EGAP PRE-REGISTRATION

TITLE OF STUDY: Public Aid Project

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Is one of the study authors a university faculty member?

No.

Is this Registration Prospective or Retrospective?

Registration prior to researcher access to outcome data.

Is this an experimental study?

Yes

Date of start of study:

11/22/2022

Was this design presented at an EGAP meeting?

No

Is there a pre-analysis plan associated with this registration?

Yes (below)

Background and explanation of rationale

Background

This pre-registration and pre-analysis plan is for a four-study survey to be fielded by YouGov in April of 2022. It is my intention that Studies 1 and 2 will be the basis of one paper, Study 3 the basis of one paper, and Study 4 the basis of one paper, resulting in three total papers. In the spirit of full transparency, this pre-analysis plan is broken down by study.

This study has an N=2150. This includes a nationally representative sample of 1,400 and an oversample of Low SES Americans of 750 to obtain appropriate variation in aid-status.

Explanation of rationale (Studies 1-3)

Voting is the heart of democracy. A vote sends a direct message to the government about how a voter wants to be represented. Yet we observe that those whose well-being is most closely tied to who holds office—those receiving government aid—turn out to vote less on average than comparable individuals not receiving aid (Mettler and Soss 2008). Further, aid beneficiaries engage with government more than the average citizen. Applying for aid is costly: aid seekers must fill out forms, attend interviews with caseworkers and undergo medical evaluations, and these costs may be recurring to maintain eligibility. Additionally, receiving government aid carries with it social stigma (Goodban, 1985; Orloff, 1993; Rogers-Dillon, 1995; Meyer, 1996) which has been shown to undermine recipient's institutional trust and sense of political efficacy (Soss 1999). With this in mind, one might reasonably expect that public aid beneficiaries would be *more* likely to participate in other ways, including turning out to vote. Instead, public assistance recipients are an especially quiescent voting bloc, whose political participation is on average lower than their non-recipient counterparts (Schneider and Ingram, 1993, 1997). Because the majority of Americans have used some form of social or public aid by the time they have reached 65 (Rank and Hirschl 2002), it is critical that we understand **how** and **by what mechanism** aid affects political behavior. I address these questions in three distinct ways.

Study 1

I collect high-quality, nationally representative, observational data on public aid, voter turnout, voter behavior, self efficacy, political efficacy, partisanship and personal relative deprivation. I will use these data to examine the observational relationship between aid, psychological conditions (e.g. efficacy), and voter behavior. Study 1 seeks to provide high-quality descriptive information on individual and cumulative aid usage, in addition to looking at correlations between aid usage and political participation.

Study 2

I collect data on whether the respondent received COVID-19 aid. Many scholars have attempted to explain the counterintuitive quiescence of aid recipients, but clear causal conclusions that connect political participation and receiving aid have proved elusive. Whereas most aid programs require recipients to seek out support, many potential beneficiaries do not receive support because they are unable or unwilling to seek or accept it. This is problematic because a respondent's willingness to seek out aid in the first place may well correlate with outcomes extant research has sought to explain. COVID-19 aid was allocated unilaterally, without application or self-selection into the program, and there is a unique opportunity to collect survey data on aid beneficiaries that is untainted by applicants' self-selection bias. This will allow me to evaluate the impact of aid on voter turnout and participation on the general population, as opposed to those who otherwise self-select into government aid programs.

Study 3

How does aid type affect turnout likelihood? Vote choice? Program evaluations? Does partisanship play a role or are these outcomes driven by program type? I interrogate these questions via a hypothetical candidate survey experiment. By manipulating the party of the governing official delivering aid, I am able to examine the effect of partisanship on self-reported voting behavior and program evaluation. I expect that respondents in the *in-party treatment* will be more supportive of the aid program, more likely to turnout to vote, and more likely to want to

reelect the incumbent. I expect that respondents in the *out-party treatment* will be less supportive of the aid program, less likely to turnout to vote, but, conditional on turning out, more likely to want to reelect the incumbent.

