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## **The Structure of Foreign Policy Attitudes among Middle Power Publics: A Transpacific Replication**

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### **Abstract**

Empirical models illustrating how mass publics organise their views on foreign policy issues abound. Models that posit militant internationalism and cooperative internationalism as the two factors structuring mass foreign policy attitudes and that typically rely on American survey data have given way to models positing a larger number of underlying factors supported by cross-national survey data. Still, there are few studies assessing the cross-national validity of multi-factor models. Further, middle power states that must navigate between international leadership and followership remain understudied. This article draws on new survey data from Canada and Australia – two archetypal middle power states – to replicate a recent and influential model of foreign policy attitudes comprised of four factors: cooperative internationalism, militant internationalism, isolationism, and support for global justice. Using an exploratory structural equation modelling (ESEM) framework, it finds that the four-factor structure of foreign policy attitudes observed in the United States, United Kingdom, France and Germany obtains among the Canadian and Australian publics, yet there are country-specific nuances that suggest differences in the ways Canadians and Australians perceive foreign policy options.

### **Key words**

Public opinion; foreign policy; Canada; Australia

## Introduction

Over the past forty years, research on public opinion toward foreign policy has overturned the so-called ‘Almond-Lippmann consensus’ which asserts that public opinion on matters of foreign policy is too volatile and unstructured to warrant attention by policymakers. Not only are foreign policy attitudes among mass publics structured; public attitudes shape and constrain the options available to policy-makers (Risse-Kappen 1991). They also influence political choices at the ballot box (Aldrich et al. 2006; Gelpi, Reifler, and Feaver 2007; Gravelle et al. 2014). Still, the dominant theoretical models, as well as the bulk of the empirical data, focus on powerful states in the international system – in particular, the United States (Wittkopf 1990; Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis 1995; Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2017). This calls into question the universality (or cross-national comparability) of foreign policy postures among mass publics, especially in cases of less powerful states. Do current models of the structure of foreign policy attitudes ‘travel well’ geographically, as well as down the hierarchy of states in the international system?

At present, the working assumption (though untested) is that cross-national comparisons of public attitudes on foreign policy are valid. Cross-national studies of public opinion often make comparisons of single survey items without giving due consideration to cross-cultural validity. Survey researchers may probe attitudes toward topical issues such as attitudes towards the United Nations, and conclude, for example, that Canadians and Australians are more supportive of the United Nations than Americans (Fagan and Huang 2019; Millard 1993). Yet, comparisons of single items provide limited insight into how these

questions are perceived by citizens of different states. Responses to survey questions truly can be comparing apples to oranges without proper cross-national validation.

These considerations are particularly important given the increased use of surveys and survey-based experiments by behavioural international relations scholars to explicate foreign policy decision making processes (Kertzer 2016; Tingley 2014). In parallel, research in comparative political behaviour has sought to broaden the well-established but American-focused literature on foreign policy attitudes through cross-national comparative survey research (Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2017; 2020). Recent research on the microfoundations of foreign policy decision making, the cross-national comparability of foreign policy postures, and the factors shaping foreign policy preferences signify a broadening evidence base, though one that remains narrow at the state level, with a focus on the United States and a small number of European powers.

Efforts to further broaden the research literature on foreign policy attitudes leads inevitably to a consideration of *middle powers* such as Canada and Australia. These two states have more limited material and economic power, but have played leadership roles on specific international issues such as arms control and multilateral trade, and as mediators of disputes within the western alliance (Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal 1993). Existing research on Canadian and Australian public opinion tends to focus on specific policy issues such as defence spending and use of force abroad (Fitzsimmons, Craigie, and Bodet 2014; Miller 2014; Chubb and McAllister 2019), relations with the United States (Gravelle 2014; Gravelle 2018; Miller 2015), and trade agreements (Bennett 2004; Tuxhorn 2019; Tuxhorn 2020; Miller and

Taylor 2017) instead of examining how broad foreign policy postures structure specific foreign policy attitudes (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Peffley and Hurwitz 1993). This prompts the question – do middle power publics conceptualise broad foreign policy outlooks in the same ways as superpower and great power publics despite their different country contexts?

This article aims to answer this question by expanding the geographic scope of recent research on the structure of foreign policy attitudes. It does so by drawing on new survey data collected in Canada and Australia, two archetypal middle powers. In this respect, our study is a *micro-replication* (Rokkan 1966) in that we seek to replicate findings from certain country contexts in other contexts, thereby testing their generalisability. Canada and Australia also are *comparable cases* (Lijphart 1971; Przeworski and Teune 1970) due to their shared British colonial history, similar parliamentary institutions, and their emergence as independent actors in international politics in the aftermath of World War I. They are also both enduring allies of the US through the bilateral North American Air Defence Command (NORAD) and the multilateral North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS), respectively. At present, both also face the challenge of balancing their security alliances with the US with growing economic ties to China – a challenge that is especially acute in the Australian case (Paltiel and Nossal 2019; Walton 2019). Despite the very different geopolitical contexts faced by Canada in North America and Australia in the Indo-Pacific, the similarities between Canada and Australia are recognised widely, and have served as motivation for several comparative studies of middle-power foreign and security policy (Bloomfield and Nossal 2007; Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal 1993; O'Connor and Vucetic 2010; Manicom and O'Neil 2012).

The article combines these new Canadian and Australian survey data along with data from the United States, United Kingdom, France and Germany to assess the cross-national measurement invariance (or measurement equivalence) of foreign policy attitudes in an exploratory structural equation modelling (ESEM) framework (Asparouhov and Muthén 2009; Marsh et al. 2014). Employing the same statistical techniques as Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto (2017), our results indicate that a four-dimensional model comprising cooperative internationalism, militant internationalism, isolationism, and support for global justice obtains in these middle powers, and allows for rigorous comparisons to the United States and European powers. A careful examination of the results, though, points to important country-specific nuances that should give pause both to scholars and policymakers in terms of interpreting what (and how) middle-power publics think about allies and international cooperation.

