The development of foreign policy belief systems in the United States

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Policy makers are well advised to take into account attitudes of the general public when they make foreign policy decisions. The general indifference concerning foreign policy of ordinary citizens notwithstanding, foreign policy attitudes convey the impression of being well-structured and stable, as numerous studies concerning foreign policy belief systems indicate (Bardes and Oldendick 1978; Mandelbaum and Schneider 1979; Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981; Wittkopf 1981; Kegley and Wittkopf 1982; Herrmann 1986; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Holsti and Rosenau 1990; Chittick et al. 1995). This research program was especially on the rise after the end of the war in Vietnam, aiming to explore the state of the "foreign policy consensus" in the United States, which suffered from the disagreements about the Vietnam war (Holsti and Rosenau 1986). In contrast to the suggestions of earlier findings (e.g. Converse 1964), it became obvious that the foreign policy beliefs of the American public are not only structured and remarkably stable, but that this structure is also more complex than a mere internationalism-isolationism dichotomy. Early studies observed, among others, two dimensions of internationalism: Citizens on the upper end of the cooperative internationalism dimension stress humanitarian goals, détente and active cooperation with other nations, while militant internationalists are concerned about the threat of communism and are willing to use force as a foreign policy instrument (e.g. Mandelbaum and Schneider 1979; Wittkopf 1986). Furthermore, evidence for a third dimension often emerged, covering attitudes which are more economic in nature and resembling a protectionism or economic nationalism dimension (e.g. Kegley and Wittkopf 1982; Chittick et al. 1995).

However, with the end of the Cold War, academic interest in the structure of foreign policy beliefs diminished (but see for American elites Rathbun 2007). This comes somehow as a surprise, as the United States did not only face new foreign policy challenges after the end of the Cold War, such as the large-scale war against the regime of Saddam Hussein to liberate Kuwait, followed by several humanitarian interventions in Africa, Latin America and the Balkans. They also suffered the first attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor, resulting in long-lasting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the world-wide war against terror. All in all, the collapse of the Soviet Union did neither allow turning public attention wholly to domestic problems nor did the communism-related foreign policy dimensions neatly fit to the new international environment at the first glance.

Nonetheless, inquiries about the consequences of the end of the Cold War, the numerous humanitarian interventions in the 1990s, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and the following wars on the foreign policy belief systems of American citizens are rare. Thereby, these international developments represent a good opportunity to investigate the consequences of foreign policy events and changes in the international environment on the structure and content of foreign policy belief systems. With the Cold
War being over for more than two decades now, it should be possible to differentiate noise from substantial changes in foreign policy belief systems (see Kegley 1986: 457-458). Most notably, one can test whether Holsti (1992: 460-461) was right in guessing that the general structure of foreign policy beliefs would survive the end of communism.

This paper therefore seeks to shed light on the stability and change of foreign policy belief systems of American citizens over a time interval of three decades, beginning in the post-Vietnam era and ending in 2010. It starts by discussing different conceptualizations of foreign policy belief structures. Afterwards it examines the content and stability of foreign policy belief systems, drawing on Chicago Council survey data. By making use of multiple group confirmatory factor analysis, it is not only possible to make statements about the stability of the general structure of foreign policy orientations, but also to discern differences in the strength of the different dimensions over time. The paper concludes by discussing the findings and elaborating on some implications.

2. Theoretical considerations

The earliest students of public opinion in matters of foreign policy came to the conclusion that the general public is uninterested and uninformed with regard to foreign policy. According to the "Almond-Lippmann consensus" (Lippmann 1922; Almond 1950), foreign policy is far too remote from the daily life of the common man to motivate him to be satisfyingly informed about foreign affairs. As people are generally indifferent and badly informed, they follow their moods when forming foreign policy attitudes. Hence, it is not only unnecessary for governments to take into account the volatile and unstructured public opinion in foreign policy decision making, it can even be dangerous, as the preferences of the man on the street are led by emotions and not rationality (Morgenthau 1962; Kennan 1984; see Holsti 1992). However, the empirical foundations of Almond’s (1950) "mood theory" were rather fragile (Caspary 1970). In contrast to the retreat to isolationism after World War I, the decade following World War II was characterized by a strong and stable commitment of the general public toward international involvement (Caspary 1970: 546). Even attitudes toward the highly emotional issue of the Vietnam War did not change in a random manner, but in accordance with events and death tolls (Mueller 1973; Verba et al. 1967; see Holsti 1992: 446-447). Nevertheless, the Vietnam War is generally perceived as a turning point with regard to the structuring of foreign policy attitudes in the United States, as it led to disagreements about to the most fundamental issues of American foreign policy (Holsti and Rosenau 1986).