*Explanation of Rationale (Study 4)*

This study follows DeSante (2013) and Hayes et al. (2020). It seeks to address the question: "Do Americans punish women who apply for federal aid relative to men?" In other words, when comparing two otherwise identical applicants for federal aid, are Americans more generous toward male applicants? While a wealth of literature considers how, when, and why Black Americans are punished when they apply for welfare (Gilens 1999; Smith 1987; Sears et al. 1997), few have considered if Americans treat male and female aid applicants differently (but see Rabinowitz et al. 2009). Instead, nearly all experiments use female names in order to hold sex constant as they evaluate race-based punishment. Using names that are distinctly white according to Hayes and Mitchel's (2020) name-characteristics dataset, I hold race fixed as white and instead vary names by sex. This allows me to explore a few mechanisms by which evaluations are made, including sex, perceived competence, and quality evaluation.

<u>Study 4</u>

I experimentally manipulate the gender, quality, and competence cues on a pair of hypothetical aid applicants, identical in format to DeSante (2013). Using names that are distinctly white according to Hayes and Mitchel's (2020) name-characteristics dataset, I hold race fixed as white and instead vary names by sex.

This design allows me to examine respondents' generosity to women as compared to men, high quality women (men) as compared to low quality women (men), high (low) quality women as compared to high (low) quality men, low rated women (men) as compared to high rated women (men), and high (low) rated women as compared to high (low) rated men. Thus, I can examine not only to which groups respondents are most giving, but comment on the underlying causes of generosity (and punishment) based on sex, stated quality, or perceived competence *and* the interactions between these factors.

These names come from Hayes and Mitchell's (2020) name-characteristics dataset and are matched on important characteristics. Specifically, James and Sandra are rated highly in professionalism, competence, and work ethic, while Sammie and Misty are rated lower in all three categories. The figure below shows the full breakdown of name characteristics. Notably, all names are distinctly white. Sandra and James (Misty and Sammie) are well-matched on measures of competence, hard work, and professionalism.

Name Characteristics
From Hayes and Mitchell (2020)
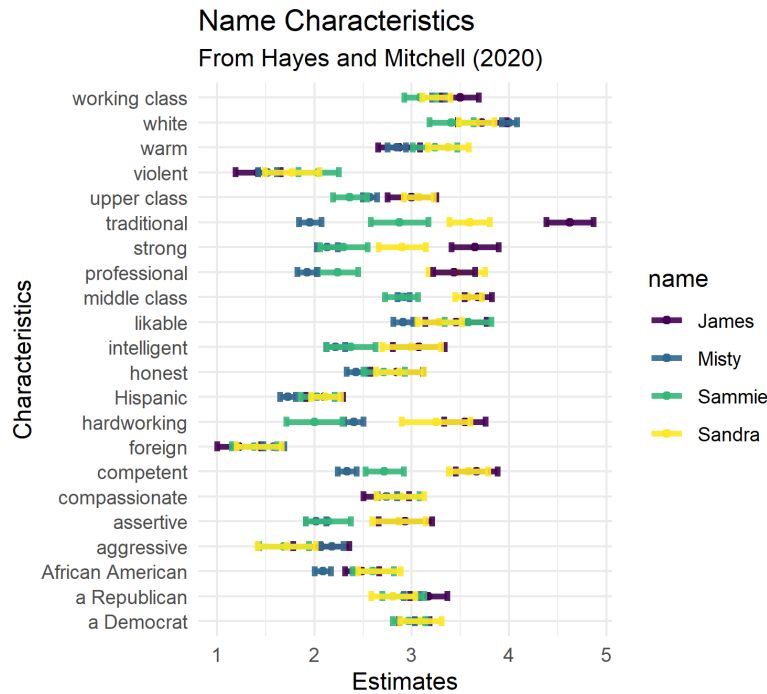
What are the hypotheses to be tested/quantities of interest to be estimated?

