

# Helping Those Who Can't Help Themselves:

People Give Paternalistic Aid To Lesser Minds

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# Ways to Provide Aid

- Prior research examines how *much* people give (*Batson, 1991; Levine et al., 2005; List, 2011; Preston & DeWaal, 2002*)
- We examine *how* people give:

## PATERNALISTIC VS. AGENTIC AID:

Extent to which the aid restricts the recipient's freedom

### Donation Example:

*Providing food vs. cash to a charity recipient*

### Policy Example:

*Remove desserts vs. provide calorie counts*

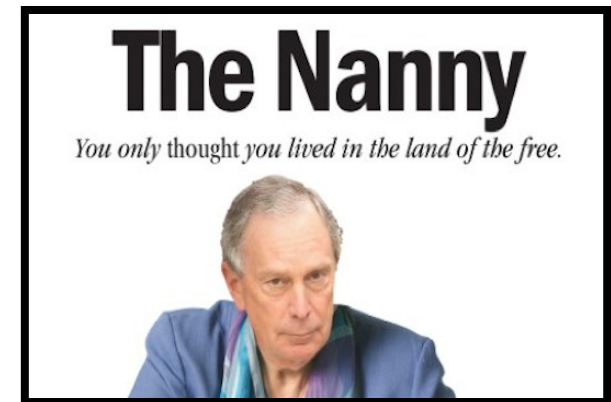
# Paternalism: Recipients' Perspective

When donors restrict aid, recipients are:

- More likely to resent aid (*Gergen et al., 1973*)
- Less likely to accept aid (*Gergen et al., 1975; Rosen, 1971*)
- Less likely to be reciprocal (*Brehm & Cole, 1966*)

Ex: New York Board of Health banned sale of large sodas.

## *The reaction?*



# Paternalism: Donors' Perspective

Almost all countries & individuals provide the majority of their aid in-kind (*Currie & Gahvari, 2008*)

**GiveDirectly**

*The reaction?*



*“It’s nuts to give to the poor without strings attached.”  
(Goldstein, 2013, NY Times)*

# Why Are There Two Different Perspectives on the Value of Paternalism?

		Competence	
		Low	High
Warmth	High	<b>Paternalistic stereotype</b> low status, not competitive (e.g., housewives, elderly people, disabled people)	<b>Admiration</b> high status, not competitive (e.g., ingroup, close allies)
	Low	<b>Contemptuous stereotype</b> low status, competitive (e.g., welfare recipients, poor people)	<b>Envious stereotype</b> high status, competitive (e.g., Asians, Jews, rich people, feminists)

(Fiske et al., 2002)

# Survey of Preferred Giving Strategies

Paternalistic Charity



**American  
Red Cross**

vs.

Agentic Charity

**GiveDirectly**

## **Effectiveness of GiveDirectly:**

- *How effective would GiveDirectly be for reducing poverty compared to other types of charity such as the Red Cross, which give indirectly by providing food or other goods?*

## **Spending the money wisely:**

- *They will waste the money, for example on gambling, jewelry, or some other unwise expensive*

# Perceptions of Recipients' Mental Capacities

## Mental Capacity Scale:

- 1) Everything poor people do is on purpose
- 2) Poor people plan every action before they do it
- 3) Poor people sometimes lack self-restraint (reverse-scored)
- 4) Poor people always engage in a great deal of thought before they act
- 5) Poor people have excellent self-control
- 6) Sometimes poor people have trouble exerting will-power over their goals (reverse-scored)
- 7) Poor people don't always know what is good for them (reverse-scored)
- 8) Poor people sometimes behave mindlessly, without thinking much first (reverse-scored)