These disagreements fueled the interest in foreign policy belief structures of American citizens and elites (for an overview see Holsti 1992). First of all, scholars corrected the long-held impression of foreign policy attitudes being highly volatile. Despite the low interest and at best modest knowledge in matters of foreign policy, American citizens seem to possess structured belief systems. One reason why foreign policy attitudes seemed to lack coherence results from the fact that traditional
determinants of domestic attitudes exhibited weak correlations with foreign attitudes only, especially in the years before 1964, when public discourse was not ideologically charged (Nie and Andersen 1974). With growing ideological polarization, domestic and international attitudes began to overlap, leading to a stronger ideological coherence of foreign policy attitudes (Holsti and Rosenau 1996). However, even if one takes into account the liberal-to-conservative and the often applied internationalist-to-isolationist continuum, public attitudes towards foreign policy issues still seem to be structured poorly (see Holsti 1992: 448). A closer examination soon revealed that multiple dimensions are necessary to describe the structure of foreign policy attitudes adequately (Barde and Oldendick 1978).

Therefore, the first studies tried to develop different types and dimensions of internationalism: conservative and liberal internationalists (Mandelbaum and Schneider 1979), Cold War and Post-Cold War internationalists (Holsti 1979; Holsti and Rosenau 1984), or militant and cooperative internationalism (Wittkopf 1986). Generally, dimensions like the militant and cooperative internationalism instead of types like Cold-War and Post-Cold War internationalists (and semi-isolationists) turned out to be more fruitful to describe foreign policy belief systems (Kegley 1986: 456-457; Wittkopf 1986: 429-431; Holsti 1992: 449), although most of the proponents of dimensions constructed ideal types of foreign policy publics by cross-cutting their dimensions as well.

The two dimensions of internationalism thereby closely reflect the public discourse of the late Cold War: Adherents of a militant internationalism perceive the world as bipolar and highly conflictual; they are concerned about the power and intentions of the Soviet Union and advocate strong military capabilities, which they are willing to use to pursue the interests of the United States. The other dimension, cooperative internationalism, cares about the problems connected with the North-South divide, like poverty or an inequitable distribution of resources, favoring cooperative involvement with the world and multilateral efforts to solve the most pressing world problems (Barde and Oldendick 1990: 233). However, there is only a consensus that at least two dimensions structure foreign policy attitudes (Holsti 2004: 54). Some authors focus on two dimensions of internationalism (e.g. Mandelbaum and Schneider 1979; Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981; Holsti and Rosenau 1984), while others include a third dimension, usually either multilateralism (e.g. Chittick and Billingsley 1989; Chittick et al. 1995) or economic nationalism (e.g. Kegley and Wittkopf 1982), or even more than three dimensions (e.g. Bardes and Oldendick 1978; Wittkopf 1981).¹

These differences stem not least from the methodology used to explore foreign policy belief systems: The number and content of the respective dimensions have been obtained inductively from the

¹ Furthermore, the structuring of foreign policy beliefs can also be conceived in vertical, not only horizontal terms. Citizens can deduce specific attitudes from abstract values and symbols, which allows many different possibilities of attitude structuring (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). Chittick and colleagues (Chittick et al. 1995; Chittick and Freyberg-Inan 2001) use a similar approach, when they claim that foreign policy beliefs emerge around the core values of security, prosperity and community (Rathbun (2007) uses a similar conceptualization around the values of hierarchy and community; for the effects of personality and Schwartz-values on internationalism, multilateralism and militarism see Pötzschke et al. (2012)).
available survey data, mainly provided by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) and the Foreign Policy Leadership Project (FPLP). Therefore, results varied remarkably as a function of the items included in the analysis, and it comes as no surprise that there are differences in the interpretation of the dimensions achieved: Holsti and Rosenau (1986) and Wittkopf (1986; Kegley and Wittkopf 1982) interpret their first dimensions as different kinds of internationalism, while Chittick and Billingsley (1989; Chittick et al. 1995) label them as militarism and multilateralism. Nonetheless, the obtained dimensions generally resemble each other considerably, independent of the number of items and the source of the data used (see Holsti 1992: 449; but see Bardes and Oldendick 1990: 233-234).^2^

