

Noblesse Oblige: Status Motivations and Public Support for Foreign Aid

Supplementary Appendix

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1 Pre-Analysis Plan

This study was pre-registered with the Center for Open Science (OSF) at https://osf.io/vujdf/?view_only=d4cfd48bde3d4c6ba84bc162be889835.

2 Survey Text

2.1 Pretreatment Questions

Need for National Status:

How well does each of the following statements describe you? [*Extremely well, Quite well, Not too well, Not well at all*]

- It is important to me that the U.S. is a highly valued member of the international community.
- I care about whether people in other countries view the U.S. positively.
- It would please me for the U.S. to have a position of prestige and international standing.
- I would like people in other countries to admire the U.S.
- I want other countries to respect the U.S. and hold it in high esteem.
- I would like other countries to follow the U.S.'s example.

Internationalism & Altruism:

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [*Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree*]

- People should always be willing to help a stranger, even if it means having to give up something.
- The U.S. would be better off if we just stayed home and did not concern ourselves with problems in other parts of the world.

2.2 Foreign Aid Experiment Conditions

Control Condition:

U.S. officials may cut foreign aid spending as part of a plan to reduce the national debt. Foreign aid is money and supplies that the U.S. government sends to poor countries to help them fight poverty. The U.S. government spends \$41 billion (less than 1% of the federal budget) in foreign aid each year.

Status Condition:

[Same information as control condition, followed by:] Experts warn that a reduction in foreign aid would hurt America's image, since other countries expect global leaders like the U.S. to help those in need. This would create a leadership vacuum that countries like China will seek to fill.

2.3 *Dependent Variables*

Do you think that the U.S. government should spend more, less, or about the same on foreign aid?

- Significantly more
- Somewhat more
- About the same
- Somewhat less
- Significantly less

Overall, each year the U.S government gives about 40 of each American's income to foreign countries. Many people think this is too low, others think it is too high, and still others think it is about right. How much per American do you think our government should spend on foreign aid each year?

- \$60 to \$79. The U.S. should raise the amount by a lot.
- \$41 to \$59. The U.S. should raise the amount by a little.
- \$40. The current amount is about right.
- \$20 to \$39. The U.S. should lower the amount by a little.
- \$1 to \$19. The U.S. should lower the amount by a lot.

What role do you think the U.S. should take in aiding poor countries?

- The U.S. should take the leading role
- The U.S. should take a major role, but not the leading role
- The U.S. should take a minor role
- The U.S. should take no role at all

3 Sample Characteristics

Table A1. Summary Statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Median	Max	N
Support for Foreign Aid	0.50	0.26	0.00	0.53	1.00	993
Need for National Status	0.72	0.23	0.00	0.71	1.00	1000
Isolationism	0.58	0.32	0.00	0.50	1.00	1000
Altruism	0.69	0.25	0.00	0.75	1.00	1000
College	0.38	0.49	0	0.00	1	1000
Age	48.37	17.77	18	49.00	89	1000
Female	0.55	0.50	0	1.00	1	1000

		N	Percent
Party Identification	Democrat	376	37.6
	Independent	380	38.0
	Republican	244	24.4
Ideology	Liberal	340	34.0
	Moderate	385	38.5
	Conservative	275	27.5