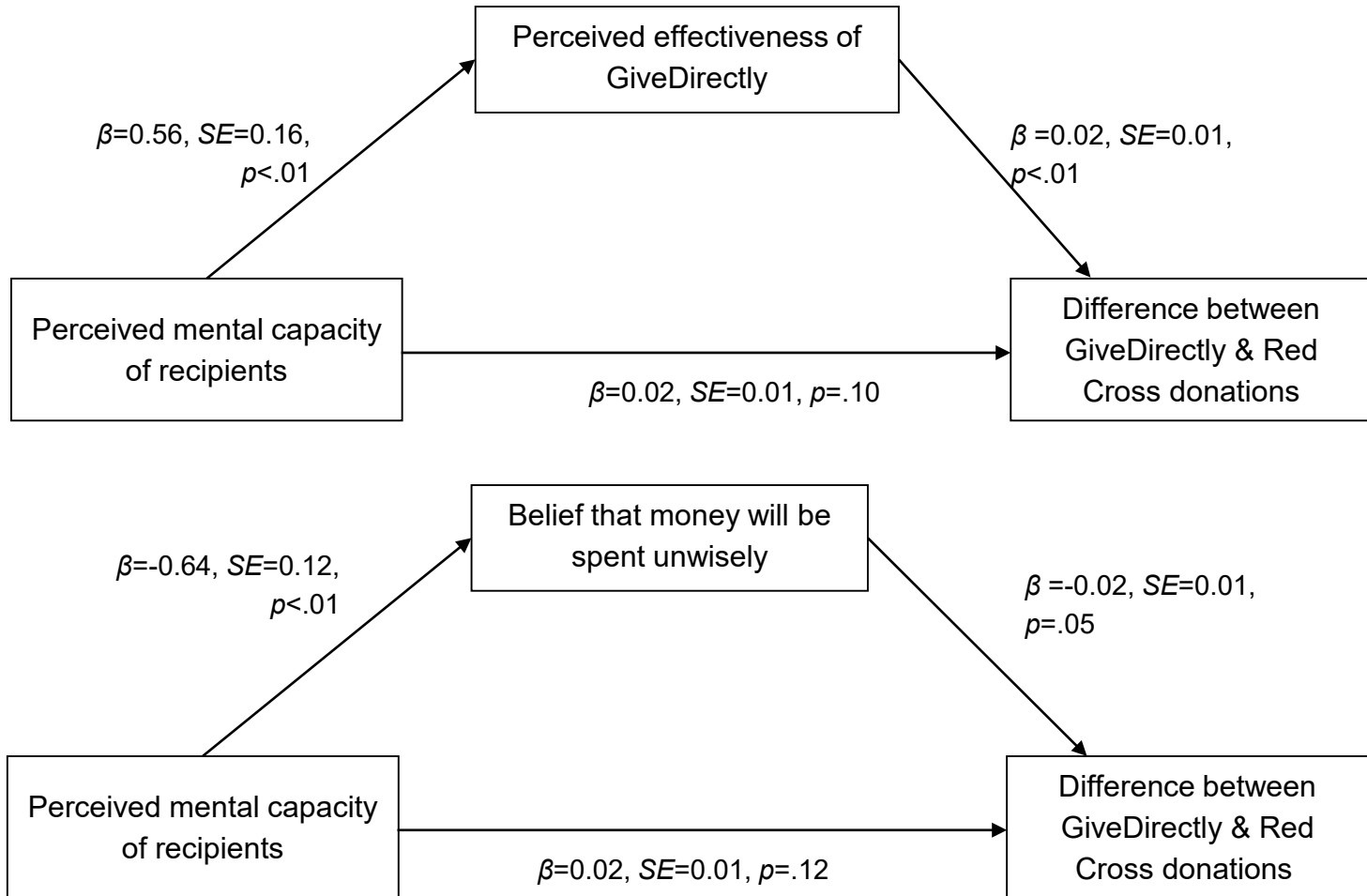
# Donation Choice

You will earn a bonus (\$0.50) for this study.  
You can choose to split it in the following ways:

- \* Yourself
- \* GiveDirectly
- \* RedCross



# Results



# Entrepreneur Experiment

Experiment: “Charity recipients are...”

