

TAKING FOREIGN POLICY PERSONALLY:

Personal Values and Foreign Policy Beliefs

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ABSTRACT: Previous research has shown that on issues of foreign policy, individuals have “general stances,” “postures,” “dispositions” or “orientations” that inform their beliefs toward more discrete issues in international relations. While these approaches delineate the proximate sources of public opinion in the foreign policy domain, they evade an even more important question: what gives rise to these foreign policy orientations in the first place? Combining an original survey on a nationally representative sample of Americans with Schwartz’s theory of values from political psychology, we show that people take foreign policy personally: the same basic values we know people use to guide choices in their daily lives also travel to the domain of foreign affairs, offering one potential explanation why people who are otherwise uninformed about world politics nonetheless express coherent foreign policy beliefs.

1 Introduction

It is now widely thought that just as values play a role in the mass public's attitudes towards domestic politics, they also help people make sense of international affairs. Previous research has shown that on issues of foreign policy, even ordinary Americans have “general stances,” “postures,” “dispositions” or “orientations” that inform their attitudes towards more specific issues in international relations (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987; Hurwitz, Peffley, and Seligson, 1993; Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser, 1999). Scholars generally agree that these orientations have their origins in underlying values. Hurwitz and Peffley (1987) and Rathbun (2007) write of “core values”; Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser (1999) assert a role for “core dispositional values”; and Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis (1995) as well as Herrmann and Keller (2004) stress the importance of “value orientations.” Against the Almond-Lippmann consensus that understood foreign policy beliefs to be shapeless and incoherent (e.g., Almond, 1950; Lippmann, 1955), we now know that foreign policy attitudes have structure and that values seem to be the mortar.

Despite this progress, however, international relations scholars lack a systematic understanding of which values matter and how they contribute to the architecture of foreign policy views. This is our key puzzle. In one strand of literature, values are inferred indirectly by the patterns of association among specific foreign policy attitudes. Data reduction techniques like factor analysis consistently reveal two main constructs — cooperative internationalism and militant internationalism. However, in these studies there is no attempt to measure values directly and estimate their impact on foreign policy postures. Another vein of work, the vertical constraint model of Hurwitz and Peffley (1987) avoids these pitfalls yet assumes that the more abstract values that drive the formation of foreign policy preferences on specific issues are unique to the foreign policy domain, structuring only views on international affairs and not other aspects of individuals' social interactions. The claim that these core principles are not themselves the product of even more trans-situational values applied by their holders more broadly to other elements of life is never tested, however. And it is not clear how these core principles of foreign policy, as opposed to other potential candidates, are identified.

We argue, in sharp contrast, that the two main dimensions of foreign policy attitudes consistently identified in the literature — cooperative and militant internationalism — are outgrowths of the two

value clusters found to structure not only political life, but social life in general. A number of social psychologists have identified models of values based on two universal human needs often in tension with one another. On the one hand, societies need to provide physical safety to their members, protecting their group from internal and external threats. On the other, societies also need to foster consideration for others and reciprocal exchange so as to reap the gains of cooperation, even with others outside the group. Values serve both of these needs.

While a number of models exist in the social psychological literature centering on these two needs, we utilize the Schwartz value framework, as it seems most capable of subsuming other similar models and is the most prominent in the recent literature. The “conservation” values of conformity, tradition, and security are designed to create the solidarity and cohesion necessary to guard against internal and external threats. “Self-transcendence” values foster prosocial bonds across individuals, leading them to care but also to cooperate with them. We find that conservation values are most strongly linked to “militant internationalism,” a general hawkishness in international relations. Universalism, a self-transcendence value that indicates an identification and concern for all human beings, is the most important value for predicting cooperative internationalism, the foreign policy orientation marked by a preference for multilateralism and cosmopolitanism in international affairs. Values also help us better understand isolationism, which has often been traced to external events rather than internal dispositions. Nevertheless, we find that isolationists are higher in conservation values. We argue that this is because isolation is another way of dealing with threats — by removing oneself from them. They are also lower in benevolence since isolationists seem to adopt a general mindset of self-sufficiency and autarky, even in their own countries. This is a unique value combination that we find in neither cooperative internationalists nor militant internationalists.

The values that matter for foreign policy beliefs, in other words, are not just specific to the domain of international affairs. They are bigger than politics. We develop and find support for hypotheses about which values predict the adoption of particular foreign policy postures, most importantly cooperative and militant internationalism, thereby establishing rather than surmising their specific value antecedents. Scholars have long presumed that values serve as the glue that holds foreign policy beliefs together. In this paper, we demonstrate precisely what these values are.

Like [Hurwitz and Peffley \(1987\)](#), we claim that values and foreign policy orientations are related at least largely in a vertical sense, with the former driving the latter. However, since personal values are defined as abstract beliefs about desirable end states or behaviors that transcend specific situations, they can guide evaluation and behavior across the water’s edge and into the domain of foreign affairs. We propose that personal values are an essential foundation for foreign policy postures. Individuals take foreign policy personally.

Our findings indicate that personal values matter for the mass public on those political issues, foreign policy matters, that they are the most removed from, thereby revealing the power of values. Not only that, values structure attitudes towards international affairs. We find evidence of a relatively parsimonious and elegant system of values and foreign policy beliefs in which different clusters of Schwartz values predict the core components of foreign policy orientations.

The results also call into serious question pessimistic readings of the mass public’s ability to form political judgments without the help of elite cue-givers (e.g. [Zaller, 1992](#); [Lupia and McCubbins, 2000](#); [Berinsky, 2009](#)). Previous research has already indicated how foreign policy predispositions allow individuals to derive attitudes on specific foreign policy events or questions on which they are not well-informed ([Rathbun, 2007](#); [Reifler, Scotto, and Clarke, 2011](#); [Kertzer and McGraw, 2012](#)). We demonstrate that those dispositions are themselves grounded in even more fundamental values. [Converse \(1964\)](#) was correct in arguing that many Americans are “innocent of ideology”, but we show how these low-knowledge individuals are just as able to connect their personal values to foreign policy preferences as high-knowledge ones, despite the latter being more ideological than the former.

Our integration of Schwartz into the study of foreign policy views makes an important contribution to the existing literature in a number of other ways. First, unlike much of the existing research in social psychology that focuses on one-off relationships between particular values and foreign policy preferences, we study the role of values as part of a broader system. As [Kertzer et al. \(2014, 828\)](#) argue, political scientists are “confronted with a cornucopia of values to choose from”, raising questions about why we should be studying one particular value but not another; the Schwartz value framework provides us with a unified and coherent framework. Second, we measure values directly, *ex ante*, rather than divining them *ex post* from the patterns of covariation found among foreign

policy attitudes. Finally, our theory of values is systematic rather than ad hoc, based on one of the most widely accepted models of values in the social psychology literature, giving us a preexisting theory of which values might or might not matter in foreign policy that is both systematic and comprehensive.

In the following sections, we first review the literature on core values in foreign policy, highlighting the two most important approaches: the cooperative/militant internationalism framework and the vertical hierarchy model. We then introduce the Schwartz value framework, derive hypotheses and present results. Subsequently we discuss the implications of those results for prominent traditions in foreign policy opinion studies that argue that the mass public is incapable of forming coherent foreign policy beliefs given their ignorance of ideology, forcing them to rely on “elite cues” instead.

2 Values and Foreign Policy: Two Research Strands

2.1 Cooperative and Militant Internationalism

Two strands of research on the foreign policy attitudes of the mass public claim that values are important. Perhaps the most prominent tradition in research on foreign policy beliefs, offered by Wittkopf (1986, 1990, 1994) and Holsti and Rosenau (1986, 1988, 1990, 1996), consistently finds that American foreign policy attitudes are organized along two related but distinct dimensions: cooperative and militant internationalism. If cooperative internationalism is the extent to which one embraces the world with open arms, militant internationalism captures beliefs about willingness to meet the world with a clenched fist.