### **The Structure of Foreign Policy Attitudes: Existing Research**

Existing research provides a range of models that purport to explain how mass publics organise their attitudes toward foreign policy issues. These include early models finding *no* underlying structure to mass public opinion toward foreign policy (Almond 1960; Converse 1964) or a single internationalist–isolationist continuum (Russett 1960). A model popularised by Wittkopf (1990; 1994) posits distinct forms of militant internationalism and cooperative internationalism. Other research proposes isolationism as a third, self-standing dimension (Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis 1995; Rathbun 2007). We take as our starting point recent research by Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto (2017) that posits a still broader, four-dimensional model of foreign policy attitudes comprising cooperative internationalism, militant

internationalism, , isolationism, and support for global justice. These four dimensions (or postures) are conceived as broad, organising concepts that structure attitudes toward more specific foreign policy issues, such as specific trade agreements, or the use of force in specific conflicts in a 'hierarchical' fashion (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Peffley and Hurwitz 1993). Measured using a battery of 14 survey items, these four factors exhibit scalar invariance when modelled using American and European data, meaning that differences on item scores reflect differences on the underlying factors, and that factor scores can be compared meaningfully across states (Davidov et al. 2014).

Previous research on Canadian foreign policy attitudes reveals constructs approximating some of these factors. For example, using data collected during the 2011 federal election, Gravelle and colleagues (2014) find that militant internationalism and cooperative internationalism both shape support for the then-incumbent Conservative government. Berdahl and Raney (2010) draw on public opinion data from 1995–2006 and uncover two factors, which they label 'international justice' focusing on foreign aid and the promotion of human rights abroad, and 'national interest' focusing on military spending and national security. Using somewhat older data from a 1985 Decima survey containing a broader set of foreign policy-focused questions, Munton and Keating (2001) identify four factors underlying Canadians' foreign policy attitudes, including 'active internationalism' focusing on poverty reduction and international human rights, 'economic internationalism' centred on international trade, and 'independent internationalism' centred on Canadian policy autonomy from the United States. These studies thus uncover factors that resemble the above-mentioned foreign policy factors, in particular, militant internationalism and

support for global justice. Differences in the wording and format of survey questions, however, preclude rigorous cross-national comparisons.

Research on Australian public opinion is, by comparison, a smaller literature, and one with an even more concrete orientation. Existing research advances issue-specific explanations of attitudes toward the Australia–US military alliance (Miller 2015), support for the Iraq War (McAllister 2015), trade relations with China and Asia more broadly (Miller and Taylor 2017; McAllister and Ravenhill 1998), as well as cognate policy issues such as immigration and asylum policy (Gravelle 2019; McAllister 2003) without reference to broader foreign policy postures that organise such attitudes. As with the Canadian case, then, there is an opportunity to consider the structure of Australian foreign policy attitudes from a cross-national, comparative perspective.

### **Middle Powers: Distinctive Public Attitudes from Distinctive Foreign Policy Actors?**

As middle powers, Canada and Australia possess limited material and economic power, yet carved out roles in advancing multilateral institutions and solutions to global problems during the Cold War and post-Cold War eras (Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal 1993). It is this orientation toward multilateralism (or cooperative internationalism) that is the important commonality. Both states have also played niche roles as providers of foreign aid, though Canadian and Australian commitments to aid are in decline, even though Canada has what many would consider a globalist Prime Minister in Justin Trudeau (Harper 2020). Shared similarities aside, differences emerge when it comes to the willingness to deploy military force: Canada has been far more selective than Australia when it comes to joining

(mostly) US-led missions as shown by their diverging approaches to the Vietnam War and the Iraq War (O'Connor and Vucetic 2010).

. Although sometimes cross-national comparisons of Australian and Canadian public opinion during specific foreign policy crises are made, they do not address the wider opinion environment to capture the postures, which Hurwitz and Peffley (1987, 1100), building from Converse (1964), reason are the 'superordinate values' or 'general idea elements' that shape attitudes toward specific foreign policy actions. Consequently, the research questions we pursue in this article are, first, do a series of updated survey questions measure the same foreign policy postures that Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto (2017) identify in four more powerful states; and second, if the models are cross-nationally valid, what levels of support for cooperative internationalism, militant internationalism, isolationism, and support for global justice exist among the Canadian and Australian publics? In short, do these two publics agree with elites' desire for multilateral engagement, and how do they fare on the other postures? If a multilateralist predisposition filters down to the public, we should see mean scores on the cooperative internationalism dimension higher among the two middle power publics than is the case in, for example, the United States and United Kingdom. Further, might the Australian public be more open to using military force than the Canadian public, in line with their historical differences in their (non-)participation in high profile conflicts?

An assessment of the broad foreign policy postures of Canadian and Australian publics is not merely an academic exercise. Canada and Australia presently are faced with

the possibility that the rules based international order and the authority of the multilateral institutions they helped build are giving way in the face of Sino-American rivalry (Manicom and O'Neil 2012). As Job (2020) notes, the two middle powers had the 'space' to champion multilateralism in the Cold War and post-Cold War periods because the role suited American interests, and they were protected by the American security umbrella. Canada and Australia may soon be forced to answer important foreign policy questions relating to: remaining closely aligned with the US in the face of its rivalry with China; increasing military capabilities should the US prove to no longer be a reliable ally; whether to continue to engage with other middle powers to uphold a rules based order grounded in 'Western values'; whether to reinvest in foreign aid even without guarantees of direct material benefits; and whether to withdraw from the international arena while the US and China fight the next Cold War.

