

The 9/11 Generation: An Analysis of College Student Attitudes Regarding U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-September 11th Period

Mark J. Mullenbach
University of Central Arkansas

Mark A. Elrod
University of Central Arkansas

The terrorist attacks of September 11th arguably had a significant impact on the foreign policy attitudes of American citizens, including members of the Millennial Generation and Generation Z. This study seeks to better understand the foreign policy attitudes of younger Americans who entered colleges and universities during the past decade. More than 1,600 students were surveyed regarding their attitudes on foreign policy between the Fall 2014 and Spring 2022 semesters. The survey showed that most respondents supported active and multilateral involvement in international affairs, as well as the use of military force to achieve foreign policy objectives. The results of statistical analyses indicated that variations in student attitudes regarding internationalism, multilateralism, and militarism were significantly impacted by their perceptions of the role of the United Nations, perceptions of the international environment, primary source of news about international affairs, amount of exposure to international news, international travel, and educational level of parents.

Introduction

Along with the Japanese military attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the United States military involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s, and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 are undoubtedly among the defining events that have significantly shaped U.S. foreign policy during the past century (Leffler 2003). The 9/11 terrorist

attacks and their aftermath have arguably also had a significant impact on the foreign policy attitudes of American citizens, particularly members of the Millennial Generation ("Generation Y") who were born during the last two decades of the 20th century (Thrall and Goepner 2015). To date, few studies have focused on the foreign policy attitudes of the younger members of the Millennial Generation, as well as the older members of the subsequent generation ("Generation Z"), who were born just before and after the terrorist attacks of September 11th.¹ We refer to this group of Americans as the "9/11 Generation."² This study is an attempt to better understand the foreign policy attitudes of these young Americans who entered U.S. colleges and universities during the past decade. Specifically, the present study focuses on two related questions. First, what are the general attitudes of American college students regarding U.S. foreign policy in the post-9/11 period and are these foreign policy attitudes largely different from or similar to those of the broader American public? Second, what are some explanations for the variations in the attitudes of college students regarding U.S. foreign policy in the post-9/11 period?

To answer these questions, more than 1,600 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory political science courses at a comprehensive, four-year public university in the U.S. South were surveyed about their attitudes regarding foreign policy and international affairs between the Fall 2014 and Spring 2022 semesters. Most of the college students surveyed in this study were born between the years 1994 and 2004. Although only a few of the college students would have had direct memories of the events of September 11th, most of them were old enough to have been aware of the subsequent U.S. military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some of the college students may even have had family members or friends who served in the military in one or both countries.³

The results of the surveys conducted for this study indicate that a majority of the respondents held foreign policy attitudes that are comparable

¹ One recent study that did focus on the foreign policy attitudes of undergraduate college students was Drury et al. 2010.

² See Towns, Eleni. "The 9/11 Generation: How 9/11 Shaped the Millennial Generation," Center for American Progress, September 8, 2011, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-911-generation/>.

³ See "Chapter 5: The Public and the Military," *War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era*, Pew Research Center, October 5, 2011, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2011/10/05/chapter-5-the-public-and-the-military/>.

to the general American public. Similar to the results of recent national surveys of the foreign policy attitudes of the general American public, this study found that younger Americans, specifically college students, support active U.S. involvement in international affairs, multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, the results of this study suggest that the foreign policy attitudes of college students are coherent and structured, as previous research over the past few decades has found regarding the foreign policy attitudes of the general American public. Statistical analyses in this study suggest that variations in the foreign policy attitudes of the college students were significantly impacted by their perceptions of the role of the United Nations, perceptions of the international environment, reliance on Fox News as the primary source of news about international affairs, amount of exposure to international news, and international travel.

The remainder of the article is divided into five parts. After briefly summarizing prior research on foreign policy attitudes, we provide a theoretical framework for explaining variations in the foreign policy attitudes of college students. We then discuss the research design, including the statistical models that will be estimated and the operationalization of variables. After providing the results of the statistical analyses and robustness checks, we discuss the overall findings in the study. We conclude with some observations about future research on foreign policy attitudes and an implication of the study for U.S. foreign policymakers.

Structure and Dimensions of Foreign Policy Attitudes

Prior to the mid-1970s, many studies of public opinion in the U.S. suggested that mass attitudes regarding foreign policy were largely inconsistent, incoherent, and unstructured (Converse 1964; Lippmann 1922; Simon 1974). Notably, Gabriel Almond (1950) asserted that foreign policy attitudes among most Americans “lack intellectual structure and factual content” (p. 69). Near the end of the Vietnam War, Stephen Bennett (1974) concluded that “the mass public’s foreign policy opinions do not lack coherence entirely,” suggesting that it depended partly on the salience of a particular foreign policy issue such as the Vietnam War at a given time (p. 742).

More recently, scholars have challenged the so-called “Lippmann-Almond Consensus”, arguing that many Americans hold coherent and

structured foreign policy attitudes (Jentleson 1992; Page and Shapiro 1992). Many of these more recent studies have suggested that foreign policy attitudes of Americans are multidimensional, as opposed to being structured along a single *internationalism-isolationism* dimension (Bardes and Oldendick 1978; Chittick and Billingsley 1989; Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981; Oldendick and Bardes 1981; Wittkopf and Maggiotto 1983). For example, Barbara Bardes and Robert Oldendick (1978) identified five different dimensions of foreign policy attitudes: *militarism* - level of support for maintaining and, if necessary, using U.S. military force; *involvement* - level of support for U.S. involvement in world affairs; *world problems* - level of support for U.S. involvement in solving worldwide problems such as hunger and arms control; *détente* - level of support for maintaining international peace through cooperation with other world powers; and *international organizations* - level of support for the United Nations and other international organizations (pp. 499-502).

Subsequent studies came to similar conclusions regarding the multidimensional character of U.S. foreign policy attitudes, although these studies differed in terms of the number of dimensions and the specific types of attitudes (Holsti and Rosenau 1990). For example, Michael Maggiotto and Eugene Wittkopf (1981) suggested two dimensions (cooperative internationalism and militant internationalism), which combined to produce four mutually exclusive types of attitudes (*accommodationists*, *internationalists*, *isolationists*, and *hardliners*) (pp. 610-612). Later, Ronald Hinckley (1988) argued that there were three "fundamental attitudinal factors underlying American opinions about the means to achieve national security and foreign policy goals," including isolation from or involvement with international affairs; independent or cooperative action; and the use or nonuse of military force (pp. 300-301). Similarly, Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis (1995) demonstrated a three-dimensional model of foreign policy attitudes, including internationalism-isolationism, multilateralism-unilateralism, and militarism-nonmilitarism. The authors concluded that each of their "three dimensions of foreign policy beliefs adds something to the explanation of specific opinions" of foreign policy issues (p. 323).

