subjective indicators, Models 1, 2 and 4 suggest that people who are more satisfied with their lives are more likely to support economic aid, medical aid to Africa and are more likely to support multiple aid types. Model 3 suggests that the people with higher self-perceived social class are more likely to support participation in United Nations peacekeeping, consistent with expectations. The coefficient on satisfaction with one's financial situation is insignificant in each model.

The effects of political and religious participation are largely insignificant. With the exception of Buddhism, being religious has no effect on support for foreign aid. Compared to Communist Party members, members of the Communist Youth League and those without political affiliation are more likely to support medical aid to Africa

(Model 2). Respondents who expressed the view that the poor lack adequate education are more likely to support aid in Models 1-3, while those who believed the poor do not want to work are less likely to support UN peacekeeping in Model 3. Believing government is responsible for poverty has statistically positive effects on support for medical aid and UN peacekeeping. Believing that the government should tax the rich has a statistically significant positive effect on support for aid in Models 1-4. Disapproval of expression of self-interest also has a statistically significant positive effect on support for each type of aid in Models 1-3 as well as Model 4.

In terms of attitudes towards institutions, the coefficients on having trust in government and trusting private sources of information have unexpected signs in Model 2 and Model 1 respectively, but are only weakly significant. Trust in state-controlled central media and beliefs that one should follow the government and support one's country have a positive effect on support for aid across all models.

Among the level-2 variables, population size is insignificant in all models, GDP per capita has a negative effect on support for aid in Models 1 and 2 and FDI per capita has a negative effect on support for economic aid in Model 1. These findings are consistent with the negative effect of personal income on support for aid at the individual level. In other words, in the aggregate, richer provinces do not exhibit greater support for foreign aid. Given that we control for respondents' own income levels and subjective indicators (including satisfaction with finance), these results imply that respondents living in wealthier provinces opposing foreign aid in favor of domestic redistribution (Paxton & Knack, 2012). Meanwhile, faster growing provinces are more likely to support all three types of aid. Similar to the WVS results, the poverty rate has a negative effect in all models, while living in a western province has a negative effect on support for economic and medical aid.

6. Conclusion and Policy Implications

The results in this paper break new ground in the sense that they present the first evidence on the determinants of public support for aid in a developing country that is both a recipient and a donor of foreign aid as well as the first evidence on the determinants of public support for aid in an authoritarian regime. The Chinese case is particularly interesting given the ongoing debate in that country about the extent to which China should be giving aid to other countries, many of which have higher GDP per capita than China, at a time when China faces considerable development challenges.

This study applies a hierarchical model, in which both individual and provincial characteristics are included in the analysis. Across the two datasets our results suggest that a complex array of factors determine public support for foreign aid. Debate has centered on the extent to which demographic characteristics versus sociopolitical views determine support for foreign aid (Henson & Lindstrom, 2013). Our results suggest that one's political ideology and sense of national identity are the most important determinants of public support for aid in China. However,

demographic characteristics (gender, education, age and income) were also important in at least some of the specifications. We also find that those living in the relatively economic-disadvantaged western provinces and in provinces with higher poverty rates express less support for giving foreign aid.

While care must be taken in drawing conclusions from this study for donor countries more generally, the results suggest some important policy implications. The first is that there may be better payoffs in targeting engagement activities at specific demographic segments. The second is that an important predictor of public support is whether individuals trust the government and, hence, public perception of how effective the government is in terms of ensuring the aid is well spent is an important factor influencing public opinion. This suggests that much can be gained by a communications strategy that demonstrates aid is effective. The third is that campaigns promoting foreign aid should not only 'sell' the effectiveness of such aid, but also play on the value to the donor in terms of enhancing its national reputation.