Cooperative internationalism (CI) is an orientation towards international affairs that stresses concern for others abroad, with whom one should work towards common goals. Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis discuss cooperative internationalism as a dimension capturing distinctions between self and other in international affairs. They write, “What all these [CI] questions seem to have in common is a concern for the wider community. We believe that those who emphasize the importance of these goals have a more inclusive identity than those who de-emphasize these same goals” (1995, 318).

Similarly, [Nincic and Ramos \(2010\)](#) write of “other-regarding” objectives. [Rathbun](#) defines this dimension as denoting a “sense of obligation to the broader international community” ([2007](#), 388). Global solidarity is therefore a key element of cooperative internationalism, but cosmopolitanism is about more than just self-sacrifice and service to others, since cooperative internationalists also believe that cooperation leads to mutual gains. Accordingly, previous work has found that support for international institutions, multilateralism, and international collaboration all load on the same CI dimension ([Rathbun, 2007](#); [Wittkopf, 1990](#); [Holsti and Rosenau, 1988, 1990](#)).

Militant internationalism (MI), on the other hand, is generally thought to mark the familiar division between hawks and doves over the importance, effectiveness, and desirability of using force to reach foreign policy objectives. [Hurwitz and Peffley](#) posit a “dimension of militarism . . . anchored, on the one end, by a desire that the government assume an assertive, militant foreign-policy posture through military strength and on the other by a desire for a more flexible and accommodating stance through negotiations” ([1987](#), 1107). Hawkish and dovish postures are thought to rest on different cognitive “models” about the effectiveness of force ([Jervis, 1976](#); [Tetlock, 1983](#)). Hawks embrace the “deterrence model,” in which peace is best achieved through strength and the demonstration of resolve. In this worldview, lack of credibility and signs of weakness invite challenges by aggressive foes in a dangerous environment. Doves, in contrast, point out the often self-defeating nature of such displays, as they can incite fear on the other side and escalate hostilities in such a way that leaves both sides worse off.

Scholars have sometimes detected a third isolationist dimension in the structure of foreign policy beliefs, characterized by a general support for the United States turning inwards and withdrawing from international affairs ([Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis, 1995](#); [Rathbun, 2007](#)). An isolationist disapproves of both foreign military engagements and collaborative multilateral efforts to solve global problems. Antimilitarists (low in MI) and anti-multilateralists (low in CI) are often mistaken for isolationists in that they often advocate similar policies of withdrawing troops or cutting back foreign aid ([Rathbun, 2007](#)). However, isolationism stands apart from both CI and MI as a general belief that the U.S. should avoid political entanglements with other countries ([Kertzer, 2013](#)).

Analysts in this tradition generally assume that these foreign policy orientations are grounded

in underlying values, but never measure them directly, instead surmising them from the clustering in factor analyses. [Murray and Cowden](#), for instance, write of the “hidden organizing principles” that bring order and coherence to foreign policy belief systems ([1999](#), 458). They are thought to be the latent values that explain the pattern of factor loadings. We argue that to put the claim that values structure foreign policy attitudes on firmer ground, we should measure values directly. While the general structure of foreign policy beliefs is well-established, it is less clear what underlies these postures.

2.2 Vertical Constraint Models

In another related strand of research, values are thought to be at the top of a hierarchical structure of attitudes, informing foreign policy orientations (such as constructs similar to cooperative and militant internationalism), which in turn manifest themselves in specific foreign attitudes like defense spending or cooperation with the United Nations ([Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987](#)). Hurwitz and Peffley identify two primary values at the top of the chain — “ethnocentrism,” which is essentially patriotism and/or nationalism, and beliefs about the morality of force.

Although these models represent an incredibly important contribution to our study of foreign policy beliefs, the past several decades of research on value systems in social and political psychology suggest three related concerns. First, the reason why values are so analytically powerful is because they are transsituational, working across domains ([Jacoby, 2006](#)). In this sense, what we believe is valuable in our personal lives should influence our judgments in domains like foreign affairs as well. Yet classic hierarchical models argue instead for a silo-like understanding of political beliefs in which each domain has its own set of overarching principles from which everything else follows. The implication is that our personal values are separate from our foreign policy values ([Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987](#)).

Second, and relatedly, because these models are domain-specific, they use values that are not very distant from the specific foreign policy attitudes they are trying to explain. This choice leaves open the question of whether less proximate values may also shape opinions on international affairs. For instance, [Hurwitz and Peffley \(1987\)](#) argue that militarism, defined by preferring force over

diplomacy, is a function of beliefs about the morality of warfare. Is the latter any more fundamental than the former? To truly examine how values affect foreign policy thinking, we need measures of values uncontaminated by the substance of foreign affairs. Grounding specific foreign policy beliefs in more general personal values also makes it easier to distinguish cause from effect, a common complaint about the public opinion literature in foreign policy (e.g. [Fordham and Kleinberg, 2012](#)).

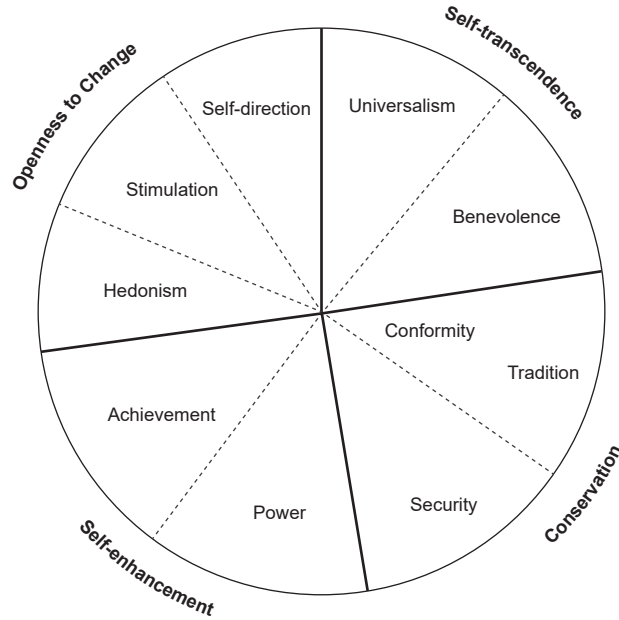
Finally, the choice of core foreign policy values in the vertical constraint literature is somewhat *ad hoc*: beliefs about the righteousness of using force are undoubtedly important, but preferences about multilateral cooperation might be just as fundamental; how do we decide *ex ante* what counts as a value worth studying? Research that focuses on a handful of values in a given study necessarily elides broader questions about the universe of values and where these stand in relation to one another. Insofar as value systems — as opposed to one or two values — matter for public opinion, this omission is problematic. [Feldman \(2003, 480\)](#) puts it this way: “The piecemeal approach to values... leaves open the possibility that important effects of values on political attitudes are missed. Perhaps most important, an understanding of the overall structure of values and value systems may yield new insights into the nature of attitudinal structure.”

2.3 Schwartz’s Theory of Values

We believe it is possible to improve on both strands of research on the structure of foreign policy beliefs by using a more theoretically grounded model of values meant to explain decision-making across multiple policy domains. We seek to integrate the insights of both these approaches while making improvements. Like the proponents of the vertical constraint model, we propose to measure directly values directly and hypothesize how these more abstract principles might vertically structure more specific foreign policy postures, the orientations of cooperative internationalism, militant internationalism and isolationism derived from other work. However, in lieu of taking an *ad hoc* approach to the study of values, we follow a more systematic approach made possible by Shalom Schwartz’s universal model of values ([1992; 1994](#)) that tests whether values unspecific to foreign policy nevertheless influence foreign policy postures.

