



## Globalization and a Conservative Dilemma: Economic Openness and Retributive Policies

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*Globalization is associated with economic openness and, in this sense, is in line with conservative free market ideology that embraces less government intervention. Globalization is also associated with greater contact with dissimilar outgroups and potential threats from terrorists and seems to run against conservative attitudes toward outgroup threat and civil liberties. We report research employing two nationally representative samples of 1,000 adults (collected in 2006 and 2008) that explored conservative individuals' attitudes as American views of terrorism evolved following 9/11. Despite diminishing estimates of the likelihood of terrorist attacks, conservatism remained strongly associated with support for seeking revenge for foreign terrorist attacks and for restricting the civil liberties of foreign visitors and noncitizens in order to prevent terrorism. These trends were not accounted for by differences in levels of perceived threat or by demographic characteristics distinguishing conservatives from others. Results are discussed in the context of globalization and the role of political ideology.*

Globalization, increasing interconnectedness of people in different parts of the world, is recognized as having widespread impact on most if not all societies in the 21st century (Marsella, 2012; Moghaddam, 2008a). Interconnectedness has resulted in a multiplier effect, so that changes in one part of the world, particularly centers of power and innovation such as the United States, cascade into other societies, setting off a chain of events that can lead back to further transformations in countries where change was initiated. For example, technological innovations in the United States (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) have facilitated revolutionary

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movements in the Arab World (Jensen & Arnett, 2012), and these dramatic political changes in turn have influenced life in the United States (in a wide range of ways, from higher fuel prices to changes in political attitudes and positioning among American political groups). In many cases globalization changes are associated with economic growth, lower trade barriers across national boundaries, and the expansion of commerce.

The economic benefits of globalization correspond to a conservative “laissez faire” political ideology. At least since the rise of the Manchester school of economics in the 19th century, it has been argued that free trade will not only increase wealth, but also result in a more peaceful world because countries that are economically interdependent will believe it is in their interests to avoid waging war against one another (Grampp, 1960). As far as globalization results in the fading away of national and regional trade barriers and a decline in government intervention in business generally, conservatives, people who (among other things) give priority to personal responsibility, “self help,” small government, and an economic market with less regulation, endorse globalization. Conservative support for globalization is in line with the growth of multinational corporations, the flow of capital around the world to find the cheapest pool of labor (Marsella, 2012), and greater investment in societies with minimal labor laws. Thus, for economic reasons globalization is in line with conservative ideology and conservative support for the economic aspects of globalization fits a rational–materialist model of human behavior (Moghaddam, 2008a).

However, globalization has also been associated with new security threats (Moghaddam, 2008b), including being “invaded” by dissimilar outgroups. A more open world means that millions of people move from one country to another, often as political and economic refugees (for a discussion of international migration trends, see Martin, Martin, & Weil, 2006). Of course, there is a long history of migration to traditional immigrant receiving countries, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Shimpi & Zirkel, 2012), but the recent patterns of migration are different in an important way. Since the 1960s there has been an enormous increase in the numbers of people originating from outside Western Europe immigrating to the United States. Second, Western European countries have also become a magnet for immigrants, with the result that there are millions of South Asians in the United Kingdom, North Africans in France, and Turks in Germany. Consequently, globalization has resulted in increased contact with more dissimilar outgroups, both in the New World and the Old World of Europe. For example, between 1890 and 1990 the percentage of foreign-born among the U.S. population of European origin declined from 86.9 to 22.9, while those of Latin American and Asian rose from 1.2 to 51.7 and 1.2 to 26.3, respectively (Gibson & Jung, 2006). Similarly, in France between 1982 and 2005 the number of immigrants from other Western European countries declined by almost 50% (e.g., immigrants from Italy declined from 606,972 to 342,000) while those from

non-Western countries increased by far higher percentages (e.g., immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa increased from 123,392 to 570,000; from Morocco the change was 358,296 to 619,000) (Novoa & Moghaddam, forthcoming).

