

Campaign Strategy Newsletter No 51, May 2009 Values And The Politics Of Aid

Values And The Politics Of Aid

Can values explain why some countries give more generously to overseas aid than others?

Rhetorically the answer is obviously 'yes' but can we actually measure this effect? Although I fear to enter this rather controversial area of ODA (Overseas Development Assistance), in which I am no expert, the answer also seems to be 'yes'.

Why Not Invest In Sanitation?

I was set wondering about this issue by a BBC [1] account of a report by the UK charity *WaterAid* [2] about sanitation. *Water Aid* had published a report which according to the BBC found *"Millions of children's lives are being put at risk each year because aid agencies and governments make wrong choices about health care priorities"*.

The BBC added that the report: *"says that diarrhoea caused by poor sanitation is killing many more children than HIV/Aids, tuberculosis and malaria combined"* and *"global spending on HIV/Aids hugely outweighs the amounts spent on providing better sanitation"*.

It continued: *"this report highlights what it calls the inequity between the diseases that are killing children and the amounts of money being spent on them. In 2004 ... diarrhoea killed 1.8 million children around the world, but only \$1.5bn (£1bn) was spent on sanitation in the two years between 2004 and 2006. In the same period, \$10.8bn (£7.1bn) was spent on HIV/Aids which was responsible for the deaths of just over 300,000 children"*.

This, said *WaterAid*, was "not rational", and Oliver Cumming, the author of the report told the BBC "The only reason that we can see is this lack of political will": sanitation was not 'fashionable'.

A Values Hypothesis

Readers of this newsletter will be familiar with the CDSM values mapping system [3] and the international values mapping conducted by Prof Shalom Schwartz and others (see for example the "International Values Campaign Planner" at www.campaignstrategy.org/articles/int_values_campaign.pdf). We can imagine that as with everything else, the unconscious needs-based values which such a system [4] maps, will tend to drive perceptions of things like 'aid'. For example:

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Settlers (Security Driven) might be expected to:

- Most favour aid targeted at people like us - “kith and kin” - and because of the same needs of identity and belonging, to want aid to go to people nearby: “charity begins at home”. Obviously this militates against giving any “overseas” aid at all. Although ‘instinctively’ averse to ODA, Settlers might support it against the push of their identity and belonging values if it could be shown to confer strong benefits in terms of some of their other values, eg the need for safety, survival or security. So if for instance it could be shown that ODA made our country safer by ‘stopping’ people abroad becoming ‘international terrorists’, or if it helped prevent the threat of an infectious disease (which could “reach our shores”), Settlers might be expected to support it.

Another active exception would be where a respected external authority, such as a religious leader, instructed Settlers that ODA was the “right thing to do”, or, more likely, that they as a group should help the deserving poor or families abroad. I recently met someone who ran a church-based charity with an ageing supporter base which was very traditional and conservative and had been raising money for foreign aid projects for decades, instructed by church leaders: that sounds like a church with a significant Settler base.

Prospectors (Outer Directed) are much less fearful and locally focused but might also have misgivings about ODA for different reasons. Based on what we already know of their values they might be expected to:

- Most favour aid which helps us (the donors) be successful: such as ‘aid’ tied to buying our products and feel ‘instinctively’ that aid is “money wasted” if all it does is to help others “get ahead”. This is because many Prospectors have an unmet need for achieving power in terms of their own material success and a need for visible achievement or success. This is one end of the ‘Power versus Universalism’ antagonism discussed in previous reports [5]. With a transactional view of life, Prospectors would evaluate aid as an exchange and look for a ‘return’. On this basis therefore we might expect countries with a large proportion of Outer Directed Prospectors to be less enthusiastic about ODA than those with a more Pioneer or Inner Directed culture [6].

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Knowing what we do about Prospectors they are also likely to want to see “proof” that aid has been “effective” and if they want to oppose aid, they are likely to look for evidence that it hasn’t “worked” in bounded cause-and-effect terms.