Many analyses, which seek to explore the dimensionality of foreign policy attitudes, thereby make use of foreign policy goal batteries (e.g. Mandelbaum and Schneider 1979; Kegley and Wittkopf 1982; Herrmann 1986: 852; Chittick et al. 1990, 1995; Richman et al. 1997), which have been asked among others in the Chicago Council and the FPLP surveys.^3^ Respondents are asked to evaluate the importance of different foreign policy goals the United States might have. These cover a wide variety of policy areas, ranging from humanitarian goals (like combating world hunger or improving the standard of living in less developed countries) over more military goals (like defending allies from foreign aggression) to economic goals (like protecting the jobs of American workers).

The foreign policy goal questions stand out due to their frequent survey. From 1974 onwards, most of the general public and elite surveys related to foreign policy contain foreign policy goals batteries. However, the composition of goals asked underwent considerable changes over the years. The end of the Cold War, of course, made some of the goals obsolete, like the struggle against the Soviet Union or the containment of communism, while others gained prominence in the meantime. Some, however, have been regularly surveyed over a time span of almost four decades, and allow the study of developments in the foreign policy belief system of American leaders and citizens over decades.^4^

The threefold division of foreign policy belief systems into internationalist, militarist and multilateralist dimensions (Chittick et al. 1990, 1995) seems to be more suited to adequately describe the foreign policy orientations of American citizens than the two kinds of internationalisms (Mandelbaum and Schneider 1979; Wittkopf and Maggiotto 1983a; Holsti and Rosenau 1984), as their content is strongly connected to the Cold War confrontation. By contrast, the most basic questions concerning attitudes toward international involvement can be answered by the trichotomy of internationalism, militarism and multilateralism, irrespective of the particular circumstances (Chittick

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^2^ Some authors used data from the general public (e.g. Mandelbaum and Schneider 1979; Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981; Wittkopf and Maggiotto 1983b), others elite data (e.g. Holsti and Rosenau 1986) or combined data (e.g. Wittkopf 1986; Chittick et al. 1995).

^3^ Most analyses concerned with foreign policy belief systems made at least use of the foreign policy goal items (e.g. Bardes and Oldendick 1978; Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981; Holsti and Rosenau 1986; Rathbun 2007). A notable exception is the analysis of vertical constraints by Hurwitz and Peffley (1987).

^4^ However, even though the large number and variety of foreign policy goals available in the different surveys allow interesting insights in the views of American citizens and elites on foreign policy issues, the universe of possible foreign policy goals is certainly not covered by the selection of goals asked. Therefore it cannot be excluded that relevant dimensions of foreign policy belief systems remain incomplete or even undiscovered.
and Freyberg-Inan 2001: 39): Depending on the position on the relevant dimension, people differ in their willingness to support the international involvement of their state in general, they disagree in their perceptions of adequate instruments, and they dissent in the issue of acting internationally in cooperation with others or alone. However, given the empirical evidence of Chittick’s and Billingsley’s (1989; Chittick et al. 1995) analyses, it is debatable whether the dimensions obtained really reflect multilateralism, militarism and internationalism.

For instance, their internationalism dimension was earlier called "economic nationalism" or "protectionism" by Kegley and Wittkopf (1982). Such an interpretation seems to be more plausible, as this factor consists predominantly of economic items like the protection of American jobs and businesses or the securing of energy supplies, which cover only a certain aspect of isolationism.

Similar issues are raised by the multilateralism dimension: On the one hand, multilateral orientations can reflect the tendency to support international institutions, especially the United Nations. In this case, the dividing line between unilateralists and multilateralists proceeds along the question whether the approval of the UN Security Council is necessary to legitimize an intervention into another country. Furthermore, such multilateralists will probably identify with the goals of the United Nations like international cooperation, the supremacy of international law and the binding nature of human rights. This conception of multilateralism is reflected by the goals which load on this dimension, like the strengthening of the UN, the promotion of humanitarian rights, the combat against world hunger or the improvement of living conditions in least developed countries. In so far, this kind of multilateralism resembles the identification with a wider community, like Chittick and colleagues have in mind (Chittick et al. 1995; Chittick and Freyberg-Inan 2001). Furthermore, this dimension comes close to the liberal or cooperative internationalism of other authors.