Building on the work of [Rokeach \(1973\)](#), [Schwartz \(1994, 20\)](#) conceptualizes personal values

Figure 1: The Schwartz Model of Value Relations



as i) abstract beliefs ii) about desirable end states or behaviors that iii) transcend specific circumstances and contexts, iv) guide evaluation and behavior, and v) can be rank-ordered in terms of relative importance. Schwartz has identified 10 broad value domains: benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, and tradition. The content and structure of personal values can be illustrated using the circumplex shown in Figure 1, which arrays the value types along a circular motivational continuum. Adjacent values share similar motivations (and should be positively correlated with one another), opposed values share conflicting motivations (and should be weakly or negatively correlated with one another). Values should have the highest positive correlations with those directly next to them in the circumplex, so that, for instance, achievement and power have a stronger positive association than achievement and security.

When the motivational bases underpinning the identified universe of personal values are considered *en masse*, four superordinate values emerge. As indicated in Figure 1, the capstone principles are (1) self-transcendence values, which emphasize the acceptance of and concern for other individuals (known and unknown), groups, society writ large, and even the global community; (2)

self-enhancement values, which call for the pursuit of one’s own self-interest, success, satisfaction and dominance, over others if necessary; (3) openness values, which privilege independent feeling, thought, creativity, and action; and (4) conservation values, which emphasize self-restraint, social stability, resistance to change, and deference to established traditions and cultural dictates.

To illustrate, tradition values call for deference to established familial, cultural, and religious norms and practices. They are compatible with adjacent conformity values that prioritize the goals of impulse control, self-restraint and submission to social expectations. Together as conservation values they stand opposed to stimulation values, which prioritize excitement and novelty, and self-direction values, which emphasize thought and action free of socially imposed norms or internally imposed restraints. Hence, the realization of one value (e.g., self-direction) can obstruct attainment of another (e.g., tradition or conformity).

Over the past 25 years, Schwartz and others working in this vein have collected data from over 400 independent samples covering some 80 countries. Generally speaking, the model has performed quite well in most applications: researchers have found the empirical patterns in the data usually correspond to the hypothesized value structure (Schwartz, 1992; Spini, 2003; Davidov, Schmidt, and Schwartz, 2008). Given the number of independent samples and the fact that they have been drawn from diverse cultures, linguistic traditions, age groupings, probability and non-probability samples, and different points in time, it seem fair to conclude this model of value content and structures rests on a strong empirical foundation. As a result, the Schwartz value framework has become “the most widely employed model of values” in social psychology (Hitlin and Pinkston, 2013, 322), and “the standard model in values research” (Gollan and Witte, 2014, 452); at the time of this writing, the five most popular pieces by Schwartz developing this framework have been cited nearly 20,000 times. Thus, although the Schwartz value framework is by no means the only value framework within social psychology, it is among the most widely employed, and as Duckitt and Sibley (2009) note, there is a striking similarity between Schwartz’s factors and those utilized by others, which enables us to better develop hypotheses about the connection between core values and foreign policy orientations.

2.4 Schwartz Values and Politics

Psychologists see personal values as standards that guide perception, judgment, and behavior in all walks of life. Values operate at a higher level of evaluative abstraction than attitudes toward or beliefs about concrete objects; therefore, the former are well-positioned to shape the latter. To take some examples, values shape lifestyle choices, consumption decisions, altruistic behavior, social interactions, college majors, what people worry about, and many other judgments and behaviors (Bardi and Schwartz, 2003; Maio and Olson, 1995; Roccas et al., 2002; Verplanken and Holland, 2002). It is precisely because of values' centrality in political judgment that elites turn to value frames when they want to mobilize public opinion (Zaller, 1992; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley, 1997; Brewer, 2001).

Since people use values in a trans-situational manner to guide evaluation in all (or at least many) elements of their lives, the application of values to the formation of political preferences follows naturally. Indeed, Converse (1964, 211) anticipated this possibility when he noted “a few crowning postures—like premises about survival of the fittest in the spirit of social Darwinism—serve as a sort of glue to bind together many more specific attitudes and beliefs.” Recent research has found that basic human values shape public opinion on domestic policy views and electoral choice in both the United States and in other countries (e.g., Barker and Tinnick, 2006; Caprara et al., 2006; Nelson, Gwiasda, and Lyons, 2011; Piurko, Schwartz, and Davidov, 2011; Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione, 2010). Conservation values of security, conformity and tradition tend to predict support for the political right, and self-transcendence for the political left, for instance.

Application of the Schwartz framework to the foreign policy domain, however, has been much less systematic. No study to date has applied the Schwartz value framework systematically to foreign policy, focusing instead on how individual values affect specific policy stances, such as the use of force in a particular instance, or at best how values affect one particular orientation, such as militarism (which might be considered synonymous with militant internationalism). We know for instance that self-transcendence values are important for understanding concern about human rights (McFarland and Matthews, 2005). However, we do not know whether Schwartz values affect the broader construct of cooperative internationalism, which encompasses concern for the human rights of those abroad,

much less isolationism. In addition, most studies in this tradition have not relied on representative samples, although some do go beyond the undergraduate student body (Mayton, Peters, and Owens, 1999; Begue and Apostolidis, 2000; Cohrs, Moschner, Maes, and Kielmann, 2005; Cohrs, Kielmann, Maes, and Moschner, 2005; Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione, 2010; Bayram, 2014).

3 Theoretical Expectations

Schwartz (1992, 1994) argues that values enable the smooth functioning and survival of groups, and coordinated social interaction. Understanding values in this way helps us identify their likely effects on foreign policy dispositions. We also buttress those proposed links with findings from other value frameworks, most of which overlap significantly with that of Schwartz.

Conservation values serve to create ingroup solidarity to protect from internal and external threats. In order to provide for their safety, individuals must trade some degree of autonomy (Feldman, 2003). Jost et al. (2003) argue that an “existential” motivation underlies this sets of values. Braithwaite (1997, 1998) calls it the “security” dimension of social beliefs, attitudes and values. As Schwartz notes, both conformity and tradition entail subordination of the self in favor of socially imposed expectations. They create social solidarity, making sure everyone is behaving properly and willing to sacrifice for the group. Tradition and security both stress preserving existing social arrangements that give certainty to life, and conformity and security emphasize production of order and harmony in social relations. Those who score high on these values also embrace particular moral foundations of ingroup loyalty and deference to authority that serve the common goal of “binding” the group together (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek, 2009; Haidt, Graham, and Joseph, 2009; Graham et al., 2011). Authority is necessary for keeping individuals in line and for leading a cohesive group against internal and external threats Duckitt (2001, 2006) (as well as Duckitt et al. 2002 and Van Leeuwen and Park 2009) demonstrate that those that embrace these values are driven by a conception of the world as a dangerous and threatening place. Feldman and Stenner (1997) similarly show that they go hand-in-hand with a sense of threat. Conservation values are marked by an “avoidance” motivation; they have the goal of preventing negative outcomes through protection and security rather than ensuring positive ones through the provision of goods to others

(even if avoiding negative happenings requires the provision of defense) (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, and Baldacci, 2007; Janoff-Bulman, 2009). Threats, of course, might be either external or internal.

We expect that these conservation values will have the greatest effect on support for militant internationalism, as the military and force are used to protect the in-group from threats. For those who hold conservation values, the use or threat of force would be a necessary element for controlling an unpredictable environment where there is no recourse to a higher authority. They will be relatively more hawkish. Conservation values might also lead to lower scores on cooperative internationalism. Conservation values bind individuals together in the presence of some external “other,” which could inhibit a sense of global identity and cosmopolitanism. Hatemi et al. (2013) find that those with greater levels of fear seek to restrict their interactions to a smaller group of individuals, avoiding cooperation with outsiders. However, in-group identification and out-group derogation have been shown to be related but not reducible to one another in previous research. For instance, greater patriotism does not necessarily lead to nationalistic feelings of group superiority (Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Schatz, Staub, and Lavine, 1999; Herrmann, Isernia, and Segatti, 2009).