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

Following the direction of Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis (1995) and Hinckley (1988), we assume that core foreign policy attitudes are structured along three basic dimensions: (a) support for or against active involvement by the U.S. in international affairs (*internationalism-isolationism*); (b) support

for or against multilateral involvement by the U.S. in international affairs (*multilateralism-unilateralism*); and (c) support for or against the use of American military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives (*militarism-nonmilitarism*). Given the three-dimensional structure of foreign policy attitudes, we argue that variations in foreign policy attitudes are generally impacted by an individual's perceptions of the world and the information about the world to which an individual is exposed. In this study, we have identified two perceptual factors and four informational factors that we believe function as filters through which an individual's specific attitudes about foreign policy and international affairs are largely formed: perception of the role of the United Nations; perception of the international environment; primary source of news about international affairs; amount of exposure to international news; international travel; and educational level of parents.

Perception of the Role of the United Nations

Founded in October 1945, the United Nations facilitates international cooperation across a wide range of issues, including peace and security, human rights, refugees, global environment, and economic development. Given the UN Charter's prohibition on the use of military force by member-states against other states (except in cases of individual or collective self-defense or uses of military force authorized by the UN Security Council), the UN encourages member-states to rely primarily on diplomacy and negotiations over coercion and military action. Only on rare occasions, most notably North Korea's invasion of South Korea in 1950 and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, has the UN Security Council authorized member-states to use military force to enforce international peace and security (Blokker 2000; Franck 2001). Since the end of the Second World War, most Americans have generally held a favorable opinion about the UN and its importance in international affairs, although this support has varied depending on international events at any given time.⁴ In addition, recent surveys have found that young adults in the U.S. have been somewhat more favorable (68%) toward the UN compared to older adults (56%).⁵

In this study, we suggest that the perceptions of individuals about the role of the UN in the world influence their attitudes about U.S. foreign

⁴ See "Seventy Years of U.S. Public Opinion on the United Nations," The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, June 22, 2025, <https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/>.

⁵ See "United Nations gets mostly positive marks from people around the world," Pew Research Center, September 23, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/>.

policy. Specifically, we argue that college students who perceive that the UN plays an important global role are more likely to value many of the basic principles of the UN, including the peaceful or non-military resolution of international disputes and multilateral cooperation across the wide range of global issues. As such, we expect that college students who perceive that the UN plays an important global role are more supportive of cooperative internationalist approaches to U.S. foreign policy, which would include active, multilateral, and non-military involvement in international affairs.⁶

H1: College students who perceive that the United Nations plays an important role in the world are more likely to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs, more likely to support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and more likely to oppose the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Perception of the International Environment

Individuals' attitudes regarding U.S. foreign policy and international affairs may be influenced by their perceptions of the international environment (Taydas and Olson 2022). In their study, Brewer et al. (2004) suggested that individuals "with high levels of international trust see the realm of world affairs as a friendly environment where trust and cooperation among nations are the norms" and individuals "with low levels of international trust see the same realm as a hostile environment where all nations strive against one another for advantage" (p. 96). In addition, the authors found evidence that individuals who perceive the international environment as a friendly or non-threatening place were more supportive of internationalism as a general principle and less supportive of the use of military force to prevent Iraq from acquiring weapons of mass destruction (Brewer et al., 2004). Using this same logic, we expect that college students who perceive the world as non-threatening are more supportive of cooperative internationalist approaches to U.S. foreign policy compared to college students who perceive the world as threatening.

H2: College students who perceive the international environment as generally safe and friendly are more likely to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs, more likely to support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs,

⁶ Rathbun et al. (2016) define "cooperative internationalism" as an orientation toward international affairs that stresses concern for others abroad, with whom one should work toward common goals" (p. 125).

and more likely to oppose the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Primary Source of News about International Affairs

Numerous scholars have found that the media in the U.S. have an impact on the political attitudes, voting behaviors, perceptions, and misperceptions of citizens (DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007; Druckman and Parkin 2005; Gadarian 2010; Gil de Zúñiga, Correa, and Valenzuela 2012; Groeling and Baum 2008; Kull, Ramsay, and Lewis 2003/2004; Ladd and Lenz 2009; Lin 2009). In particular, some scholars have suggested that foreign policy attitudes are particularly susceptible to “media framing,” which occurs when the media focuses on specific themes or aspects of an issue in order to influence government policymakers and shape public opinion (Auerbach and Bloch-Elkon 2005). Media framing is particularly effective in shaping foreign policy attitudes when a major source of international news, such as a cable news network, rather overtly provides “politically biased news and opinion” in a consistent manner over a period of time (Jones 2012, p. 179). Mark Harmon and Robert Muenchen (2009) found that Fox News was “more likely to use the pro-war terms and less likely to use the anti-war terms” in their broadcast news programs, contributing to support for the use of military force (p. 19). Aday et al. (2005) also found evidence in their study that reporting by Fox News prior to the U.S. military invasion of Iraq in 2003 was clearly biased in favor of the use of military force and that Fox News viewers were highly supportive of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

In this study, we argue that the attitudes of American college students regarding U.S. foreign policy may vary depending on their primary source of media information. Specifically, college students who rely primarily on conservative or right-leaning media, such as Fox News, are more likely to support military and unilateral approaches to U.S. foreign policy. On the other hand, college students who rely primarily on liberal or left-leaning media, such as CNN or MSNBC, are more likely to support non-military and multilateral approaches to U.S. foreign policy. We test this proposition by hypothesizing that the foreign policy attitudes of college students whose primary sources of international news are the three major 24-hour cable news networks (Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC) will vary depending on which cable news network they rely for their information. Since viewers of each of these cable news networks have a greater exposure to international news than non-viewers, we expect that both groups of

college students will be more supportive of active U.S. involvement in international affairs, just not in the same manner.

H3a: College students whose primary source of news about international affairs is Fox News are more likely to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs, more likely to oppose multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and more likely to support the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

H3b: College students whose primary source of news about international affairs is CNN or MSNBC are more likely to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs, more likely to support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and more likely to oppose the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Amount of Exposure to International News

Previous studies have found evidence that exposure to information about the world has an impact on the foreign policy attitudes of Americans (Korzenny, del Toro, and Gaudino 1987; Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981). These studies have often found that more exposure to international news in newspapers and other traditional forms of media is associated with more supportive attitudes regarding active American involvement with other countries in international affairs. For example, Maggiotto and Wittkopf (1981) found the more closely individuals follow news about international affairs, the “more likely they are to score high on the cooperative internationalism dimension,” suggesting that these individuals were more likely to support active and multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs (p. 618). Therefore, we argue that the attitudes of college students regarding U.S. foreign policy should vary depending on the amount of exposure they have to information about international affairs. We expect that college students who have more exposure to international news will be more supportive of cooperative internationalist approaches to U.S. foreign policy compared to college students who have less exposure to international news.