**High-mental capacity**: “...enterprising entrepreneurs.”

**Low-mental capacity**: “...unemployed.”

**Donation Choice:**

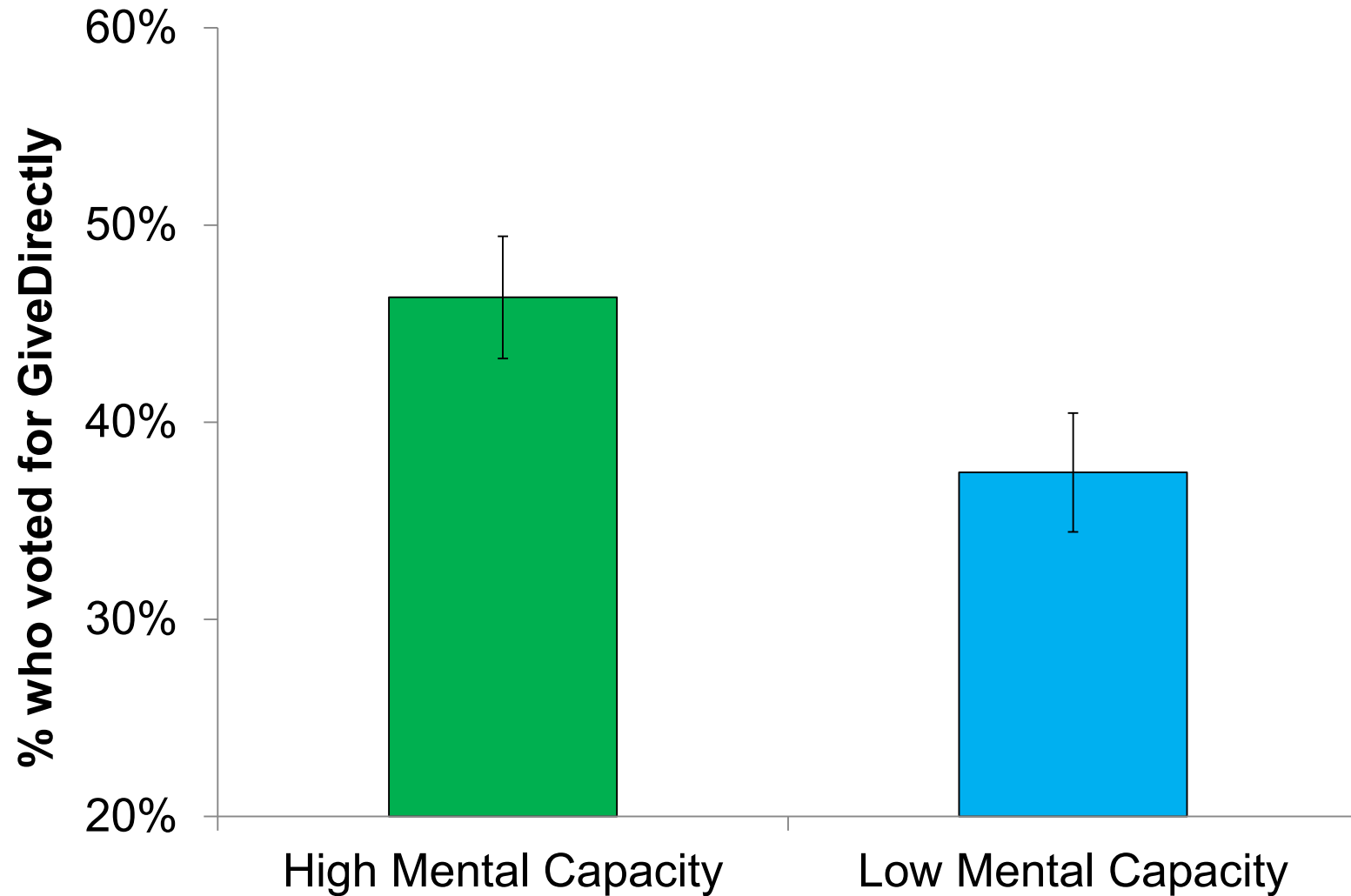


**American  
Red Cross**

**vs.**

**GiveDirectly**

# Results



# Self/Other Difference in Paternalism?

- Does self-enhancement (*Waytz, Epley, & Schroeder, 2014; Alicke et al., 1999*) affect paternalistic giving strategies for self vs. other?

**Experiment: Decide which policies are most effective.**

**Self-targeted:** “The Governor is making legislation that will affect you. Endorse the most effective policy for YOU.”

**Other-targeted:** “You are the Governor making legislation that will affect your citizens. Endorse the most effective policy for the AVERAGE CITIZEN.”

Policy goals: 1) increase healthy eating, 2) reduce credit card debt, 3) prevent gun violence, 4) increase savings rates, and 5) reduce mortgage debt

# Experimental Stimuli

Example policies for enhancing healthy eating:

## **PATERNALISTIC OPTION**

Unhealthy food ban - Bans you from ordering and consuming entrees at fast food restaurants that contain more than half of the American Heart Association's recommended daily cholesterol intake. You will not be allowed to consume such entrées.