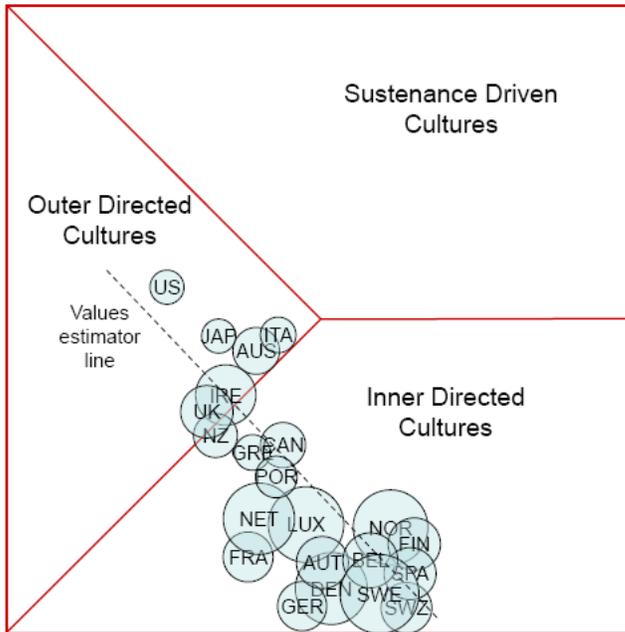
Pioneers actively espouse globalism, universalism, and benevolence and so are obvious candidates to support ODA and might be expected to:

- Support the principle and the practice of ODA and see it in ethical terms, They are also more likely to give their own money (eg through development charities) as well as supporting official ODA and be content to see aid go where it is “most needed” and can make the “biggest difference” to the benefit of others. Knowing what we do about Pioneers, they are also likely to want to hear authentic stories from people who benefit and the ‘bigger picture’ of social, economic and environmental sustainability. Unlike Prospectors they may be expected to be less concerned about any ‘payback’ to the donor country and more concerned about issues such as corruption or misuse of funds.

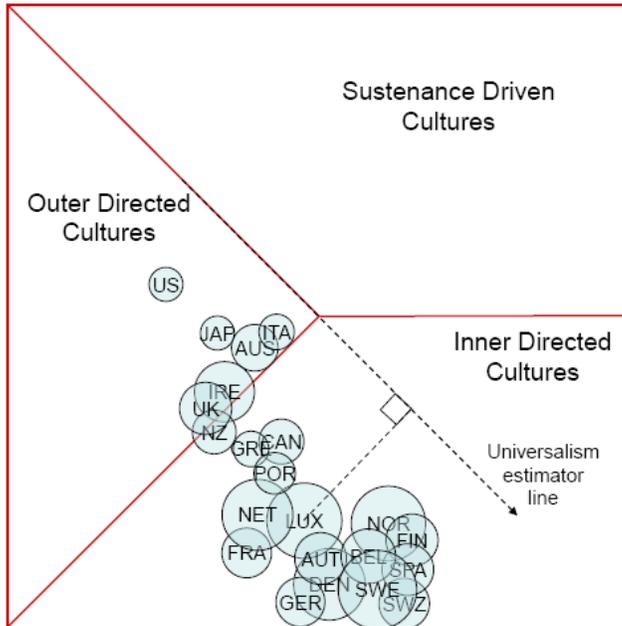
It seems to me that such differences may be part of the explanation for why diseases like HIV AIDS and TB get more ODA money than sanitation. For one thing, people in the donor country can imagine that they too might benefit from ‘tackling’ an infectious disease: it’s something they could catch while travelling or if it reaches their home. Sanitation on the other hand, as well as being more conceptual and having a less human face (pipes as opposed to dying children), only benefits the people in the target country. So both Settlers and Prospectors might, on *a priori* values grounds, be expected to favour ODA targeted at infectious disease rather than sanitation. An exception to this might be people working in the water industry, which may stand to benefit from overseas contracts, if major sanitation projects are undertaken.

