

**A Structure to the British Public's Foreign Policy Attitudes and their Relevance
to Domestic Political Competition**

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Abstract

Establishing whether British foreign policy attitudes have a coherent structure remains an open issue. Employing Confirmatory Factor Analytic (CFA) techniques on data from the May 2008 wave of the British Election Study's Continuous Monitoring Survey, we find that British foreign policy attitudes are well explained by two latent dimensions we label *Liberal Internationalism* and *British Militarism*. These dimensions closely resemble those found in models of foreign policy beliefs outside of Britain. We follow the derivation of the factor model with a full measurement model, and our analyses uncover significant co-variation between the two dimensions and the respondents' partisan identification and their affect towards party leaders. Latent foreign policy beliefs remain important after numerous controls are added to the multivariate analyses, but different dimensions matter for different parties and leaders. Notably, the controls include perceptions of Government performance on relevant domestic and foreign policy issues.

After 10 years of service as Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair resigned in May 2007. Under his leadership, British troops participated in the NATO mission in Kosovo, and in Blair's second and third terms, British troops played a prominent role in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. From 1997-2007, the British Parliament passed no fewer than four pieces of major legislation aimed at reforming the asylum process and Labour flirted with abandoning the Pound for the Euro. Such commitments defined the Blair era, but by the end of his term it was evident that they had taken a toll on the once popular Prime Minister. By 2007, polls showed the British public to be highly sceptical over Britain's foreign commitments, most notably the British alliance with the United States in Iraq. Discontent over the Government's (perceived) poor performance on the issues of immigration and asylum was palpable. Together, these issues were among those that kept Tony Blair's approval ratings under 50% in the last three years of his tenure.

Public opinion polls show Britons became increasingly concerned about foreign affairs. In the late 20th Century most British voters judged the economy and social welfare to be the issues of highest importance, but by 2005 citizens were mentioning immigration, asylum, and Iraq as the most important problems facing the country. Tony Blair's fortunes declined as public concern over these issues grew, suggesting linkages between foreign policy attitudes and domestic politics in Britain. The puzzle is determining which issues matter and how they matter, and it is one that remains unexamined in the British voting behaviour literature.

Early students of public opinion were sceptical about the ability of citizens to coherently structure their attitudes about international affairs (cf. Lippmann 1922, 1925; Almond 1950; Converse 1964). This scepticism facilitated the omission of comprehensive batteries of agree-disagree foreign policy questions on election

studies, both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Scholarly doubt concerning the coherence and role of foreign policy attitudes in domestic politics was revisited in studies of American public opinion during the 1980s (cf. Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981; Wittkopf and Maggiotto 1983; Wittkopf 1986; Aldrich et al. 1989), but there is less research analyzing the foreign policy attitudes of non-U.S. publics.¹

Eight foreign policy questions were posed to a representative sample of the British public in May, 2008. The questions were designed to tap the sample's positions concerning both traditional foreign policy concerns like security issues as well as more contemporary concerns like humanitarian assistance and economic integration. We conclude that answers to these questions were a function of two meaningful and substantive latent foreign policy dimensions, ones we labelled *British Militarism* and *Liberal Internationalism*. We found that these dimensions, which are derived from agree-disagree or "directional" questions about British foreign policy, had meaningful and interpretable co-variances with evaluations of party leaders and partisan identification. These relationships held even after controlling for the so-called "valenced" evaluations of the Labour Party on two key foreign policy issues, terrorism and asylum (cf. Clarke et al. 2004).

Should British Foreign Policy Attitudes Have Structure?

Empirical studies employing exploratory factor analysis on foreign policy issues can serve as a guide as to what might be expected when looking for structure to the British public's foreign policy beliefs. As research methods became more sophisticated scholars came to the conclusion that Almond (1950) and Converse (1964) were too pessimistic about citizens and their ability to form consistent and coherent beliefs about their nation's role in the world.

¹ But see Flynn and Rattinger (1985) for an early examination of foreign policy attitudes across nations. Data limitations required them to consider only single issues as opposed to trying to uncover the interrelatedness of public opinion on numerous policies.

Wittkopf's (1986) analysis of survey data from the 1970s and 1980s characterized Americans' foreign policy beliefs as being structured along two dimensions: *Militant Internationalism* and *Co-operative Internationalism*. The former covered support for military action to defend American interests abroad (often seen as fighting Communism) while the latter tapped support for the belief that American interests are advanced through international institutions and cooperation. From these two structuring dimensions Wittkopf devised a typology of foreign policy beliefs with four categories. Pure "Isolationists" wanted America to withdraw from both military and non-military engagement with the world and had low "scores" on both dimensions. Those with high scores on both dimensions thought the United States should not shy away from military force, but should also engage with the world through non-military means, and were dubbed "Internationalists." Approximately 50% of the public was split, having high scores on the *Militant Internationalism* dimension and low scores on the *Co-Operative Internationalism* dimension or vice versa. Wittkopf labelled those in former group as "Hardliners," and those in the latter as "Accommodationists." It is hard to overstate how much influence Wittkopf has had on subsequent research on foreign policy and public opinion. While the exact number and interpretation of factors is still open to debate (and likely depends at least somewhat on the available data and the modelling choices), nearly all accept that there are at least two dimensions and these two dimensions have similar silhouettes to Wittkopf, even if the faces are a little different.

Although there are exploratory analyses arguing that more than two latent dimensions are necessary for modelling the public's foreign policy attitudes (Chittick et al. 1995; Richman et al. 1997; Chittick and Freyberg-Inan 2001; Munton and Keating 2001; Nevitte and Gibbins 1986; ~~Scott et al. 2009~~), every attempt to

determine structure of foreign policy attitudes has found at least two dimensions. Regardless of the final number of dimensions, there is nearly universal agreement that all structures seem to have one dimension for military/security issues and another for more humanistic concerns.² The research that finds two clear dimensions best understood as military and humanitarianism includes Wittkopf (1986, 1990), Holsti and Rosenau (1990), Bjereld and Ekengren (1999), Ziegler (1987), and Gelpi et al (2009).³

The finding of a clear military dimension and a clear humanistic dimension that structures attitudes towards broad foreign policy goals travelled well outside of the United States. Ziegler (1987) analyzed Eurobarometer data from 1980 and replicated Wittkopf's two dimensional model in four Western European mass publics (1986; see also Wittkopf and Maggiotto 1981; Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1983).⁴ In a comparison of American and Swedish foreign policy attitudes in the middle of the 1990s, Bjereld and Ekengren (1999) identified two latent foreign policy dimensions that separately tapped attitudes towards non-military and military intervention. Nevitte and Gibbins (1986) employed a three dimensional model to explain Canadian foreign policy attitudes, and they identified a military dimension, a "humanistic dimension"⁵, and a closeness to the U.S. dimension. ~~Scott et al (2009) also found three dimensions to structure Canadian foreign policy attitudes, although the substantive meaning of them differed. They found clear militarism and~~

² Among the many scholars that find more than two dimensions, the exact meaning and interpretation of the dimensions that emerge in addition to military and humanistic concerns tends to vary (see Chittick (2009) for an excellent discussion of all the scholars that find a third dimension).