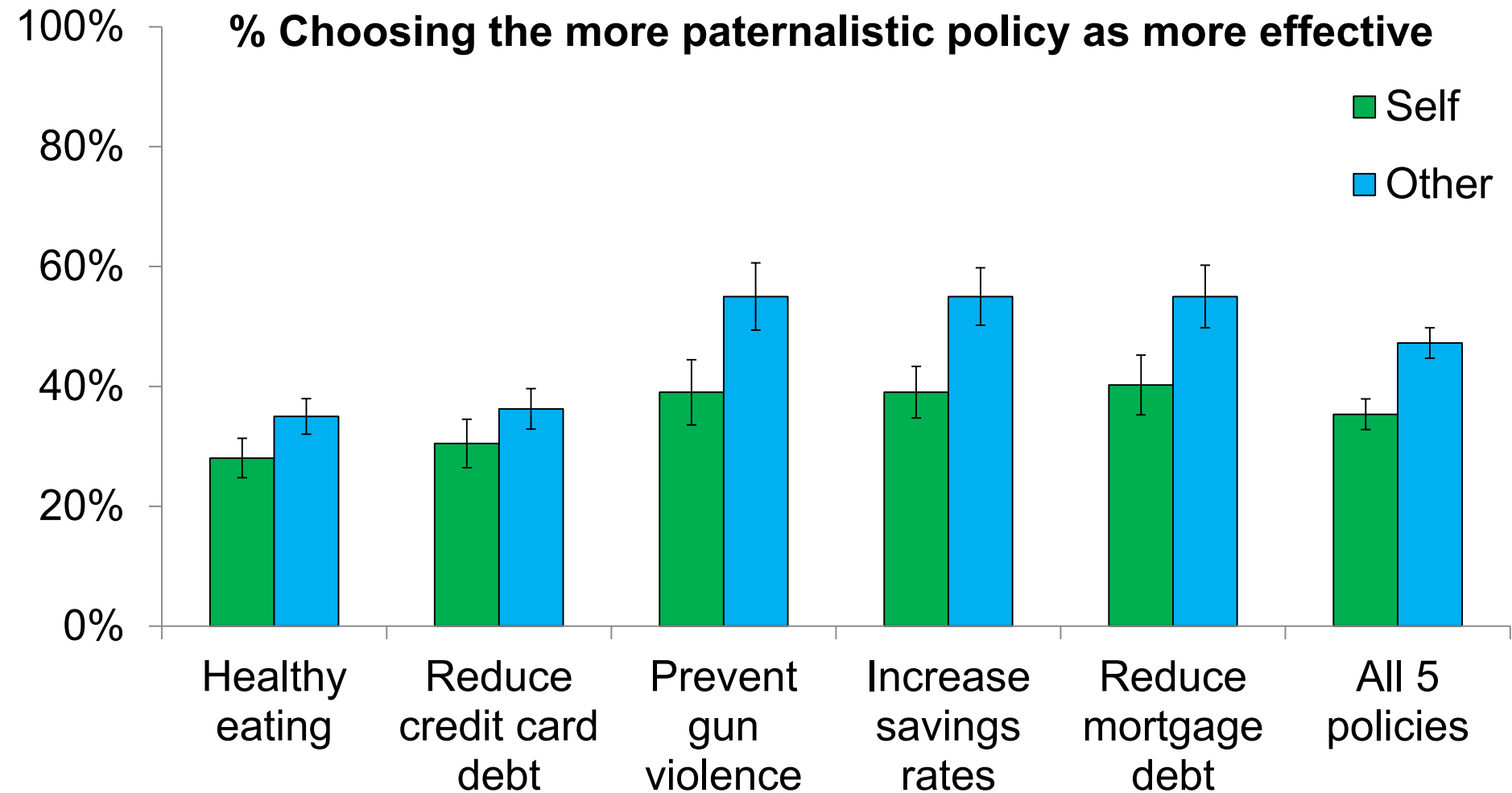
## **AGENTIC OPTION**

Calorie count - Requires all fast food restaurants in the state to provide the number of calories in each entrée. You will be able to read the calorie counts and make informed decisions regarding your choice of entrée.