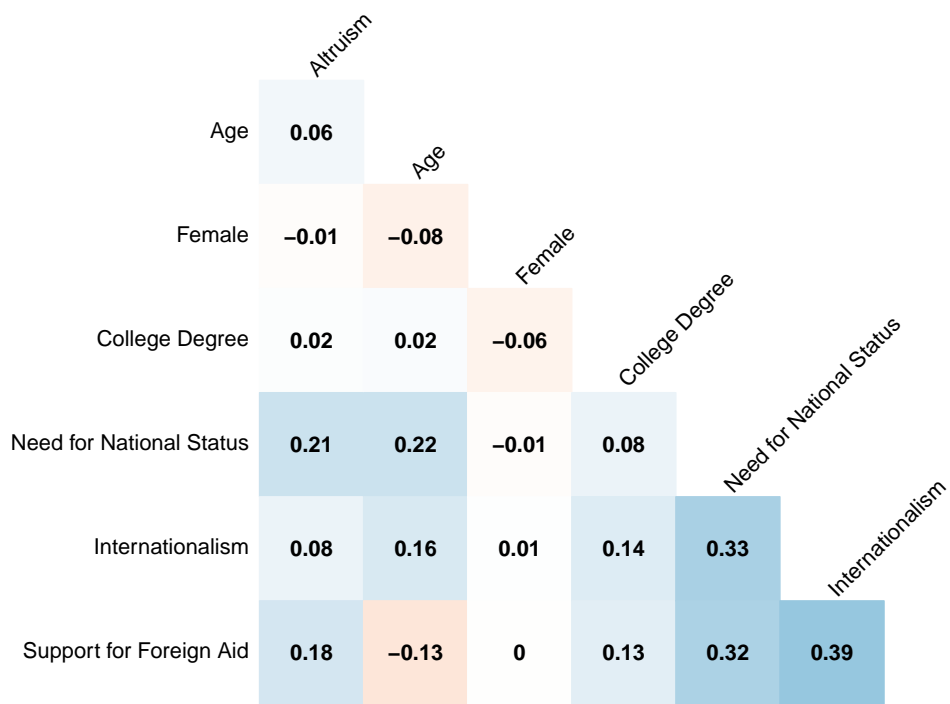


Figure A1. Correlation Matrix

4 Support for Foreign Aid (Index)

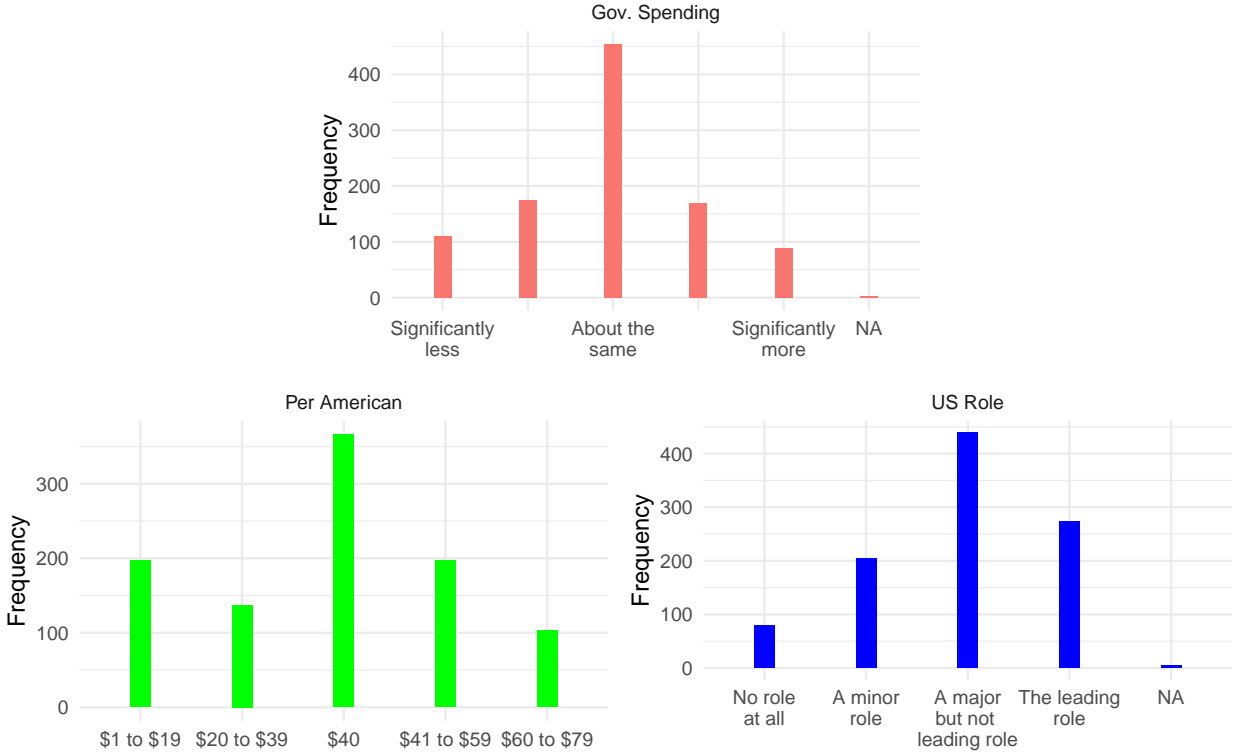


