

The Moral Foundations of Individual-Level Foreign Policy Preferences

David Lindsey and David A. Lake

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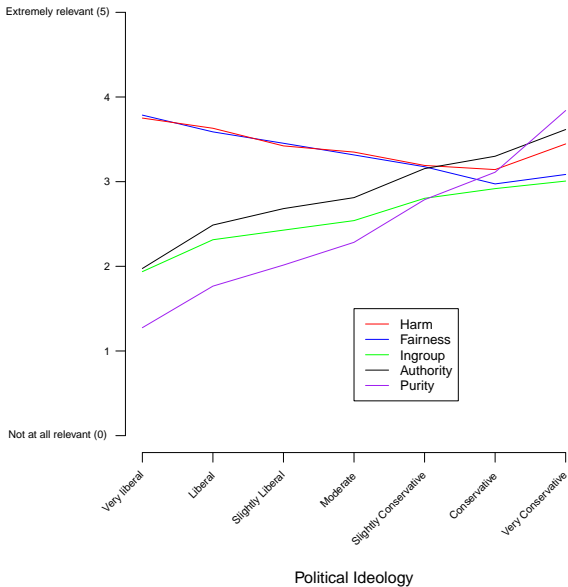
- ▶ Previous research shows that five moral “foundations,” developed without explicit political content, significantly correlate with individual-level ideology, partisanship, and attitudes on a diverse array of domestic political issues.
- ▶ We show that these same foundations strongly and significantly correlate with attitudes on a wide variety of foreign policy issues spanning both security and foreign economic policy.

The Moral Foundations

Five “universal cognitive modules upon which cultures construct moral matrices” (Haidt 2012):

- ▶ **Care/harm**: characterized by the emotion of compassion and the virtues of caring and kindness toward others.
- ▶ **Fairness/cheating**: concerns equality and proportionality in social relations.
- ▶ **Loyalty/betrayal**: manifested in feeling of attachment and pride in one’s “in group” and fear of any “out group.”
- ▶ **Authority/submission**: distinguished by the emotions of respect and fear towards the authority as an institution or those in authority as individuals and the virtues of obedience and deference.
- ▶ **Sanctity/degradation**: disgust towards certain objects or acts that are perceived as “unclean” or taboo.

Ideology and the Moral Foundations



Our Survey

- ▶ 1,561 US adults recruited on Amazon Mechanical Turk.
- ▶ “Catch questions” eliminated 219 respondents who obviously were not paying attention to the questionnaire.
- ▶ Moral foundations measured using the 30 question MFQ, which consists of 6 questions for each of the 5 foundations, none of which are explicitly political.
- ▶ 26 foreign policy questions, selected for breadth of substantive coverage, and division of opinion among the American public.

Illustrative Question

“The United States should provide aid that helps needy countries develop their economies” (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5)

	Foundations	With Ideology	Full Controls
Harm	0.36** (0.05)	0.32** (0.05)	0.33** (0.05)
Fairness	0.19** (0.05)	0.17** (0.05)	0.18** (0.06)
Loyalty	0.03 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)
Authority	-0.15** (0.05)	-0.12* (0.05)	-0.10 (0.06)
Sanctity	-0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Ideology		-0.07** (0.02)	-0.07** (0.03)
Female Dummy			-0.15*
Education			0.07*
Income			0.02
Age			-0.00
Party ID			-0.10*
Tradable Dummy			-0.07
Religiosity			0.06*
Political Interest			0.14**
Log Likelihood	-1195.73	-1156.79	-1030.59
Num. obs.	1280	1249	1146

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$,

Full Results: Goals of US Foreign Policy

Dependent Variable	Correlation with Ideology	Effect of a One Point Increase in... Harm	Fairness	Loyalty	on Pr("Very Important") Authority	Sanctity
Strengthening the UN	0.254	2.2%	9.0%	3.1%	4.2%	0.7%
Protecting Human Rights	0.249	10.6%	6.2%	1.8%	-5.7%	1.6%
Protecting Weaker Nations Against Foreign Aggression	0.099	4.8%	2.0%	2.5%	-1.3%	2.5%
Promoting Democracy	-0.049	-0.2%	1.8%	5.0%	-0.5%	1.4%
Stopping the Flow of Illegal Drugs into US	-0.262	-1.2%	2.3%	4.7%	7.2%	11.5%
Maintaining Superior US Military Power	-0.370	-10.4%	-1.1%	8.2%	6.9%	2.8%