The above questions ultimately will be answered by Canada's and Australia's respective governments. Still, existing research notes that foreign policy can play into the choices voters make when choosing leaders (Aldrich et al. 2006; Gravelle et al. 2014). When undertaking foreign policy actions, middle powers' ability to act is shaped by reservoirs of domestic public support as much as external constraints. Our article assesses these reservoirs of public support in the cases of Canada and Australia in the present challenging times for middle-power democracies.

## **Data**

We explore these issues through a test of the measurement invariance of the foreign policy attitudes of the Canadian and Australian publics using online surveys conducted in Canada (n = 2,725) and Australia (n = 2,300). Data collection occurred in two waves on 7–13 May 2018 and 8–15 January 2019. For the May 2018 wave, online samples (1,680 for Canada and 1,200 for Australia) were recruited via Lucid, an online sample provider that sources survey respondents from multiple online research panels. For the January 2019 wave, online samples (1,045 for Canada and 1,100 Australia) were recruited via Research Now–Survey Sampling International (now Dynata). Survey data collection was conducted via self-administered online questionnaires, and the final samples were weighted to national census parameters on sex, age, educational attainment, and province (or state). The Canadian and Australian data were pooled with survey data collected online by YouGov in four previously-studied country cases: the US (n = 4,902, collected 5–18 December 2018), UK (n = 4,999, collected 4–19 December 2018), France (n = 5,930, collected 15–24 May 2014) and Germany (n = 2,551, collected 14–22 October 2014) to create a six-country dataset for analysis (n = 23,407).<sup>1</sup>

Such online non-probability samples remain a topic of active research and debate in the survey methodology literature concerning their appropriate use. While some studies find differences between sample estimates from probability and non-probability sources (e.g., Yeager et al. 2011), others focused on political topics find few meaningful differences between online non-probability panels and probability-based samples (e.g., Ansolabehere and Schaffner 2014; Stephenson and Crête 2011). We therefore contend that our focus on the factor structure (as a type of correlational structure) underlying our data imply that non-probability samples are fit for purpose (Baker et al. 2013; Cornesse et al. 2020).

The survey questions, which appear in Table 1, are a battery of 14 items covering a wide-ranging set of foreign policy issues, and first presented in Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto (2017). The items use a five-category, fully-labelled response scale with categories ‘Strongly agree,’ ‘Somewhat agree,’ ‘Neither agree nor disagree,’ ‘Somewhat disagree’ and ‘Strongly disagree.’ Summing up the ‘Strongly agree’ and ‘Somewhat agree’ responses allows for a high-level comparison of the attitudes of the six publics. This reveals that the Canadian and Australian publics are similar to the American public and European publics in supporting consensus-building and diplomacy while falling between the US and western Europe on questions of consulting allies in deciding their respective foreign policies. Still, Canadians and Australians are less likely to agree on the need for a strong military to be effective in international relations (especially the Canadian public). Compared to Americans, Canadians and Australians are somewhat more likely to express the view that the national interest is best served by avoiding international involvement. The Canadian and Australian publics also are slightly more favourable toward increased foreign aid than Americans and Britons (see Table 1).

[Table 1 here]

### **Methods**

With a previously validated four-factor model of foreign policy attitudes as our reference point (Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2017), we likewise analyse our data in an exploratory structural equality modelling (ESEM) framework. ESEM extends and unifies exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural

equation modelling (SEM) by allowing all items to be reflective of (to 'load on') all factors as in EFA and providing tests of overall model fit typically reported in CFA and SEM. ESEM thus relaxes the (often restrictive) assumption of 'simple structure', where items load only on a single factor typical of CFA. This offers a modelling approach with greater flexibility 'by providing an option that in some cases is more closely aligned with reality, reflecting more limited measurement knowledge of the researcher or a more complex measurement structure' (Asparouhov and Muthén 2009).<sup>2</sup> ESEM still provides confirmatory tests of overall model fit to the data, and also permits tests for varying degrees of measurement invariance by imposing equality (invariance) constraints on factor loadings and intercepts (Marsh et al. 2014). Importantly for our purposes, rather than the restrictive 'load/does not load' dichotomy that we consider overly restrictive, ESEM is able to indicate where items have multiple or weak loadings in the new country cases, providing an empirical indication that Canadians and/or Australians do not interpret specific questions in a manner identical to Americans and Europeans.

Our analysis proceeds in two stages. First, we assess the *dimensionality* of foreign policy attitudes in Canada and Australia by fitting ESEMs comprising 1–5 factors to the Canadian and Australian data separately to determine the minimum number of factors needed to achieve good fit to the data (Preacher et al. 2013). In line with the findings from Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto (2017), our working hypothesis is that four factors are necessary to achieve good fit to the data in each state.

Second, we test the measurement invariance of foreign policy attitudes. This in turn comprises two parts: assessing *configural invariance* and then assessing *scalar invariance*. The methodological literature on measurement invariance differentiates between increasingly stringent levels of invariance: configural, metric, and scalar invariance. When modelling with categorical data such as the five-category ordered survey questions in our surveys, only configural and scalar invariance are relevant.<sup>3</sup> Our assessment of configural invariance involves comparing the structures of salient factor loadings in Canada and Australia, both to each other, and to those obtained in the US and Europe (Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2017) to determine if the factors are substantively similar. Our hypothesis is that country-specific four-factor models of the Canadian and Australian data achieve configural invariance – that is, the militant internationalism, cooperative internationalism, isolationism, and global justice factors emerge in Canada and Australia in single-country analyses.

