

Supplementary Material

A. Survey 1 – Question wording

Thinking about overseas aid to poor countries, please indicate the extent to which you think that the UK Government should give overseas aid, where a score of 0 means that it 'should not give aid at all' and a score of 10 means that it 'should give aid very generously'. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

0 - Should not give aid at all

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10 - Should give aid very generously

12 Don't know

Overall, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'very ineffective' and 10 means 'very effective,' how effective do you think government spending on overseas aid is?

0 - Very ineffective

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10 - Very effective

12 Don't know

[other questions from omnibus survey...]

Treatment groups

Treatment 1: Combined treatment (Baseline)

Zambia is one of the world's poorest countries. But working together with the Zambian government, aid from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has meant that 9 of every 10 children are now enrolled in school and poverty has been cut by half. However, human rights and democracy observers are becoming increasingly concerned about recent events in Zambia where there has been a crackdown on political opposition. Independent media organisations critical of the government have been shut down and last week two opposition leaders were jailed.

Treatment 2: Repression

Human rights and democracy observers are becoming increasingly concerned about recent events in Zambia where there has been a crackdown on political opposition. Independent media organisations critical of the government have been shut down and last week two opposition leaders were jailed.

Treatment 3: Progress

Zambia is one of the world's poorest countries. But working together with the Zambian government, aid from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has meant that 9 of every 10 children are now enrolled in school and poverty has been cut by half.

[Respondents were shown the following items on the same page as the treatment vignette]

Thinking about overseas aid to poor countries in general, *not just to Zambia*, please indicate the extent to which you think that the UK Government should give overseas aid, where a score of 0 means that it 'should not give aid at all' and a score of 10 means that it 'should give aid very generously'. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

0 - Should not give aid at all

1

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9

10 - Should give aid very generously
12 Don't know

B. Survey 2 – Question wording

Treatment groups

Treatment 1: Combined + justify

Zambia is one of the world’s poorest countries. But working together with the Zambian government, aid from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has meant that 9 of every 10 children are now enrolled in school and poverty has been cut by half. However, human rights and democracy observers are becoming increasingly concerned about recent events in Zambia where there has been a crackdown on political opposition. Independent media organisations critical of the government have been shut down and last week two opposition leaders were jailed.

The UK Government has been following these events closely, but defended giving direct budget support to the Zambian government. A DFID spokesperson said: “UK aid has helped the Zambian government lift thousands out of poverty in an incredibly difficult context. We are closely monitoring the political situation in Zambia and we have rigorous checks to protect UK taxpayers’ money.”

Treatment 2: Combined + cut

Zambia is one of the world’s poorest countries. But working together with the Zambian government, aid from the UK Department for International Development (DfID) has meant

that 9 of every 10 children are now enrolled in school and poverty has been cut by half. However, human rights and democracy observers are becoming increasingly concerned about recent events in Zambia where there has been a crackdown on political opposition. Independent media organisations critical of the government have been shut down and last week two opposition leaders were jailed.

The UK government has been following these events closely and in response has suspended aid to the Zambian government. A DFID spokesperson said: “It is clearly not possible to provide direct budget support to Zambia’s government at the moment. No UK aid will be sent until we are fully satisfied that the political situation has been resolved”.

Treatment 3: Combined + divert

Zambia is one of the world’s poorest countries. But working together with the Zambian government, aid from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has meant that 9 of every 10 children are now enrolled in school and poverty has been cut by half. However, human rights and democracy observers are becoming increasingly concerned about recent events in Zambia where there has been a crackdown on political opposition. Independent media organisations critical of the government have been shut down and last week two opposition leaders were jailed.

The UK government has been following these events closely and in response has suspended direct budget support to the Zambian government and instead has directed UK aid to health and education programmes in Zambia. A DFID spokesperson said: “We will continue to use UK aid to support the most vulnerable in Zambia but will now channel aid away from the government”.

Respondents received the same set of questions.

C. Case selection

In order to ascertain the unbiased estimates of the treatments we eliminated African countries associated with prominent violations that have been well-covered in the UK media.

