

Who Benefits

Experimental Evidence of Gender Differences in Aid Allocations

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Motivation

Welfare in the United States is highly stigmatized (Goffman 1968; Pinker 2017). The public tends to support aid to the “deserving poor,” but not social safety net spending (Feldman and Steenbergen 2001).

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Despite this, we know remarkably little about gender differences in attitudes toward welfare recipients and perceptions of deservingness.

My Question

When men and women are put in direct competition for scarce resources, how do women fare compared to similarly-situated men? Are they perceived as more deserving?

Traditional conceptualizations of deservingness are associated with women, usually mothers (Monnat 2010)

This plays to benevolently sexist attitudes and may increase women's perceived deservingness

Whereas men seeking aid are usually seen as failed breadwinners or lazy "home slackers" (Willrich 2000)

Leading to perceptions of women and men with the same objective needs deserving different amounts

Theory

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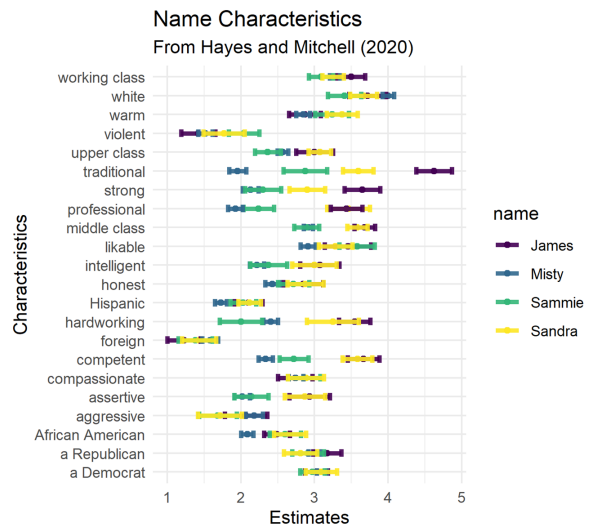
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Hayes and Mitchell (2022) demonstrate that racial discrimination in welfare applications decreases when relevant valences are held constant

Competence: Hayes and Mitchell (2022)



Hypotheses

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H2. On average, high-competence applicants will be awarded more than low-competence applicants.

H3a. For male applicants, there will be no significant difference between amounts awarded to “Excellent” workers as compared to “Poor” workers.

H3b. For female applicants, there will be a significant difference between amounts awarded to “Excellent” workers as compared to “Poor” workers.

Empirical Approach

YouGov survey experiment (n=1800); nationally representative sample + low SES oversample¹

Following DeSante (2013), subjects are shown two applications for state aid

Each has a stated need of \$900 with a budget constraint of \$1,500

Any funds not given to the applicants go to the state to “offset the state budgetary deficit” (principled objection)

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Empirical Approach

WORK FIRST ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

Applicant Name: Misty [REDACTED] Date of Application: [REDACTED]
Address: [REDACTED] Telephone: [REDACTED]
County: [REDACTED]
Case No.: [REDACTED] District No.: [REDACTED]

HOUSEHOLD: List all household members for whom Assistance is being requested:

(Non-Applicant household members are not required to provide a social security number, immigrant, or citizen status)

Name	Date of Birth	Sex	Social Security No.	Citizen/Eligible Immigrant	Relationship
[REDACTED]	08/16/2010	M	[REDACTED]	Y	Son
[REDACTED]	04/14/2012	F	[REDACTED]	Y	Daughter

[REDACTED]

Total assessed monthly need: \$ 900.00

Worker Quality Assessment (circle one):

Poor

Excellent

Applicant Statement: I understand that it is against the law for me to make false statements and that I am

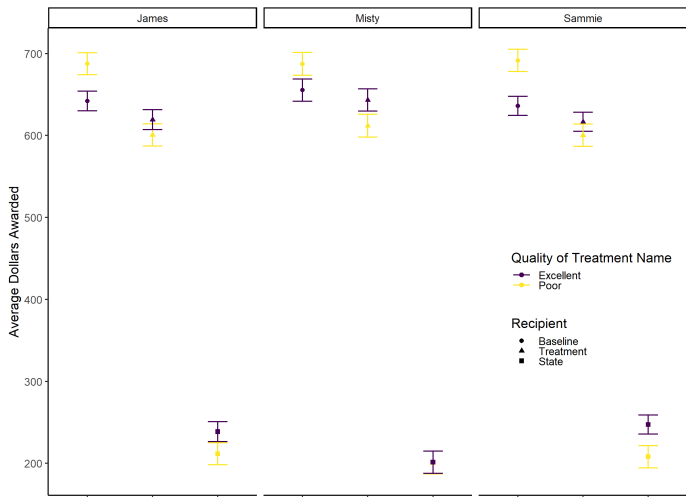
Empirical Approach

I use names (Sandra, James, Sammie, Misty) to cue applicants' gender and relevant valences

Following DeSante (2013) and Hayes and Mitchel (2022), I use a binary “Worker Quality Rating” (Excellent/Poor) to denote quality

All subjects were shown Sandra with an “Excellent” rating as a baseline as Applicant 1
Applicant 2 is a randomly assigned a name (James, Sammie, or Misty) and quality rating (Excellent/Poor) with equal probability

Results



Results: H1 - Men Receive Less?

Treatment Name	Quality	Competence	Difference from Baseline	p-value
James	Excellent	High	\$-22.86	0.014**
Sammie	Excellent	Low	\$-19.38	0.000***
Misty	Excellent	Low	\$-12.11	0.141

Results: H2 - Competence Matters?

Pairing	Quality	Difference	p-value
Misty vs. Sandra	Excellent	\$ - 12.11	0.141
Sammie vs. James	Excellent	\$-2.60	0.88
Sammie vs. James	Poor	\$ - 0.28	0.986

Results: H3a-b - Worker Quality

Treatment Name	Excellent	Poor	Difference	p-value
Misty	\$643.20	\$611.80	\$ - 31.40	0.044**
Sammie	\$619.20	\$600.59	\$-18.16	0.256
James	\$616.60	\$600.32	\$ - 16.28	0.351