Globalization has also been associated with a more direct threat to Western societies generally, and the United States in particular, from Islamic radicalization and terrorism. This threat culminated in the tragedy of 9/11, followed up by more intense clashes between American-led forces and Muslims in different parts of the world, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Libya. From the terrorists' point of view the United States became by far the most important target of violent jihad in the world and radical Islamic countries such as Iran positioned the United States as the "Great Satan" to be targeted everywhere around the globe (Moghaddam, 2006). There is also a threat that such radical thinking might gain influence among Muslim youth living in the United States. This aspect of globalization, whereby actual or potential "enemies of America" enter the country and pose a threat from within America's borders, impacts different groups of Americans differently.

Political ideology is likely to have a particularly important role in how Americans behave in a context in which there is greater contact with, and increases in potential threat from, dissimilar out-groups. Individuals who adhere to a conservative political ideology tend to be less open to, and accepting toward, dissimilar outgroups and more supportive of greater restrictions on immigration and immigrants (Chavez & Provine, 2009), but this trend is accentuated during times of felt security threat (Huddy, Feldman, & Weber, 2007), and also in times of economic hardship (although the relationship between economic hardship and outgroup attitudes is complex, O'Connell, 2005). Conservatives not only support a more aggressive foreign policy and stronger reactions against external threat (Huddy, Feldman, Taber, & Lahav, 2005), but they also support stronger restrictions on minorities and the curtailment of civil liberties at home in the face of internal threats (Cohrs, Kielmann, Maes, & Moschner, 2005).

The tension between the appeal of expanding access to cheap international labor—as well as perhaps less restrictive taxes and government regulation—and the threat of greater social diversity through immigration challenges the underlying core psychology of conservatism. Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway (2003) argue that the dispositions to preserve the status quo, resist change, and embrace hierarchical, unequal societal structures represent core psychological features of political conservatism and draw upon a meta-analytic review of large international studies to demonstrate that a need to manage uncertainty and threat is an important motivation underlying conservative political preferences. Social threat perceptions, however, can originate from emotion-based symbolic sources as well as from realistic sources (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). A recent survey of the British public (King & Maruna, 2009), for example, found that the perceived threat of crime was better accounted for by broad economic insecurity

and generational distrust than by actual crime-related factors. Moreover, in their review of intergroup threat studies, Riek et al. (2006) found that on average the magnitude of effects of symbolic and realistic threats did not differ significantly, that is, psychological constructions could have impact on a par with objective threats.

Thus, framed as a policy that promotes global workforce migration, globalization triggers a countervailing sense of threat that conflicts with the economic appeal of free global markets. The threat of terrorism exacerbates this tension.

The tension between countervailing views of globalization is consistent with theories of intergroup relations that have drawn upon three major kinds of psychological factors to explain conflict among groups: "irrational," arising from implicit, unrecognized fears, desires, or motives, frequently masked by high-principled rationalizations, "materialistic," stemming from appraisals shared or competing material resources, or "identity-based," grounded in peoples' perceptions of their social identity and group memberships (Moghaddam, 2008a). Combinations of these factors evoke different perspectives on globalization. In a series of experiments in which participants were primed with alternative frames regarding cross-border business transactions, for instance, transactions framed materialistically in cost-benefit terms were viewed more favorably and rationally than transactions framed in terms of social identity differences among the transacting cultures (Tong, Hui, Kwan, & Peng, 2011). Similarly, differences between the United States and Germany in energy consumption behaviors appears to be mediated by cultural variations in cost-benefit appraisals, as well as "biospheric concerns" that perhaps reflecting a greater sense of global social identity (Swim & Becker, 2012).

The threat of terrorism represents an additional complication for conservatives. A rational-materialist interpretation of reactions to terrorist threat proposes a direct relationship between perceived threat and, on the one hand, punitive actions against the threat source and, on the other hand, tightening of liberties at home in order to achieve a more united "home front." Thus, according to a rationalist-materialist perspective if Joe sees a greater likelihood of terrorist attacks against the United States Joe is more likely to support aggressive action against terrorists and a tightening of civil liberties at home. The cost-benefit analysis that underlies a rational materialist perspective, however, may diminish the perceived seriousness of a terrorist threat until a tipping point is reached and the magnitude of threat can only be seen to outweigh any perceived benefit of globalization. Alternatively, from an irrationalist-identity based perspective, adherents to a conservative political ideology are generally less supportive of civil liberties and more supportive of an aggressive foreign policy at all levels of perceived terrorist threat. Is it then the case that, contrary to a rational-materialist interpretation, Joe the conservative will want to restrict civil liberties and punish terrorists irrespective of how probable a terrorist attack seems to him?