Of course, we recognize that conservation values also vary by the situational context. As the motivational goals underlining right wing authoritarianism (RWA), concern for conformity, tradition and security rise in situations of acute threat (Duckitt, 2001; Cohrs, Moschner, and Maes, 2005; Duckitt and Fisher, 2003). Although it goes beyond the scope of our crosssectional data, we know from foreign policy practice that there are often calls for greater conformity and tradition when international threats become more acute as a way of making society more cohesive and better able to face an external challenge.

Self-transcendence values indicate concern for and acceptance of others. They are the expression of one of the defining characteristics of human society, its high degree of altruism, which facilitates cooperation and allows for a higher degree of social organization (Trivers, 1971). Self-transcendence values are associated with different moral foundations than conservation values, those of fairness and caring for others (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek, 2009; Haidt, Graham, and Joseph, 2009; Graham et al., 2011). Braithwaite (1997, 1998) calls this the “harmony” dimension of values, oriented towards improving the welfare of other individuals. Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, and Baldacci (2007) identifies

these values as having an “approach” motivation. They drive individuals towards bringing about positive outcomes, “providing” for others rather than “protecting” them.

[Schwartz \(1992\)](#) distinguishes between benevolence, which is caring for those in one’s local community, and universalism, marked by “understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.” Universalism should be associated with a belief in the interdependent nature of international relations and a commitment to the collective resolution of common problems, what we might call multilateralism; [Bayram \(2014\)](#) finds that self-transcendence values like universalism are significantly associated with cosmopolitanism. Universalism will also potentially lead to negative support for militant internationalism, as the imposition of force is harmful to its targets and universalists will demonstrate a greater concern for their welfare, even if they are not part of one’s immediate in-group. Nevertheless we expect that the primary effect of universalism will be on cooperative internationalism.

Benevolence on the other hand will likely lead in the opposite direction. Conservation values call for ingroup solidarity; for this reason benevolence sits adjacent to the conservation set of values in the Schwartz circumplex that encourage deference to authority and conformity to common social standards. Those high on benevolence are therefore likely to score higher on militant internationalism and lower on cooperative internationalism for the same reasons identified above for those who embrace conservation.

To the extent that self-enhancement values — one’s concern for one’s own achievement and power — are directly opposed to self-transcendence, particularly universalism, we should expect that they predict support for militant internationalism but are antagonistic to cooperative internationalism. However, the relationship between what one values for oneself and how one relates to broader groupings is an open (and ultimately empirical) question. It might be, for instance, that one’s desire for personal achievement does not come at the expense of one’s commitment to others. Indeed one might desire power and achievement for oneself in order to help those in one’s community and beyond. Since foreign policy is fundamentally about groups interacting with one another, it could be that the personal values that define individuals’ relationships with broader groups and help coordinate behavior within them should matter most in determining foreign policy beliefs. Values based purely

on individual needs, such as achievement or power, would demonstrate less of an effect. In this view, values that serve the most basic (or even base) needs of individuals — such as individual status within a group or pleasure seeking — are the least likely to affect foreign policy beliefs. Coveting status, positions of leadership, and respect will not necessarily translate into support for military superiority, for instance, since the latter concerns the actions of one’s group rather than oneself.

Lying between self-transcendence and self-enhancement (and directly across from conservation) in Schwartz’s circumplex are “openness” values such as self-direction and stimulation. To explain this positioning, consider that self-direction is a value that justifies the pursuit of selfish interests. However, as a general principle applied to others it indicates a belief that all individuals should pursue their own conception of the good life. It is indicative of a prosocial, universalist approach to individuals that emerges from the Enlightenment in which all humans are thought to have intrinsic worth.

Openness likely helps individuals expand ingroup boundaries or at least venture beyond them. It allows individuals to look for mutually beneficial cooperation outside of one’s immediate circle. Those who do so have been found to do better than those who confine their relations to those who are just like them ([Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994](#), 141; [Messick and Kramer, 2001](#); [Rathbun, 2012](#); [Orbell and Dawes, 1993](#); [Orbell, Schwartz-Shea, and Simmons, 1984](#)). We expect therefore that openness values will be predictive of cooperative internationalism. To the extent that openness values, which celebrate individuals, are directly opposed to conservation values, they should also lead to higher support for militant internationalism.

Scholars have had considerable difficulties identifying the individual-level attributes that consistently account for variation in isolationism. For instance, while liberalism is associated with higher levels of cooperative internationalism and lower levels of militant internationalism, political ideology explains little of the variance in this general desire for disengagement from the world. One might argue that we could disregard the dispositional causes of isolationism. In contemporary studies of the structure of foreign policy attitudes, it is always the weakest dimension, captured in statistical terms by a lower eigenvalue than the other two foreign policy orientations (e.g. [Rathbun, 2007](#); [Kertzer et al., 2014](#)). Research also shows that it likely has strong situational determinants, whether

changes in the White House (Urbatsch, 2010), the economy (Nincic, 1997; Fordham, 2008), or the world stage (Kertzer, 2013). However, we argue that even while isolationism might not be as much a dispositional phenomenon as other foreign policy postures, values might still help us understand why some are inclined towards removing their countries from the world.

We propose that isolationism is partially driven by a sense of threat, and can thus be understood as a different strategy for creating security. Rather than preparing to fight so as to deter negative outcomes, isolationists might simply prefer flight to remove themselves from dangerous situations through self-sufficiency and non-involvement. Exemplified by what Mead (2002) calls the “Jeffersonian” tradition in US foreign policy, this strand of isolationism should therefore be associated with high levels of conservation and low levels of universalism. Indeed historically isolationism has been highly nationalistic, even chauvinistic in character and hostile to liberal schemes for multilateral order (Monten, 2005; Dueck, 2006). At the same time, that desire for self-sufficiency likely makes isolationists feel less of a bond with their fellow countrymen, which would be expressed in higher scores on self-enhancement and lower scores on benevolence.

4 Hypotheses

Based on the previous discussion, we hypothesize a relatively simple and elegant structure of foreign policy beliefs and personal values. Since it is well established empirically that foreign policy postures help people derive more specific policy attitudes (e.g. Reifler, Scotto, and Clarke, 2011), our interest is higher up in the vertical chain: the effect of Schwartz’s constructs on three foreign policy orientations.

Our most important hypotheses are H1 and H2, as we expect the largest impact for those two core sets of values that are the basis of multiple two-dimensional models:

H1: Universalism will be positively related and highly predictive of cooperative internationalism.

H2: Conservation will be positively related and highly predictive of militant inter-

nationalism.

While we also expect universalism to be negatively associated with MI and conservation to be negatively associated with CI with weaker effects, we believe that effects of these values will be more attenuated given the primary purposes they serve.

As concerns self-enhancement values, we have two different hypotheses:

H3: If self-enhancement values are directly opposed to universalist values, they will have the opposite effect of universalism, leading to lower cooperative internationalism and higher militant internationalism.

H4: If self-enhancement values are oblique or orthogonal to universalist values, conservation and self-transcendence values (particularly universalism) self-enhancement values will not have much effect on foreign policy attitudes.

As for openness, we predict,

H5: Openness will be associated with greater cooperative internationalism and lower militant internationalism.

We also have two different expectations for isolationism.

H6: Isolationism will be associated with higher levels of conservation and lower levels of universalism.

H7: Isolationism will be associated with high levels of self-enhancement and low levels of benevolence.

5 Data and Results

5.1 The CVP Survey, Personal Values, Rival Independent Variables and Controls

In late January 2011, a national representative sample of 1200 American adults was given the “Core Values Project” (CVP) survey, which we believe is the most comprehensive survey to date in asking respondents about their values, foreign policy outlooks, and political attitudes. The survey, fielded by YouGov/Polimetrix, was specifically designed to test the claims presented in this paper that values structure foreign policy thinking. Our empirical strategy is straightforward: we estimate the underlying trans-situational values people hold, and use them to explain foreign policy outlooks while controlling for other political values.