H4: College students who have more exposure to news about international affairs are more likely to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs, more likely to support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and more likely to oppose the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

International Travel

In addition to exposure to international news, an individual's understanding of the world is arguably enhanced through international travel. For most Americans, international travel is their "main direct source of foreign impressions," and individuals who have traveled abroad are better able to incorporate "international considerations" into their thinking (De Sola Pool, Keller, and Bauer 1956, pp. 164-168). In particular, college student participation in international educational programs (i.e., study abroad programs) results in a greater degree of comfort with people of other cultures and a different perspective about the world (Ballantyne 2011). Velta Clarke (2004) found that international travel by college students made a "positive contribution to international attitudes" (p. 62). Likewise, Jerry Carlson and Keith Widaman (1988) concluded that studying abroad "can be an important contributor to international awareness and potentially contribute to attitudes and behaviors that help foster international understanding" (p. 15). Given the results of these previous studies, we argue that college students who have traveled overseas at least once are more supportive of cooperative internationalist approaches to U.S. foreign policy compared to college students who have not previously travelled overseas.

H5: College students who have traveled outside of the U.S. are more likely to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs, more likely to support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and more likely to oppose the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Educational Level of Parents

Another potential source of information about international affairs for younger individuals is their parents. Since "childhood is a particularly malleable period," parents are known to be one of the primary socialization agents of children (Maccoby 1992, p. 1006). Therefore, we expect that variations in the foreign policy attitudes of college students are influenced, at least in part, by the level of education of their parents. The more education an individual's parents have obtained, the more likely that the individual will be exposed to information about the world, either through the availability of books and magazines, through casual conversations, or through television programs viewed in the home.

In fact, scholars have found evidence that education matters when it comes to foreign policy attitudes in the U.S. One study found that individuals with the least education tended to support militant internationalism and individuals with the most education tended to support

cooperative internationalism (Wittkopf and Maggiotto 1983). Several other studies concluded that well-educated individuals are more likely to be internationalists and multilateralists, while less-educated individuals are more likely to be nationalists or isolationists (Hinckley 1988; Schoen 2007; Urbatsch 2010). A study of the Persian Gulf War in the early 1990s found that college-educated Americans were less supportive of U.S. military action compared to less-educated Americans (Schuman and Rieger 1992). Similarly, Bardes and Oldendick (1978) found that individuals in higher education groups were less supportive of the use of military force and more supportive of greater U.S. involvement in the world. In making the connection between higher levels of education and internationalism, Brewer et al. (2004) suggested that “support for internationalism among the American public increases with education, presumably because education brings citizens into contact with the pro-internationalism consensus among American political elites” (p. 95). Therefore, since college-educated individuals are more likely to support cooperative internationalist approaches to U.S. foreign policy, we argue that college students whose parents are college-educated are also more likely to support cooperative internationalist approaches to U.S. foreign policy.

H6: College students whose parents are college-educated are more likely to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs, more likely to support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and more likely to oppose the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Alternative sources of foreign policy attitudes

There is a possibility that certain ideological, political, and demographic factors - including ideological orientation, political party identification, race, sex, and religious affiliation - play important roles in shaping an individual's attitudes regarding foreign policy and international affairs. While earlier studies downplayed the role of partisan and ideological identifications, as well as certain social-economic factors, in explaining foreign policy attitudes (e.g., Converse 1964; Verba et al. 1967), more recent studies have found some evidence of the significance of ideology, political party, and demographic factors.

Several scholars have examined the ideological differences in foreign political attitudes in the U.S. Some of these studies have found that conservatives are generally more supportive of the use of military force compared to individuals who identify with other ideologies (Bardes and Oldendick 1978; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Wittkopf 1981; Wittkopf and

Maggiotto 1983). Seeking to explain the impact of ideology on foreign policy attitudes, Peter Gries (2014) argued that liberals “tend to question both the efficacy and desirability of the use of force,” while the “conservative view that force is both efficacious and normatively justified has a very long history” (pp. 105-106). Rathbun et al. (2016) argued that for conservatives, the “use or threat of force would be a necessary element for controlling an unpredictable environment where there is no recourse to a higher authority” (p. 128). On the other hand, Harald Schoen (2007) suggested that individuals with liberal values are thought to be “more skeptical of armed forces and of the international use of military force than conservatives” (p. 409). Finally, Kertzer et al. (2014) found that “libertarianism is positively associated with isolationism” in their study of the impact of moral values on foreign policy attitudes (p. 835).

Some scholars have also found partisan differences with respect to the foreign policy attitudes of Americans. Many of these studies found that individuals identifying with the Democratic Party tend to be less supportive compared to individuals identifying with the Republican Party when it comes to the use of military force (Bardes and Oldendick 1978; Drury et al. 2010; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). Other studies have found that Democrats are more likely to believe that some of the country’s problems can be solved by working with other countries (Mordecai and Fagan 2021). Similarly, Robert Urbatsch (2010) found that Democrats are generally more supportive of active and multilateral involvement by the U.S. in international affairs, although foreign policy attitudes may depend on which political party controls the White House at any given time. In other words, the foreign policy attitudes of both Democrats and Republicans may vary depending on the current occupant of the White House. Due to increasing political polarization, both groups may be more supportive of certain foreign policy approaches when their own political party aligns with the political party of the president (Friedrichs and Tama 2022; Maxey 2022; Smeltz 2022).

Studies that have examined the role of race as a source of foreign policy attitudes have generally found that whites are more supportive of the use of military force than non-whites. For example, Val Burris (2008) found that for most of the uses of U.S. military force between the Vietnam War and the Iraq War, whites have been more supportive of military actions than non-whites. With respect to foreign policy attitudes regarding active U.S. involvement in international affairs, Urbatsch (2010) found that “non-whites...are all more likely to sympathize with isolationism” (p. 478).

Several scholars have concluded that the foreign policy attitudes of males and females are generally different, partly because males tend to be more militaristic in their foreign policy attitudes than females (Drury et al. 2010; Togeby 1994; Urbatsch 2010). For example, Burris (2008) found that for most of the uses of U.S. military force from the Vietnam War to the Iraq War, “women indicated less support for military initiatives than men” (p. 459). Providing at least one reason for this difference, Schoen (2007) noted that females are “more risk averse and less inclined to support the use of military force” (p. 409). On the other hand, Bardes and Oldendick (1978) found “virtually no differences between males and females” on their five dimensions of foreign policy attitudes (p. 505).

Finally, some recent studies have explored the relationship between an individual’s religious affiliation and foreign policy attitudes in the U.S. (Cavari 2013; Jelen 1994; Wuthnow and Lewis 2008). In their study, Zeynep Taydas and Laura Olson (2022) found that religious affiliation “systematically points Americans in different directions regarding a wide range of foreign policy attitudes” and that the “unaffiliated and Catholics...perceive the world as less threatening than do evangelicals and prefer multilateral, cooperative solutions to international problems” (p. 921). Guth et al. (2005) found that evangelical Christians were more favorable to unilateral actions by the U.S. government in international affairs, while those who were not affiliated with a religion were more favorable to multilateral actions by the U.S. government. Other studies have found that evangelical Christians are generally more supportive of the use of U.S. military force compared to other groups, particularly Roman Catholics and religiously unaffiliated individuals (Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris 2008; Smidt 2005; Taydas and Olson 2012). Analyzing public opinion regarding the U.S. military intervention in Iraq in 2003, Carolyn Lin (2009) found that while evangelical Christians “continued to express unwavering support for the military action, other mainstream Christian denominations – such as the Methodists and the African American churches – started to speak out against the war” (p. 31).