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Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of 2007 World Values Survey

Should the Chinese leaders give top priority to help reducing poverty in the world or to solve your own country's problems?	
Scale: 1-10 (1: top priority to solve my own country's problems; 10: top priority to help reducing poverty in the world)	
Mean	2.7
Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics	
Age	44.7
Male (%)	45.6
Have child (%)	87.8
Health (scale: 1-4)	2.8
Qualification (%)	
Less than primary school	26.2
Primary school	26.3
Junior high school	29.0
Senior high school	12.2
Graduate diploma/bachelor	6.1
Postgraduate	0.2
Personal income decile (scale: 1-10)	4.0
Subjective indicators	
Trust other people (%)	52.4
Finance satisfaction (scale: 1-10)	5.9
Life satisfaction (scale: 1-4)	2.9
Social class (scale: 1-5)	2.3
Religious, social and political participation	
Church or religious organization (%)	12.9
Sports or recreational organization (%)	23.1
Art, music or educational organization (%)	20.2
Political party (%)	18.4
Environmental organization (%)	14.6
Charitable or humanitarian organization (%)	11.4
Social and political views	
People in society treat me fairly (scale: 1-10)	7.4
Government should tax the rich to help the poor (scale: 1-10)	7.6
China needs a democratic system (scale: 1-4)	3.3
Importance of democracy (scale: 1-10)	8.6
Attitudes toward institutions	
Trust central government (scale: 1-4)	3.3
Trust print media (scale: 1-4)	2.8
Trust television (scale: 1-4)	2.9
Who should decide aid to developing countries? (%)	
Individual governments	32.2
Regional organization	11.8
The United Nations	56.0
Provinces/municipalities: Beijing, Hebei, Shanxi, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Fujian, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Yunan, Shaanxi, Xijiang, Ningxia	

Note: all variables in scales are measured from low to high.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of 2006 Chinese General Social Survey

Economic aid: China should expand its economic aid to other developing countries (%)	77.1
Medical aid: China should provide more medical aid to African countries (%)	83.2
Military aid: China should participate in the United Nations Peacekeeping (%)	84.9
Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics	
Age	42.7
Male (%)	46.2
Have child (%)	55.7
Health (scale: 1-4)	2.1
Qualification (%)	
Less than primary school	7.6
Primary school	22.3
Junior high school	33.2
Senior high school	22.6
Graduate diploma/bachelor	11.8
Postgraduate	2.5
Personal income decile (scale: 1-10)	5.4
Residence (%)	
Inner city	52.5
Towns	5.7
Suburbs	0.9
Villages	40.7
Others	0.2
Subjective indicators	
Finance satisfaction (scale: 1-3)	2.4
Life satisfaction (scale: 1-5)	3.4
Social class (scale: 1-5)	1.9
Religious and political participation	
Religion (%)	
Non-religious	86.7
Buddhism	7.4
Daoism	0.2
Chinese popular religions	1.9
Islam	1.5
Catholic	0.3
Protestant	1.7
Others	0.3
Party membership (%)	
Chinese Communist Party	8.8
Democratic parties	0.1
Communist Youth League	6.3
None	84.8
Social and political views	
Disapproval of expression of self-interest (factor score)	1.44e-09
The poor lack adequate education (scale: 1-4)	2.7
The poor are lazy (scale: 1-4)	2.2
Government is responsible for poverty (scale: 1-4)	2.6
Government should tax the rich to help the poor (scale: 1-4)	3.1
Attitudes toward institutions	
Trust government (factor score)	5.43e-09
Trust state-controlled central media (factor score)	1.63e-09
Trust private sources of information (factor score)	-4.96e-09
Should always follow government (scale: 1-4)	2.7
Should always support my country (scale: 1-4)	2.9

Provinces/municipalities: Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Fujian, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Xinjiang

Note: all variables in scales are measured from low to high.