Figure A2. Support for Foreign Aid Scale Responses

5 Need for National Status (Index)

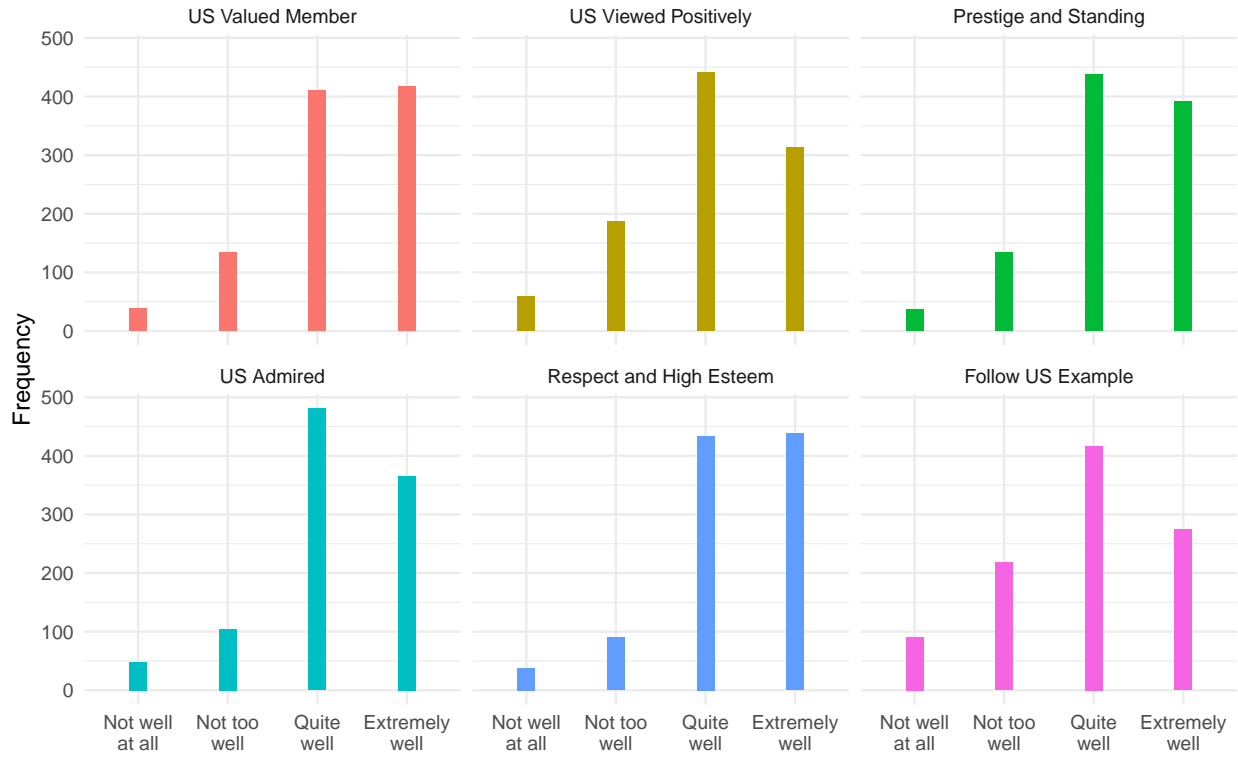