Research Design

The main hypotheses developed in this study are tested using data compiled from a 15-question survey of 1,607 undergraduate students enrolled in multiple sections of lower-level political science courses offered at a comprehensive, four-year public university in the U.S. South (see

Appendix A).⁷ The surveys were administered to students enrolled in these courses at the university during two different periods – Fall 2014 to Spring 2017 and Fall 2019 to Spring 2022.⁸ Surveys that were incomplete or completed by students who were not citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. were omitted from the sample.

The aggregate data from the surveys is summarized in Table 1.⁹ The foreign policy attitudes of most of the 1,607 college students surveyed for this study reflected support for active U.S. involvement in international affairs, support for multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and support for the use of U.S. military force. As shown in Table 1, some 70 percent of the respondents supported active U.S. involvement in international affairs, 72 percent of the respondents supported multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, 63 percent of the respondents

⁷ Except when the survey was administered electronically due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a hard copy of the survey was distributed to each of the students attending class sessions in each of the selected courses. The surveys were administered by the instructors of the selected courses. Students were given written instructions with the surveys, including the option of choosing not to participate in the survey. During the period of the study, more than 90 percent of the students attending the class sessions completely filled out the survey. Overall, less than ten percent of the surveys were either left blank or were not completely filled out.

⁸ The surveys were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the university in October 2014 and October 2019. The lower-level courses in which the survey was administered included Introduction to Political Science, U.S. Government & Politics, and Introduction to International Relations. Although the latter two courses were required for all students pursuing the political science major at the university, most of the respondents in the sample were students who were not majoring in political science. In fact, most of the students were enrolled in the courses in order to complete specific components of the university's lower-level general education requirements. Consequently, we believe that the sample of students participating in the survey was a reasonably good sample of the overall population of freshmen and sophomore students (excluding international students and other students who were not citizens or permanent residents of the U.S.) who were enrolled at the university during these two periods.

⁹ Table 1 includes a summary of some basic demographic characteristics of the survey respondents, which were not significantly different from the basic demographic characteristics of the overall student population at the university. The gender of the survey respondents was 57.4 percent female and 42.6 percent male. By comparison, the proportion of female undergraduate students ranged from 58.5% to 61.0% and male undergraduate students ranged from 39.0% to 41.5% at the university between 2014 and 2022. The racial identification of the survey respondents was 71.3 percent White, 18.1 percent Black, and 6.7 percent Latino. By comparison, the proportion of White undergraduate students ranged from 65.1% to 67.0%; Black undergraduate students ranged from 15.4% to 18.7%; and Latino undergraduate students ranged from 4.2% to 6.3% at the university between 2014 and 2022.

supported the use of military force to protect U.S. national security interests, and 54 percent of the respondents supported the use of military force to deal with humanitarian crises.

The foreign policy attitudes of the college students surveyed for this study were generally consistent with the foreign policy attitudes of the broader American public during this time period. Like most of the college students surveyed for this study, a majority of Americans tend to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs. The 2019 public opinion survey sponsored by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs found that 70 percent of Americans supported an active U.S. role in world affairs.¹⁰ A survey sponsored by the Pew Research Center in 2019 also found that a majority of Americans, albeit a somewhat lower percentage (53%), supported an active U.S. role in world affairs.¹¹ Furthermore, a majority of both the college students surveyed for this study and the American public generally support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs. In a survey sponsored by the Pew Research Center in 2020, some 74 percent of Americans, including 90 percent of Democrats and 53 percent of Republicans, supported the idea that countries should “act as part of a global community that works together to solve problems.”¹² Lastly, a majority of both the college students surveyed for this study and the American public generally support the use of military force in the pursuit of U.S. foreign policy objectives. The 2019 National Defense Survey sponsored by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute found that 65 percent of Americans support maintaining U.S. military bases overseas and 76 percent of Americans support the use of U.S. military force to prevent human rights violations and to defend freedom in other countries.¹³

¹⁰ See Smeltz, Dina, et al. 2019. *Rejecting Retreat: Americans Support U.S. Engagement in Global Affairs - Results of the 2019 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy*. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Chicago, Illinois, <https://globalaffairs.org/>.

¹¹ See Pew Research Center, *In a Politically Polarized Era, Sharp Divides in Both Partisan Coalitions*, December 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/>.

¹² See Pew Research Center, *International Cooperation Welcomed Across 14 Advanced Economies*, September 2020, page 10, <https://www.pewresearch.org/>.

¹³ Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute, *Results of the 2019 National Defense Survey*, November 2019, <https://www.reaganfoundation.org/reagan-institute/>.

Table 1: Summary of College Student Attitudes Regarding US Foreign Policy

Variables	N	%
Dimensions of Foreign Policy Attitudes		
Support for internationalism	1,119	69.6
Support for multilateralism	1,154	71.8
Support for militarism	1,248	77.7
Support for militarism / security	1,012	62.9
Support for militarism / humanitarian	871	54.2
Perception of the Role of the United Nations		
UN plays an important role in the world	1,249	77.7
Other	358	22.3
Perception of the International Environment		
World is generally safe and friendly	519	32.3
Other	1,088	67.7
Primary source of News about International Affairs		
CNN News or MSNBC News	375	23.3
Fox News	311	19.4
Other	921	57.3
Amount of Exposure to International News		
One to three hours weekly	859	53.4
Three or more hours weekly	265	16.5
Other	483	30.1
International Travel		
Traveled abroad at least once	812	50.5
Other	795	49.5
Educational Level of Parent		
Both parents have at least a four-year college degree	607	37.8
Other	1,000	62.2
Total Number of Survey Respondents	1,607	100.0

Variables continued	n	%
Political Ideology		
Conservative	543	33.8
Liberal	590	36.7
Libertarian	113	7.0
Other	361	22.5
Political Party Identification		
Democratic Party	660	41.0
Republican Party	516	32.1
Libertarian Party	70	4.4
Other	361	22.5
Racial Identification		
White	1,146	71.3
Black	291	18.1
Latino	108	6.7
Other	62	3.9
Gender		
Male	684	42.6
Female	923	57.4
Religious Affiliation		
Evangelical Christian	599	37.3
Mainline Protestant	132	8.2
Roman Catholic	139	8.7
No Religious Affiliation	333	20.7
Other Religion	404	25.1
Total Number of Survey Respondents	1,607	100.0

Dependent Variables

To account for each of the three main dimensions of U.S. foreign policy attitudes, three dependent variables are used in the statistical models estimated in this study: *Internationalism* – a model explaining support for active U.S. involvement in international affairs; *Multilateralism* – a model explaining support for multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs; and *Militarism* – a model explaining support for the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives. Since individual attitudes regarding the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives might be conditioned on the general purpose of the use of military force, two additional models are estimated: *Militarism/Security* – a model explaining

support for the use of military force for protecting U.S. national security interests; and *Militarism/Human* – a model explaining support for the use of military force to deal with humanitarian crises. For each of these five models, the dependent variable is coded “1” when the respondent indicates explicit support for the particular U.S. foreign policy approach, and the variable is coded “0” otherwise. The latter category includes responses that were not supportive of the particular approach or were unsure.