Table 3 Correlates of Domestic vis-à-vis International Development Priority, 2007 World Values Survey (linear multilevel mixed model)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
<i>Level-1: Fixed effects parameters</i>								
Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics								
Age	-0.0991***	(-2.71)	-0.0628*	(-1.65)	-0.0767*	(-1.83)	-0.103**	(-2.14)
Age squared	0.000943**	(2.43)	0.000598	(1.48)	0.000790*	(1.77)	0.00112**	(2.19)
Male	-0.261*	(-1.94)	-0.293**	(-2.13)	-0.341**	(-2.26)	-0.393**	(-2.28)
Have child	-0.310	(-1.22)	-0.443*	(-1.67)	-0.265	(-0.95)	-0.140	(-0.44)
Health	-0.170**	(-2.41)	-0.167**	(-2.12)	-0.0744	(-0.84)	-0.0577	(-0.55)
Qualification (ref: less than primary school)								
Primary school	0.384*	(1.95)	0.238	(1.17)	0.285	(1.13)	0.314	(0.96)
Junior high school	0.0585	(0.29)	0.0757	(0.36)	0.364	(1.45)	0.330	(1.03)
Senior high school	0.0243	(0.10)	-0.0644	(-0.26)	0.212	(0.75)	0.259	(0.74)
Graduate diploma/bachelor	0.128	(0.42)	0.00559	(0.02)	0.182	(0.53)	0.323	(0.78)
Postgraduate	0.613	(0.51)	0.0653	(0.05)	0.0962	(0.08)	0.0403	(0.03)
Personal income decile	-0.0781**	(-2.06)	-0.0894*	(-1.89)	-0.140***	(-2.70)	-0.127**	(-2.11)
Subjective indicators								
Trust other people			0.295**	(2.20)	0.159	(1.05)	0.161	(0.90)
Finance satisfaction			0.00668	(0.22)	0.000684	(0.02)	-0.00819	(-0.20)
Life satisfaction			-0.161	(-1.44)	-0.238*	(-1.86)	-0.281*	(-1.84)
Social class			0.158	(1.63)	0.174	(1.61)	0.217*	(1.73)
Religious, social and political participation								
Church or religious organization					0.331*	(1.79)	0.390*	(1.85)
Sports or recreational organization					-0.0855	(-0.60)	-0.0643	(-0.42)
Art, music or educational organization					0.149	(0.94)	0.162	(0.96)
Political parties					0.285**	(2.12)	0.327**	(2.23)
Environmental organization					0.162	(0.76)	0.105	(0.47)
Charitable or humanitarian organization					-0.0758	(-0.33)	-0.0908	(-0.38)
Social and political views								
People in the society treat me fairly					-0.0608*	(-1.72)	-0.0731*	(-1.75)
Taxing the rich to help the poor is essential in democracy					-0.0651**	(-2.42)	-0.0746**	(-2.29)
China needs a democratic system					-0.365***	(-2.89)	-0.0239**	(-2.15)
Importance of democracy					-0.139***	(-3.04)	-0.191***	(-3.64)
Attitudes towards institutions								
Trust central government							-0.0250	(-0.16)
Trust print media							-0.510***	(-2.79)
Trust television							0.647***	(3.31)

Who should decide aid to developing countries? (ref: individual governments)

Regional organization							-0.0758	(-0.26)
The United Nations							-0.375**	(-1.97)
Constant	6.137***	(7.83)	5.427***	(6.43)	8.634***	(8.11)	8.334***	(6.44)
<i>Level-1: N</i>	1360		1234		813		627	
<i>Level-2: Random effects parameters</i>								
Population (million)	0.000267	(0.86)	0.000247	(0.83)	0.000347	(0.56)	0.000367	(0.76)
GDP per capita (RMB)	-0.00531	(-0.67)	-0.00620	(-0.47)	-0.00510	(-0.67)	-0.00631	(-0.57)
FDI per capita (RMB)	0.00624	(0.68)	0.00574	(0.88)	0.00621	(0.68)	0.00524	(0.68)
Annual growth rate (per cent)	0.0132*	(1.73)	0.0122*	(1.61)	0.00920*	(1.83)	0.0121*	(1.80)
Poverty rate (per cent)	-0.00216*	(-1.82)	-0.00200*	(-1.73)	-0.00198*	(-1.72)	-0.00199*	(-1.70)
Western province	-0.0151*	(-1.62)	-0.0131*	(-1.43)	-0.0140*	(-1.65)	-0.0156*	(-1.74)
<i>Level-2: N</i>	23		23		23		23	
Likelihood ratio test vs. single-level linear regression (Prob>=chibar2)	0.000	***	0.000	***	0.0387	**	0.0304	**
Akaike information criterion (AIC)	6230.700		5603.874		3534.194		2755.428	