## **Mental capacity measure:**

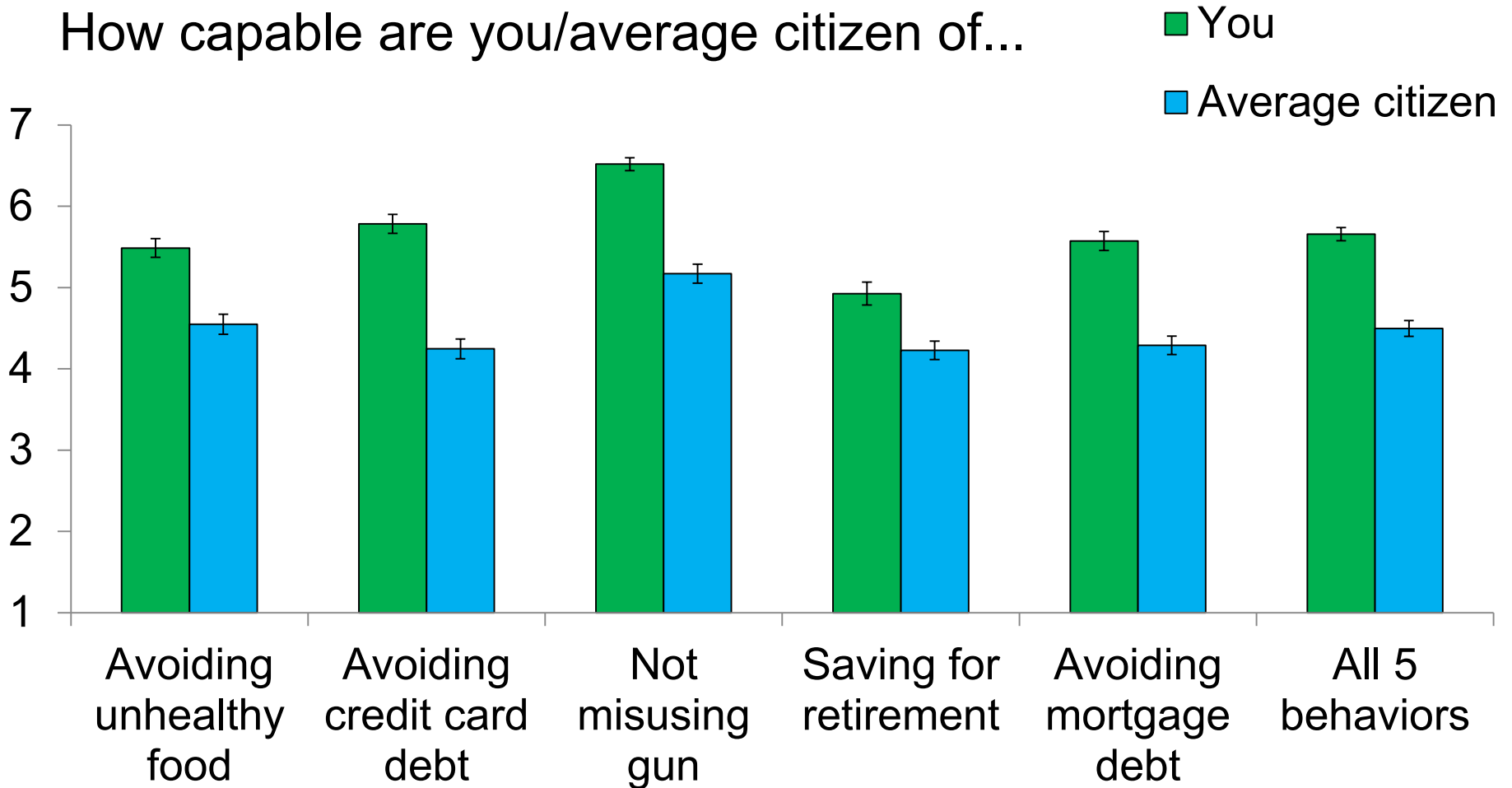
How capable [you are/the average citizen is] of: avoiding unhealthy foods, avoiding credit card debt, not misusing a gun, saving for retirement, and avoiding mortgage debt?