Independent Variables

Each of the main independent variables in this study, which are listed below, were operationalized as dichotomous (binary) variables.¹⁴

UN Role – coded “1” if the respondent believes that the United Nations plays an important role in the world and coded “0” otherwise.

World – coded “1” if the respondent believes that the world is generally a safe and friendly place and coded “0” otherwise.

CNN/MSNBC – coded “1” if the respondent’s primary source of news about international affairs is CNN or MSNBC and coded “0” otherwise.

Fox News – coded “1” if the respondent’s primary source of news about international affairs is Fox News and coded “0” otherwise.

News Exposure – coded “1” if the respondent spends three or more hours on average reading or listening to news about international affairs each week and coded “0” otherwise.

International Travel – coded “1” if the respondent has traveled outside of the U.S. and coded “0” otherwise.

Parents’ Education – coded “1” if both of the respondent’s parents have at least four-year college degrees (or at least one of the respondent’s parents has a graduate or professional degree) and coded “0” otherwise.

¹⁴ We tested for multicollinearity among the main independent variables in the statistical models. The variance inflation factor (VIF), which indicates how much of the variance of a coefficient estimate is being inflated by multicollinearity, was between 1.01 and 1.14 for each of the independent variables in the study. The condition number was 6.3038. Generally, a VIF value less than five and a condition number less than ten indicate that multicollinearity is not a problem in the statistical models.

Control Variables

In each of the models, we controlled for alternative influences on foreign policy attitudes, including ideology (*Conservative*, *Liberal*, and *Libertarian*), race (*White*, *Black*, and *Latino*), sex, (*Male*), and religion (*Evangelical Christian*, *Mainline Protestant*, *Roman Catholic*, and *No Religion*).¹⁵ Each of these control variables is coded “1” if the respondent identified with the factor and is coded “0” otherwise. The omitted categories in the dichotomous (binary) control variables are the responses corresponding to all of the other categories (including “other”) in the survey questions. We also include the control variable *Partisan* in each of the models. This control variable is coded “1” when a respondent’s political party affiliation aligned with the political party of the current president and is coded “0” otherwise.¹⁶

Results

Since each of the dependent variables in this study were operationalized as dichotomous (binary) variables, we estimated five different sets of logistic regression models with robust standard errors. The results of the logistic regression analyses of each of the dependent variables are presented in Tables 2 through 6. In each table, the three models correspond to analyses using the combined survey data from both periods (model 1), survey data from the period 2014-2017 (model 2), and survey data from the period 2019-2022 (model 3). Since logistic regression coefficients are difficult to interpret, we have included the odds ratio for the logit coefficients estimated in each of the models.

In Table 2, where the dependent variable in the models is *Internationalism*, there is support for four of the seven main hypotheses pertaining to college student attitudes regarding active U.S. involvement in international affairs. The logit coefficients for the independent variables *UN Role* and *World* are in the predicted direction (positive) and statistically

¹⁵ We did not include the respondent’s political party affiliation (*Democratic*, *Republican*, and *Libertarian*) in the logistic regression models since these control variables were highly correlated with the ideology control variables (*Conservative*, *Liberal*, and *Libertarian*). We tested the models with the political party control variables instead of the ideology control variables, but this did not significantly change the results in any of the models.

¹⁶ For the combined period, the political party affiliation of a total of 623 out of 1,607 college students (38.8%) aligned with the political party of the current president.

significant in all three models.¹⁷ In addition, the logit coefficients for the independent variable *International Travel* are in the predicted direction (positive) and statistically significant in models 1 and 2, and the logit coefficient for the independent variable *Fox News* is in the predicted direction (positive) and statistically significant in models 1 and 3. As expected, college students who perceive that the UN plays an important role in the world, who perceive that the world is generally safe and friendly, who are exposed to three or more hours of international news each week, and whose primary source of international news is Fox News were more likely to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs. The logit coefficients for the independent variable *Parents' Education* are statistically significant in models 1 and 3, but not in the predicted direction.

¹⁷ In model 1, the odds ratio (1.496) for the independent variable *UN Role* suggests that for students who perceive that the UN plays an important role in the world, the odds of supporting active U.S. involvement in international affairs are about 49 percent higher compared to students who do not perceive that the UN plays an important role in the world.

Table 2: Logistic Regression Analyses of College Student Attitudes Regarding Internationalism

Variables	(Combined)		(2014-2017)		(2019-2022)	
	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio
UN Role	.401 (.134)***	1.493	.407 (.168)***	1.502	.440 (.225)**	1.553
World	.345 (.126)***	1.413	.310 (.164)**	1.364	.370 (.202)**	1.448
CNN / MSNBC	-.017 (.143)	.983	.130 (.178)	1.138	-.413 (.257)*	.662
Fox News	.207 (.160)*	1.230	.106 (.193)	1.112	.382 (.297)*	1.465
News Exposure	.198 (.158)	1.219	.263 (.209)	1.301	.111 (.248)	1.118
International Travel	.299 (.117)***	1.349	.341 (.153)**	1.406	.224 (.187)	1.252
Parents' Education	-.238 (.120)**	.788	-.194 (.156)	.824	-.307 (.191)*	.736
Conservative	.248 (.163)*	1.281	.221 (.201)	1.247	.370 (.298)	1.448
Liberal	.272 (.157)**	1.313	.158 (.205)	1.172	.522 (.268)**	1.685
Libertarian	-.178 (.233)	.837	-.127 (.312)	.881	-.081 (.372)	.922
Partisan	.278 (.125)**	1.321	.343 (.180)**	1.410	.305 (.192)*	1.356
White	.515 (.208)***	1.674	.840 (.302)***	2.317	.063 (.313)	1.066
Black	-.238 (.231)	.788	-.121 (.316)	.886	-.368 (.365)	.692
Latino	.073 (.288)	1.076	.405 (.403)	1.499	-.396 (.457)	.673
Male	.156 (.117)*	1.169	.125 (.149)	1.133	.190 (.195)	1.210
Evangelical Christian	.270 (.147)**	1.310	.330 (.191)**	1.390	.239 (.236)	1.270
Mainline Protestant	.319 (.239)*	1.376	.343 (.301)	1.410	.260 (.406)	1.297
Roman Catholic	.493 (.245)**	1.638	.587 (.317)**	1.799	.387 (.409)	1.473
No Religion	-.117 (.165)	.890	-.085 (.217)	.918	-.160 (.264)	.852
Constant	-.493 (.268)		-.781 (.374)		-.284 (.422)	
N	1,607		993		614	
Log likelihood	-941.785		-569.750		-366.250	
Wald chi-squared	83.68		59.26		32.48	
Prob > chi-squared	0.0000		0.0000		0.0276	

Note: Cell entries are logit coefficients estimated using STATA. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. The odds ratios are the exponentiated coefficients. Significance levels: *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01; one-tailed tests.