## Methods

This research employed two nationally representative probability samples of 1,000 adults age 18 and older selected randomly in late November and December in 2006 (Sample 1) and 2008 (Sample 2) from Internet-enabled panels maintained by Knowledge Networks (KN). KN panel members are recruited through a random digit telephone dialing system based on a sample frame covering the entire United States. In contrast to “opt-in” Web surveys, which recruit participants of unknown characteristics via “blind” Internet solicitations, KN panel members are selected on the basis of known, nonzero probabilities. Individuals are not permitted to volunteer or self-select for participation in the KN panel. In addition, individuals who lack either computers or Internet access are provided equipment or access without charge. The confidential, software-administered survey format reduces the impact of social desirability bias and other effects associated with interviewer-based methods (for review and discussion of strengths and weaknesses of this approach see Schlenger & Silver, 2006). KN panel-based surveys have demonstrated concordance with a variety of “benchmark” large-scale surveys (e.g., Baker, Bundorf, Singer, & Wagner, 2003; Dennis & Li, 2007; Heeren, Edwards, Dennis, Rodkin, & Hinson, 2008) and have been utilized in several studies of reactions to terrorism and disasters (Fischhoff, Gonzales, Lerner, and Small, 2005; Galea et al., 2002; Holman et al., 2008; Silver, Holman, McIntosh, Poulin, & Gil-Rivas, 2002; Viscusi & Zeckhauser, 2006).

In the present study, the response rate to invitations to participate were 68% and 71% for Sample 1 and Sample 2, respectively. To reduce the effects of potential nonresponse and noncoverage bias, poststratification sample weights incorporating the probability of participant selection based on age, gender, race and ethnicity benchmarks from the appropriate Current Population Surveys and supplements were utilized in all statistical analyses using algorithms modified for complex survey designs in the statistical software package STATA (StataCorp., 2009). Participants in Sample 1 and Sample 2 were more likely to be older White employed urban residents. Statistical methods that fail to account for response rate differences among subgroups of participants can bias estimates of effects and yield imprecise and misleading standard errors and confidence intervals. Sampling weights are employed to reduce such bias. In contrast to “opt in” Internet-based surveys, in which only the reported demographics of participants who choose to volunteer for the survey are available, complete population demographics for the KN Panel are known prior to survey recruitment. Thus, demographic differences between respondents and nonrespondents can be used to create sampling weights. Details regarding the Knowledge Networks panel design and poststratification sample weighting is available on-line at <http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp/docs>. In brief, an iterative process is used to create weights that are inversely proportional to the probability of selecting each subject, i.e., the proportion of

people in the population belonging to each “cell” or cross-classification by age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income, and geographic region groups. Participants in overrepresented cells are weighted less; participants in underrepresented cells are weighted more. Iteration is continued until the distribution of weighted data converges on the most recently available U.S. census distributions for each cell. Sampling weights are employed in subsequent statistical analyses to adjust for response rate and coverage biases and to strengthen the representativeness of results.

### *Measures*

*Political ideology.* Participants’ self-identified preferred political ideology were categorized as either *conservative* (i.e., participants self-identified as “slightly conservative,” “conservative,” or “extremely conservative”) or *nonconservative* (all other participants).

*Perceived risk of terrorism.* Participants rated the probability of terrorist attacks using an anchored scale from 0 (“totally unlikely to occur”) to 100 (“absolutely certain to occur”) and assessed the probability of acts of terror within the country over the next year (*risk to nation*; “How likely do you feel a terrorist attack is somewhere within the United States”).

*Support for retributive policies.* Participants were asked whether they “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “agreed,” or “strongly agreed” with two terrorism policy statements: “It is important for the United States to take revenge on the people and countries,” (*revenge seeking*) and “In order to prevent terrorism, the United States should restrict the rights of noncitizens and foreign visitors,” (*restrict rights of foreigners*).

Participants were free to decline responses to any item.