# Results



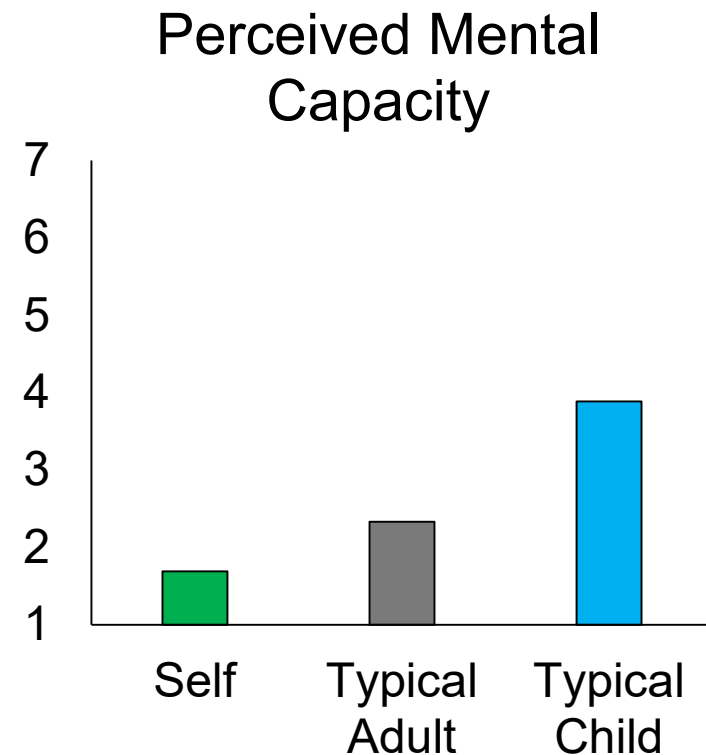
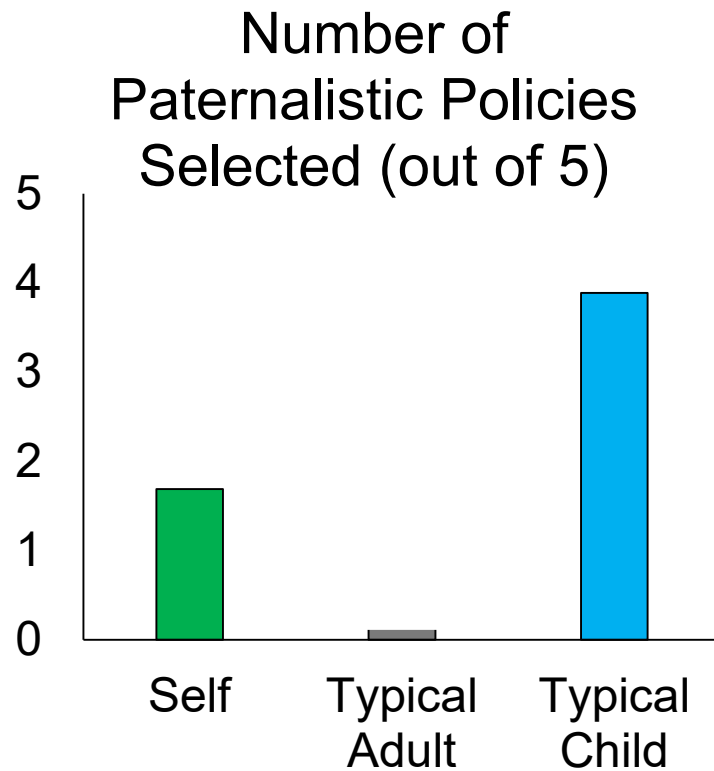
# Results

How capable are you/average citizen of...



# Child vs. Adult Experiment

- Choice between which agentic vs. paternalistic policies would be more effective for self, “typical adult,” or child