Table 3: Logistic Regression Analysis of College Student Attitudes Regarding Multilateralism

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	(Combined)		(2014-2017)		(2019-2022)	
	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio
UN Role	.390 (.134)***	1.477	.271 (.176)*	1.312	.558 (.220)***	1.746
World	.294 (.131)**	1.342	.633 (.186)***	1.884	-.099 (.197)	.906
CNN / MSNBC	-.113 (.147)	.893	-.188 (.188)	.829	-.146 (.258)	.865
Fox News	-.306 (.154)**	.737	-.290 (.197)*	.748	-.485 (.273)**	.616
News Exposure	.711 (.186)***	2.036	1.057 (.287)***	2.876	.331 (.261)	1.392
International Travel	.203 (.122)**	1.226	-.079 (.168)	.924	.561 (.189)***	1.753
Parents' Education	.056 (.125)	1.057	.062 (.168)	1.064	.134 (.196)	1.143
Conservative	-.133 (.164)	.876	.061 (.200)	1.063	-.315 (.319)	.730
Liberal	.401 (.170)***	1.493	.482 (.232)**	1.619	.375 (.293)*	1.455
Libertarian	-.071 (.260)	.932	.227 (.384)	1.255	-.279 (.411)	.757
Partisan	-.121 (.130)	.886	.024 (.195)	1.024	-.162 (.192)	.851
White	.749 (.215)***	2.114	.818 (.310)***	2.267	.295 (.317)	1.343
Black	.169 (.237)	1.184	.073 (.332)	1.076	-.156 (.374)	.855
Latino	.495 (.299)**	1.641	.528 (.412)*	1.696	.057 (.479)	1.058
Male	.334 (.122)***	1.396	.486 (.163)***	1.626	.161 (.198)	1.175
Evangelical Christian	-.170 (.147)	.844	-.481 (.194)***	.618	.263 (.237)	1.300
Mainline Protestant	-.130 (.229)	.878	-.422 (.290)*	.656	.107 (.401)	1.113
Roman Catholic	-.168 (.240)	.845	-.452 (.307)*	.636	.137 (.400)	1.147
No Religion	.356 (.194)**	1.428	.272 (.282)	1.313	.395 (.280)*	1.484
Constant	-.293 (.279)		.050 (.390)		-.299 (.430)	
N	1,607		993		614	
Log likelihood	-888.913		-507.862		-358.461	
Wald chi-squared	124.56		111.07		45.51	
Prob > chi-squared	0.0000		0.0000		0.0006	

Note: Cell entries are logit coefficients estimated using STATA. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. The odds ratios are the exponentiated coefficients. Significance levels: *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01; one-tailed tests.

In Table 3, where the dependent variable in the models is *Multilateralism*, there is support for five of the seven main hypotheses pertaining to student attitudes regarding multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs. The logit coefficients for the independent variables *UN*

Role and *Fox News* are in their predicted directions and statistically significant in all three models. In addition, the logit coefficients for the independent variable *International Travel* are in their predicted direction (positive) and statistically significant in models 1 and 3. Lastly, the logit coefficients for the independent variables *World* and *News Exposure* are in the predicted direction (positive) and statistically significant in models 1 and 2. As expected, college students who perceive that the UN plays an important

role in the world, who are exposed to three or more hours of international news each week, who have traveled overseas, and who perceive the world as generally safe and friendly were more likely to support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs. Also consistent with our expectations, we found that college students whose primary source of international news is Fox News were less likely to support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs.¹⁸

In Table 4, where the dependent variable in the models is *Militarism*, there is support for two of the seven main hypotheses pertaining to college student attitudes regarding the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives. The logit coefficients for the independent variable *World* are in the predicted direction (negative) and statistically significant in models 1 and 3, and the logit coefficients for the independent variable *Fox News* are in the predicted direction (positive) and statistically significant in all three models. As expected, college students who perceive the world as generally safe and friendly were less likely to support the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives, while college students whose primary source of international news is Fox News were more likely to support the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives. The logit coefficients for the independent variable *International Travel* are statistically significant, but not in the predicted direction, in all three models.

The results shown in the models in Table 4 may reflect the possibility that some college students only support the use of military force for national security reasons or for humanitarian reasons, but not necessarily for both reasons. If that is true for at least some of the college students surveyed for this study, the statistical impact of the independent variables on attitudes regarding the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy

¹⁸ In model 1, the odds ratio (.737) for the independent variable *Fox News* suggests that for students whose primary source of international news is Fox News, the odds of supporting multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs are about 27 percent lower compared to students whose primary source of international news is not Fox News.

Table 4. Logistic Regression Analyses of College Student Attitudes regarding Militarism

Variables	<i>Model 1</i>		<i>Model 2</i>		<i>Model 3</i>	
	<i>(Combined)</i>		<i>(2014-2017)</i>		<i>(2019-2022)</i>	
	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio
UN Role	.188 (.161)	1.207	.252 (.208)	1.287	.168 (.263)	1.183
World	-.235 (.137)**	.790	-.006 (.188)	.994	-.483 (.211)**	.617
CNN / MSNBC	.201 (.170)	1.222	.227 (.218)	1.254	.086 (.289)	1.090
Fox News	.733 (.209)***	2.082	.360 (.258)*	1.433	1.273 (.403)***	3.571
News Exposure	.001 (.172)	1.001	-.059 (.232)	.943	-.066 (.264)	.937
International Travel	.311 (.135)**	1.365	.286 (.188)*	1.331	.298 (.201)*	1.347
Parents' Education	.034 (.138)	1.035	.020 (.197)	1.020	.114 (.204)	1.121
Conservative	.733 (.202)***	2.081	1.181 (.277)***	3.358	.242 (.354)	1.273
Liberal	-.479 (.164)***	.619	-.232 (.213)	.793	-.698 (.292)***	.498
Libertarian	.029 (.270)	1.029	.271 (.371)	1.312	-.371 (.439)	.690
Partisan	.335 (.140)***	1.398	.262 (.203)*	1.299	.387 (.202)**	1.473
White	.621 (.231)***	1.860	.656 (.329)**	1.928	.481 (.349)*	1.618
Black	-.066 (.261)	.936	-.134 (.358)	.875	-.156 (.412)	.856
Latino	.521 (.327)*	1.683	.004 (.385)	1.004	1.119 (.568)**	3.061
Male	.178 (.133)*	1.195	.074 (.175)	1.077	.419 (.214)**	1.521
Evangelical Christian	-.024 (.172)	.977	.249 (.230)	1.283	-.310 (.270)	.734
Mainline Protestant	.121 (.289)	1.129	.266 (.396)	1.304	-.049 (.451)	.952
Roman Catholic	.217 (.292)	1.242	.208 (.363)	1.231	.145 (.502)	1.156
No Religion	-.679 (.179)***	.507	-.668 (.242)***	.513	-.805 (.283)***	.447
Constant	.397 (.304)		.320 (.423)		.586 (.483)	
N	1,607		993		614	
Log likelihood	-764.918		-427.104		-321.429	
Wald chi-squared	158.86		84.65		75.17	
Prob > chi-squared	0.0000		0.0000		0.0000	