On the other hand, multilateralism can also imply the desire to cooperate with allies internationally, regardless of an institutional involvement. Multilateralists in this sense support international commitment if allied countries get involved as well. This variety of multilateralism comes closer to Holsti’s and Rosenau’s (1984) and Wittkopf’s (1986) conception of multilateral attitudes. In contrast to the conception of Chittick et al. (1990, 1995), however, they postulate the existence of a third dimension in addition to the militant and cooperative internationalisms, while Chittick and colleagues conceive the cooperative internationalism dimension as multilateralism. All in all, comparable to the deficiencies of the isolationism dimension, Chittick’s (Chittick and Billingsley 1989; Chittick and Freyberg-Inan 2001) multilateralism dimension covers only a certain fraction of the multilateralism construct.

The last of the three factors, militarism, is somehow problematic, because it is heavily ideologically charged: It does not only encompass attitudes toward the use of force in international affairs, but also certain goals of international involvement. During the Cold War, purposes like the containment of communism or the matching of Soviet military power defined this dimension. Several other variables were thereby torn between the multilateralism and the militarism dimension, depending on the
political circumstances in the respective years (Chittick and Freyberg-Inan 2001: 46). When relations with the Soviet Union deteriorated, the promotion of democracy was, for instance, perceived as a security-relevant goal. In less turbulent times, it was considered as more humanitarian in nature. However, as American leaders used the label “democratic” too generously when they talked about friendly dictators (Holsti 2004: 94), the term democracy was probably never free of any ideological flavor. Particularly the war against Iraq in 2003 has probably led to the perception of the promotion of democracy as an ideological and security-related foreign policy goal. Two other goals, which load regularly on this security/militarism dimension, namely the defense of allies and the protection of weaker nations against foreign aggression, are in some respect more militaristic in nature, as they contain the use of force to defend or protect others. At the same time, they exhibit also a multilateral notion, which qualifies them for the multilateral dimension as well.

All in all, one can state that the trichotomy of internationalism, militarism and multilateralism is principally very useful to interpret foreign policy attitudes and to provide a better theoretical connection than the inductively obtained internationalisms. The empirical results based on the foreign policy goal batteries, however, indicate that the prior conceptualization of militant and cooperative internationalism and economic nationalism (Kegley and Wittkopf 1982) might imply less misperceptions of the content of the three dimensions. Nonetheless, keeping these conceptual shortcomings in mind, we prefer the terms of Chittick et al. (1995) because of their greater analytical clarity, even if the data available do not allow to depict the different dimensions in all its nuances over time.

Therefore, three dimensions of foreign policy attitudes are postulated: The multilateralism dimension covers attitudes toward international cooperation, multilateral institutions and humanitarian efforts. This dimension comes very close to the cooperative or liberal internationalism dimension (Mandelbaum and Schneider 1979; Wittkopf and Maggiotto 1983a; Holsti and Rosenau 1984). In contrast to Wittkopf’s (1986) proposal of a third dimension covering multilateral sentiments, cooperative internationalism and multilateralism are perceived as so close to each other that a merging of both dimensions seems to be appropriate. The second dimension encompasses attitudes towards the projection of U.S. hard power and the defense of American security interests. Properly speaking, this militarism dimension does not only contain attitudes toward the justifiability of the use of force, but also beliefs about the superiority of American values. This dimension resembles the militant or conservative internationalism of earlier studies (see also Reifler et al. 2011). The last dimension is labeled protectionism, as it covers sentiments to preserve the economic well-being of the United States, and can best be described as some kind of American parochialism (a similar conceptualization is used by Hurwitz and Peffley (1987), when they conceive ethnocentrism as a foreign policy core value). The purpose of fostering American well-being is thereby predominantly obtained by sealing off from international interdependencies (Kegley and Wittkopf 1982; Chittick 2006). All in all, these
three dimensions should be sufficient to allow forming attitudes on most foreign policy objects, even under conditions of low interest and information.

3. Hypotheses

Change in foreign policy postures can take place in different ways. Most often, researchers are interested in mean changes. They try to answer the underlying question whether the public became more internationalist or more pacifist over the years (see Chittick et al. 1990). However, when these explorations are based on indices or dimensions, one does not know for sure whether the mean of the respective dimension really changed (or remained stable) or whether the purport of the dimension changed in the meantime (Golembiewski et al. 1976). If a redefinition of the content of a dimension occurred, one might easily make a mistake by comparing apples and oranges.