We utilize the CI/MI framework, supplemented by isolationist measures, as a large and well-established body of research has repeatedly found that it accounts for the overall structure of the foreign policy beliefs of Americans, even across epochs ([Murray, 1996](#)). Moreover, the evidence of coherent attitudes does not seem to be unique to the American context: scholars have also found evidence of a similar structure of foreign policy beliefs in at least Sweden, Canada, and Great Britain ([Bjereld and Ekengren, 1999](#); [Reifler, Scotto, and Clarke, 2011](#)). We therefore measure our dependent variables of interest — participants’ foreign policy orientations rather than specific issue attitudes — by asking participants about the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of 10 statements, each of which taps into one of these three classic orientations from the foreign policy beliefs literature (e.g. [Rathbun, 2007](#); [Wittkopf, 1990](#); [Holsti and Rosenau, 1988, 1990](#); [Kertzer et al., 2014](#)). Four of the items measure militant internationalism (sample item: “The United States must demonstrate its resolve so that others do not take advantage of it”), four capture cooperative internationalism (sample item: “The United States needs to cooperate more with the United Nations”), and two reflect support for isolationism (sample item: “The U.S. should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own.”)

As would be expected given the popularity of these three sets of measures, a variety of factor analytic techniques point to the presence of three distinct factors: parallel analysis ([Zwick and Velicer,](#)

1986) recommends a three factor solution, exploratory factor analysis with principal axis factoring and varimax rotation shows that the three factors correspond to the MI, CI, and isolationism scales (see Appendix §4.1 for the pattern matrix), and produces a good fit according to standard model fit criteria (RMSEA: 0.042, RMSEA.LB: 0.03, TLI: 0.967 — see [Preacher et al. 2013](#)). In the main analysis below, we employ factor scores for these scales to obtain more precise estimates of our constructs of interest; in the appendix we replicate the analysis using simpler additive scores, and find the results hold.¹

To measure our independent variables of interest — participants’ personal values — we employ a 20-item version of the Schwartz Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) in which respondents are presented with verbal “portraits” of individuals (sample item for universalism: “She thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. She believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.”) gender-matched with each respondent, and asked to indicate “how much each person is or is not like you” (see Appendix §2 for the full instrumentation). We use a shorter 20-item version of the Schwartz value scale based on the ESS-PVQ-21 employed on the European Social Survey rather than the longer 40-item version, which is less practical to field on nationally representative samples because of cost considerations (for its measurement properties, see [Davidov, Schmidt, and Schwartz 2008](#); [Bilsky, Janik, and Schwartz 2010](#)). As is standard in this type of survey research, we also include the usual demographic controls, measuring age, race, gender, and so on.

Importantly, the Schwartz items are farther removed from the policy preferences they are supposed to explain than many of the standard items employed by political scientists in surveys such as the American National Election Studies (ANES) or General Social Survey (GSS). Consider this ANES egalitarianism item: “We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country.” Some respondents may interpret the phrase “equal rights” to mean civil rights for African Americans or marriage equality for same-sex couples. If this equality item inadvertently taps support for federal efforts to ensure equal rights for blacks or to legalize gay marriage, any correlation between it and preferences regarding these issues will be artificially inflated. Similar problems compromise other

¹For other uses of factor score regression in survey research in political science, see [Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder \(2008\)](#).

measures in other surveys. Take this GSS equality item: “It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes.” Because the question blends abstract ideas about equality with government policy, a finding that it predicts support for aid to the poor is not a powerful demonstration that egalitarianism influences policy opinion. Finally, scholars have used this item to measure the political value of limited government: “Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. . . Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. . . Where would you place yourself on this scale?” Given the explicit mention of “government in Washington” in the question, it is hardly surprising that responses to it predict support for federal spending on the unemployed, the poor, and people on welfare. The Schwartz items are more abstract than measures of domain-specific political values, and thus, inoculated from the charge that they are too close semantically to the dependent variables they are supposed to explain.

5.2 Personal values shape foreign policy orientations

As an initial cut at the results, Table 1 presents a series of regression models where we estimate the effect of personal values on foreign policy orientations by aggregating upwards and employing additive scores for each of Schwartz’s four superordinate value categories (conservation: $\alpha = 0.77$, openness to change: $\alpha = 0.74$, self-enhancement: $\alpha = 0.84$, self-transcendence: $\alpha = 0.77$). Models 1, 3 and 5 include survey weights, while models 2, 4, and 6 include a series of demographic control variables, although both sets of results tell a substantively similar story, suggesting four findings in particular.

First, self-enhancement values, devoted to the meeting of personal needs, never significantly predict foreign policy orientations, while interpersonal values — particularly conservation and self-transcendence — play a larger role. Thus, as anticipated given the sociotropic nature of foreign policy preferences, interpersonal values more strongly predict foreign policy orientations than personal ones. Openness also adds little. Second, conservation values are statistically significant predictors of support for militant internationalism: individuals who embrace values that emphasize group sur-

Table 1: Value underpinnings of foreign policy orientations (I)

	MI		CI		Isolationism	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Conservation	0.061*** (0.005)	0.056*** (0.005)	-0.015*** (0.005)	-0.016*** (0.005)	0.016*** (0.005)	0.013** (0.006)
Openness	0.014* (0.008)	0.015** (0.007)	0.010 (0.007)	0.008 (0.007)	0.015* (0.008)	0.013* (0.008)
Self-enhancement	-0.005 (0.006)	0.010* (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.008 (0.006)	0.002 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)
Self-transcendence	-0.040*** (0.009)	-0.037*** (0.008)	0.095*** (0.008)	0.095*** (0.008)	-0.014 (0.009)	-0.014 (0.009)
Male		0.030*** (0.010)		-0.008 (0.010)		-0.023** (0.011)
Age (logged)		0.123*** (0.015)		-0.038** (0.015)		0.010 (0.016)
White		0.055*** (0.011)		-0.002 (0.011)		0.008 (0.012)
High school		-0.029 (0.026)		-0.007 (0.026)		0.004 (0.028)
Somce college		-0.004 (0.027)		-0.044 (0.027)		0.018 (0.029)
College/university		-0.029 (0.027)		-0.043 (0.027)		-0.008 (0.029)
Graduate/professional		-0.065** (0.029)		0.005 (0.029)		-0.061* (0.032)
Constant	0.469*** (0.027)	-0.056 (0.068)	0.347*** (0.026)	0.530*** (0.069)	0.427*** (0.028)	0.410*** (0.075)
N	955	955	955	955	955	955
Adjusted R ²	0.129	0.226	0.148	0.160	0.014	0.029

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Models 1,3,5 include survey weights. Schwartz values measured using additive scales, normalized to range from 0-1 for ease of interpretability.

vival like conformity, tradition and security are the most supportive of the United States employing tough, coercive means of foreign policy abroad. Third, self-transcendence strongly predicts support for cooperative internationalism: respondents who seek to promote the welfare of others endorse foreign policies that do the same. Fourth, in comparison with MI and CI, isolationism appears to be less rooted in personal values. There is some support for H6: conservation’s effect is statistically significant, but substantively weak, and even combined, the values explain relatively little of the variation in isolationist views, echoing other research highlighting the difficulties of rooting isolationism in personal values (Kertzer et al., 2014).