So because everyone exerts some influence over the collective culture of a country, we might expect the values weighting of a nation to be reflected in its relative enthusiasm for giving ODA. I asked Les Higgins at Cultural Dynamics Strategy and Marketing if he could map ODA as a proportion of GNI (Gross National Income: an OECD measure [7]), against values of the major donor countries. The result is below [all diagrams copyright CDSM].

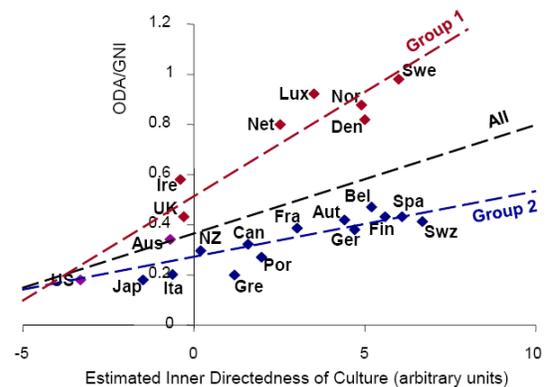
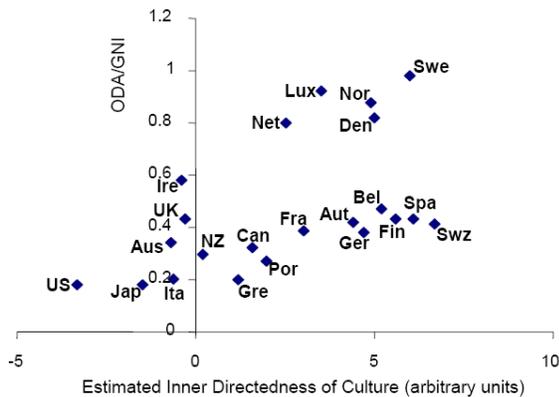
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Here countries are plotted in international values-space by their 'centre of gravity' (national average). The bigger the circle, the higher % of GNI goes to ODA.



Here Les has added the Universalism axis – a values antagonism between the top left on the Settler-Prospector boundary (where people feel a strong need for power, material success etc) and the bottom right where that need is low and they feel a need to be 'universalist' – taking ethical action on everyone's behalf. Below are the countries mapped on GNI/ODA correlations on two axes, against "inner directedness"



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(In the above diagrams 'estimated inner directedness' is a measure of distance along the "values estimator line" in the direction of ID space. Zero is where the line intersects the ID/OD boundary. For statistical significances see 'notes' below).

You can see from the above that there is a strong correlation between the overall values weighting of countries, and the money they give to ODA as a proportion of their wealth. The more inner directed they are, the bigger the ODA share tends to be. The differences shown here are between countries with an outer directed 'centre of gravity' (eg USA) and those with an inner directed centre of gravity (eg Sweden). These values weightings are based on the international Schwartz surveys analysed by CDSM, and date from around 2007 [8]. As you can see there appear to be two groups of Inner Directed countries – although why, we do not know. Overall however this suggests that the unconscious needs-based Maslowian values of a country exert a powerful effect over ODA policy and practice.

This information may be of interest to those involved with ODA, or any charities concerned with development, health, environment or education in countries overseas. If this is you, you might also consider how your propositions or programmes can be reconfigured to hit the "hot buttons" of Prospectors and Settlers, as well as your 'base' of Pioneers, to increase political support, especially in countries which are not heavily 'Inner Directed'.

Red Nose Day

Lastly, here's an example of how the way that an ODA-type appeal or proposition is executed, can reposition it from something that might only appeal to Pioneers, into one that works for a much wider audience. The UK BBC 'Red Nose Day' (www.rednoseday.com) is a fundraising exercise which channels money to development and poverty relief projects in Africa. Under the TV name 'Comic Relief' it was launched on Christmas Day in 1985, live on BBC One. At that time, a devastating famine was crippling Ethiopia.