³ Hurwitz and Peffley (1987) take a different approach to understanding the structure of U.S. foreign policy attitudes and develop a hierarchical model, hypothesizing that core values (e.g. ethnocentrism and beliefs about the morality of warfare) and higher-order foreign policy postures (such as support for military intervention) caused attitudes on specific issues such as the need for increased defence spending. When extending this approach to comparing the United States and Costa Rica, Hurwitz et al. (1993) find the approach worked well for both the U.S. and Costa Rica.

⁴ The content of the surveys dictated the fact that the co-operative internationalism dimension was dominated with questions concerning economic integration.

⁵ We adopted the term "humanistic" from Nevitte and Gibbins (1986).

humanitarianism dimensions, and a third dimension that seemed to tap attitudes about putting limits on the use of the Canadian military abroad. In an article comparing attitudes towards nuclear energy and missiles in the United States and Great Britain, Jenkins-Smith et al. (2004) found that a similar structure explained American and British attitudes toward nuclear weapons and energy, even though the distribution of attitudes were quite different.

From these findings, we derive one formal hypothesis:

H1: Foreign policy attitudes in Britain have a coherent structure that can be explained by underlying latent dimensions. We further expect clear Security/Militarism and Liberal Internationalism dimensions to emerge.

We do not have a hypothesis for the exact number of dimensions, but we expect to uncover *at least* two dimensions, one that will represent support/opposition for military activity and national security (militarism) and another will represent something akin to “humanistic concerns” (liberal internationalism). Beyond these two dimensions we are less certain because there is no consensus in the literature. Differences may be a function of the available indicators and the modelling choices. But we would always expect to see clear and separate militarism and liberal internationalism dimensions.

Measures of Foreign Policy Attitudes in Britain

In May, 2008, a representative sample of 1161 British respondents was asked eight items to ascertain their positions on enduring foreign policy questions. These questions were placed on the monthly surveys being conducted in conjunction with the larger British Election Study (BES).⁶ Seven of the eight items had response

⁶ As is the case with the larger BES, the population from Northern Ireland were not sampled. A cross-cultural comparison is possible as five of the questions appearing in the analyses are direct replicated of those asked in a mail-back study of the Canadian population in 2004. For an analysis of the Canadian data, see Scotto et al. (2009).

categories that were five point ordinal scales (“strongly agree,” “agree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree”), and the question concerning Britain joining the Euro had three possible choices tailored to the indicator (“definitely join,” “wait and see,” “definitely stay out”). The exact wording and response distributions to the questions are presented in Table 1.⁷

[Table 1 about Here]

All of the items had substantial variation across response categories, making them suitable for multivariate analysis, but answers to five of the seven agree-disagree questions skewed in one direction or the other. Moreover, far more Britons opposed (49%) rather than supported (18%) abandoning the Pound for the Euro. Almost three-fifths (59%) of the sample strongly agreed or agreed that spending on the armed forces needed to increase, and over half (56%) wanted Britain to retain its overseas bases. On the whole, the British public showed little desire to withdraw from the global challenges that would call for the use of its military. Only 16% of the sample agreed that the nation should stand down to reduce the threat of terrorism, and more agreed (44%) than disagreed (27%) that Britain’s participation in peacekeeping operations was worth the potential cost in soldiers’ lives. However, the willingness of the British to have a strong and mobile military should not be taken to imply that the public was unwilling to obtain multilateral sanction for its actions—49% agreed and only 23% disagreed with the idea that Britain should seek UN approval when it planned to use its military abroad.

A plurality of the sample believed that engagement with the outside world should not entail Britain accepting newcomers into their nation, either as willing

⁷ Between 3% and 9% of the sample provided a non-response to individual questions. For the indicators, we utilized the procedures in the MPLUS software package to treat the “don’t know” as Missing at Random, imputing values based upon the observed co-variation of non-missing data points (cf. Muthén and Muthén 1998-2007: 347-348).

immigrants or as dispossessed asylum seekers. Fully half the sample disagreed that immigrants added something positive to the national culture and close to half (47%) were reluctant to believe the pleas of asylum seekers. Scepticism towards permitting foreign citizens to settle in the country might have been high because this was an area where the domestic costs of liberal policies were highlighted by the media.

A Two Dimensional Model of British Foreign Policy Attitudes

As discussed above, our central focus was whether we could establish a model with latent *Militarism* and *Liberal Internationalism* dimensions.⁸ We hypothesized that the questions concerning the nation's economic and humanitarian interactions with others would load on one dimension while answers to questions concerning the use of the military would load on another. The indicators hypothesized to load under these latent dimensions are depicted in Figure 1.⁹ Note that we hypothesize the *Peacekeeping* indicator to load on both dimensions, largely because the action of peacekeeping almost always involves the use of the military and almost by definition has a humanitarian component.¹⁰

[Figure 1 about Here]

To test the validity of the hypothesized structure to the data, we employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and aimed to establish a model that passed the

⁸ Consideration was given as to whether additional latent dimensions could do better at explaining the relationship between answers to the set of questions. Attempts to fit such models failed empirically. We reiterate that we are not rejecting the existence of additional dimensions, just that we could not find them with the current data.

⁹ The *Peacekeeping*, *Military Spending*, *Maintain Bases*, and *Immigration* indicators were coded 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=agree; and 5=strongly agree. The *Asylum*, *Fight Terror*, and *UN Approval* indicators were coded 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=disagree; and 5=strongly disagree. The *Euro* question was coded 1=definitely stay out; 3=wait and see how it develops; and 5=definitely join.