Study 1

Entitlements	Loans	Means-Tested	Universal
Social Security	Student Loans	Food Stamps	Unemployment
Medicare	Business Loans	Medicaid	Social Security Disability Insurance
Government Pension		Welfare	Workers' Comp.
Veterans Benefits		EITC	
GI Bill		Public Housing	
		WIC	
		HeadStart	
		College Grant	
		Mortgage Tax Credit	

Tab. 1: Aid Programs by Type

Exploratory Research Questions

Q1. Do people tend to benefit from one type of aid or benefit from a few programs across types?

Q2. Do people who participate in more aid programs turnout more than those who participate in less aid programs?

Q3. What is the distribution of sexes across aid types? Programs?

Q4. What is the distribution of registered to non-registered voters across aid types? Programs?

Q5. What is the distribution of party ID across aid types? Programs?

Study 2

H1a. Those who received COVID-19 Aid will be more likely to report turning out to vote in 2020 than those who did not receive COVID-19 Aid.

H1b. Those who received COVID-19 Aid who voted will be more likely to report voting for incumbent president Donald Trump than those who turned out but did not receive COVID-19 Aid.

H2a. Republicans who received COVID-19 Aid will be more likely to report turning out to vote in 2020 than Democrats who received COVID-19 Aid.

H2b. Democrats who received COVID-19 Aid will be less likely to report turning out to vote in 2020 than Republicans who received COVID-19 Aid.

Study 3

The experiment has four conditions in the form of a hypothetical proposed program: the *control condition* (a government program to remodel the state capital building); the *universal condition* (a government program which gives each resident of the state an annual cash transfer of $500); a *deserving poor* condition (a government program which gives resident mothers one or more dependent children an annual cash transfer of $500); and a *poverty* condition (a government program which gives all residents under the poverty line an annual cash transfer of $500).

General Predictions

H3a. Those in the *deserving poor* condition will evaluate the program more favorably compared to those in the control condition, holding the party condition constant.

H3b. Those in the *poverty condition* will evaluate the program less favorably compared to those in the *control condition*, holding the party condition constant.

H3c. Those in the *universal condition* will evaluate the program more favorably compared to those in the *control condition*, holding the party condition constant.

H3d. Those in the *deserving poor condition* will evaluate the program more favorably than the *control* relative to the *universal condition*, but both will be evaluated more favorably than the *poverty condition*, holding the party condition constant.

I define the *co-partisan* condition as the condition when the hypothetical candidate's party matches with the respondent's self-reported party ID (e.g. Republican-Republican). I define the *out-partisan* condition as the condition when the hypothetical candidate's party is the opposite of the respondent's self-reported party ID (e.g. Democrat-Republican).

H4. Democrats in the co-partisan condition will evaluate all programs, on average, higher than Republicans in the co-partisan condition.

H5a. Those in the co-partisan condition will report higher likelihood of turning out to vote than those in the out-partisan condition.

H5b. Those in the co-partisan condition will be more likely to say they will reelect the incumbent than those in the out-partisan condition.

Study 4

H6. On average, male applicants (James/Sammie) will be awarded less than female applicants (Sandra/Misty).

H7. On average, high-competence (Sandra/James) names will be awarded more than low-competence names (Sammie/Misty).

H8a. For female applicants (Sandra/Misty), those rated as "Excellent" workers will be awarded, on average, more than those rated "Poor" workers. For example, "Excellent" Sandra is expected to be awarded more than "Poor" Sandra.

H8b. For male applicants (James/Sammie), there will be no significant difference between amounts awarded to "Excellent" workers as compared to "Poor" workers. For example, "Excellent" James is expected to not earn significantly more or less than "Poor" James.

How will these hypotheses be tested?

[All of the survey items and protocol are attached.]