Comic Relief/ Red Nose Day reaches across values groups. The core proposition or rationale is the same as that promoted by development aid and poverty relief groups such as Oxfam or Christian Aid whose core supporter base and values are highly Pioneer (ID Inner Directed). But it has a number of attributes which transfer it as a brand to encompass the OD Prospectors and some Settlers because it also:

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- Is fronted by comedians (all groups)
- Is 'about fun' (and the promise matches the offer - it is actually 'fun') not 'about the issue'
- Is on national TV (OD Prospector - high profile)
- Involves celebrities (OD Prospector)
- Allows participants to be an instant small celebrity in their own workplace, school, home or community – wear a plastic red nose and “do something funny for money” (OD Prospector and SD Settler)
- Shows results (ie cuts through complexity – OD Prospector)
- Is on a very familiar channel (SD Settler) – in the UK they talk about the BBC as “Aunty”
- Does not ask people to make a 'political' stand (SD Settler and OD Prospector)
- Has a very simple and easily actioned ask - raising money (SD and OD dislike complexity)
- Celebrates results in real time (you are a small hero or celebrity – OD Prospector)

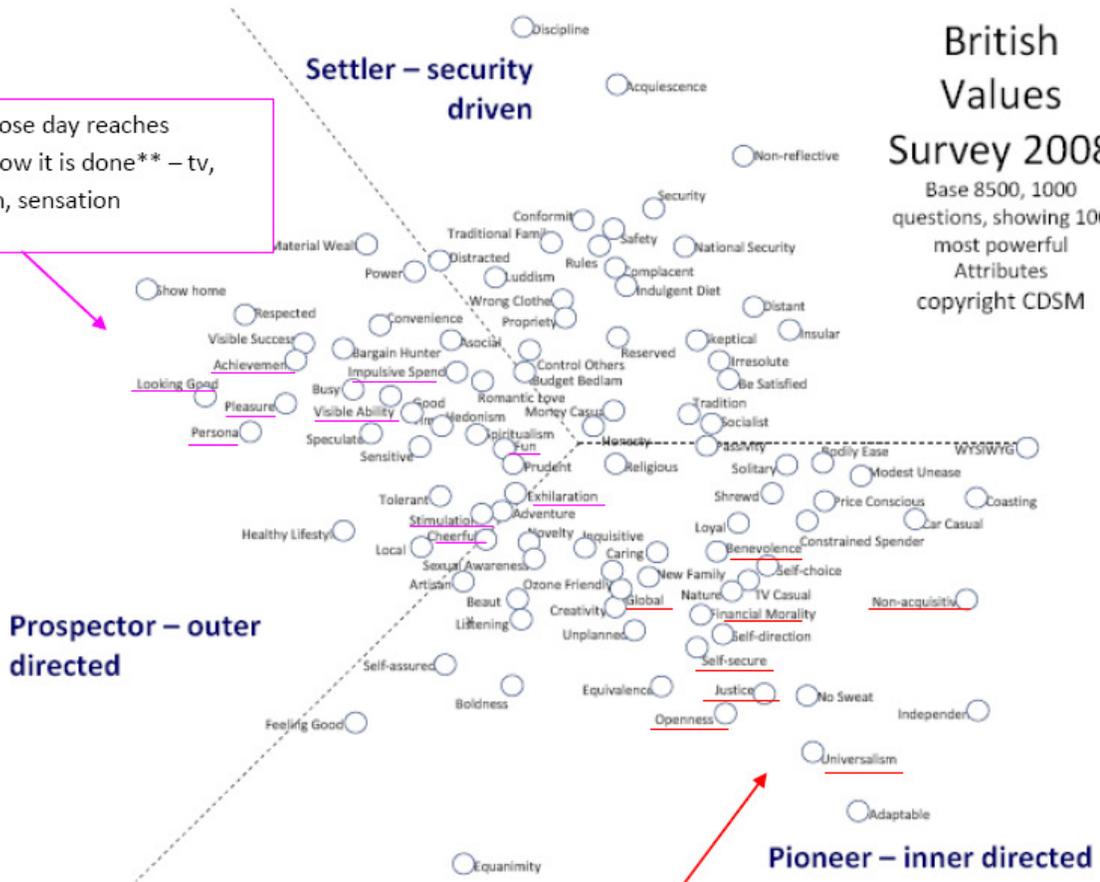
This is even though the 'territory' of helping foreigners in countries often seen as corrupt and dangerous (controversial and remote), on a 'political' issue (international relations, inequalities, injustice etc) is firmly ID Pioneer. (The event was also initially timed for Christmas which is a traditional time-of-goodwill and giving in the UK (SD Settler)).