¹⁰ Further, the peacekeeping question specifically mentioned the use of British soldiers and the threat of lost lives, and other work showed the Canadian public's positions on peacekeeping were a function of their latent positions on non-military international engagement and the willingness of respondents to use their nation's military abroad (Scotto et al. 2009).

χ^2 exact fit test.¹¹ We coded the data so that individuals with higher scores on the *Liberal Internationalism* and *Militarism* dimensions were more willing to see Britain engage with the world through non-military and military means, respectively.

Estimation of the initial factor model failed to produce a model that replicated the observed co-variances among the variables included in the analysis. Although the initial model was parsimonious, the exact and approximate fit statistics, reported in the Appendix, showed model fit could be substantially improved.¹²

Modification indices indicated that a substantial reduction in the χ^2 fit statistic could be obtained if the *Military Spending* indicator was freed on the *Liberal Internationalism* dimension.¹³ *Military Spending's* standardized loading remained much stronger on the *Militarism* dimension (0.59) and the negative (-0.30) loading on

¹¹ MPLUS, Version 5.1 was used to estimate the models presented in this paper. The categorical and ordinal nature of the indicators necessitated the use of the programme's Weighted Least Squares with Adjusted Means and Variances (WLSMV) estimator in all analyses. The paper had two separate, but complimentary goals: 1) Establish a structural model of foreign policy attitudes that fits the responses provided by the sample, and 2) Determining whether the factors influence partisan choice and affect for the party leaders in a multivariate analysis. Consequently, we utilized the "two-step" approach to Structural Equation Modelling (cf. Burt 1973, 1976; James et al. 1982), obtaining a factor model that passed the χ^2 exact fit test before running the full models presented in Tables 3 and 4. The estimates presented in Table 2 were obtained before the factors were used as predictors in subsequent analyses. Fortunately, the factor structure and loadings obtained in the multivariate analyses were highly similar to those presented in Table 2, a finding that reinforced the validity and robustness of the CFA.

¹² In the Appendix, we reported three fit statistics for all iterations of the model. These were the χ^2 exact-fit test and two measures of close fit, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Weighted Root Mean Square Residual (WRMR). The RMSEA is the average discrepancy between the observed and model implied co-variances weighted by the degrees of freedom in the model. Subjective cut points provided by MacCallum et al. (1996) holds that RMSEA values greater than 0.10 indicate that a hypothesized SEM has a poor fit to the observed data, and values in the 0.08-0.10 range indicate a "mediocre" fit. RMSEA values less than 0.08 subjectively indicate "reasonable errors of approximation in the population," and values less than 0.05 indicate approximate fit (Byrne 1998: 112). Another close fit statistic reported in the Appendix is the Weighted Root Mean Square Residual (WRMR). It was the weighted measure of the difference between sample variances and co-variances and those estimated for a population. A model with a WRMR below 1.00 is generally judged to have close fit (Yu 2002). Although these statistics help diagnosing the degree of model misfit, our objective was to obtain a factor model that, allowing for random sample fluctuations, exactly fit the covariance structure of the data. It was the insignificant χ^2 exact-fit test accompanying our final model (Table 2) that signals the attainment of this goal.

¹³ Modification indices gave "the expected drop in the chi-square if the parameter in question is freely estimates" and are often used in the inductive re-specification of CFA models (cf. Muthén and Muthén 1998-2006: 507).

the *Liberal Internationalism* dimension reinforced the meanings of both dimensions.¹⁴ After this change in the model's factor structure, fit remained mediocre. Surprisingly, the respondents' positions on the *Euro* had a substantial negative co-variance with the indicators loading on the *Militarism* dimension. When the path between this latent dimension and the *Euro* indicator was freed, the standardized loading was a significant -0.17, leading us to reconsider the meaning of the latent *Militant Internationalism* dimension.¹⁵ The fact that animosity towards the biggest symbol of European Integration, the Euro, was related to indicators encompassing attitudes toward military activity caused us to rename the general *Militarism* dimension to *British Militarism* to reflect the fact the dimension also seems to tap concerns related to British sovereignty and prestige.

In a similar vein, the *Fight Terror* indicator surprised us by positively co-varying with affirmative positions on the *Immigration* and *Asylum, Peacekeeping, and Euro* indicators. Although the loading (0.13) was not particularly strong, it indicated that *Liberal Internationalism*, at least as we uncover it here, was not incompatible with an aggressive stance against terrorism.

The substantive changes to the factor structure described above produced a two-factor model that obtained reasonable fit to the data (WRMR=0.89 RMSEA=0.07). Although care must be taken not to over-fit the model, the presence of significant error co-variance between the *Immigration* and *Asylum* indicators made substantive sense as the terms are often used interchangeably to mean the same thing in public discourse. Two of the remaining freed error co-variances, *Military Spending* with *Maintain Bases* and *UN Approval* and *Military Spending* were from questions

¹⁴ The standardized loadings reported are those from the iteration of the factor model under discussion. Final standardized loadings from the last iteration of the model are presented in Table 2.

¹⁵ As was the case with the *Military Spending* dimension, the strength of the *Euro* indicator retained a higher loading 0.52, on its hypothesized dimension.

that mentioned the military or armed forces. Further, *Peacekeeping* often gets carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, so it was not surprising that errors in measurement of these indicators appear to be related to one another. Upon inspection of the modification indices and running iterations of the CFA, we found that the freeing of these four correlated error co-variances produced a revised model that provided an exact fit to the data ($\chi^2=10.15$; $p<0.34$). The final CFA is illustrated in Figure 2.

[Figure 2 about Here]

Table 2 provides the standardized factor loadings and other pertinent information from the final factor model. This model was utilized in the multivariate analyses below. Although there was considerable overlap in the content of the *Liberal Internationalism* and *British Militarism* dimensions, the dimensions were distinct and only correlated with one another at -0.27. This negative correlation indicates that support for *Liberal Internationalist* policies comes with a modest but noticeable decrease in support for *British Militarism*. Reinforcement of this relationship came thru the negative loading of the *Military Spending* indicator on the *Liberal Internationalism* dimension. An interesting aspect of the structure of the *Liberal Internationalism* dimension is that it was positively associated with greater support for *Peacekeeping*, but negatively associated with the funding that would enable such missions (*Military Spending*). With the exception of the *Peacekeeping* indicator which was hypothesized to load on both dimensions, other questions with paths from both factors had stronger standardized loadings on their hypothesized factors, and each had between 32 and 61 percent of their variances explained by the latent variables. Now that we have established a fitting two dimensional model of British foreign policy beliefs, we move to the question of whether respondents'

positions on the dimensions predicted two important components of electoral support, partisan identification and affect for the party leaders.