Figure A3. Need for National Status Scale Responses

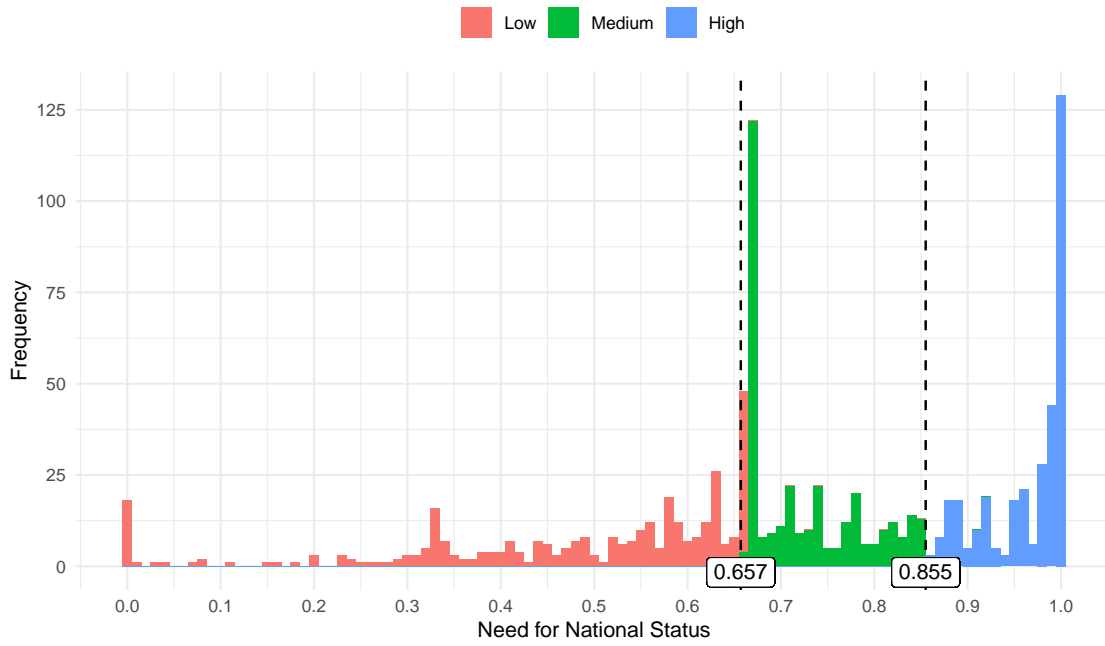


Figure A4. Cutoff Points: Need for National Status (Categorical Variable)