Although Red Nose Day/Comic Relief is a fundraising exercise it has also helped (since 1985) change perceptions of debt/ aid issues in the UK and hence made policy space for politicians such as Gordon Brown on subjects such as ODA. That will have helped pave the way, for example, for campaigns such as Make Poverty History which had a much more political proposition but again used mass participation 'fun' events to widen its appeal beyond the ethical base. For how the way Red Nose Day was done repositions it into OD Prospector values territory, see below:

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British Values Survey 2008
Base 8500, 1000 questions, showing 100 most powerful Attributes copyright CDSM

Where red nose day reaches because of how it is done** – tv, celebrity, fun, sensation



Where red nose day would be if it was a conventional issues based campaign (eg a protest + lobbying)

** 'persona' means taking on a persona – eg being a red nose person that day

(data source: CDSM BVS based on 30 year time series; 2008 8,500 people, 1,000 questions. Shown here are the 100 most discriminating 'Attributes' representing each about 5 questions). Red Nose Day example is shown underlined (my interpretation).

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Notes:

Correlation and Regression

All Correlations

		Idness	OdaGni
Idness	Pearson Correlation	1	.533*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	22	22
OdaGni	Pearson Correlation	.533*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	22	22

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Regression: ODA/GNI = 0.046 * IDness +0.352

Group 1

US, Aus, UK, Ire, Net, Lux, Nor, Den, Swe
Correlations

		Idness	OdaGni
Idness	Pearson Correlation	1	.951**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	9	9
OdaGni	Pearson Correlation	.951**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	9	9

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression: ODA/GNI = 0.085 * IDness +0.497

Group 2

US, Aus, Jap, Ita, NZ, Gre, Can, Por, Fra, Aut, Ger, Bel, Fin, Spa, Swz
Correlations

		Idness	OdaGni
Idness	Pearson Correlation	1	.871**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	15	15
OdaGni	Pearson Correlation	.871**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	15	15

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression: ODA/GNI = 0.029 * IDness +0.262

Above: significance of correlations for values (as ID-ness'), and proportion of GNI as ODA.

Thanks to Les Higgins of CDSM for help in supplying data and analysis: leshiggins@cultdyn.co.uk

- [1] Matt McGrath, BBC science reporter, Children sanitation alert issued, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/health/8045073.stm> 2009/05/12 00:35:04 GMT
- [2] An independent NGO supported by staff from the UK water industry, its companies, and others – see www.wateraid.org/uk
- [3] see eg Using values Modes at this website www.campaignstrategy.org for an introduction
- [4] There are other similar systems eg 4Cs run by the agency Y and R and Social Value Groups run by Environics
- [5] see for example http://www.campaignstrategy.org/articles/int_values_campaign.pdf
- [6] how the values make up of a country translates into policy and ODA spend is obviously complex and varies according to the way politics captures and reflects values etc in different countries
- [7] source: TABLE 1: NET OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN 2008 Preliminary data for 2008 - <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/48/34/42459170.pdf>
- [8] since that time the UK has shifted slightly towards Inner Directed/Pioneer but the relative rank order is unlikely to change very quickly.