Should Structured Foreign Policy Attitudes Matter in Britain?

Analysing British Election Studies (BES) data from the 1960s, Butler and Stokes (1969: 199) noted that positions on a small set of foreign policy issues neither correlated with one another nor were related to the positions the interviewees took on domestic issues.¹⁶ Further, BES data revealed that the 1960s British public was more concerned with housing costs, social welfare, and economic conditions than with foreign policy. Three decades later, little had changed--a study of the British electorate both before and after the 2001 national election noted that a plurality of the electorate was worried about healthcare and education (Clarke et al. 2004: 90).

However attitudes towards international affairs were not totally absent from public concern. In the months prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, approximately 10-15% of those sampled indicated that they were most concerned with issues such as European integration and asylum. Further, evidence showed that those who supported Britain joining the Euro were prone to dislike then-Conservative leader William Hague and support then-Liberal Democratic Leader Charles Kennedy (Clarke et al. 2004: 90, 119-121).

In the 2005 election, which took place after British forces were deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, there was a sharp up-tick in Britons interested in their nation's interactions with other countries and peoples. Interestingly, the issues of immigration and asylum seekers weighed more heavily on Britons than Iraq (approximately 20% listed the former as the most important issue, while only 2% said Iraq). The Tories

¹⁶ The positional issues probed in the 1960s were Britain's retention of nuclear weapons, immigration, and entry into the European Common Market.

were the preferred party among those concerned with foreign policy (Whiteley et al. 2005: 810).

By 2008, there was evidence that the three major British political parties, Labour, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats, had staked out positions on foreign policy matters that distinguished them from their rivals. In short, we believe the *Militarism* and *Liberal Internationalism* dimensions are linked to support for parties and their leaders because of the distinct positions taken by the parties at the time. The most distinct policy statements came from the smallest of the three parties, the Liberal Democrats. They were stridently opposed to Britain's involvement in Iraq, and the party's proclamations condemned Britain as acting hastily and without broad international approval upon committing to the American led invasion coalition. The Party later demanded post-war management of the conflict be placed under the auspices of the United Nations (Moore et al. 2006). In contrast, the Party was not adverse to Britain's role in the multinational coalition operating in Afghanistan, and their May 2008 statement presented both a humanitarian and security case for intervention. British participation in the coordinated international effort to rebuild Afghanistan was said to be vital to a lasting peace, but the Liberal Democrats took care to warn that there would be a long term risk to global security if the NATO military mission failed. To these ends, the party made the case for increased financial support for the British armed forces (Liberal Democratic Party 2008).

The Liberal Democrats' were very open to non-military aspects to statecraft. At the 2007 Party Conference, party leaders stated that "immigration to Britain has been of enormous benefit to the economy and to society," and they believed that more liberal minded international conventions should guide the nation's asylum policies (Liberal Democratic Party 2007). Given the Party's pronouncements, we expect

survey respondents who had high scores on the dimension encompassing attitudes surrounding the nation's non-military foreign policy activities would be more likely to identify as Liberal Democrats and feel warmly towards the party's leader, Nick Clegg. The relationship between a willingness to use military force, identity with the party and affect towards its leader is less clear. It could be negative given the Party's vociferous opposition to British involvement in Iraq, but the Liberal Democrat's commitment to the British mission in Afghanistan might weaken this relationship.

Conservative policy statements from 2007 and 2008 appealed to the portion of the electorate distrustful of international entanglements and providing non-military support to people abroad. Tory elites were sceptical of the European Union project, with members warning about the EU morphing into "United States of Europe" and the threat to British sovereignty that could arise through further "integration through supra-nationalism" (Bourne 2008). The Conservatives sensed Labour's vulnerability on the issues of immigration and asylum, condemned the Government's failure to deport "failed" asylum seekers, and called for controls on immigration from outside the European Union (Conservative Party of Great Britain 2007). Consequently, potential voters who wanted Britain to retreat from non-military international entanglements or commitments (either to people or nations) might be more prone to support the Conservative Party and its leader, David Cameron.

In early 2008, the Tories argued that Britain's armed forces were "overstretched" and questioned spending cuts on proposed equipment upgrades (Conservative Party of Great Britain 2008). On terrorism, the Conservatives declared that domestic and international security concerns were not separate. For these reasons, we hypothesize that survey respondents willing to see Britain flex its military

muscle were more likely to identify as Conservatives and support Opposition Leader David Cameron.

In contrast to their feelings towards the Tories, supporters of military readiness and intervention might have had mixed opinion towards Labour and the new Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. During the Blair-Brown period, interest in and support for the military sometimes appeared on the back burner as the Government concerned itself with increased investment in domestic programmes. These domestic priorities left the Cabinet little room to increase spending on the military. Although former Prime Minister Tony Blair and much of the Party leadership were supportive of British participation in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the decision to undertake the latter without UN sanction caused widespread dissent among rank and file members of the Party.¹⁷ Prime Minister Blair's actions in Afghanistan were not universally accepted by Labour Parliamentarians who were particularly vocal when the Armed Forces engaged in intense 2006 battles in the Helmand Province (cf. Hickley and Chapman 2006). Given the dissent within the Labour party over the use of the military, the public's latent position on military engagement would likely be uncorrelated with respondents' identification with Labour or support for Gordon Brown.

During the opening months of Gordon Brown's term as Prime Minister, Labour showed the same level of attention to non-military engagement in world affairs as it did under Tony Blair. Even as the issues of immigration and asylum raised the ire of voters, the Party remained committed to welcoming new immigrants to Britain, albeit via a points system that rewarded the highly skilled. Although Labour Party announcements expressed concern over abuse of the asylum process, the

¹⁷ Indeed, anger among Labour's Parliamentary backbenchers over sending troops to fight in Iraq led to the biggest rebellion against party unity in the House of Commons since the mid-1800s (Cowley and Stuart 2003).

Party maintained that Britain should be open to exploited refugees (Somerville 2007). Importantly, the Party was supportive of the European Union and open to taking Britain off the Pound.¹⁸ If voters are following the Labour Party's stances on these non-military related foreign policy issues, those committed to integrating Britain with Europe and the rest of the world and accepting the less fortunate into the country should be more supportive of the Party and Brown.