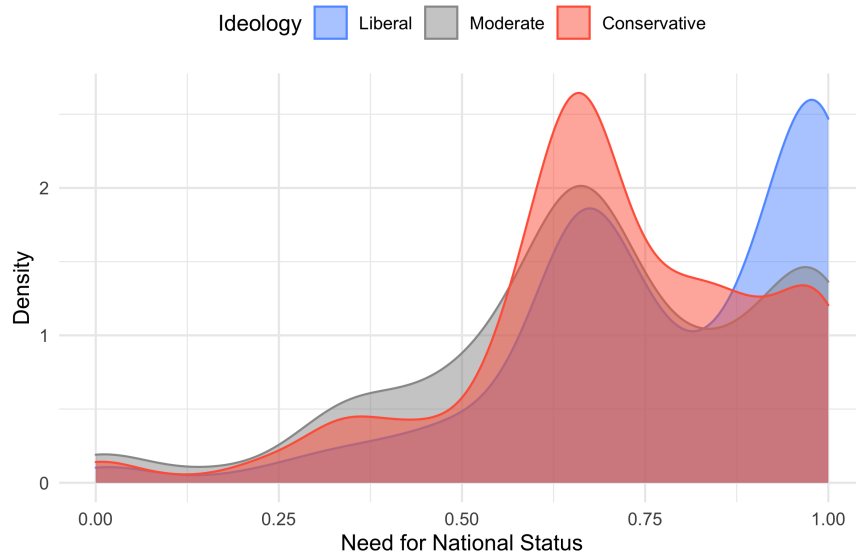


Figure A5. Distribution of Need for National Status (Index) by Ideology

6 Robustness Checks: Dependent Variable

Table A2 reports the results from our observational analysis using each of the questions that compose our index for foreign aid support. For Models 1 and 2, the dependent variable measures a respondent's preference on the amount the U.S. government should spend on foreign aid. The dependent variable for Models 3 and 4 gauges how much the U.S. government should spend per American on aid. Finally, the dependent variable for Models 5 and 6 measures respondents' preferences regarding the role the U.S. should take in helping poor countries. As in our main specification, the analysis provides support to our first hypothesis: Across model specifications, a respondent's need for national status has a positive and statistically significant association with their support for aid-giving.

Table A3 shows the results from our experimental analysis using the three questions that compose our index of foreign aid support. As in our main specification, the analysis provides support to our second hypothesis: Respondents are more supportive of foreign aid when cued to consider that aid cuts would reduce U.S. status abroad. By incorporating pre-treatment covariates, we obtain more precise effect estimates, all of which are significant at the 0.01 level. In our multivariate analysis, the status treatment increases support for: (1) government spending on foreign aid by 5.6 percentage points (Model 2); (2) foreign aid spending per American by 3.5 percentage points (Model 4) and the U.S. taking a larger role in helping poor countries by 3.2 percentage points (Model 6).

Table A2. Observational analysis: Need for national status and foreign aid support by question

	Gov. Spending		Per American		US Role	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Need for Status	0.398*** (0.005)	0.250*** (0.009)	0.398*** (0.005)	0.250*** (0.009)	0.563*** (0.007)	0.435*** (0.010)
Internationalism		0.202*** (0.012)		0.202*** (0.012)		0.201*** (0.010)
Altruism		0.084*** (0.005)		0.084*** (0.005)		0.137*** (0.006)
Democrat		0.052*** (0.008)		0.052*** (0.008)		0.013** (0.006)
Republican		-0.062*** (0.005)		-0.062*** (0.005)		-0.061*** (0.004)
Liberal		0.073*** (0.009)		0.073*** (0.009)		0.041*** (0.006)
Conservative		-0.047*** (0.004)		-0.047*** (0.004)		-0.011** (0.004)
College Degree		0.011*** (0.003)		0.011*** (0.003)		0.014*** (0.003)
Age		-0.002*** (0.0001)		-0.002*** (0.0001)		-0.002*** (0.0001)
Female		-0.017*** (0.003)		-0.017*** (0.003)		-0.026*** (0.003)
Constant	0.171*** (0.004)	0.214*** (0.005)	0.171*** (0.004)	0.214*** (0.005)	0.227*** (0.005)	0.218*** (0.006)
Observations	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	995	995
R ²	0.086	0.249	0.086	0.249	0.173	0.278

Ordinary least squares coefficients shown with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. Results are weighted on age, race, Hispanic origin, education level, and gender to match the U.S. population.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A3. Experimental analysis: Status treatment and foreign aid support by question

	Gov. Spending		Per American		US Role	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Status Treatment	0.045*** (0.017)	0.056*** (0.015)	0.021 (0.020)	0.035** (0.017)	0.022 (0.019)	0.032** (0.016)
Need for Status		0.202*** (0.042)		0.217*** (0.047)		0.351*** (0.044)
Internationalism		0.167*** (0.029)		0.254*** (0.032)		0.237*** (0.031)
Altruism		0.083** (0.033)		0.102*** (0.036)		0.111*** (0.034)
Democrat		0.041* (0.021)		0.037 (0.024)		0.020 (0.021)
Republican		-0.018 (0.023)		-0.034 (0.026)		-0.038 (0.026)
Conservative		0.059*** (0.020)		0.085*** (0.023)		0.056*** (0.021)
Liberal		-0.046* (0.024)		-0.047* (0.026)		-0.026 (0.026)
College Degree		-0.005 (0.016)		0.016 (0.017)		0.022 (0.016)
Age		-0.003*** (0.0004)		-0.003*** (0.0005)		-0.002*** (0.0005)
Female		0.008 (0.015)		-0.013 (0.017)		-0.037** (0.016)
Constant	0.463*** (0.013)	0.279*** (0.037)	0.457*** (0.014)	0.211*** (0.042)	0.625*** (0.014)	0.258*** (0.042)
Observations	998	998	1,000	1,000	995	995
R ²	0.007	0.227	0.001	0.271	0.001	0.289