Generally, there are convincing reasons to suspect that foreign policy orientations in the U.S. general public are subject to continuous change. Several foreign policy events after the end of the Vietnam War might have led to shifts and reconfigurations of foreign policy belief systems, like the end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union with the United States remaining the world's only superpower, or the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the resulting long-lasting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It is reasonable to suggest that the end of the Cold War had a considerable impact on foreign policy orientations in the American public. If it did not alter the structure of the foreign policy belief systems altogether, we should at least find that the willingness of the American general public to support international involvement receded in comparison to the years before: The end of the Cold War gave, on the one hand, the opportunity to tackle domestic problems, as liberal democracy appeared to be the undisputed model for the world in the upcoming years. Larger conflicts, comparable to the struggle with the Soviet Union, seemed to be out of reach at that time. On the other hand, the United States quarreled with their role as world policeman, among other things evoked by the losses of American lives during the humanitarian intervention in Somalia. Therefore, one can expect that the willingness of the American people to support both humanitarian as well as more militant goals receded. In contrast, American citizens should increasingly support measures to foster the more narrowly defined well-being of the United States.

The relatively peaceful period of the 1990s and the early 2000s - which was, apart from the war against Saddam Hussein, predominantly characterized by the lack of a serious international opponent in the international realm and several humanitarian interventions in the Balkans, the Caribbean and Africa - came to an end with the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The resulting widespread belief in the necessity to fight global terrorism thus should have led to a strengthening of militarist sentiments, while more prosperity-related orientations faded into the background. With regard to multilateral postures, opposing developments can be imagined: On the one hand, resignation about the eventually
ineffective humanitarian efforts during the 1990s could prevail, resulting in a continuing rejection of multilateral ideas. On the other hand, the worldwide solidarity with the United States in the aftermath of the attacks might have fostered multilateralism. Furthermore, fundamental terrorism can be conceived as a reaction or an expression of inequalities of resources and wealth in the world. According to this view, it is necessary to undertake efforts to reduce these imbalances in the world, which can be best achieved by multilateral means. Therefore one can expect that multilateral sentiments in the general public are on the rise.

With regard to the years from 2003 onwards, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq can hardly be conceived as an encompassing success. Both interventions necessitated the presence of American troops for years, accompanied by steady losses of lives and expenses running into the trillions. As the foreign policy capacity of the United States is largely exhausted by these wars, both militarist and multilateral sentiments should be on the retreat at the end of the first decade of the new millennium. The American general public should neither be willing to bear further efforts to achieve militarist foreign policy goals nor be advocating efforts to promote humanitarian goals any more, as both wars started with the promise to foster liberal democracy in these countries. Instead, a growing support for goals concerning the well-being of the United States is likely to be noted.

As far as the general structuring of foreign policy attitudes in the United States is concerned, one can suppose that major revisions, if any, have taken place during the 1990s. The thinking of the Cold War, which structured foreign policy debates for about 40 years, became more and more obsolete, giving way to a possibly new view on the international environment. These shifts might have contributed to modifications of foreign policy belief systems, leading to a reconfiguration of foreign policy goals. For instance, one could imagine that the militarism dimension, which involved many attitudes concerning communism and the Soviet Union, lost its relevance. Instead, the economic nationalism dimension could incorporate those sentiments, possibly leading to a multilateralism dimension and a dimension covering American interests. However, it is difficult to assess whether the changes in the international environment were lasting enough to cause a reconfiguration of decades-old policy belief systems. And it is even more difficult to provide reasonable suggestions in which directions these changes should develop.

Compared to the 1990s, one can say, however, that the situation after the attacks of 9/11 should resemble the foreign policy belief systems of the Cold War more closely. The equivalents of the Soviet Union and Communism are now international terrorism, fundamentalism and rouge states. The militarism dimension of the Cold War thereby comprises sentiments toward tough approaches concerning the combat against global terrorism and other threats, while the multilateralism dimension covers postures with regard to humanitarian and multilateral strategies to tackle global challenges. The circumstances at the end of the first decade of the new millennium are likely to be different, again. As the Cold War is over for 20 years now and the war against terror does not seem to come to an end, despite enormous endeavors, contemporary foreign policy orientations might be subject to change. For
instance, there might be a growing overlap between the militarism and the multilateralism dimension, with militarist orientations going hand in hand with unilateralist sentiments. These developments could reflect the divisions within the American society and between the U.S. and its allies over the appropriate dealing with problems like terrorism, weapons of mass destruction or climate change.