Full Results: Agree/Disagree Questions

Dependent Variable	Correlation with Ideology	Effect of a One Point Increase in...					Sanctity
		Harm	Fairness	Loyalty	Authority	Pr("Strongly Agree")	
US Should Make More Decisions within the UN	0.410	2.5%	4.7%	-0.9%	1.9%	-2.8%	
Developed Countries Have Moral Obligation to Reduce Hunger	0.266	7.3%	5.6%	-0.7%	-2.9%	0.9%	
US should provide food & medicine to needy countries	0.257	5.9%	3.3%	-1.1%	-2.6%	1.4%	
Econ power more important than military power	0.234	3.9%	3.3%	-0.7%	-1.9%	-2.0%	
US should provide development aid	0.232	4.3%	3.1%	-0.1%	-2.3%	0.8%	
Growing trades and business ties with other countries are good	0.104	2.2%	3.8%	0.8%	5.0%	-4.7%	
US should provide aid to increase its influence	-0.081	-0.3%	0.4%	2.2%	1.0%	0.4%	
US should limit import of foreign products	-0.089	-0.7%	0.6%	-0.7%	2.4%	3.0%	
US should exert strong leadership in world	-0.132	0.6%	-0.3%	5.0%	3.6%	2.1%	
US should limit immigration by high-skill workers	-0.223	-1.6%	-0.2%	0.8%	1.5%	1.7%	
US should limit immigration by low-skill workers	-0.271	-2.0%	-0.4%	0.8%	3.0%	1.4%	
War sometimes necessary to maintain order in world	-0.275	-8.1%	0.9%	3.7%	4.7%	1.1%	
War sometimes necessary to obtain justice	-0.277	-9.8%	2.7%	3.0%	4.7%	0.2%	
Our culture needs protection against foreign influence	-0.385	-1.8%	-2.1%	1.6%	1.8%	2.6%	

Full Results: Would You Favor or Oppose the Use of US Troops...

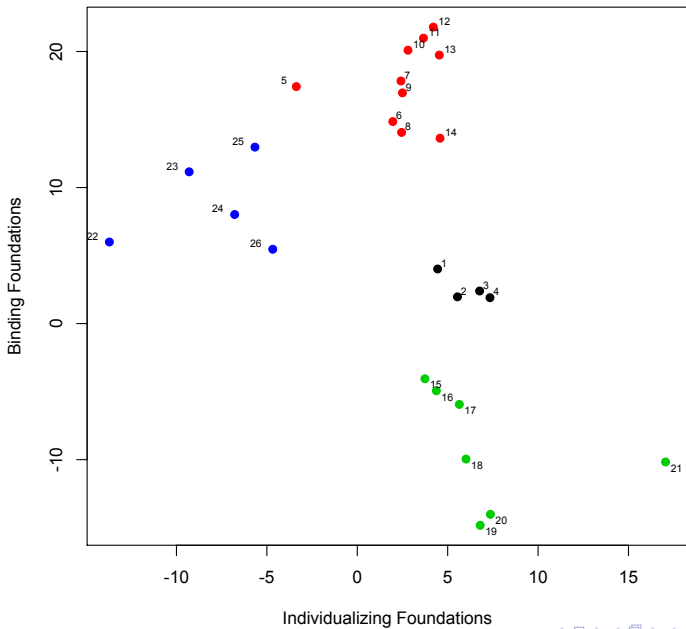
Dependent Variable	Correlation with Ideology	Effect of a One Point Increase in... on Pr("Strongly Favor")				
		Harm	Fairness	Loyalty	Authority	Sanctity
To Deal with Humanitarian Crises	0.193	6.4%	3.2%	2.2%	1.0%	0.5%
To stop a genocide	0.116	6.5%	6.5%	1.2%	-0.1%	0.8%
In response to North Korean invasion of SK	-0.043	0.3%	-1.5%	1.5%	0.8%	-0.3%
In response to Chinese invasion of Taiwan	-0.101	-1.2%	-0.1%	2.5%	-1.2%	0.3%
To Prevent Islamist Takeover of Pakistan	-0.110	-0.6%	0.2%	2.3%	1.0%	1.0%
To Ensure the Oil Supply	-0.320	-2.5%	-1.9%	3.9%	2.8%	1.5%

Moral Foundations as a Source of Structure in Foreign Policy Attitudes

We construct a two-dimensional spatial model to estimate the “ideal point” of agreement with our foreign policy statements in the moral space.

$$y_{ij}^* = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} * (\alpha_{1j} - x_{1i})^2 + \beta_{2j} * (\alpha_{2j} - x_{2i})^2 + \epsilon_{ij}$$

Question Ideal Points in Two Dimensional Space



Conclusion

- ▶ Five moral “foundations” are strongly correlated with attitudes on both foreign and domestic policy issues.
- ▶ Moral concerns explain some of the structure in foreign policy attitudes found by others.
- ▶ Despite the evident salience of morality, moral rhetoric in the political sphere is likely to have muted effects in shifting attitudes.

Priming Experiments

Respondents primed for the foundations using the scrambled sentence protocol in either a care/harm, loyalty/betrayal, or neutral condition. Example:

- ▶ Harm Condition: “Endangered Orange They Friends Their” → “They **endangered** their friends”
- ▶ Loyalty Condition: “Betrayed Orange They Friends Their” → “They **betrayed** their friends”
- ▶ Neutral Condition: “Encountered Orange They Friends Their” → “They **encountered** their friends”

Final “test” sentence could be completed with or without the target. In the harm experiment, for example: “Qualified Teacher Sympathetic Was The”:

- ▶ The teacher was **sympathetic**
- ▶ The teacher was **qualified**

Priming Experiments

- ▶ 535 respondents participated in the harm experiment. 583 participated in the loyalty experiment (half were assigned the harm/loyalty treatment, the other half were assigned to the neutral condition).
- ▶ Completions of the test sentence show that priming was successful
- ▶ Null results: No meaningful differences on foreign policy questions between the treatment and control groups