Eligibility and exclusion criteria for participants

Participants are YouGov panel members in the U.S. who consented to participate in an online study (YouGov determines the specific eligibility and exclusion criteria for their panel). Researchers have no role in selecting the participants. Also see sampling procedure attached.

Data collection and blinding

Data will be collected by YouGov as described above.

Study 2

COVID-19 aid was not randomly assigned, but it was assigned to many Americans without a preceding application process. I will test H1a-b and H2 using logit and linear probability models (LPM), specified below.

<u>*Test of H1a*</u>

2020_Turnout = α + COVID-19_Aid

      + 2016_Turnout + Republican + Sex + Race + Receives_Other_Aid + ε

<u>*Test of H1b*</u>

Voted_Trump = α + COVID-19_Aid

      + 2016_Vote_Choice + Sex + Race + Receives_Other_Aid + ε

<u>*Test of H2a and H2b*</u>

2020_Turnout = α + COVID-19_Aid x Republican + 2016_Turnout

      + COVID-19_Aid + 2016_Turnout + Republican + Sex + Race + Receives_Other_Aid + ε

Randomization Process (Study 3)

I will use a 3x4 between-subjects design in which respondents are randomly assigned to one of three possibly party conditions (Republican, Democrat, or None) and one of four possible "program" treatments (deserving poor, universal, poverty, and control).

These treatments are randomized via the YouGov platform. There is a 1/3 probability of being assigned each of the party conditions. There is a ¼ probability of being assigned each of the possible program conditions. The instructions provided to YouGov programmers can be found in the survey protocol attached.

Randomization Process (Study 4)

Respondents are asked to allocate $1,500 between two applicants with expressed need of $900 each or to the state to "offset the federal budget." The exact applicant images that respondents will see are attached in the protocol. The instructions provided to YouGov programmers can be found in the survey protocol attached.

All respondents will see the same Applicant 1, Sandra, who is rated as an "Excellent" worker. There is a 1/7 probability of being assigned each of the possible options for Applicant 2: Excellent James, Poor James, Excellent Misty, Poor Misty, Excellent Sammie, Poor Sammie, Excellent No Name, and Poor No Name. An example of how the applications will appear to respondents is below.

Primary and Secondary Outcome Measures

<u>Study 2</u>

Outcome 1: Turnout

Outcome 1: Vote Choice

Study 3

Outcome 1: Support of Program

Outcome 2: Likelihood to turnout

Outcome 3: Likelihood of voting for incumbent

Study 4

Outcome 1: Amount Awarded to Applicant 1

Outcome 2: Amount Awarded to Applicant 2

Outcome 3: Amount Allocated to the State

Planned Analysis

Study 1

Study 1 explores five questions, listed again here for convenience.

    Q1. Do people tend to benefit from one type of aid or benefit from a few programs across types?

    Q2. Do people who participate in more aid programs turnout more than those who participate in less aid programs?

    Q3. What is the distribution of sexes across aid types? Programs?

    Q4. What is the distribution of registered to non-registered voters across aid types? Programs?

    Q5. What is the distribution of party ID across aid types? Programs?

I will address these questions using standard summary statistics (mean, median, mode, range), scatterplots, and histograms/density plots to report relevant distributions and frequencies.

Study 2

To address my hypotheses for Study 2, I will estimate linear probability models (LPM) and logit models.

To test H1a, the outcome variable of interest is *turnout in 2020*, dichotomously measured where 1 indicates a respondent who turned out and 0 indicates those who did not turn out. Other explanatory variables include a dichotomous measure of receiving COVID-19 federal aid via the CARES Act, a dichotomous indicator of turnout in 2016, Republicanism, sex, race, and a dichotomous indicator of whether the respondent receives other aid.