The next step in assessing measurement invariance entails fitting a scalar invariant model to the data from Canada, Australia, the US, UK, France and Germany. Scalar invariance requires good model fit while constraining intercepts (or thresholds) and factor loadings to be equal across groups (in this case, countries). Scalar invariance must hold to make meaningful comparisons of latent variable means across groups (Davidov et al. 2014). Because the scalar invariance of the four-factor model of foreign policy attitudes already has been established for the US, UK, France and Germany (Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2017), we report the results of the six-country configural invariance model but do not focus on it. Here, our primary hypothesis is that scalar invariance of the four-factor model (depicted in Figure

1) is achieved for the six states (Canada and Australia plus the four previously studied American and European cases).

[Figure 1 here]

### **The Dimensionality of Foreign Policy Attitudes in Canada and Australia**

Examining the ESEMs for the Canadian and Australian samples separately, the model chi-square statistics (as a measure of absolute fit) indicate that none of the models achieve good fit (see Table 2). In SEM applications with large samples, however, chi-square statistics frequently indicate model misfit for otherwise well-fitting models (Kline 2016). This leads us to focus instead on more useful approximate fit indices: the comparative fit index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) emphasised in the SEM literature (Preacher et al. 2013; Kline 2016). In doing so, models with 1–3 factors do not achieve good fit in Canada. These results suggest that the conventional two-factor cooperative internationalism-militant internationalism model (Wittkopf 1990; Wittkopf 1994) is a poor fit for the Canadian public, as is a three-factor model that adds isolationism (Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis 1995; Rathbun 2007). Good model fit is achieved only with a four-factor model (CFI = 0.982, RMSEA = 0.040). It is much the same with Australia: models with 1–2 factors fit poorly, though a three-factor model achieves acceptable fit (CFI = 0.941, RMSEA = 0.073). As in Canada, model fit improves appreciably with the specification of a four-factor model (CFI = 0.980, RMSEA = 0.048). In both cases, model fit improves only marginally with the specification of a five-factor model. Overall, the results point to a four-factor solution as

the best depiction of the structure of Canadian and Australian foreign policy attitudes, confirming our expectations.

[Table 2 here]

### **The Measurement Invariance of Foreign Policy Attitudes:**

#### **Comparing Middle Powers to the United States and Europe**

If four postures describe the structure of foreign policy views of the Canadian and Australian publics, are they the same as those previously found among the publics of the US and Western Europe? Considering first their configural invariance, the factors in both countries appear quite similar (see Table 3). Survey items centred on working through international organisations, building international consensus, and being committed to diplomacy have high factor loadings on the first factor. In the Canadian case (but not in Australia), there are salient (albeit lower) factor loadings for items centred on sharing wealth and foreign aid spending. This dimension can thus be credibly labelled cooperative internationalism. It is worth pointing out, though, that unlike the cases of the US and major European powers, the idea of taking into account the views of one's country's major allies is only weakly associated with this factor in Canada or Australia (cf. Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2017). Interestingly, it also is weakly (but still positively) associated with the fourth factor (militant internationalism) in both countries. In both the Canadian and Australian contexts, such a question is more likely interpreted as an endorsement of aligning foreign policy with one's major ally (singular), the US, instead of a statement on international cooperation writ large. This interpretation is most plausible in light of the long-standing

debates about ties to the US in both countries (see, e.g., Bow and Lennox 2008; Higgott and Nossal 1998) and the ambivalence they have engendered at the level of mass public opinion (Gravelle 2014; Miller 2015).

[Table 3 here]

The second factor in both models speaks clearly to isolationism as captured in previous studies (Rathbun et al. 2016; Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis 1995; Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2017). There are strong loadings for survey items focused on avoiding involvement with other nations, not putting one's citizens' well-being at risk through international involvement, and minding one's own business in international affairs. In the Australian case, there are also salient positive factor loadings for sharing wealth and spending on foreign aid. At first glance, these factor loadings might appear to be wrongly signed, but for Australia, isolationism and foreign aid plausibly are linked. The geographic focus of Australia's official development assistance provides one link. Australia's foreign aid efforts are focused on its immediate neighbourhood in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia, with the aim of bolstering the political and economic of states that might otherwise give rise to threats to Australia's security (Firth 2011). Restrictionist immigration attitudes provide another link: foreign aid, some claim, serves as a means of reducing migrant inflows to donor states by improving living conditions in recipient states (Bermeo and Leblang 2015). Applied to mass public opinion, these explanations do run the risk of ex post theorising and should be treated as a conjecture requiring confirmation by further research.

With high factor loadings for survey items capturing willingness to share wealth, spending more on foreign aid, and disagreement (i.e., a negative loading) with the statement that one's country already does enough for the world's poor, the third factor clearly resembles the global justice factor found by Gravelle, Reifler and Scotto (2017) in the US and Europe, as well as cognate factors previously found in Canada by Berdahl and Raney (2010) and Munton and Keating (2001).

The fourth factor features high loadings on survey items that endorse having a strong military and the use of force to prevent aggression, as well as disagreement with (i.e., another negative loading) a commitment to diplomacy and not resorting to military force in international crises. This factor thus resembles Wittkopf's (1990; 1994) classic militant internationalism factor. It also approximates the operationalisation of militant internationalism in Gravelle and colleagues (2014), and Berdahl and Raney's 'national interest' factor.

In sum, the foreign policy postures present in Canadian and Australian mass public opinion exhibit (at least) configural invariance: the patterns of salient factor loadings are sufficiently similar between Canada and Australia, and both are similar to previous findings from the US and Europe (Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2017). Still, there are nuances in how Canadians and Australians interpret questions that refer to allies, as well as how Australians link some of the foreign aid questions to isolationism. Rigorous cross-national comparisons, such as comparisons of factor means, however, requires a well-fitting scalar invariant model. Is this standard met? The results from the six state, four factor, scalar invariant model

indicates that it is (see Table 2). The CFI statistic for the scalar invariant model is 0.944, and the RMSEA statistic is 0.066, both indicating acceptable model fit. These results do point to a degree of model misfit compared to the configural invariant model where factor loadings and thresholds are allowed to vary across states, and thus allows for close fit (CFI = 0.989; RMSEA = 0.047). Still, it is notable that a constrained, scalar invariant model achieves acceptable fit across six publics in states occupying very different positions in the international system. The cross-national factor structure of foreign policy postures can thus be represented by the single set of factor loadings presented in Table 4.