4. Data and methods

All in all, 37 different policy goals have been surveyed in the Chicago Council surveys between 1974 and 2012, with about 15 items per questionnaire. One third of the items were surveyed only once, but eight foreign policy goals have been asked at least ten times. A major change in the composition of questions asked occurred, of course, with the end of the Cold War, when items concerning communism or the Soviet Union became obsolete. In return, new questions were included to reflect the increased importance of issues like environmental pollution, illegal immigration or trade imbalances (see Table A1 in the appendix for an overview of the most often surveyed questions).

In order to explore the stability and the developments of foreign policy orientations in the United States, six surveys have been selected. Beginning in 1978, they cover a time span of 32 years until 2010. However, it is not possible to compare the dimensional structure of all the survey years selected at once: only seven foreign policy goals have been asked in every year. As less than three observed items per latent variable may lead to unstable results, a comprehensive exploration of the whole period has to be discarded. Instead, two separate models are estimated. Thus, at least three items per dimension can be incorporated into the models.

The first model covers the years 1978, 1986, 1994, and 2002, and compares the two Cold War survey years as a baseline with the post-Cold War year 1994 and the year 2002 in order to examine the effect of the 9/11 terrorist attacks (see Figure 1). Ten foreign policy goals are available in each of the surveys used. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they think of several goals as very important, somewhat important or not important at all. Among these are the strengthening of the United Nations, the combat against world hunger, the improvement of living conditions in less developed countries, and the promotion of human rights in other countries. These four variables constitute the multilateralism factor, as these goals are concerned with the global community, international cooperation and point to a multilateral institution. The militarism dimension consists of the defending of America's allies' security, the protection of weaker nations against foreign aggression, and the goal of helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations. As a consequence, the content of this dimension

5 The attribution of items to the different foreign policy dimension in this paper follows largely earlier works on foreign policy belief systems (Kegley and Wittkopf 1982; Chittick et al. 1990, 1995).
possibly changes considerably as the defense of allies or the weak and the promotion of democracy have a distinct multilateral element. Nonetheless, these goals are concerned with military security (defense of allies and weaker nations) or heavily ideologically charged (superiority of democracy in contrast to other political systems) and should therefore represent militarist orientations. The third dimension, economic nationalism, is defined by postures concerning the goals of protecting the jobs of American workers on the one hand and the interests of American business abroad on the other, and lastly the securing of adequate supplies of energy. These variables are concerned with the narrowly defined economic wellbeing of the United States.

Figure 1: Three-dimensional structure of U.S. foreign policy belief systems, 1978-2002

The second model contrasts the foreign policy orientations in the years 1998, 2002, and 2010 (see Figure 2). The goal of improving the standard of living in less developed countries has to be dropped, just as the defense of allies' security and the protection of interests of American business abroad. Instead, the goals of combating international terrorism and preventing the spread of nuclear weapons add to the militarism dimension. Again, the goal of containing the proliferation of nuclear weapons could be considered as multilateral in nature, comparable to the efforts to mutually reduce the stock of U.S. and Soviet nuclear weapons during the Cold War. However, as the main concerns relating to

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6 Chittick and Freyberg-Inan (2001: 46) describe the "weak nations" and "democratic government" questions as "particularly susceptible to varying interpretations", with the democracy item "in the post-Cold War context [...] clearly [defining] the community dimension". However, even if there are good reasons to conceive the promotion of democracy as principally multilateral in nature, the promotion of democracy is still interpreted as a security issue, as the war against Iraq in 2003 exemplifies. In order to achieve an as parsimonious model as possible, the promotion of democracy and the protection of weak nations are regarded as solely militarist goals for the time being.

7 Further analyses (not reported) show that both dimensions have opposing effects on the probability to support military involvements in several hypothetical wars (Korea, Middle East) and on attitudes toward increased defense spending, where militarists agree and multilateralists disagree. In contrast, multilateral orientations consistently increase the chance of supporting foreign aid. Therefore it seems reasonable to suggest that both dimensions clearly depict different aspects with regard to militarism and multilateralism.

8 Due to data limitations it is not possible to examine the structure of foreign policy belief systems in 2004, 2006, or 2008. The number of surveyed foreign policy goals is rather limited in these years. It would have been necessary to draw on the goal of controlling and reducing illegal immigration as an indicator of the protectionism dimension. This goal is, however, closely connected to the multilateralism dimension as well, which complicates the interpretation of the resulting model severely.
weapons of mass destruction applied to terrorists and rogue states during the 1990s and especially after 2000, this goal can be conceived as much more militarist than multilateral. The goal of reducing the trade deficit with foreign countries serves as a replacement for the protection of U.S. business interests abroad. As a negative trade balance is a sign of dependencies on other countries, people advocating an inward-looking United States should favor this goal.