# Thanksgiving Experiment

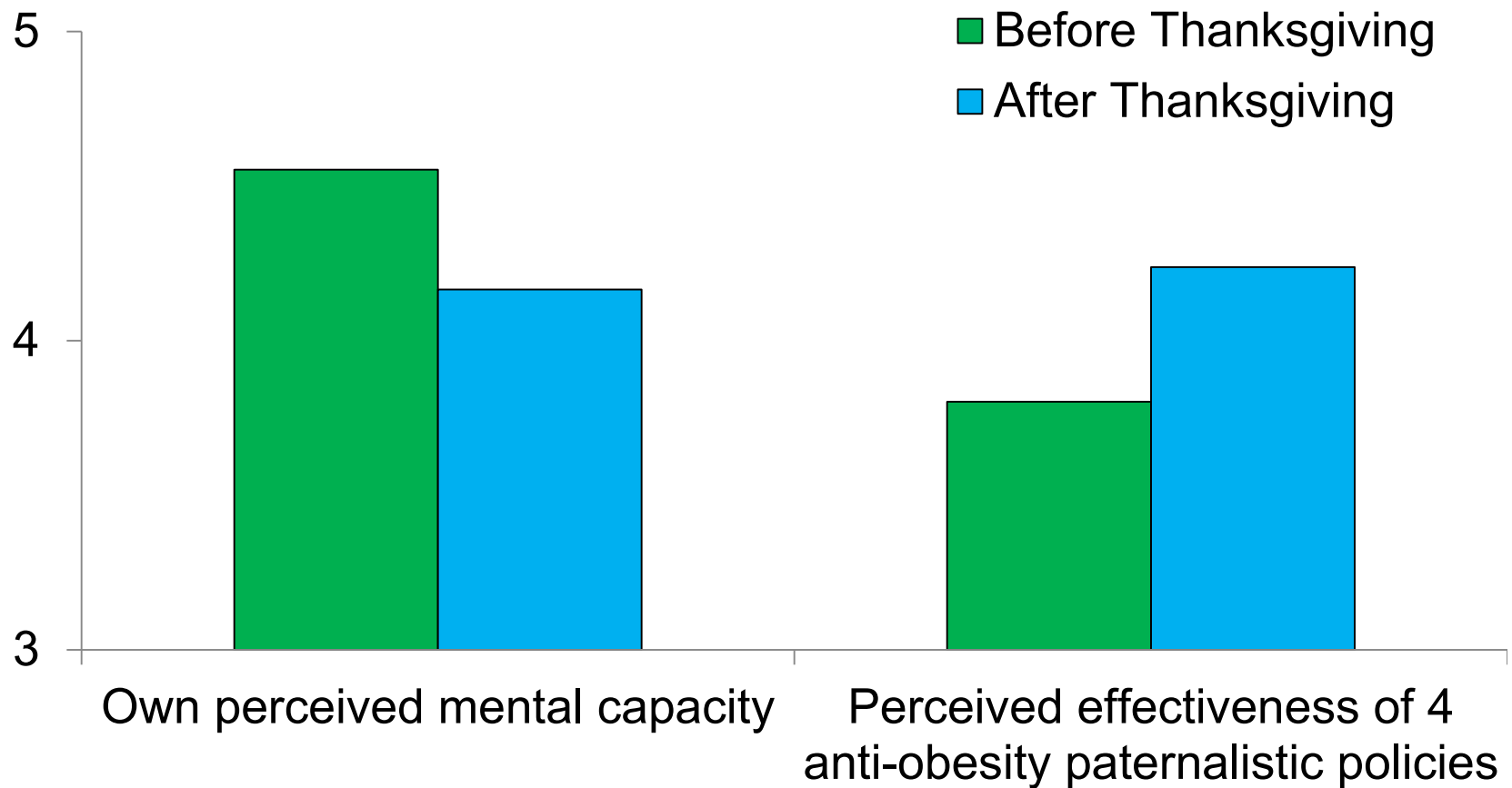
- Can reminding people of their own self-control failures make them more receptive to paternalism?



# Thanksgiving Experiment

- Experimental Manipulation: Before vs. After Thanksgiving dinner (manipulated the saliency of a self-control failure)
- Measured:
  1. Perceptions of own mental capacity
  2. Support for 4 anti-obesity paternalistic policies (e.g., cutting high-calorie entrees in restaurants)

# Results



# Summary

“I believed that I could do more good with money for the poor than the poor could do for themselves. I [assumed] that poor people are poor in part because they're uneducated and don't make good choices [and they] need people like me to figure out what they need and get it to them.”

- Joy Sun, Chief Operating Officer of GiveDirectly

# Summary

- The way you think about a person's mind influences how you help them.

## Remaining Questions:

1. How much paternalism is appropriate?
  - Too paternalistic toward others? Not paternalistic enough for the self?
2. Do people infer that recipients of paternalism have weaker mental capacity?

# Thank You



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