Ordinary least squares coefficients shown with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. Results are unweighted.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

7 Robustness Checks: Independent Variable

Table A4 shows the results from our observational analysis using the categorical need for national status variable. As in our main specification, the results provide support to our first hypothesis: A respondent’s reported need for national status has a positive and statistically significant association with their support for aid-giving.

Table A5 shows the results of our experimental analysis using our categorical need for national status variable. As in our main specification, the results provide support to our second hypothesis: As Model 1 in Table A5 shows, the status treatment increases support for foreign aid by 4.1 percentage points, which represents 15% of the standard deviation in foreign aid support. Moreover, we do not find support for our third hypothesis. As Model 2 in Table A5 shows, the interaction between our status cue treatment and the categorical need for national status variable is not statistically significant.

Table A4. Observational analysis: Need for national status (categorical) and support for foreign aid

	Unweighted		Weighted	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Medium Need for Status	0.090*** (0.020)	0.081*** (0.018)	0.099*** (0.003)	0.096*** (0.005)
High Need for Status	0.175*** (0.020)	0.090*** (0.020)	0.179*** (0.002)	0.094*** (0.002)
Internationalism		0.243*** (0.026)		0.210*** (0.008)
Altruism		0.104*** (0.030)		0.118*** (0.002)
Democrat		0.046** (0.020)		0.055*** (0.005)
Republican		-0.029 (0.022)		-0.050*** (0.004)
Liberal		0.076*** (0.019)		0.073*** (0.007)
Conservative		-0.038* (0.022)		-0.035*** (0.002)
College Degree		0.007 (0.015)		-0.001 (0.003)
Age		-0.003*** (0.0004)		-0.002*** (0.0001)
Female		-0.010 (0.014)		-0.007*** (0.002)
Constant	0.411*** (0.015)	0.345*** (0.032)	0.400*** (0.002)	0.326*** (0.004)
Observations	993	993	993	993
R ²	0.075	0.303	0.076	0.283

Ordinary least squares coefficients shown with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. Weighted results are weighted on age, race, Hispanic origin, education level, and gender to match the U.S. population.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A5. Experimental analysis: Need for national status (categorical), status treatment, and support for foreign aid

	(1)	(2)
Status Treatment	0.041*** (0.014)	0.051** (0.025)
Medium Need for Status	0.082*** (0.018)	0.079*** (0.025)
High Need for Status	0.091*** (0.020)	0.111*** (0.027)
Status Treatment X Medium Need for Status		0.007 (0.034)
Status Treatment X High Need for Status		-0.039 (0.035)
Internationalism	0.243*** (0.026)	0.243*** (0.026)
Altruism	0.101*** (0.030)	0.099*** (0.030)
Democrat	0.045** (0.020)	0.044** (0.020)
Republican	-0.029 (0.022)	-0.030 (0.022)
Conservative	0.078*** (0.019)	0.078*** (0.019)
Liberal	-0.041* (0.022)	-0.042* (0.022)
College Degree	0.007 (0.015)	0.007 (0.015)
Age	-0.003*** (0.0004)	-0.003*** (0.0004)
Female	-0.009 (0.014)	-0.009 (0.014)
Constant	0.324*** (0.033)	0.320*** (0.034)
Observations	993	993
R ²	0.309	0.310

Ordinary least squares coefficients shown with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. Results are unweighted.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$