Note: Cell entries are logit coefficients estimated using STATA. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. The odds ratios are the exponentiated coefficients. Significance levels: *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01; one-tailed tests

objectives may not be apparent in the models shown in Table 4. The impact may, however, be apparent in the models discussed below in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Logistic Regression Analyses of College Student Attitudes regarding Militarism / Security

Variables	<i>Model 1</i>		<i>Model 2</i>		<i>Model 3</i>	
	<i>(Combined)</i>		<i>(2014-2017)</i>		<i>(2019-2022)</i>	
	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio
UN Role	.262 (.140)**	1.299	.429 (.178)***	1.536	.084 (.232)	1.087
World	-.208 (.120)**	.812	-.177 (.160)	.838	-.225 (.195)	.798
CNN / MSNBC	.296 (.149)**	1.345	.276 (.182)*	1.318	.138 (.271)	1.148
Fox News	.533 (.167)***	1.704	.336 (.202)**	1.399	.738 (.297)***	2.092
News Exposure	.231 (.153)*	1.260	.153 (.204)	1.165	.279 (.243)	1.322
International Travel	.096 (.116)	1.101	.054 (.155)	1.055	.087 (.182)	1.091
Parents' Education	-.157 (.119)*	.855	-.173 (.160)	.841	-.066 (.185)	.936
Conservative	.521 (.168)***	1.683	.649 (.211)***	1.915	.500 (.306)*	1.648
Liberal	-.747 (.150)***	.474	-.442 (.193)**	.643	-.883 (.268)***	.413
Libertarian	-.219 (.231)	.803	-.096 (.309)	.908	-.291 (.379)	.748
Partisan	.058 (.120)	1.059	-.144 (.168)	.865	.175 (.186)	1.191
White	.454 (.213)**	1.575	.421 (.286)*	1.523	.339 (.330)	1.404
Black	-.037 (.243)	.964	-.089 (.318)	.915	-.124 (.392)	.883
Latino	.227 (.280)	1.255	-.106 (.345)	.899	.597 (.483)	1.817
Male	.167 (.116)*	1.181	.108 (.151)	1.114	.286 (.191)*	1.331
Evangelical Christian	.281 (.146)**	1.325	.574 (.195)***	1.776	-.053 (.228)	.949
Mainline Protestant	.293 (.227)*	1.340	.544 (.307)**	1.723	-.091 (.378)	.913
Roman Catholic	.184 (.231)	1.202	.360 (.290)	1.433	-.116 (.398)	.890
No Religion	-.428 (.162)***	.652	-.475 (.210)**	.622	-.408 (.266)*	.665
Constant	-.089 (.277)		-.056 (.371)		-.079 (.438)	
N	1,607		993		614	
Log likelihood	-952.035		-557.228		-375.468	
Wald chi-squared	184.66		98.30		87.26	
Prob > chi-squared	0.0000		0.0000		0.0000	

Note: Cell entries are logit coefficients estimated using STATA. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. The odds ratios are the exponentiated coefficients. Significance levels: *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01; one-tailed tests.

In Table 5, the dependent variable in the models is *Militarism/Security*. This dependent variable measures support for the use of military force to protect vital U.S. national security interests, including supporting U.S. allies against foreign aggression and opposing security

threats to the U.S. The logit coefficients for the independent variables *World* and *Parents' Education* are in the predicted direction (negative) in all three models, but only statistically significant in model 1. These results indicate that college students who perceive the world as generally safe and friendly and whose parents had at least four-year college degrees were generally less supportive of the use of military force to protect vital U.S. national security interests. The logit coefficients for the independent variable *Fox News* are in the predicted direction (positive) and statistically significant in all three models. These results indicate that college students whose primary source of international news is Fox News were more supportive of the use of military force to protect vital U.S. national security interests. The logit coefficients for *UN Role* and *CNN/MSNBC* were positive and statistically significant in models 1 and 2.

Finally, *Militarism/Humanitarian* is the dependent variable in the models in Table 6. This dependent variable measures support for the use of military force to deal with humanitarian crises, including stopping or preventing genocide and assisting civilians adversely affected by civil war. The logit coefficients for the independent variable *International Travel* are positive and statistically significant in models 1 and 3, while the logit coefficient for the independent variable *Parents' Education* is positive and statistically significant in model 2. In addition, the logit coefficient for the independent variable *CNN/MSNBC* is positive and statistically significant in model 2. The results provide some evidence that college students who have traveled overseas, whose parents have at least four-year college degrees, and whose primary source of international news was CNN or MSNBC were significantly more likely to support the use of military force to deal with humanitarian crises.

Robustness Checks

In order to check the robustness of the results of the original logistic regression models, we ran additional tests and estimated additional regression models to address two potential issues. First, we assume that the three main dependent variables in this study (*Internationalism*, *Multilateralism*, and *Militarism*) are correlated since they are three dimensions of foreign policy attitudes. If an individual's foreign policy attitudes are coherent and structured, then it makes sense that the dimensions are correlated in some manner. Using bivariate probit regression, two correlated dependent variables can be simultaneously estimated using the same set of

Table 6. Logistic Regression Analyses of College Student Attitudes regarding Militarism / Humanitarian

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	(Combined)		(2014-2017)		(2019-2022)	
	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (SE)	Odds Ratio
UN Role	-.022 (.125)	.979	.050 (.155)	1.051	-.355 (.222)	.873
World	-.005 (.113)	.995	.011 (.146)	1.011	-.039 (.186)	.962
CNN / MSNBC	.149 (.133)	1.161	.226 (.163)*	1.253	.010 (.259)	1.010
Fox News	.096 (.144)	1.100	-.077 (.176)	.926	.399 (.266)*	1.490
News Exposure	.074 (.141)	1.077	.052 (.179)	1.054	.113 (.231)	1.119
International Travel	.273 (.107)***	1.314	.063 (.140)	1.065	.572 (.175)***	1.772
Parents' Education	.042 (.109)	1.043	.209 (.142)*	1.233	-.131 (.178)	.877
Conservative	.194 (.148)*	1.214	.296 (.177)**	1.345	.040 (.287)	1.041
Liberal	-.151 (.144)	.860	-.032 (.184)	.917	-.272 (.251)	.762
Libertarian	.008 (.224)	1.008	.207 (.295)	1.230	-.388 (.381)	.679
Partisan	.363 (.112)***	1.438	.380 (.158)***	1.463	.326 (.180)**	1.386
White	.362 (.195)**	1.436	.430 (.261)**	1.537	.233 (.299)	1.262
Black	-.294 (.219)	.745	-.335 (.285)	.716	-.362 (.354)	.697
Latino	.068 (.264)	1.071	-.410 (.325)	.664	.800 (.454)**	2.226
Male	-.010 (.107)	.990	-.172 (.135)	.842	.296 (.185)*	1.345
Evangelical Christian	-.181 (.134)*	.835	-.137 (.171)	.872	-.246 (.224)	.782
Mainline Protestant	-.123 (.212)	.884	-.129 (.258)	.879	-.013 (.393)	.987
Roman Catholic	.125 (.212)	1.133	.135 (.267)	1.145	.029 (.365)	1.029
No Religion	-.349 (.157)**	.706	-.217 (.203)	.805	-.641 (.258)***	.527
Constant	-.245 (.255)		-.249 (.335)		-.198 (.416)	
N	1,607		993		614	
Log likelihood	-1076.995		-660.602		-399.266	
Wald chi-squared	60.39		39.05		45.91	
Prob > chi-squared	0.0000		0.0043		0.0005	

Note: Cell entries are logit coefficients estimated using STATA. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. The odds ratios are the exponentiated coefficients. Significance levels: *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01; one-tailed tests.

independent variables. These results can be compared with the results of the original logistic regression models.