## **Results**

Self-identified conservatives comprised 35% and 37% of the 2006 and 2008 samples, respectively. Demographic characteristics for conservatives and nonconservatives in Sample 1 and 2 are displayed in Table 1. In both samples, men and Non-Hispanic Whites were more prevalent among conservatives, whereas Black Non-Hispanics were more prevalent among nonconservatives. Significantly more conservatives reported annual household incomes over \$60,000 and significantly fewer claimed incomes under \$20,000 in 2006. Conservative and nonconservative income distributions did not differ significantly in 2008.

On average, Sample 1 Americans in 2006 appraised the probability of a terrorist attack on the nation occurring during the following year at 41%, and

**Table 1.** Proportion of 2006 and 2008 Participants within Political Ideological Groups by Demographic Categories

	2006 Sample		2008 Sample	
	Conservative ( <i>N</i> = 352)	Other ( <i>N</i> = 648)	Conservative ( <i>N</i> = 370)	Other ( <i>N</i> = 630)
Male	<i>.548*</i>	.478	<i>.546*</i>	.487
Age Group				
18–29	.148	.174	.130	<i>.205**</i>
30–44	.270	.290	.295	.284
45–59	.281	.269	.278	.295
60+	.301	.267	.297	.216
Race/ethnicity				
White	<i>.738*</i>	.682	<i>.846**</i>	.744
Black, Non-Hispanic	.080	<i>.124*</i>	.032	<i>.092**</i>
Other, Non-Hispanic	.040	.046	.014	.014
Hispanic	.125	.124	.076	<i>.113*</i>
Multiple, Non-Hispanic	.017	.025	.032	.037
Education				
<High School	.085	.099	.095	.106
High School	.256	.286	.265	.306
Some College	.281	.279	.289	.289
B.A. degree or higher	.378	.336	.351	.298
Household income				
<\$20,000	.097	<i>.154*</i>	.116	.135
\$20,000–\$39,000	.190	.213	.214	.194
\$40,000–\$59,000	.205	.213	.216	.219
>\$60,000	<i>.509**</i>	.419	.454	.452

*Note.* Italicized proportions are significantly larger than the sample proportion observed within the other ideological group. \**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .005.

conservatives’ risk appraisals did not differ significantly from nonconservatives. Two years later, the national Sample 2 average estimate of the probability of an attack decreased to an average of 33%, however, conservatives’ estimated risk (*M* = 37.6%) significantly exceeded (*t*(998) = 4.53, *p* < .001, Cohen’s *d* = .24) nonconservatives’ estimates (*M* = 29.8%).

A majority of Americans supported both retributive policies regarding terrorism in each time period sampled. In 2006, 70% of participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that it was important to seek revenge for acts of terrorism, compared with 62% in 2008. In the 2006 and 2008 samples, 72% of participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with imposing restrictions on the civil liberties of foreign visitors and noncitizens. The odds of support for revenge were 65% greater

among 2006 conservatives (odds ratio (OR) = 1.65,  $z = 4.17$ ,  $p < .0001$ , 95% C.I. = 1.30–2.85) and twice as great among 2008 conservatives (OR = 2.44,  $z = 7.08$ ,  $p < .0001$ , 95% C.I. = 1.91–3.11). Furthermore, the odds of conservative support for restrictions on foreigners were more than twice that of nonconservatives in 2006 (OR = 2.14,  $z = 6.27$ ,  $p < .0001$ , 95% C.I. = 1.69–2.72) and 2008 (OR = 2.28,  $z = 6.43$ ,  $p < .0001$ , 95% C.I. = 1.78–2.94).

In both samples the importance of seeking revenge and restrictions on foreigners was significantly associated among participants generally with elevated estimates of the chance of terrorist attacks. Conservatives, however, remained significantly more likely to support retributive policies even when terrorist risk appraisals during either time sampled were accounted for statistically. Thus, when terrorism risk appraisals, as well as gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and income were included as covariates, conservative political ideology remained a significant predictor of support for seeking revenge (adjusted OR (AOR) = 1.58,  $z = 3.66$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% C.I. = 1.24–2.02; AOR = 2.38,  $z = 6.53$ ,  $p < .0001$ , 95% C.I. = 1.83–3.07; 2006 and 2008, respectively), as well as for restrictions on foreigners (AOR = 2.17,  $z = 6.12$ ,  $p < .0001$ , 95% C.I. = 1.70–2.79; AOR = 2.44,  $z = 7.08$ ,  $p < .0001$ , 95% C.I. = 1.91–3.11; 2006 and 2008, respectively).