Based upon the positions taken by parties and party elites we expect the following:

H2: Given the internationally liberal policies of the Labour Government, we expect that the humanistic internationalism dimension will be a significant covariate of evaluations of Gordon Brown and identification with the Labour Party. The implications of militaristic attitudes on Labour Party identification and evaluations of the Prime Minister are indeterminate because the aggressive foreign policy pursued by Blair created so much dissention within the party.

H3: Militarism will be a significant covariate of Conservative Party identification and affect towards David Cameron. This is due to the unequivocal tie of the Party to support for a strong and sovereign Britain and the party's historic willingness to use force to achieve these ends (Churchill in WWII; Thatcher with Argentina and the Falklands (Malvinas); and British participation in the first and second Gulf Wars—the latter which was done even though political expediency could have led them to oppose "Blair's War."). We have no expectation regarding the role

¹⁸ Press releases by the European Union wing of the Labour Party explicitly stated their policies towards European integration and attempted to dispel accusations that the EU was bad for the United Kingdom (European Parliamentary Labour Party 2007).

*of Liberal Internationalism on Tory support; support of Militarism does not require opposition to Liberal Internationalism.*¹⁹

H4: Liberal Internationalism will significantly co-vary with affect for Nick Clegg and Liberal Democratic Party identification. We are unsure what to expect for Militarism; negative scores on this dimension could positively correlate with support for the Party as they were vocally against the use of force or it could be unimportant—just like support for the Tories militarism does not require a rejection of liberal internationalism, support for the Liberal Democrats’ liberal internationalism does not imply pacifism.

The Domestic Political Correlates of Coherent Foreign Policy Attitudes

The importance of the two foreign policy dimensions on domestic politics can be ascertained by considering their relationship with short and long term antecedents of voter choice—party identification and support for party leaders. In the multivariate analyses presented in Tables 3 and 4 below, we followed a two step process. Respondents’ decisions to identify with one of the three parties and their evaluations of party leaders were first regressed only on the foreign policy dimensions.²⁰ An exact-fit χ^2 test statistic was used to evaluate whether exact fit was maintained when

¹⁹ The difficulties of predicting how *Liberal Internationalism* will affect Tory support can be seen in its variegated positions on international issues over the past decade. In the late 1990s, the Conservative Party became embroiled in several controversies in which Party leaders made rather dramatic anti-international statements, such as then leader William Hague’s statement fearing Britain becoming a “foreign land” under Labour policies or John Townend declaring the British people a “mongrel race.” (c.f. d’Ancona 2001). Further, expansion of the European Union and the rise of a single currency on the continent were hotly debated among party members. Recent leaders, Ian Duncan Smith and David Cameron, have worked hard, with varying degrees of success, to downplay both intra and inter-party debates over Britain’s relationship with Europe (Evans 2008). Under the current leadership of David Cameron, the official Conservative Party Platform (2009) declares “Britain must be open and engaged with the world, supporting human rights and championing the cause of democracy and the rule of law at every opportunity,” while at the same time the Opposition Party is seen as pushing for tougher restrictions on immigration and asylum seekers.

²⁰ The party identification variables were coded “1” if the respondent identified with the party and “0” otherwise. The dichotomous nature of the dependent variable necessitated the use of the probit estimator to obtain the results presented in Table 3. The party leader thermometers were treated as continuous and ranged from 0-“strongly dislike” to 10-“strongly like”

the foreign policy factors were used as exogenous predictors of domestic political attitudes. The R^2 summary statistic indicated the amount of variance in party identification and support for the party leaders that can be explained just by knowing a respondent's factor scores on the latent foreign policy dimensions.

The second step involved determining whether the impact of one or both of the dimensions remained strong when controls were added to the models. In addition to standard demographic and regional controls, we also included respondents' retrospective economic evaluations and their evaluations of the Labour Government's performance on four domestic and two foreign policy issues.²¹ Inclusion of the latter set of variables tests the robustness of the positional, agree-disagree foreign policy factors against assessments of the Government's competence on major issues. Controls for party performance are particularly important given their primacy in recent analyses of voting behaviour in Britain (cf. Clarke et al. 2004). The *British Militarism* and/or *Liberal Internationalism* factors retained their significance in the full estimations *after* controlling for assessments of the Government on terrorism and asylum.

Table 3 presents the results of the probit estimations of partisan identification on the foreign policy dimensions and control variables. On their own, the foreign policy dimensions explained between nine and nineteen percent of the variance of the decision to identify with each party. In the simple models with only two independent variables, the χ^2 exact fit tests remained insignificant, a result that underscored the

²¹ The performance questions were phrased "How well do you think the present government has handled _____," and responses ranged from 1="Very Badly" to 5="Very Well." Those who responded "don't know" were recoded to 3. Coding for the respondents' answers to a standard personal retrospective question ranged from 1="Got a lot worse" to 5="Got a lot better." Income was a 9 point variable with a median of 6 (equivalent to an annual household income between £25,000 and £29,999; respondents not reporting an income were recoded to the median). Age was a continuous variable with a median value of 48, the value assumed for those who failed to report their age. All remaining controls are dichotomous and coded "1" when the respondent had the characteristic in question.

fact that there was significant co-variation between foreign policy attitudes and partisan identification.

[Table 3 About Here]

The results from the full multivariate models, presented in Table 3, are consistent with hypotheses H₂ through H₄. Higher scores on the *Liberal Internationalism* factor predicted partisan identification for both the Liberal Democrats and Labour while higher scores on the *British Militarism* factor predicted identification with the Conservatives. To reiterate, these dimensions retained their significance over and above controls for evaluations of the Labour Party's performance on a host of domestic and foreign policy issues. As a matter of fact, when it came to adjudicating between the most influential variables in the full probit estimations, an examination of the standardized loadings (not shown) indicated that, for Labour identification, a 1 standard deviation unit shift on the *Liberal Internationalism* factor was almost as strong as a standardized unit shift in evaluations of the Government performance on the issues of terrorism or asylum. The latent dimension that captured the directional positions people had on foreign policy goals that (mostly) did not entail the use of the military held its own against the more valenced measures of competence on two key foreign policy matters. The standardized loadings indicated that support for *British Militarism* and anger at the Labour Government's handling of asylum was almost equal in their strength of co-variation with Conservative identification.