However, there are several reasons to be cautious about these results: although parsimonious, restricting our focus to the four superordinate value categories may mask potential heterogeneity, belying the possibility that values that occupy a similar structural position within Schwartz’s framework have distinct effects on foreign policy postures. For example, as mentioned above, both universalism and benevolence are self-transcendence values, yet since universalism involves promoting the welfare of all while benevolence involves taking care of your friends, we would expect cooperative internationalism to be more strongly predicted by the former than the latter. Testing this hypothesis thus requires a lower level of aggregation. Moreover, the use of additive scales tacitly assumes that each indicator contributes equally to a participant’s score, when certain questions may more closely proxy the underlying construct being measured than others.

To obtain a more precise measure of our quantities of interest and strike a balance between parsimony and empirical richness, we used principal axis factoring with varimax rotation to generate factor scores from a six factor solution, in which two of the factors correspond to superordinate value categories discussed above (conservation, and openness to change), and the remaining factors refer to the two self-transcendence values (universalism, and benevolence), and two self-enhancement values (achievement and power). We present the pattern matrix and more details about the model selection procedure in Appendix §4.2, but four points are worth noting here: the six factor solution has a good model fit (RMSEA: 0.043, RMSEA.LB: 0.037, TLI=0.951), is theoretically interpretable, and avoids the multicollinearity concerns that would result from including additive scales for all 10 Schwartz values in a regression model simultaneously, all while obtaining more precise measures of

Table 2: Value underpinnings of foreign policy orientations (II)

	MI		CI		Isolationism	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Conservation	0.317*** (0.028)	0.302*** (0.028)	0.001 (0.026)	−0.0001 (0.028)	0.104*** (0.030)	0.087*** (0.031)
Openness	0.019 (0.028)	0.060** (0.027)	0.093*** (0.026)	0.086*** (0.027)	0.037 (0.030)	0.039 (0.030)
Achievement	0.019 (0.029)	0.077*** (0.028)	0.045 (0.027)	0.040 (0.028)	0.037 (0.031)	0.043 (0.032)
Power	0.010 (0.032)	0.036 (0.031)	−0.094*** (0.031)	−0.095*** (0.031)	0.004 (0.034)	0.016 (0.035)
Universalism	−0.242*** (0.030)	−0.197*** (0.029)	0.430*** (0.028)	0.423*** (0.029)	0.015 (0.032)	0.014 (0.032)
Benevolence	0.198*** (0.035)	0.143*** (0.034)	−0.063* (0.033)	−0.060* (0.034)	−0.077** (0.037)	−0.088** (0.038)
Male		0.030*** (0.010)		−0.004 (0.010)		−0.021* (0.011)
Age (logged)		0.114*** (0.015)		−0.022 (0.015)		0.014 (0.017)
White		0.045*** (0.011)		0.010 (0.011)		0.010 (0.012)
High school		−0.026 (0.025)		−0.009 (0.025)		−0.0004 (0.028)
Some college		−0.010 (0.026)		−0.033 (0.026)		0.017 (0.029)
College/university		−0.029 (0.026)		−0.035 (0.026)		−0.009 (0.029)
Graduate/professional		−0.068** (0.028)		0.014 (0.028)		−0.062** (0.032)
Constant	0.431*** (0.037)	−0.069 (0.073)	0.338*** (0.035)	0.445*** (0.073)	0.434*** (0.039)	0.397*** (0.082)
N	958	958	958	958	958	958
Adjusted R ²	0.190	0.265	0.214	0.219	0.014	0.029

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01. Models 1,3,5 include survey weights. Schwartz values measured using factor scales, normalized to range from 0-1 for ease of interpretability.

Figure 2: Personal values predict foreign policy orientations

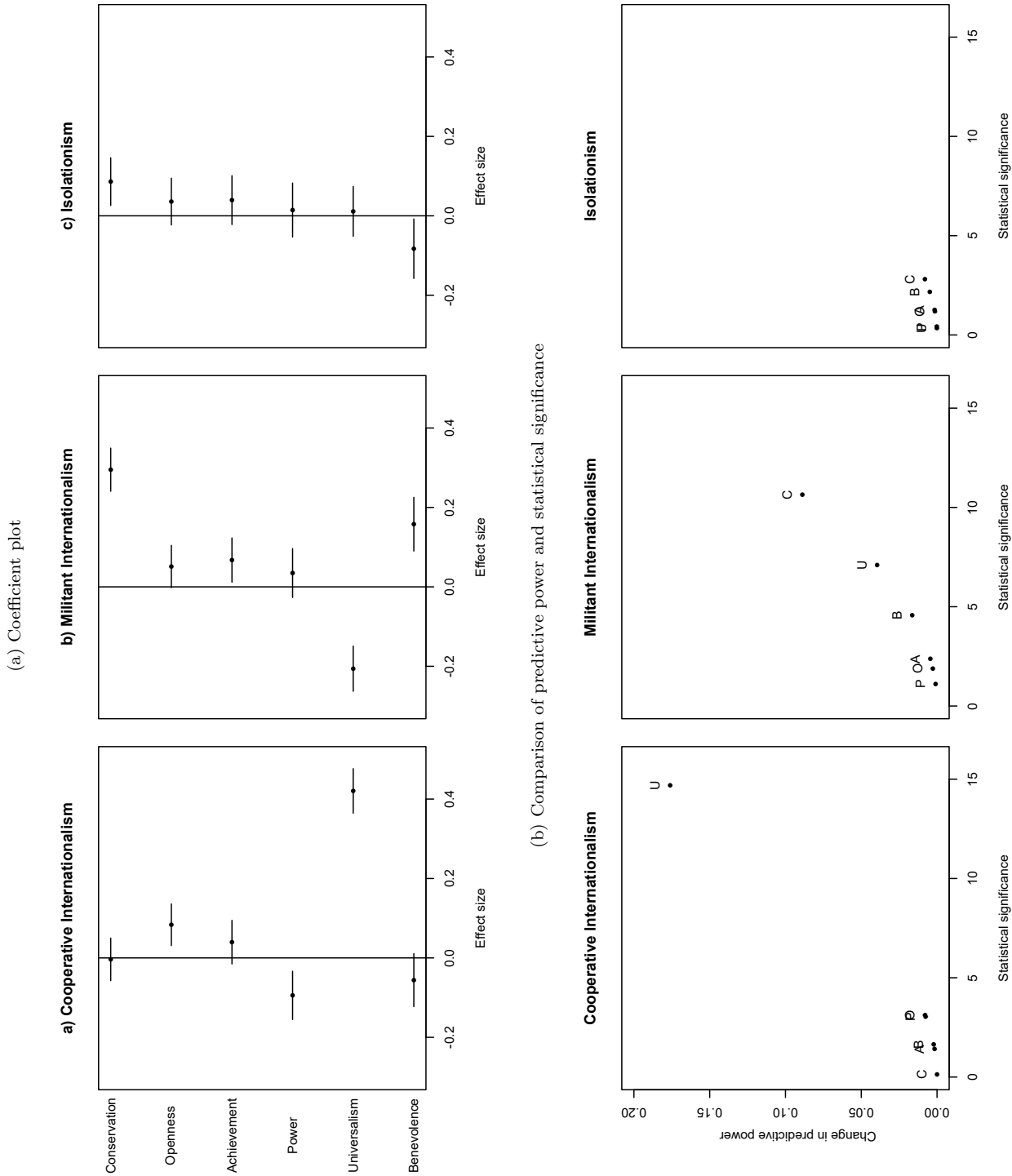


Figure 2(a) presents a set of coefficient plots from a series of regression models regressing foreign policy orientations on the Schwartz values, while Figure 2(b) follows Ward, Greenhill, and Bakke (2010) by presenting the same results another way, comparing each variable's statistical significance ($|z|$) and contribution to the model's in-sample predictive power (ΔR^2). Both sets of plots reconfirm that universalism is the driving value behind cooperative internationalism, that conservation (and to a lesser extent, universalism) underpin militant internationalism, and that the Schwartz values have little impact on isolationism.

our quantities of interest than would be possible from simple additive scales. Table 2 replicates the models from Table 1, this time using the factor score measures of the Schwartz values; the quantities of interest are also depicted visually in the coefficient plot in Figure 2(a).