Since there are three main dependent variables in this study, we ran three different bivariate probit regression models using the three pairs of dependent variables (*Militarism-Internationalism*, *Militarism-Multilateralism*, and *Internationalism-Multilateralism*). A bivariate probit regression model generates a correlation coefficient (ρ) pertaining to the disturbances (errors terms) of the simultaneously estimated probit models. If the correlation coefficient (ρ) is statistically significantly different from zero, then we can confirm that the dependent variables in the simultaneously estimated model are correlated. The models, which are provided in Table 7 in Appendix B, indicate correlation between the pairs of dependent variables. The results are generally consistent with the results of the original logistic regression models. All of the independent variables with statistically significant coefficients in the predicted directions in the original logistic regression models were also statistically significant in the predicted directions in the bivariate probit regression models. Unlike the original logistic regression models, the coefficients for *News Exposure* were statistically significant in the predicted direction in the bivariate regression models that included *Internationalism* as one of the two dependent variables (models 1 and 3).

A second issue impacting the robustness of the original logistic regression models is the possibility that the two perceptual independent variables (*UN Role* and *World*) and the *Fox News* independent variable may not be entirely exogenous or, in other words, may not actually be independent. More specifically, the variables may be partially influenced by the dependent variables in the models. This issue is known as simultaneity bias. For example, a college student's foreign policy attitudes regarding the use of U.S. military force may be influenced by the student's reliance on Fox News as their primary source of news regarding international affairs. At the same time, the student's reliance on Fox News as their primary source of news regarding international affairs may be influenced by their attitudes regarding the use of U.S. military force. Similarly, a college's students foreign policy attitudes regarding active U.S. involvement in international affairs may be influenced the student's perception of the importance of the UN. At the same time, the student's perception of the importance of the UN may be influence by their foreign policy attitudes regarding active U.S. involvement in international affairs. In both examples, the "causal arrows" may go in both directions.

Since endogenous independent variables may lead to biased and inconsistent regression coefficients, we need to test for endogeneity. Since the dependent variables and the potentially endogenous independent

variables are dichotomous (binary) variables, we estimated a series of seemingly unrelated bivariate probit (SUBP) regression models. In these models, a suspected endogenous independent variable is treated as a dependent variable in the first of two simultaneously estimated probit models (first stage). In the second of the two simultaneously estimated probit models (second stage), the suspected endogenous variable is included as an independent variable in the equation with the main dependent variable. We found evidence that the suspected independent variables were endogenous in nearly half of the SUBP regression models. Notably, all three of the suspected variables were found to be endogenous in the models with *Militarism* and *Militarism/Security* as the dependent variables. The results of the SUBP regression models are provided in Tables 8 through 10 in Appendix B. Correcting for endogeneity in the models in which the correlation coefficient ρ is statistically significant, the results (second stage) are mostly consistent with the results of the original logistic regression models.¹⁹

Discussion

This study examined the foreign policy attitudes of members of the “9/11 generation” who were born just prior to or after the September 11th terrorist attacks. More than 1,600 college students at a university in the U.S. South were surveyed regarding their attitudes regarding foreign policy and international affairs between 2014 and 2022. Several perceptual and informational factors were hypothesized to influence three dimensions of the foreign policy attitudes of the college students, including internationalism, multilateralism, and militarism. The results of logistic regression models, along with the results of bivariate regression models to check the robustness of the logistic regression models, provided empirical support for most of the hypotheses in this study pertaining to the foreign policy attitudes of college students.

College students who perceived that the UN plays an important global role were more likely to support active and multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs. Contrary to our expectation, college students who perceived that the UN plays an important global role were also more likely to support the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives. Consistent with our expectations, we found that college students

¹⁹ The correlation coefficient (ρ) is statistically significant in models 3 and 4 in Table 8; models 2, 3, and 4 in Table 9; and models 3 and 4 in Table 10.

who generally perceive the international environment as friendly or non-threatening were also more likely to support active and multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs and less likely to support the use of military force.

Regarding the importance of a college student's primary source of news about international affairs, we found that media had a minimal impact on the foreign policy attitudes of college students whose primary source of news about international affairs were the left-leaning CNN or MSNBC. What little impact we did find for CNN/MSNBC was not in the expected direction concerning foreign policy attitudes on the use of military force. On the other hand, we found that media had a considerable impact on the foreign policy attitudes of college students whose primary source of news about international affairs was the right-leaning Fox News. As expected, these students were more likely to support active U.S. involvement in international affairs, less likely to support multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and more likely to support the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives. These findings suggest that Fox News may be more effective than both CNN and MSNBC in terms of influencing the foreign policy attitudes of their respective audiences.

We also found support in this study for the hypotheses that college students who spent three or more hours on average per week consuming news about international affairs and who had previously travelled outside of the U.S. were more likely to support active and multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs. The expectation that such college students would also oppose the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives was not supported empirically by the statistical analyses in this study. There was no support for the hypothesis that college students whose parents were more educated would support active and multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs or oppose the use of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Overall, the findings in this study enhance our basic understanding of the foreign policy attitudes of members of the "9/11 Generation" who entered colleges and universities in the past decade. Similar to other Americans, a majority of the college students surveyed for this study were generally supportive of active U.S. involvement in international affairs, multilateral U.S. involvement in international affairs, and the use of military force to achieve foreign policy objectives. The results of the statistical analyses supported the argument that certain perceptual and information

factors impact the foreign policy attitudes of college students. While the results of this study provided evidence of the impact of cable news networks, particularly Fox News, on college student attitudes regarding foreign policy, future research on this topic might focus more on social media and other alternative (non-traditional) sources of information on which college students may be increasingly relying.

Although the sample of college students surveyed for this study came from one public, four-year university in the U.S. South, there is at least one general implication for U.S. foreign policymakers. The results provide evidence that, similar to previous generations of Americans, many members of the “9/11 Generation” hold coherent and structured attitudes about U.S. foreign policy and international affairs. If so, U.S. government officials making decisions about foreign policy in the future will need to pay close attention to the attitudes of this generation as they have done with previous generations of Americans.

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