Notes: z statistics in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 4 Correlates of Support for Foreign Aid, 2006 Chinese General Social Surveys (multilevel mixed model)

	Model 1 (logit regression)		Model 2 (logit regression)		Model 3 (logit regression)		Model 4 (Poisson regression)	
	Economic aid		Medical aid to Africa		UN Peacekeeping		Count of supported items	
<i>Level-1: Fixed effects parameters</i>								
Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics								
Age	-0.0102	(-0.58)	0.0151	(0.77)	0.00381	(0.19)	0.00194	(0.42)
Age squared	0.000183	(0.94)	-0.000110	(-0.51)	0.0000417	(0.18)	-0.0000105	(-0.21)
Male	-0.0105	(-0.15)	0.0138	(0.18)	0.141*	(1.73)	0.0105	(0.57)
Have child	-0.0494	(-0.67)	0.0266	(0.32)	-0.0678	(-0.77)	-0.00834	(-0.43)
Health	0.0116	(0.23)	0.00674	(0.12)	0.112*	(1.86)	0.00872	(-0.64)
Qualification (ref: less than primary school)								
Primary school	0.445***	(3.25)	0.408***	(2.77)	0.0226	(0.15)	0.0528	(1.43)
Junior high school	0.419***	(3.04)	0.412***	(2.75)	0.139	(0.87)	0.0557	(1.48)
Senior high school	0.464***	(3.02)	0.527***	(3.12)	0.151	(0.85)	0.0623	(1.50)
Graduate diploma/bachelor	0.421**	(2.35)	0.610***	(3.03)	0.142	(0.67)	0.0576	(1.18)
Postgraduate	-0.464	(-0.72)	0.604	(0.72)	0.422	(0.39)	-0.0232	(-0.12)
Personal income decile	-0.0289**	(-2.06)	-0.00898	(-0.56)	-0.00122	(-0.07)	-0.00319	(-0.85)
Residence (ref: inner city)								
Towns	0.256*	(1.71)	0.424**	(2.41)	0.0535	(0.31)	0.0350	(0.88)
Suburban areas	-1.114***	(-2.94)	-2.072***	(-5.35)	2.036***	(2.68)	-0.333***	(-2.59)
Villages	0.341***	(3.86)	0.225**	(2.26)	0.0891	(0.87)	0.0401*	(1.77)
Others	1.334	(1.27)	16.37	(0.01)	-0.0961	(-0.09)	0.112	(0.71)
Subjective indicators								
Finance satisfaction	0.0297	(0.55)	-0.0580	(-0.94)	-0.0235	(-0.37)	0.00114	(0.08)
Life satisfaction	0.175***	(3.43)	0.160***	(2.77)	0.0223	(0.37)	0.0230*	(1.74)
Social class	-0.00766	(-0.18)	-0.000166	(-0.00)	0.117**	(2.33)	0.00452	(0.41)
Religious and political participation								
Religion (ref: non-religious)								
Buddhism	-0.245**	(-1.98)	-0.210	(-1.50)	-0.507***	(-3.72)	-0.0660*	(-1.86)
Daoism	1.263	(1.19)	15.95	(0.01)	-0.0959	(-0.12)	0.151	(0.82)
Chinese popular religions	0.173	(0.59)	-0.198	(-0.66)	0.124	(0.36)	-0.0180	(-0.22)
Islam	0.308	(0.93)	-0.394	(-1.24)	-0.358	(-1.06)	-0.0442	(-0.54)
Catholic	-0.0779	(-0.11)	-1.086	(-1.59)	-0.927	(-1.35)	-0.202	(-0.88)
Protestant	0.143	(0.52)	-0.0668	(-0.23)	-0.403	(-1.47)	-0.0193	(-0.28)