Many of the patterns we saw in Table 1 also manifest themselves in Table 2: conservation, for example, is strongly positively associated with support for militant internationalism. At the same time, however, several dynamics change. The effect sizes are consistently larger than their predecessors in the previous set of models. Moreover, by disaggregating the self-transcendence values, we see that universalism and benevolence indeed have very different effects. As expected, it is the former rather than the latter that is strongly predictive of cooperative internationalism; although less statistically significant, benevolence appears to be negatively associated with CI, consistent with previous research that shows that in-group loyalty decreases support for humanitarianism abroad (Kertzer et al., 2014). Benevolence is also positively associated with support for MI, as we would expect if its effect is to facilitate in-group solidarity based on our theoretical review above, although displaying a substantively smaller effect than conservation.

As we expected in H3, if self-enhancement values were not directly opposed to self-transcendence values, they have no real effect, statistical or substantive, on foreign policy postures, with the exception of power's slight negative effect on cooperative internationalism. We find some support for H5: Openness is associated with higher cooperative internationalism, although not with lower militant internationalism. We expected the latter if openness was not orthogonal to conservation, as indicated by the two value sets forming separate dimensions in the factor analysis.

Finally, we find some support for both H6 and H7. Isolationism is indeed associated with higher levels of conservation, consistent with the idea that conservation values are a way of meeting threats, and that isolationism is a particular way of protecting one's country. And yet, isolationists do not have the same communal solidarity as others who embrace conservation values; they score lower on benevolence. In this way, isolationists have a different value combination than either cooperative internationalists or militant internationalists. With the militant internationalists, they share conservation values, consistent with the idea that both fight and flight are the responses we expect in situations of threat, which conservation values are oriented towards. However, they do not

have the same sense of communal solidarity expressed through benevolence values. Isolationism is about self-sufficiency and removing oneself from others.

Values are therefore helpful in resolving a longstanding puzzle in the literature on foreign policy attitudes. Wittkopf and Holsti and Rosenau have conceptualized isolationism as a combination of low internationalism, both militant and cooperative. Yet it often appears as a separate dimension in factor analyses of survey data, as it does here. That suggests that isolationism is more than just the absence of other foreign policy orientations. Our data offer a helpful step in understanding this: isolationism is a different construct because its adherents have a different constellation of values than internationalists of either type. Nevertheless, we do note that values are a weaker determinant of isolationism than other foreign policy postures, consistent with the idea that the question of *whether* to engage with the international system has stronger external determinants than the question of *how*.

Since, as [Ward, Greenhill, and Bakke \(2010\)](#) show, statistical significance does not necessarily lead to predictive power, we illustrate these results another way in Figure 2(b), which replicates the regression results presented in Table 2 and Figure 2(a), but this time plotting the effects of each of the personal values as a function of its statistical significance (on the x axis, represented here as the absolute value of its z statistic), and the change in in-sample predictive power (on the y axis, represented here by the change in the R^2 statistic) incurred by dropping the personal value from the model. These results reconfirm the intuitions from the previous sets of results: universalism is the driving value behind cooperative internationalism (explaining almost 20% of the variance), while conservation — and to a lesser extent, universalism — underpin militant internationalism, and the Schwartz values have relatively little impact on isolationism. The substantive effects of universalism on cooperative internationalism and conservation on militant internationalism are substantively large: holding all other variables at their means, a change from the 5th to the 95th percentile in universalism is associated with a change from the 17th to the 70th percentile in cooperative internationalism, while a change from the 5th to the 95th percentile in conservation is associated with a change from the 29th to the 67th percentile in militant internationalism.

5.3 Nonparametric mediation analysis: do personal values shape foreign policy preferences even amongst the politically unsophisticated?

To summarize, we have thus far shown that personal values — especially those serving interpersonal goals — shape foreign policy orientations: Americans who place a great deal of emphasis on promoting the welfare of others are more likely to be cooperative internationalists favoring working through the United Nations to resolve global problems, while respondents who are heavily concerned with the stability and security of the in-group are more likely to be militant internationalists favoring the use of force abroad. Americans, in other words, take foreign policy personally.

Both the CI/MI and the vertical constraint models challenged the pessimism of early studies of American public opinion that found the mass public incapable of forming coherent beliefs about foreign policy, largely because they could not connect attitudes about international relations with their political ideology. Despite consistent findings that foreign policy attitudes are structured, this idea has persisted, most recently in the form of “elite cue” theory in which the mass public is viewed as passively receiving the wisdom of elites and the media.

[Goren \(2013\)](#) has challenged this pessimistic view of voter competence, showing that even while low-information voters who do not follow politics closely have a hard time identifying what a conservative or a liberal position is, they can nevertheless form coherent beliefs based on core values. In statistical terms, this is demonstrated by showing that values demonstrate a similar effect on policy attitudes of both low and high knowledge respondents but that in the case of the latter those views are more highly mediated by political ideology.

We therefore turn to nonparametric mediation analysis ([Imai et al., 2011](#)), estimating a set of nonparametric mediation models in which the effects of personal values are mediated by political ideology. Doing so not only serves as a means of mapping the ideological pathways through which personal values structure foreign policy beliefs, but also offers a way to study the role of political ideology without inducing post-treatment bias ([King and Zeng, 2007](#)): if personal values are truly pre-political, estimating their effects on foreign policy preferences while controlling for ideology would bias our effect estimates. We estimate separate mediation models for high- and low-knowledge

participants, based on how they performed on a political knowledge test in our survey.² If the public is truly as helpless as pessimistic readings of elite cue theory would suggest, low-knowledge respondents should have difficulty connecting their core values to their foreign policy orientations; they should need information from trusted elites in order to structure their foreign policy preferences for them, to provide the “constraint” from above that is unavailable from below. If, in contrast, even low-knowledge individuals are capable of grounding their foreign policy orientations in their core values, we should see the total effects of core values not significantly varying across both subgroups, even if the indirect effects through ideology differ. Low-knowledge individuals may indeed be as “innocent of ideology” as [Converse \(1964\)](#) claimed, and will thus display weaker indirect effects, but the total effects will remain the same across both subgroups, as even unsophisticated respondents can anchor their foreign policy beliefs on their core values, despite the absence of elite cues from above. Given the complexity of the model — with six treatments and three dependent variables — in order to save space we relegate the full set of results to Appendix §6, and focus our attention here on the effects of conservation and universalism, the two Schwartz values that are not only of the most theoretical interest, but also played the most important role in the previous analyses.

Figure 3 plots three quantities of interest for each personal value. First is the average causal mediation effect (ACME), which refers to each personal value’s effect on foreign policy orientations transmitted through political ideology. Second is the direct effect, which refers to the personal value’s effect on foreign policy postures channeled through all other potential mechanisms; in supplementary analyses in Appendix §6, we estimate a set of multiple mediation models to test whether ethnocentrism and the morality of force, the two foreign policy values espoused by [Hurwitz and Pefley \(1987\)](#), play a role here, although we focus on the role of ideology in our main analysis. Third is the total effect of the personal value on foreign policy orientations, irrespective of the mechanism. We median-split the sample on respondents’ levels of political knowledge, and estimate two sets of models: the point estimates shown in black are from the high-knowledge subsample, and the point estimates in grey are from the low-knowledge one.

Three points are important here. First, although ideology’s mediation effects are significant for

²The parallel analyses are thus equivalent to a moderated mediation model, in which the indirect effect of core values on foreign policy orientations through political ideology is moderated by political knowledge. On moderated mediation, see ([Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes, 2007](#)).