Explaining why the small percentage of the electorate chooses not only to vote for but to identify with the Liberal Democrats has perplexed scholars who often see it as a "protest party" that lacks a stable base of support (cf. Norpoth 1992; Whiteley et al. 2006; Lebo and Young 2009). In our multivariate estimation, the *Liberal*

Internationalism factor was the only statistically significant covariate with identification with this party. It does not appear to be the case that those sceptical of the use of the military are flocking towards the party. Rather, the party was attractive to those who favoured international cooperation and policies that support humanistic concerns, even if that meant participating in peacekeeping or standing firm in combating terrorism.

Gauging the impact of foreign of the foreign policy dimensions on leader support tells a similar story. These models, presented in Table 4, have slightly worse fit than the party identification models, but the substantive results remain the same. (The slightly worse model fit is hardly surprising given that one's affect towards party leaders is far more sensitive to the daily ebb and flow of politics than is one's party identification.) We found the *Liberal Internationalism* dimension to predict affect for the leaders of the Labour and Liberal Democratic parties and the *British Militarism* dimension to predict support for David Cameron, the leader of the Opposition Conservatives. Again, these findings are consistent with hypotheses H₂ through H₄.

[Table 4 about Here]

Discussion and Conclusion

The analyses above utilized a battery of questions administered in May 2008 that were designed to measure levels of agreement and disagreement among the British public on matters of international affairs. Few attempts have been made to measure systematically the foreign policy beliefs of British citizens. We hypothesized that we would find a structure that produced clear *Militarism* and *Liberal Internationalism* factors. The Confirmatory Factor Analytic techniques supported this hypothesis and we found a *British Militarism* factor and a *Liberal Internationalism* factor. That being said, some of the loadings of specific indicators operated

differently than our expectations. The significant and negative loading of the *Euro* on what was the *Militarism* dimension led us to surmise that the dimension was also tapping attitudes concerning British sovereignty. Hence, we renamed the dimension *British Militarism*. Support for extra military spending was found to negatively co-vary with *Liberal Internationalism*, but willingness to challenge the terrorist threat to peace and security at home was found to positively co-vary with the latent factor. Given the positive loadings of *Peacekeeping* and *Fight Terrorism*, the *Liberal Internationalism* dimension should not be construed as a measure of pacifism or appeasement.

The analyses presented here fill a gap in the literature by showing that specific foreign policy issues can influence key components of voter choice in their roles as both valence and positional issues. The two latent foreign policy dimensions we dubbed *Liberal Internationalism* and *British Militarism* had significant co-variation with long and short term predictor of electoral choice in Britain, namely party identification and affect for the leaders of the three major parties. After controls for evaluations of the Labour party's performance on important issues, both domestic and foreign were included in a more comprehensive estimation, one of the two dimensions maintained its significant relationship with leader affect or party choice. And it did so in a meaningful way—Labour and the Liberal Democrats appear to be attractive to those with permissive positions on international engagement that does not entail the use of the military while the Conservatives seem to court those who want to see Britain's armed forces strengthened and, if necessary, used abroad.

These findings support recent analyses (cf. Clarke et al. 2004; Whiteley et al. 2005) that take great pains to distinguish agree-disagree issues (or “positional”) issues from “valenced” evaluations of government performance when explaining party

identification and affect for party leaders. This is particularly true on issues where there is agreement about the ends (e.g. stopping the threat posed by terrorism) but disagreement about the means (e.g. aggressively fighting terrorists or backing down to reduce terrorist threats). The analyses presented above affirm the notion that valence and positional issues are distinct concepts in the study of British politics. The positional measure of *British Militarism* (which is positional by virtue of being constructed from agree-disagree questions) and the valence measure of Labour's handling of terrorism are only weakly associated, yet both are important in the models for party identification and leader support. The same is true for *Liberal Internationalism* (positional) and evaluations of the Labour on the issue of asylum (valence). While the relation between the two is stronger than with *British Militarism* and handling of terrorism, additional analyses (not shown, available at the author's website) demonstrated that the two variables are not collinear and that each made separate contributions to the multivariate estimations.

Differentiating valence evaluations from positional issues helps us to gain a better understand the long-standing British puzzle of the longevity of the Liberal Democratic party. The perennial third party is viewed as one of protest and a reservoir for those who want to vent their frustrations against the major parties (cf. Whiteley et al. 2006; Lebo and Young 2009). Models of *Liberal Democratic* support are often plagued by low R^2 summary statistics and a plethora of statistically insignificant coefficients. Our models affirm this norm but contest the idea that Liberal Democrats are nothing but a hodgepodge of disaffected Conservatives and Labourites. It was positive positions on the Liberal Internationalism (and only positions on this dimension) that positively co-varied with affect toward Nick Clegg and identification with the party, suggesting they must compete with Labour for

voters on the positive side of this dimension. However, there is no indication that the smallest of Britain's major parties stands to gain if voters become disillusioned with the Government's performance on the two major foreign policy matters of asylum and the handling of terrorist threats.

Because foreign policy attitudes seem to matter for domestic political competition, these findings suggest that more directly studying domestic public opinion can add to the study of international relations. For example, there is an impressive amount of scholarship addressing theories on the democratic peace and audience costs. Both theories clearly state that public opinion constrains the behaviour of democratically elected state leaders. The democratic peace literature argues that citizens simply do not want to bear the human and financial costs of war. Thus, going into war and bearing those costs will come at great electoral cost to leaders. On the other hand, the audience costs literature says that leaders who back down from threats and commitments will pay an electoral cost. While far from a complete delineation of the nuances of both the democratic peace and audience cost arguments, there is an important common element: citizens have preferences about foreign policy, and leaders who veer from those preferences are punished come election time.

This paper provides support for this common element of both arguments. Britons have preferences about foreign policy. And these preferences affect important antecedents to the vote such as party identification and affect towards party leaders. Examining foreign policy preferences more directly may also help us better understand the democratic peace and audience cost literatures. For example, Gelpi et al. (2009) show that there is considerable variation in the human cost citizens are willing to bear in war. Likewise, there may be considerable variation in how sensitive

members of the public are to backing down in international crises. We suspect the *British Militarism* dimension may serve as a useful moderator if anyone were to extend Tomz's (2007) experimental work on audience costs to the British case.

The international arena remains beset with challenges and peril. Citizens have preferences about how a state should navigate and respond to these challenges. Leaders that ignore the foreign policy preferences of the electorate will quickly find that the domestic arena is also wrought with peril.