Others	0.273	(0.34)	-0.427	(-0.52)	-0.969	(-1.34)	-0.0513	(-0.24)
Party membership (ref: Chinese Communist Party)								
Democratic parties	0.170	(0.14)	-1.465	(-1.13)	12.96	(0.03)	-0.0236	(-0.06)
Communist Youth League	0.0754	(0.42)	0.399**	(1.98)	0.138	(0.67)	0.0223	(0.45)
None	0.0712	(0.62)	0.278**	(2.19)	0.144	(1.06)	0.0247	(0.80)
Social and political views								
Disapproval of expression of self-interest	0.0885***	(2.66)	0.112***	(2.90)	0.0746*	(1.82)	0.0189**	(2.10)
The poor lack adequate education	0.117***	(2.84)	0.249***	(5.34)	0.147***	(2.96)	0.0293***	(2.67)
The poor are lazy	0.0583	(1.46)	-0.0286	(-0.63)	-0.114**	(-2.41)	-0.00393	(-0.38)
Government is responsible for poverty	0.0202	(0.43)	0.138***	(2.62)	0.219***	(4.04)	0.0194	(1.55)
Government should tax the rich to help the poor	0.152***	(3.42)	0.165***	(3.29)	0.295***	(5.69)	0.0317***	(2.64)
Attitudes towards institutions								
Trust government	0.0691	(1.51)	-0.0899*	(-1.71)	-0.00168	(-0.03)	-0.0000476	(-0.00)
Trust state-controlled central media	0.125***	(2.79)	0.283***	(5.62)	0.251***	(4.83)	0.0357***	(2.99)
Trust private source of information	0.0655*	(1.86)	-0.0230	(-0.57)	-0.0735*	(-1.77)	-0.00305	(-0.33)
Should always follow government	0.235***	(5.24)	0.145***	(2.90)	0.184***	(3.53)	0.0304**	(2.54)
Should always support my country	0.333***	(7.28)	0.466***	(9.05)	0.399***	(7.48)	0.0749***	(6.02)
Constant	-2.303***	(-4.40)	-3.059***	(-5.20)	-2.552***	(-4.15)	0.157	(1.11)
<i>Level-1: N</i>	6019		6089		5990		5691	
<i>Level-2: Random effects parameters</i>								
Population (million)	0.0000121	(0.77)	0.0000131	(0.37)	0.0000142	(0.35)	0.00000912	(0.62)
GDP per capita (RMB)	-0.00553**	(-2.85)	-0.00263**	(-2.33)	-0.00467	(-0.26)	-0.000233	(-0.23)
FDI per capita (RMB)	0.00724*	(1.68)	0.00424	(0.12)	0.00332	(0.11)	0.000432	(0.22)
Annual growth rate (per cent)	0.0290*	(1.73)	0.0167*	(1.67)	0.0189*	(1.73)	0.00187	(0.63)
Poverty rate (per cent)	-0.00326*	(-1.82)	-0.00232*	(-1.90)	-0.00178*	(-1.89)	-0.000786	(-0.72)
Western province	-0.0231**	(-2.61)	-0.0171**	(-2.45)	-0.0110	(-0.91)	-0.00171	(-0.61)
<i>Level-2: N</i>	27		27		27		27	
Likelihood ratio test vs. single-level linear regression (Prob>=chibar2)	0.000	***	0.000	***	0.000	***	0.00260	***

Notes: z statistics in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$