Figure 3: Nonparametric mediation models: even low-knowledge respondents can anchor on core values

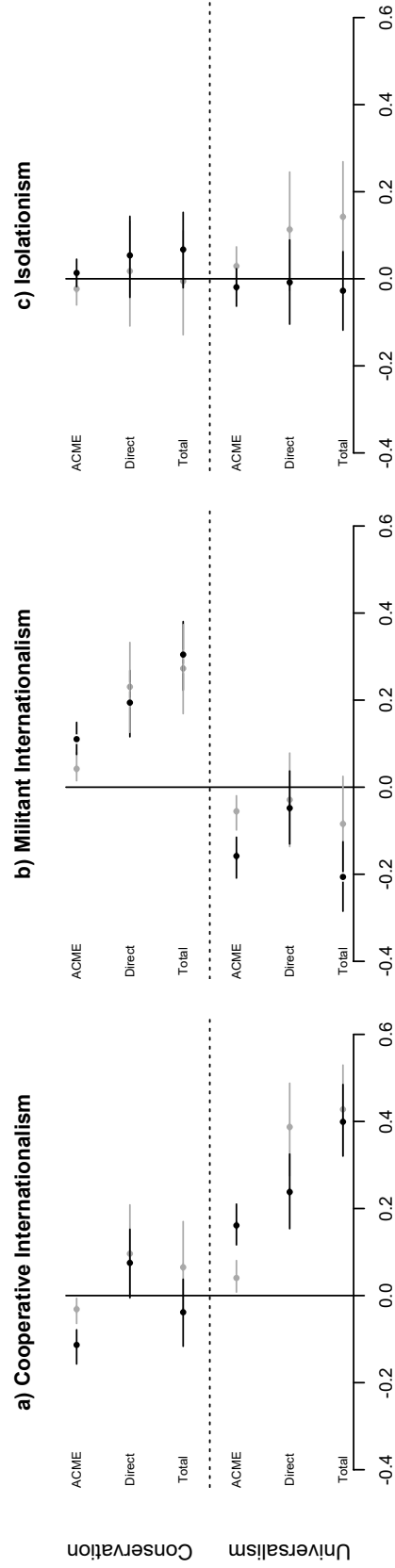


Figure 3 presents selected results from a pair of nonparametric mediation models (Imai et al. 2011) calculated using $N=1500$ simulations and 95% quasi-Bayesian confidence intervals, in which personal values' effects on foreign policy orientations is mediated through political ideology. The results for low-knowledge respondents is shown in grey, and high-knowledge ones in black. Importantly, although the ACMEs differ — a greater proportion of the total effect is mediated by ideology for higher-knowledge participants — the total effects do not. We present just the results for the two most substantively important personal values (conservation, and universalism) here; see Appendix §6 for the full set of results.

our core values of interest, personal values continue to matter independently of ideology for both groups of respondents: in the high-knowledge subsample, for example, only 36% of conservation’s effect on MI is transmitted through political ideology. We know that political ideology matters in foreign policy (Herrmann and Sniderman, 2009; Gries, 2014), but these results tell us that personal values predict foreign policy postures above and beyond the usual differences displayed by liberals and conservatives.³ Second, the magnitude of the mediation effects is systematically larger for high-knowledge participants than for low-knowledge ones: the ACME for the effect of universalism on CI is 0.16 in the high-knowledge group (40% of the total effect), but only 0.04 in the low-knowledge group (9% of the total effect). Similarly, the ACME for the effect of conservation on MI is 0.11 in the high-knowledge group (36% of the total effect), and only 0.04 in the low-knowledge group (15% of the total effect). Consistent with much of the public opinion literature, then, high-knowledge respondents are more ideological than low-knowledge ones. Yet the size of the total effects do not significantly differ from one another: the total effect of universalism on CI is 0.43 in the low-knowledge group, and 0.40 in the high-knowledge one; the total effect of conservation on MI is 0.27 in the low knowledge group, and 0.31 in the high-knowledge one.

In other words, we find, as did Goren in other domains, that values ground low-knowledge respondents’ foreign policy dispositions just as they do for high-knowledge respondents. The latter simply demonstrate a tighter link between values, ideology and foreign policy postures. Where we differ from other work, however, is that the values we use are horizontal in character; they transcend the foreign policy domain.

6 Conclusion

Our findings here suggest that personal values play a role in how ordinary people make sense of world politics. Scholars of public opinion about foreign policy have studied the role of values before, but have typically done so by studying one-off effects of individual values rather than exploring how values are linked as part of a broader system. Although Schwartz’s theory of universal values now constitutes a prominent and prolific research agenda in political and social psychology, this is

³See Appendix §6 for sensitivity analyses.

the first work we are aware of to systematically investigate the relationship between these personal values and foreign policy orientations on a nationally representative sample of Americans.

Through an original survey, we show how personal values significantly predict foreign policy beliefs. In general, those values that define individuals' relationships with broader groups and help coordinate behavior within them play a larger role than values based purely on individual needs. Conservation values are strong predictors of militant internationalism, while universalism values are strongly associated with cooperative internationalism. In other words, the same fundamental values that shape our beliefs or behavior in our daily lives also predicts our foreign policy preferences; people take foreign policy personally. Moreover, a series of nonparametric mediation analyses suggest that the effect of these values goes beyond that of liberal-conservative ideology. Interestingly, isolationism is disconnected from the Schwartz values, offering further evidence of the difficulty rooting it in prior values (Kertzer et al., 2014).

These results are noteworthy for a number of reasons. First, one of the attractions of the Schwartz value scheme is its universality, encompassing multiple aspects of life, and working across cultures and contexts. Because other research has demonstrated the significance of this same value framework for domestic political issues (e.g. Caprara et al., 2006; Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione, 2010), our results offer further evidence that foreign policy beliefs continue past the water's edge (Holsti and Rosenau, 1996; Rathbun, 2007), and that their structure is the reflection of a universal value scheme. Future research should extend this line of inquiry, combining more extensive batteries of domestic and foreign policy postures in the same survey so as to further investigate the transsituational nature of core values at the respondent-level, and supplementing general measures of foreign policy orientations with more concrete policy attitudes. Subsequent research should also explore similar linkages between personal values and foreign policy preferences in other countries (e.g. Begue and Apostolidis, 2000; Bayram, 2014), and whether cross-national variation in foreign policy preferences can be traced to cross-national variation in values as well. Typically in IR we assume that shared values across states promotes cooperation — as in, for example, liberal theories of the democratic peace (Russett, 1993), or research on the role of ideological distance and conflict (Haas, 2005) — but because conservation values serve the stability and well-being of the ingroup,

one can imagine common values also facilitating tension rather than cooperation.

Second, and relatedly, when IR scholars typically talk about values, they tend to have a constructivist or ideational bent, associated with concepts like legitimacy, socialization, norms, and identity (Finnemore, 2009; Johnston, 2007; Hopf, 1998; Katzenstein, 1996). What is interesting about the Schwartz values, however, is that they are biologically grounded, with each value cluster linked to specific needs to survive as organisms and individuals. In this sense, there is a “rump materialism” (Wendt, 1999) in the Schwartz value scheme, which may offer a potential bridge between public opinion research and work examining the biological underpinnings of conflict and decision-making (e.g. McDermott et al., 2009; Hatemi and McDermott, 2012).

Third, because the mass public is relatively uninformed about events on the world stage, a large literature has sprung up in IR emphasizing the extent to which citizens use endorsements from trusted elites as heuristics to shape their judgments (Zaller, 1992; Berinsky, 2007, 2009). Yet personal values are another way that generally uninformed individuals can establish coherent foreign policy preferences, even in absence of elite cues. Although we do not focus on the role of elites here, we should note that our findings are also compatible with elite-driven models, since policy-makers frequently employ value frames when they seek to mobilize support for their preferred policies (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley, 1997; Brewer, 2001). Future research should examine the specific role that personal values like conservation and universalism can play in this process when it comes to attitudes towards war and peace.

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