Authoritarian rule and human rights abuses Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe, for example, has increasingly been linked to discourses on dictatorship and violence in the UK media – particularly following the introduction of the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme in 2000 which impacted significantly upon white farmers with UK links, or passports and Mugabe’s high-profile public spats with then prime minister Tony Blair during the latter’s 1997-2007 premiership (Gallagher, 2011). Similarly, Uganda came to be seen in a similar light under – and since – Idi Amin (in power 1971-1979), who became especially notorious in the UK press for his expulsion of Asian-Ugandans (many of whom fled to the UK) in 1972 and for his paranoid and abusive approach to governance (covered sometimes gratuitously in the UK press and reintroduced into the UK public imagination through the 2006 release of the film *Last King of Scotland*). Uganda’s reputation for human rights abuses was also re-established in a range of critical media reports on the country’s Anti-Homosexuality Bill between 2009-2010 and between 2013-2014.

Corruption Nigeria (the third largest recipient of UK aid in 2014-2015; OECD, 2019) has frequently been portrayed in the contemporary UK media and in television programmes as a home to a highly corrupt political elite (increasingly linked in the latter to so-called “419 email scams”). Kenya, Uganda and Malawi have also appeared in the UK media on a number of occasions in the last decade in relation to high-level corruption scandals, sometimes involving development aid and leading to aid cuts by the UK and other donors (Fisher, 2015).

Violence and anarchy Major UK aid recipients have also been reported on within the UK media primarily through the lens of civil conflict and war – notably Rwanda following the 1994 genocide and Kenya – which was headline news across UK media outlets for parts of December 2007 and January 2008 – in the aftermath of the post-2007 election violence. While Democratic Republic of Congo – where the UK is the second largest bilateral donor (OECD, 2019) – has enjoyed a lower profile in the UK media and popular imagination, it has long been popularly associated with the chaotic, violent realm depicted in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Similarly, the UK image of Ethiopia (the UK’s top aid recipient in 2014-2015; OECD, 2017) has been overwhelmingly shaped by poignant news footage of famine – particularly the landmark broadcast on the “biblical famine” in the north of country by BBC journalist Michael Buerk in October 1984 – and the Live Aid movement that grew up around this, memorialized annually throughout December on UK radio stations with the playing of the 1984 Band Aid

charity single “Do They Know It’s Christmas?”, re-recorded in 1989, 2004 and 2014 (Franks, 2013).

D. Political developments in Zambia (August-September 2016)

The results of a close-run 15 August 2016 presidential election in Zambia (won by incumbent Edgar Lungu) were immediately contested by opposition candidate Hakainde Hichilema, who – together with some other observers and analysts – also accused the government of cracking down on critics when the country’s largest private television station and two radio stations were shut down on 23 August 2016. This followed the closure of one of Zambia’s largest independent newspapers, *The Post*, during the election campaign – ostensibly for not settling an outstanding tax bill, but interpreted by critics as politically-motivated. There were a number of anti-Lungu protests by opposition supporters during August and September 2016 where some arrests were made, although arrests of opposition leaders themselves did not take place until 5 October 2016, six days after Survey 2. The bulk of the “repressive” frame (“Human rights and democracy observers are becoming increasingly concerned about recent events in Zambia where there has been a crackdown on political opposition. Independent media organisations critical of the government have been shut down...”) was thus, at a general level, reflective of real-world developments (“...last week two opposition leaders were jailed”, however, was not).

Some of these events were reported in the UK media in the lead-up to the two surveys, primarily in international news sections and in general the situation was not provided with much prominence in any UK media outlets. We consider it highly unlikely that many respondents without an existing interest in Zambia, Africa or international aid would have become aware of the recent developments in the country through media sources any more so than at any other time in recent years. Given that respondents were randomly assigned to different groups in each survey, any pre-existing feelings on how DFID should respond to specific recent events a respondent was aware of in Zambia would anyway have washed out across the groups and not impacted meaningfully upon the general findings of the study.

Moreover, while the “repressive” frame reflected some real-world events, the UK Government decision vignettes outlined in the second survey – though drawing on language previously used in similar cases by the UK Government – were wholly fictional in relation to these events.

Neither DFID nor the UK Government more widely appears to have issued any statements concerning development aid to Zambia or political developments in Zambia during the months leading-up to the surveys, aside from an 18 August statement by the UK Minister of State for Africa congratulating Lungu “on his re-election”. Likewise, development assistance to Zambia was neither diverted, suspended nor defended during this period by DFID. Survey 2 therefore provided three wholly hypothetical scenarios, albeit developed with close reference to previous re/actions by DFID to governance crises in aid recipient states and to DFID language released in explaining such re/actions.

References for Supplementary Material only

Franks, S. (2013) Reporting disasters: famine, aid, politics and the media. London: Hurst.

Gallagher, J. (2011) Britain and Africa under Blair. Manchester: Manchester University Press.