Test of H1a

2020_Turnout = α + COVID-19_Aid

    + 2016_Turnout + Republican + Sex + Race + Receives_Other_Aid + ε

To test H1b, I estimate a nearly identical LPM and logit model. The outcome variable in this model is *vote choice*, which takes a value of 1 if the respondent voted for the incumbent (Donald Trump) and 0 otherwise. The primary explanatory variable is still COVID-19 CARES Act aid, measured dichotomously. I do not include Republicanism in this model, as I expect it will be highly correlated with 2016 Vote Choice and the dependent variable. Instead of controlling for past turnout, I control here for past vote choice, which takes on a value of 1 if the respondent voted for Donald Trump in 2016 and 0 otherwise.

Test of H1b

Voted_Trump = α + COVID-19_Aid

    + 2016_Vote_Choice + Sex + Race + Receives_Other_Aid + ε

To test H2a-b, I estimate a model identical to Model H1a and interact *receiving COVID-19 CARES Act aid* with *Republicanism.* If H2a holds, we should expect those for whom COVID-19 Aid and Republicanism take on values of 1 to be the *most* likely to turnout. If H2b holds, those for whom COVID-19 Aid = 1 and Republicanism = 0 should be the least likely to turnout to vote.

Test of H2a and H2b

2020_Turnout = α + COVID-19_Aid x Republican + 2016_Turnout

    + COVID-19_Aid + 2016_Turnout + Republican + Sex + Race + Receives_Other_Aid + ε

Study 3

To test H3a-d, I will compare the difference in mean rating of each of the four programs for those in the in- and out-party conditions.

I will also run an OLS regression, specified below, in which the party condition is held constant at its mean and the control condition is the reference category. "Co-Partisan_Condition" is a dummy variable which takes on a value of 1 if the respondent is in the Co-Partisan condition and 0 otherwise.

Program_Rating = α + Deserving_Condition + Universal_Condition + Poverty_Condition +

    + Co-Partisan_Condition + ε

To test H4, I will restrict my sample to only those in the co-partisan condition. I will divide the in-party sample into Democrats and Republicans and compare the difference in mean rating of each of the four programs.

To test H5a-b, I will divide my full sample into the co-partisan and out-partisan conditions. I will estimate the mean likelihood of turnout and the mean likelihood of reelecting the incumbent within the party conditions. I will then compare these means. Those in the co-partisan condition should be report higher turnout and reelection likelihood than those in the out-partisan condition.

I will also use OLS regression to test H5a-b. Model specifications are below. The reference category is the Control Condition.

Test of H5a

Turnout_Likelihood = α + Co-Partisan_Condition

       + Deserving_Condition + Universal_Condition + Poverty_Condition + ε

Test of H5b

Reelection_Likelihood = α + Co-Partisan_Condition

       + Deserving_Condition + Universal_Condition + Poverty_Condition + ε

Study 4

To evaluate H6-8b, I will use difference-in-means testing.

As a first step in evaluating these hypotheses, I will use the average amount awarded to Sandra as the baseline and compare the average amounts awarded to Misty, James, Sammie, and the state. I will use difference in means testing to determine whether the average amounts awarded to Misty, James, and Sammie are statistically significantly different from Sandra.

I will also aggregate the names into Male and Female groups, take the average amount awarded to men (James/Sammie) and the average amount awarded to women (Sandra/Misty). If H6 holds, male applicants should receive significantly less than female applicants.

To evaluate H7, I will group the applicants into high-competence (Sandra/James) and low-competence (Sammie/Misty) groups, take the average amount awarded to each group and perform a difference in means test.

To evaluate H8a, I will compare the average amount awarded to Misty (excellent) with the average amount awarded to Misty (poor) relative to the baseline, Sandra (excellent). If H8a holds, Misty (excellent) should earn significantly more than Misty (poor).

To evaluate H8b, I will compare the average amount awarded to James (excellent) and Sammie (excellent) to James (poor) and Sammie (poor) relative to the baseline, Sandra (excellent). If H8b holds, James (excellent) should not earn significantly more than James (poor) and Sammie (excellent) should not earn significantly more than Sammie (poor).