## Discussion

The results of this study show that, contrary to a rational-materialist model, for self-identified conservatives support for a retribution based policy abroad and restrictions on noncitizens at home was not related to the perceived risk of terrorist attack. When the influence of education, age, and other major demographic variables were accounted for, conservative ideology still predicted support for revenge policies. An implication is that the narrative adopted by those who self-identity as conservatives includes a theme of “hitting hard” against enemies in all situations.

An important feature of this study is that measures were taken at two different times, 2006 and 2008, and that among both conservatives and nonconservatives the perceived probability of a terrorist attacked declined over this period. Thus, the more time passed after 9/11, the less people believed that a terrorist attack against the United States would take place. A rationalist-materialist model would lead us to expect that this decline would be associated with lower support for retribution based policies against people and countries abroad, and lower willingness to restrict civil liberties for noncitizens at home. This expectation was not met for conservatives.

The pattern of support shown by conservatives for retribution based policy abroad and limitations on civil liberties at home needs to be assessed in the context of accelerating globalization. The economic aspects of globalization, including free trade, open borders, free movement of capital and labor to maximize market opportunities, and limited government intervention, are all in line with



conservative political ideology. In this respect, conservatives have supported accelerating globalization, as well as regional arrangements (e.g., European Union, North American Free Trade Agreement) that open the way for freer trade. Importantly, globalization had allowed international capital to avoid restrictions placed on “laissez faire” economics by national and local labor unions. Multinational corporations have an advantage over labor unions, which still tend to have remained largely within national borders (Christens & Collura, 2012).

Conservative political ideology also involves a more “muscular” foreign policy, and less support for civil liberties at home. We found that conservatives both saw greater threat from terrorist attacks and believed in a “revenge” policy independent of the perceived threat of attack. Conservatives were also more willing to restrict the civil liberties of noncitizens at home. This poses a potential dilemma, because in the era of globalization market forces create demand for a larger number of noncitizens to be working in the United States. The need for labor acts as a magnet, pulling tens of millions of non-Europeans inside the U.S. border so that “A majority of the nation’s children will be minorities before the decade is out, crossing a demographic milestone more quickly than previously predicted. . .” (Morello, 2011). The rapid rise in the number of non-European minorities, many of whom will likely remain noncitizens for decades (at least), creates a tension with the greater conservative willingness to curtail the civil liberties of noncitizens.

This potential tension is also discussed by Gelfand, Lyons, & Lun (2011) who highlight that some characteristics of globalization, most notably increased cross-border migration, may be in conflict with values such as in-group priority and in-group loyalty. Shimpi and Zirkel (2012), elaborate on this tension in their description of U.S. citizen attitudes toward Chinese immigrants over the past century (see also, Gries, Crowson, & Cai, 2011).

There are several important limitations of this study. We focus on threat perceptions and policy preferences and do not directly measure conservative attitudes towards globalization. In addition, our findings are derived from participants’ self-report, not observations of actual behavior. Moreover, self-identified conservatism represents only an indicator of ideology and cannot fully capture the complex collection of attitudes, beliefs, and preferences that comprise individuals’ political ideologies. Clearly, definitive conclusions require much further research.

American public opinion—especially among the less socioeconomically advantaged—has recently been characterized by similar levels of distrust in free trade and economic globalization among conservatives as well as adherents of different political ideologies (Keefer & Morin, 2007). Our data suggests potential for further erosion of conservative support for globalization. The two themes we have identified in the relationship between conservatism and globalization, support for economic globalization but aggressive tactics against “threats” abroad and civil liberties for noncitizens at home, will become increasingly salient as globalization accelerates. The finding that “revenge” tactics were favored by conservatives

independent of changes in perceived threat suggests stability in this aspect of foreign policy, a conclusion to be further examined in future research.

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