[Table 4 here]

The patterns of factor loadings closely resemble those reported by Gravelle, Scotto, and Reifler (2017). Given that four of the six states are the same as those included in that analysis, this should not come as a surprise. Still, it is worth noting that these data yield factors resembling cooperative internationalism (factor 1) and militant internationalism (factor 4) in line with seminal work by Wittkopf (1990; 1994). Isolationism (factor 2) emerges as a distinct posture, in line with Rathbun (2007) and Chittick and colleagues (1995), and further supporting the contention that isolationism is not equivalent to the joint negation of cooperative and militant internationalism. The third factor focuses on international redistribution and poverty alleviation, making the 'global justice' label apt. Notably, there is a clear (though not always recognised) distinction at the level of mass opinion between inter-state cooperation (on the one hand) and the redistribution of wealth between states (on the other).

Looking at the factor means obtained from the six-state scalar invariant model (see Table 5), the six publics exhibit substantial variation in their mean foreign policy outlooks.<sup>4</sup> Tests of the equality of factor means are highly significant for all four factors. Focusing on the Canadian and Australian publics, both appear slightly less inclined toward cooperative internationalism, on average, than the American public, with standardised factor scores of -0.119 and -0.187, respectively. Given the internationalist reputations of middle powers like Canada and Australia, two points are worth making in relation to this seemingly counterintuitive finding. First, in spite of numerous instances in the history of American foreign policy where unilateralism and militarism have prevailed, the American public holds distinctly multilateralist and cooperative foreign policy attitudes (Todorov and Mandisodza 2004). Second, it is important to consider carefully the cross-national face validity of the indicators of cooperative internationalism used here. While Canadians and Australians are slightly more in favour of working through the United Nations than Americans and Europeans, and equally supportive of build international consensus and the diplomatic resolution of international crises as Americans, they are cooler to consulting 'major allies' in formulating foreign policy. As noted above, and given Canada's and Australia's long-standing alliances with the US – under the auspices of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS), respectively – this is most plausibly interpreted as coordinating foreign policy actions with the US. Given recent, high-profile strains in both the Canada–US and Australia–US bilateral relationships during the

Trump presidency, it is unsurprising that some Canadians and Australians would object to closer coordination or consultation with the US on foreign policy issues (Gravelle 2018).

[Table 5 here]

Examination of sources of model misfit for the scalar invariant model suggests that the key source is the factor loading for the 'take into account the views of its major allies' question on the cooperative international factor, and suggests that the shift from configural to scalar invariance may gloss over an important difference in how the Canadian and Australian publics interpret multilateralism. Additional analyses (reported in the online appendix) remove the 'views of major allies' item from the single-country and six-country four-factor ESEMs. These results show that four-factor models still achieve close approximate fit (indeed, little change on the relative fit indices) and yield the same overall patterns of factor loadings (see Tables A1 and A2). Yet without the 'views of major allies' item forming part of the cooperative internationalism factor, there are no statistically significant mean differences on this factor between the US, Canada, Australia, the UK and Germany (see Table A3).

While there is no significant difference between Australia and the US on militant internationalism, Canada is less inclined toward militant internationalism with a standardised factor score -0.194 – a score closer to its two European 'mother countries,' Britain and France. A potential explanation for these results might make reference to Canada's and Australia's very different geopolitical contexts: adjacent to the US in North America, Canada's security long has been assured by the US, whereas Australia's location in

the Indo-Pacific long has been perceived as presenting greater threats. These geographic facts shape both states' strategic cultures and their willingness to use force abroad (Bloomfield and Nossal 2007).

Canada and Australia also appear moderately more isolationist than the US, with standardised factor scores of 0.176 and 0.270, respectively. These findings might again seem counterintuitive. It is worth noting that the American public, on average, is not inclined toward isolationism (Kertzer 2013), and recent survey research suggests that what isolationist sentiment there is among the American public may be on the wane in reaction to President Trump (Edwards-Levy 2018). Also, one of the indicators of isolationism measures agreement with not risking Canadian and Australian 'citizens' happiness and well-being by getting involved with other nations.' The fact that more 40 percent of Canadians and Australians agree with this sentiment is perhaps unsurprising given the willingness of some Canadians to loosen Canada-US ties (Gravelle 2014), or of some Australians to loosen Australia-China ties (Miller and Taylor 2017).

At the same time, the Canadian and Australian publics score higher on support for global justice with standardised factor scores of 0.168 and 0.171, respectively, being closer to Germany than the US, UK, or France. These results align with previous research showing that Canadians express greater support for redistribution than Americans, both domestically and internationally (Noël, Thérien, and Dallaire 2004). They are also interesting in light of the higher expenditures on official development assistance (as a percentage of gross national income) by Canada and Australia compared to the US: OECD (2020) figures for 2017 put

Canadian spending at 0.264 percent and Australian spending at 0.232 percent; US spending was 0.177 percent. Given that both middle powers show a long-term decline in foreign aid spending, might this be an area where the publics are more supportive of foreign aid than their elites.

### **Conclusion**

This article aims to fill a gap in our understanding of the broad foreign policy orientations of the Canadian and Australian publics, and how these orientations compare to those of the American public and select European publics. The results of our exploratory structural equation modelling (ESEM) analyses indicate that the two middle power publics have complex but organised attitudes similar to those in the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Germany (Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2017). We therefore consider this a successful micro-replication: the four foreign policy postures previously found to underlie American and European foreign policy attitudes – cooperative internationalism, militant internationalism, isolationism, and support for global justice – also underlie foreign policy attitudes in Canada and Australia. In sum, we continue to find four factors, and they travel across the Pacific. They also travel down the hierarchy of states.