Figure 1: A Two-Dimensional Model of British Foreign Policy Beliefs

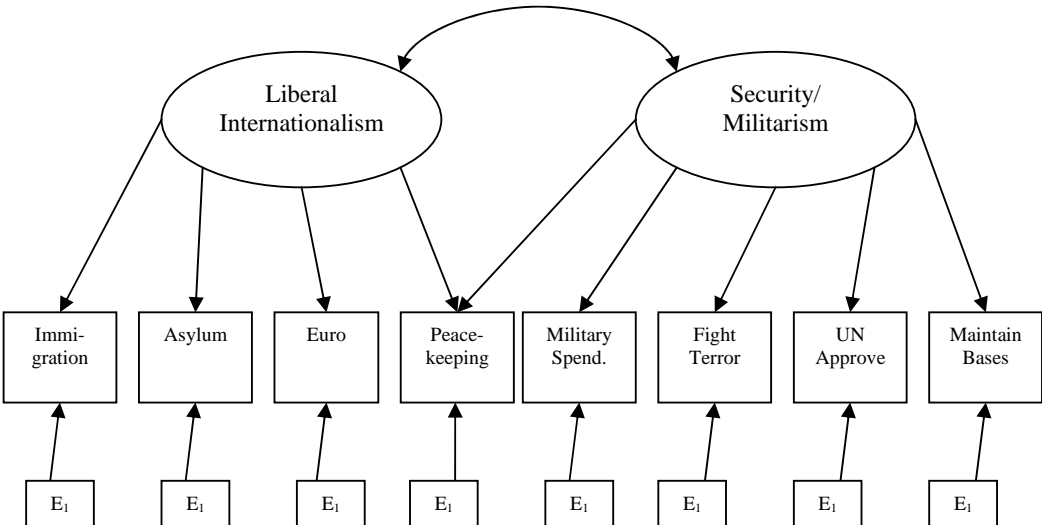


Figure 2: The Final Two-Dimensional Model of British Foreign Policy Beliefs

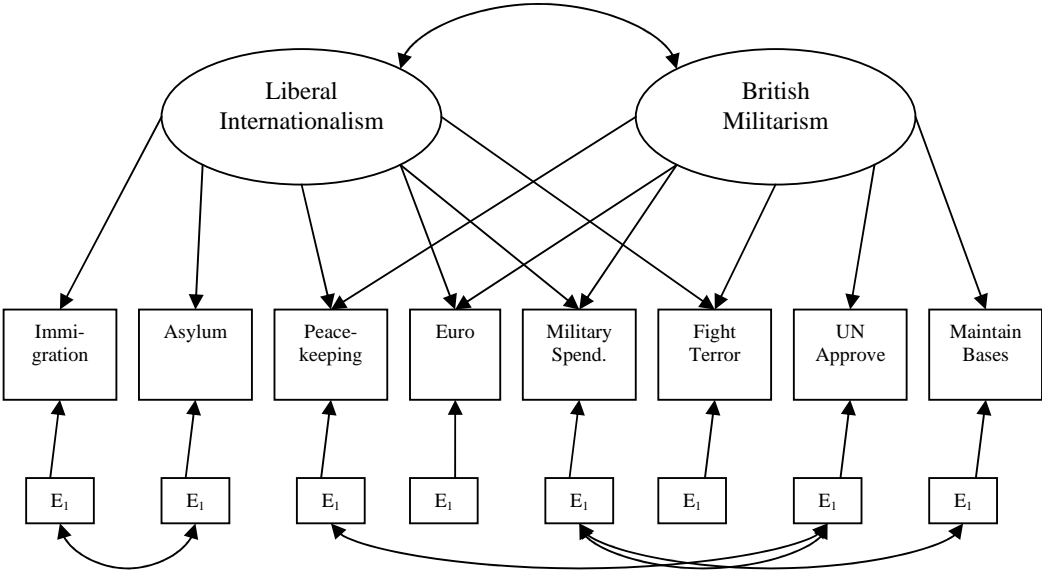


Table 1: Distribution of Answers to Eight Foreign Policy Questions, May 2008

Statement	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
Allowing Immigrants into Britain enriches British Culture (Immigration)	6%	17%	24%	28%	22%	3%
Most asylum seekers who come to Britain should be sent home immediately (Asylum)	25%	22%	21%	19%	8%	4%
Britain should participate in peacekeeping operations abroad even if it means putting the lives of British soldiers at risk. (Peacekeeping)	9%	35%	22%	17%	10%	8%
Britain needs to spend more money on its armed forces (Military Spending)	24%	35%	21%	9%	4%	7%
Britain should not try to combat terrorist organizations because that will encourage the terrorists to attack us (Fight Terror)	4%	11%	21%	32%	24%	8%
Britain should not use its armed forces abroad unless it gets approval from the United Nations (UN Approval)	17%	32%	19%	15%	8%	9%
Britain should maintain its overseas military bases (Maintain Bases)	15%	41%	23%	9%	3%	9%
		<i>Definitely Join</i>	<i>Wait and See</i>	<i>Definitely Stay Out</i>		<i>Don't Know</i>
Thinking of the Single European Currency (the Euro), which of the following would come closest to your own view? Do you think Britain should: (Euro)		18%	28%	49%		5%

Notes: Data are Weighted; N=1,169

Table 2: The British Foreign Policy Issue Space in May 2008

<u>Question</u> (R ²)	<u>Liberal Internationalism</u>	<u>British Militarism</u>
Immigration (0.41)	0.64	
Asylum (0.41)	0.64	
Peacekeeping (0.61)	0.63	0.67
Euro (0.46)	0.63	-0.12
Military Spending (0.51)	-0.32	0.56
Fight Terror (0.32)	0.12	0.58
UN Approval (0.41)		0.64
Maintain Bases (0.45)		0.67

Correlation of Liberal Internationalism with British Militarism
Factor: -0.270

Correlated Error Co-variances:

Military Spending with Maintain Bases: 0.25
 Asylum with Immigration: 0.49
 UN Approval with Military Spending: -0.22
 UN Approval with Peacekeeping: -0.31

Notes:

Estimation by Weighted Least Squares (Means and Variances Adjusted)
 All Coefficients are Standardized and significant at p<0.01
 (N=1169)

$X^2_{WLSMV}(9) = 10.15$ (p<0.34)

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation= 0.01

Weighted Root Mean Square Residual= 0.31

Table 3: Significant Co-variates of Identification with British Parties, May 2008