Though Canadians' and Australians' foreign policy views are organised in the same manner, there are meaningful differences in their foreign policy preferences. The Canadian and Australian publics reveal themselves to be slightly less inclined toward cooperative internationalism compared to the US, a finding most plausibly interpreted as Canadians and Australians interpreting (in part) cooperation with compliance vis-à-vis the US. This

interpretation is supported by our results in an alternative model specification that removes the item capturing attitudes toward taking into account the view of one's major allies. By doing so, the cross-country differences on cooperative internationalism largely disappear (see Table A3 in the online appendix). Canadians are somewhat less militaristic than their American neighbours and more like the British and French, while Australians and Americans are equally militaristic, on average. This result is especially interesting given Australia's history of joining American-led conflicts while Canada's record is more mixed; the former also resides in a more challenging geopolitical context, with China a more present threat. It therefore does not surprise that Australians are more militaristic than Canadians, on average. Compared to the US, Canada and Australia also express somewhat stronger isolationist sentiment while simultaneously expressing greater support for global justice. The comparatively high isolationist sentiment in the two middle powers suggests internal dissension, and we hope future work will explore whether there are foreign policy 'issue publics' in the Canadian and Australian electorates.

Our empirical analyses also suggest how Canadians and Australians might respond if their leaders were to pursue more prominent roles in multilateral diplomacy in an era of rising tensions between the United States and China. Though at first glance it might appear that the Canadian and Australian publics are less interested in cooperative internationalism than other states, careful statistical analysis suggests that scepticism toward international cooperation largely stems from responses to a question on working with 'major allies' (read, the United States). Released from the need to take the US 'into account', both publics are open to multilateralism. These findings are important given recent proposals for an 'Alliance

for Multilateralism' advanced by French and German elites who have looked to Canada and Australia to play key roles.

Given our focus on the issue of measurement invariance in cross-national survey research applied to public opinion on foreign policy, we set aside (for the moment) the question of prediction – that is, what factors influence foreign policy attitudes. Since the broad foreign policy orientations we find replicate cross-nationally, this suggests that they may have psychological roots, and originate with individuals' core values and personality traits (Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto 2020; Rathbun et al. 2016). We see this as an area ripe for further comparative, cross-national research.

The article similarly sets aside the question of how these foreign policy postures structure more specific policy attitudes in a 'hierarchical' fashion (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). These include support for particular trade pacts, development programs, and military conflicts, as well as bilateral relations with states within and outside the western alliance (Scotto and Reifler 2017; Gravelle 2014). There also is the question of how these foreign policy factors influence vote choice. Though there is a well-developed literature on retrospective foreign policy assessments and voting (Aldrich et al. 2006; Gelpi, Reifler, and Feaver 2007), there relatively is little research linking broad foreign policy orientations and vote choice – for example, individuals scoring high on militant internationalism supporting right-wing parties, individuals scoring high on cooperative internationalism or support for global justice supporting left-wing parties, or individuals scoring high on isolationism supporting the

populist radical right (but see Gravelle et al. 2014; Mughan and Paxton 2006). Additional comparative research on this topic is necessary.

Future research also should pursue improvements in the psychometric measurement characteristics of the survey items capturing the four foreign policy orientations. Since the current set of survey items are unbalanced (there are more positively-worded than negatively-worded questions), this might involve developing sets of items to mitigate acquiescence bias (Harzing 2006). It also might involve designing survey items that more clearly link to one (and only one) foreign policy factor in pursuit of simple structure.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that in broadening the study of the structure of foreign policy attitudes beyond the US and Europe to include the middle-power cases of Canada and Australia, our analyses here remain limited to a set of high-income, western democracies with existing alliances (NATO, NORAD, and ANZUS), and so our findings of cross-national measurement invariance should be viewed in this context. Broader claims about the cross-national applicability (or universality) of our four-factor model of foreign policy orientations require survey data from lower-income or non-western states. We hope that future comparative research on foreign policy attitudes will explore this issue.

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## Notes

1. As an aside, our paper uses American and British data from 2018 while the initial model of Gravelle, Reifler, and Scotto (2017) used survey data from 2011. That our results for American and British respondents from 2018 closely mimic those obtained with public opinion data from seven years earlier under when the UK and US had different leaders, provides cross-temporal validation of the four-factor model.
2. Marsh and colleagues (2009) also note that specifying 'zero factor loadings usually leads to distorted factors with overestimated factor correlations. This leads to distortions in structural relations.'
3. Given that our foreign policy survey items comprise five ordered categories, we model them as such, and estimate our models using robust weighted least squares (Finney and DiStefano 2013).
4. In SEM (and in ESEM), joint tests of the equality of means are conducted by constraining all factor means to zero (the mean for the reference group, the US). The results are: factor 1 (cooperative internationalism):  $\chi^2 = 195.794$ ,  $d.f. = 5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; factor 2 (isolationism):  $\chi^2 = 716.192$ ,  $d.f. = 5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; factor 3 (global justice):  $\chi^2 = 421.186$ ,  $d.f. = 5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; factor 4 (militant internationalism):  $\chi^2 = 573.967$ ,  $d.f. = 5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 1: Foreign Policy Posture Survey Items**

Survey item (% agree)	Canada	Australia	United States	United Kingdom	France	Germany
<i>Cooperative Internationalism</i>						
[Country] should work more through international organizations, like the UN.	48.1	48.5	42.6	39.6	35.3	42.3
In deciding on its foreign policies, [country] should take into account the views of its major allies	54.1	52.8	61.7	47.4	46.1	40.4
The best way for [country] to be a world leader in foreign affairs is to build international consensus.	55.7	53.2	53.2	51.2	41.8	53.3
[Country] should be more committed to diplomacy and not so fast to use the military in international crises.	58.5	57.5	58.2	56.6	57.7	58.5
<i>Militant Internationalism</i>						
[Country] doesn't need to withdraw from international affairs, it just needs to stop letting international organizations tell us what we can and can't do.	62.2	63.6	48.7	56.6	54.8	44.7
[Country] should always do what is in its own interest, even if our allies object.	50.6	55.4	43.7	48.1	54.8	43.2
[Country] should take all steps including the use of force to prevent aggression by any expansionist power.	45.6	49.6	46.1	40.9	44.7	33.7
[Country] needs a strong military to be effective in international relations.	44.6	54.9	64.2	56.0	55.6	32.5
<i>Isolationism</i>						
[Country's] interests are best protected by avoiding involvement with other nations.	28.1	31.1	24.7	22.3	41.5	35.8
[Country] shouldn't risk its citizens' happiness and well-being by getting involved with other nations.	44.5	44.3	36.3	40.0	53.9	37.2
[Country] needs to simply mind its own business when it comes to international affairs.	28.8	32.2	26.4	25.3	47.2	42.4
<i>Global Justice</i>						
[Country] should be more willing to share its wealth with other nations, even if it doesn't coincide with our political interests.	22.3	25.4	22.0	15.0	19.8	23.6
[Country] should spend significantly more money on foreign aid.	20.2	24.4	19.4	11.5	13.4	25.7
[Country] already does enough to help the world's poor.	53.1	55.0	47.2	60.0	60.9	45.1

**Table 2: ESEM Model Summary Statistics**

	Number of factors	Model $\chi^2$	DF	Model fit			
				CFI	RMSEA	(90% CI)	<i>p</i> Close fit
Canada	1	4,724.148	77	0.526	0.149	(0.145 – 0.152)	0.000
configural invariance	2	2,690.996	64	0.732	0.123	(0.119 – 0.127)	0.000
(n = 2,725)	3	1,051.237	52	0.898	0.084	(0.080 – 0.088)	0.000
	4	220.908	41	0.982	0.040	(0.035 – 0.045)	0.999
	5	92.128	31	0.994	0.027	(0.021 – 0.033)	1.000
Australia	1	5,500.602	77	0.503	0.175	(0.171 – 0.179)	0.000
configural invariance	2	2,674.642	64	0.761	0.133	(0.129 – 0.138)	0.000
(n = 2,300)	3	696.546	52	0.941	0.073	(0.069 – 0.078)	0.000
	4	262.188	41	0.980	0.048	(0.043 – 0.054)	0.667
	5	66.033	31	0.997	0.022	(0.015 – 0.030)	1.000
6 countries, configural invariance (n = 23,407)	4	2,325.462	246	0.989	0.047	(0.045 – 0.048)	0.999
6 countries, scalar invariance (n = 23,407)	4	11,303.501	636	0.944	0.066	(0.065 – 0.067)	0.000

**Table 3: ESEM unstandardized factor loadings, 4-factor solution, country-specific configural invariant models**

Survey Item	Canada				Australia			
	1 CI	2 ISO	3 GJ	4 MI	1 CI	2 ISO	3 GJ	4 MI
[Country] should work more through international organizations, like the UN.	0.770	-0.302	0.312	-0.019	0.771	-0.064	0.612	-0.071
In deciding on its foreign policies, [country] should take into account the views of its major allies	0.367	-0.063	0.032	0.250	0.385	-0.088	0.121	0.324
The best way for [country] to be a world leader in foreign affairs is to build international consensus.	0.951	-0.310	-0.005	0.024	0.966	-0.223	0.110	0.086
[Country] should be more committed to diplomacy and not so fast to use the military in international crises.	1.061	0.056	-0.011	-0.624	0.921	0.072	-0.007	-0.543
[Country's] interests are best protected by avoiding involvement with other nations.	-0.047	1.301	0.126	-0.016	-0.153	1.217	0.086	0.112
[Country] shouldn't risk its citizens' happiness and well-being by getting involved with other nations.	0.106	0.931	-0.227	-0.048	0.185	0.668	-0.235	-0.046
[Country] needs to simply mind its own business when it comes to international affairs.	-0.158	1.369	0.040	-0.017	-0.040	1.353	-0.076	-0.161
[Country] doesn't need to withdraw from international affairs, it just needs to stop letting international organizations tell us what we can and can't do.	0.389	0.164	-0.436	0.111	0.528	0.066	-0.598	0.170
[Country] should always do what is in its own interest, even if our allies object.	0.209	0.448	-0.291	0.189	0.412	0.334	-0.419	0.178
[Country] should take all steps including the use of force to prevent aggression by any expansionist power.	0.193	0.035	-0.064	0.627	0.085	0.123	-0.035	0.851
[Country] needs a strong military to be effective in international relations.	-0.050	0.048	0.012	1.102	-0.033	0.011	-0.073	1.075
[Country] should be more willing to share its wealth with other nations, even if it doesn't coincide with our political interests.	0.515	0.080	1.082	-0.008	0.125	0.485	1.332	0.030
[Country] should spend significantly more money on foreign aid.	0.523	0.010	1.488	0.293	0.062	0.764	2.155	0.071
[Country] already does enough to help the world's poor.	0.064	0.414	-0.705	0.192	0.135	0.103	-1.000	0.448

Notes: Shaded cells indicate salient factor loadings ( $\geq |0.400|$ ). CI = cooperative internationalism; ISO = isolationism; MI = militant internationalism;