	Labour		Conservative		Liberal Democratic	
Liberal Internationalism	0.69***	0.27*	-0.41***	0.08	0.49***	0.70***
	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.16)
British Militarism	0.09	-0.01	0.31***	0.34***	0.02	0.00
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Gvt. Handle Terrorism		0.12*		0.02		0.02
		(0.05)		(0.05)		(0.06)
Gvt. Handle Asylum		0.16**		-0.22**		0.12
		(0.06)		(0.07)		(0.08)
Gvt. Handle Education		0.21***		-0.14**		-0.02
		(0.06)		(0.07)		(0.09)
Gvt. Handle Healthcare (NHS)		0.29***		-0.20**		-0.08
		(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.08)
Gvt. Handle Rail Services		-0.03		0.07		-0.11
		(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.09)
Gvt. Handle Crime		0.14*		-0.19**		0.07
		(0.06)		(0.07)		(0.10)
Economic Retrospections		-0.01		0.10		0.06
		(0.05)		(0.05)		(0.08)
Male		0.10		-0.04		-0.02
		(0.10)		(0.10)		(0.15)
S.E. England		-0.15		0.12		-0.12
		(0.18)		(0.16)		(0.25)
S.W. England		-0.17		-0.30		0.27
		(0.19)		(0.18)		(0.24)
Midlands		0.04		-0.18		0.08
		(0.16)		(0.16)		(0.24)
North England		0.15		-0.24		-0.18
		(0.14)		(0.15)		(0.21)
Scotland		-0.46*		-0.62**		-0.41
		(0.22)		(0.26)		(0.37)
Wales		-0.05		-0.60**		0.42
		(0.25)		(0.25)		(0.31)
Homeowner		0.04		0.49***		0.22
		(0.11)		(0.13)		(0.17)
Age		0.01**		-0.00		-0.00
		(0.00)		(0.00)		(0.01)
Union		0.42***		-0.17		-0.22
		(0.11)		(0.11)		(0.18)
Constant	0.39***	3.17***	0.64***	-0.44	1.48***	1.52***
	(0.04)	(0.27)	(0.04)	(0.31)	(0.06)	(0.40)
R ²	0.19	0.42	0.13	0.33	0.09	0.21
X ² _{WLSMV} (df)	16.62(14)	438.6(73)	18.76(14)	435.6(72)	12.24(12)	433.5(72)
(p-value)	(0.28)	(0.00)	(0.17)	(0.00)	(0.43)	(0.00)

Notes: Probit Estimation by Weighted Least Squares with Adjusted Means and Variances

Coefficients are unstandardized; N=1169

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

Table 4: Significant Co-variates of Support for British Party Leaders, May 2008

	Gordon Brown		David Cameron		Nick Clegg	
Liberal	2.40***	0.54**	-1.17***	0.15	0.66***	0.75***
Internationalism	(0.25)	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.15)	(0.20)
British Militarism	0.02	0.04	0.81***	0.89***	-0.90	-0.16
	(0.18)	(0.14)	(0.21)	(0.18)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Gvt. Handle Terrorism		0.23***		0.02		0.10
		(0.07)		(0.09)		(0.08)
Gvt. Handle Asylum		0.52***		-0.33**		0.12
		(0.09)		(0.12)		(0.11)
Gvt. Handle Education		0.24**		-0.21		0.16
		(0.09)		(0.12)		(0.11)
Gvt. Handle Healthcare (NHS)		0.50***		-0.47***		-0.08
		(0.09)		(0.12)		(0.10)
Gvt. Handle Rail		0.12		0.26**		-0.12
		(0.09)		(0.12)		(0.10)
Gvt. Handle Crime		0.59***		-0.49***		0.01
		(0.09)		(0.12)		(0.11)
Economic Retrospections		0.26***		-0.04		0.12
		(0.08)		(0.10)		(0.09)
Male		-0.35*		0.10		-0.22
		(0.15)		(0.18)		(0.16)
S.E. England		-0.58*		-0.16		0.01
		(0.24)		(0.32)		(0.27)
S.W. England		-0.19		-0.38		0.09
		(0.26)		(0.36)		(0.30)
Midlands		-0.84***		-0.11		0.18
		(0.26)		(0.32)		(0.30)
North England		-0.33		-0.32		-0.15
		(0.21)		(0.28)		(0.25)
Scotland		0.43		-0.94*		-0.27
		(0.28)		(0.40)		(0.39)
Wales		-0.57		-0.38		0.08
		(0.37)		(0.51)		(0.43)
Homeowner		-0.26		0.51*		0.14
		(0.16)		(0.22)		(0.20)
Age		0.01		-0.01		-0.01*
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Union		-0.11		-0.56*		-0.26
		(0.16)		(0.22)		(0.19)
Constant	3.30***	-1.87***	4.73***	8.01***	4.21***	4.20***
	(0.11)	(0.43)	(0.10)	(0.57)	(0.08)	(0.45)
R ²	0.24	0.48	0.11	0.21	0.04	0.08
X ² _{WLSMV} (df)	26.63(13)	435.2(72)	22.39(14)	437.2(72)	25.89(14)	437.3(72)
(p-value)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.07)	(0.00)	(0.03)	(0.07)

Notes: Probit Estimation by Weighted Least Squares with Adjusted Means and Variances

Coefficients are un-standardized; N=1165

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

Appendix: Steps in Fitting Confirmatory Factor Model
A. The Two Dimensional Model of Militant and Cooperative Internationalism

<u>Competing Models</u>	$\chi^2_{(WLSMV)}$	<u>p-value</u>	$\Delta\chi^2$	<u>RMSEA</u>	<u>WRMR</u>
1. Hypothesized Model	200.65	0.000	323.29	0.12	1.85
2. After Military Spending Freed on Liberal Internationalism Dimension	96.69	0.000	103.96	0.08	1.26
3. After Euro Freed on British Militarism Dimension	86.22	0.000	10.47	0.07	1.04
4. After Fight Terror Freed on Liberal Internationalism Dimension	66.50	0.000	19.72	0.07	0.89
5. After Freeing Error Covariance between Immigration and Asylum	39.03	0.000	27.47	0.05	0.68
6. After Freeing Error Covariance between Military Spending And Maintain Bases	29.91	0.001	9.12	0.05	0.60
7. After Freeing Error Covariance between UN Approval and Peacekeeping	19.78	0.019	10.13	0.03	0.45
8. After Freeing Error Covariance between UN Approval and Military Spending	10.15	0.339	9.63	0.01	0.31

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