GJ = global justice

**Table 4: ESEM unstandardised factor loadings, 4-factor solution, scalar invariant model**

Survey Item	1 CI	2 ISO	3 GJ	4 MI
[Country] should work more through international organizations, like the UN.	1.255	-0.037	0.386	-0.019
In deciding on its foreign policies, [country] should take into account the views of its major allies	1.141	-0.041	0.078	0.374
The best way for [country] to be a world leader in foreign affairs is to build international consensus.	1.466	-0.006	0.020	0.299
[Country] should be more committed to diplomacy and not so fast to use the military in international crises.	1.278	0.437	-0.031	-0.295
[Country's] interests are best protected by avoiding involvement with other nations.	-0.153	1.216	0.217	0.016
[Country] shouldn't risk its citizens' happiness and well-being by getting involved with other nations.	0.143	1.177	-0.141	0.052
[Country] needs to simply mind its own business when it comes to international affairs.	0.014	1.492	0.064	-0.288
[Country] doesn't need to withdraw from international affairs, it just needs to stop letting international organizations tell us what we can and can't do.	-0.034	0.400	-0.121	0.774
[Country] should always do what is in its own interest, even if our allies object.	-0.290	0.712	-0.028	0.765
[Country] should take all steps including the use of force to prevent aggression by any expansionist power.	0.184	0.088	0.134	0.978
[Country] needs a strong military to be effective in international relations.	-0.015	-0.039	-0.027	1.931
[Country] should be more willing to share its wealth with other nations, even if it doesn't coincide with our political interests.	0.281	0.057	1.307	-0.084
[Country] should spend significantly more money on foreign aid.	0.007	-0.024	2.513	0.037
[Country] already does enough to help the world's poor.	0.000	0.517	-0.672	0.560

Notes: Shaded cells indicate salient factor loadings ( $\geq |0.400|$ ). CI = cooperative internationalism;

ISO = isolationism; MI = militant internationalism; GJ = global justice

**Table 5: Standardised factor means, 4-factor solution, scalar invariant model, by state**

		Canada	Australia	US	UK	France	Germany
1	CI	-0.119**	-0.187***	0.000	-0.156***	-0.421***	-0.174***
2	ISO	0.176***	0.270***	0.000	0.091***	0.601***	0.380***
3	GJ	0.168***	0.171***	0.000	-0.311***	-0.006	0.261***
4	MI	-0.194***	0.024	0.000	-0.156***	-0.197***	-0.785***

Notes: \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$ . Factor means for the United States are fixed to zero. Significance tests are two-tailed Z tests comparing state factor means to the United States. Tests are not adjusted for multiple comparisons.

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## Online Appendix

**Table A1: ESEM Model (without 'Views of Major Allies' item) summary statistics**

	Number of factors	Model $\chi^2$	DF	Model fit			
				CFI	RMSEA	(90% CI)	$p$ Close fit
Canada configural invariance ( $n = 2,725$ )	4	146.959	32	0.988	0.036	(0.030 – 0.042)	1.000
Australia configural invariance ( $n = 2,300$ )	4	124.976	32	0.991	0.036	(0.029 – 0.042)	1.000
6 countries, configural invariance ( $n = 23,407$ )	4	1,719.020	192	0.992	0.045	(0.043 – 0.047)	1.000
6 countries, scalar invariance ( $n = 23,407$ )	4	9,811.685	547	0.950	0.066	(0.065 – 0.067)	0.000

**Table A2: ESEM unstandardised factor loadings,**

**4-factor solution (without 'Views of Major Allies' item), scalar invariant model**

Survey Item	1 CI	2 ISO	3 GJ	4 MI
[Country] should work more through international organizations, like the UN.	1.259	-0.052	0.429	0.003
The best way for [country] to be a world leader in foreign affairs is to build international consensus.	1.424	-0.026	0.068	0.333
[Country] should be more committed to diplomacy and not so fast to use the military in international crises.	1.286	0.421	-0.026	-0.277
[Country's] interests are best protected by avoiding involvement with other nations.	-0.209	1.227	0.265	0.018
[Country] shouldn't risk its citizens' happiness and well-being by getting involved with other nations.	0.128	1.177	-0.116	0.060
[Country] needs to simply mind its own business when it comes to international affairs.	0.009	1.504	0.089	-0.271
[Country] doesn't need to withdraw from international affairs, it just needs to stop letting international organizations tell us what we can and can't do.	0.033	0.393	-0.147	0.805
[Country] should always do what is in its own interest, even if our allies object.	-0.155	0.704	-0.079	0.791
[Country] should take all steps including the use of force to prevent aggression by any expansionist power.	0.221	0.074	0.136	1.014
[Country] needs a strong military to be effective in international relations.	-0.042	-0.057	0.006	1.901
[Country] should be more willing to share its wealth with other nations, even if it doesn't coincide with our political interests.	0.240	0.061	1.372	-0.076
[Country] should spend significantly more money on foreign aid.	0.008	-0.025	2.350	0.029
[Country] already does enough to help the world's poor.	-0.004	0.510	-0.666	0.556

Notes: Shaded cells indicate salient factor loadings ( $\geq |0.400|$ ). CI = cooperative internationalism;

ISO = isolationism; MI = militant internationalism; GJ = global justice

**Table A3: Standardised factor means,**

**4-factor solution (without 'Views of Major Allies' item), scalar invariant model, by state**

		Canada	Australia	US	UK	France	Germany
1	CI	-0.007	-0.039	0.000	-0.002	-0.186***	-0.029
2	ISO	0.154***	0.229***	0.000	0.078***	0.597***	0.393***
3	GJ	0.115***	0.144***	0.000	-0.285***	-0.008	0.213***
4	MI	-0.122***	0.041	0.000	-0.084***	-0.096***	-0.530***

Notes: \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$ . Factor means for the United States are fixed to zero. Significance tests are two-tailed Z tests comparing state factor means to the United States. Tests are not adjusted for multiple comparisons.