Figure 2: Three-dimensional structure of U.S. foreign policy beliefs, 1998-2010

Another caveat has to be regarded as well: Two mode changes took place over the years. Until 1998, respondents were interviewed face-to-face. In 2002, mode changed to phone interviews, and from 2004 onwards, respondents are surveyed online. In comparison to face-to-face interviews, respondents in phone surveys tend to select the first option more frequently. In the present case, they chose more often the "very important" category. Differences between face-to-face and online answers are less pronounced, albeit online respondents have a disposition to choose the first category more often as well. Therefore, mean changes have to be interpreted with these shortcomings in mind. The general structure of the foreign policy belief systems, however, should be hardly affected by the mode change.

The subsequent analyses serve two objectives: Firstly, we will check whether the structure of foreign policy belief systems remained stable over the 32 years-period. If this prerequisite is fulfilled, we will subsequently investigate whether and to which degree the American general public varied in their

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9 Additionally, the goal of maintaining superior military power would be available in the respective years. At first glance, this item appears to be suited to represent the militarism dimension. However, this goal turned out to be highly problematic: This goal loads both on the militarism and the multilateralism dimension (and to a lesser degree on protectionism), as preliminary analyses demonstrated. Obviously, the maintaining of superior military power worldwide is not only supported by militarists (and to a lesser degree by protectionists), but it attracts unilateralists as well. This resulted in inflated factor loadings and a high degree of multicollinearity in the model, making interpretation very difficult. Therefore it had to be dropped from the analysis.

10 In 2002, 400 Americans have been interviewed face-to-face to control for mode effects. All in all, about one third of the 2002 sample used in the two models has been asked face-to-face, which contributes to reduce the mode effect on the substantial findings. The results of a multi group confirmatory factor analysis reveal that the structure of foreign policy beliefs in both groups is identical (face-to-face: n=399, phone: n=705; RMSEA_{Configural}=0.069, CFI_{Configural}=0.943, RMSEA_{Constrained}=0.060, CFI_{Constrained}=0.948, Chi-squared=21.294 (df=15), p=0.1277). However, mean changes occur, with phone respondents being more multilateral and militarist than face-to-face interviewees. With regard to the economic nationalism dimension, no differences can be observed.
multilateral, militarist and protectionist orientations in the last years. A possibility to examine the stability of foreign policy belief systems over time was applied by Chittick et al. (1990): They explored the degree of change in the structure of foreign policy belief systems of American citizens and elites by comparing the results of exploratory factor analysis. They found the belief systems of elites to be structured as both theoretically expected and stable, while the general public exhibited more instability and deviations from the ideal target matrix. However, the use of exploratory factor analyses did not allow for the comparison of means over time. A possibility to investigate structural stability and mean changes over the years at once is provided by the multiple-group confirmatory factor analysis, enriched by the means and covariance structure analysis (Jöreskog 1971; Sörbom 1974; see Millsap 2011).

The analyses proceed as follows (cf. Byrne 2012): First of all, separate models for every year are estimated to confirm the suitability of the hypothesized model. If fit indices are not acceptable, adjustments are made, based on modification indices and theoretical considerations to improve the goodness of fit of the model. The next step is a multiple group model in which no parameter constraints are imposed, replicating the separate models from the first step. This configural model serves as a baseline against which models with additional parameter constraints are compared. To examine the stability of foreign policy belief systems and mean changes in the three dimensions over time, a model with restrictions on factor loadings and thresholds is estimated. To decide whether the more restrictive model is still acceptable in comparison to the baseline model, the comparative fit index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) are regarded: If the differences of the CFI and the RMSEA are larger 0.01, the more restrictive model is rejected (Cheung and Rensvold 2002; Chen 2007). In contrast, a decrease in CFI and an increase in RMSEA greater than 0.01 hints toward noninvariance between the groups. A review of the modification indices thereby helps to identify problematic factor loadings, which are then freely estimated if required. However, such differences between the years complicate the comparison of mean differences, of course. Mean comparisons are nonetheless possible: although some items may have different factor loadings and thresholds or may even load on an additional dimension, the results can, as partial invariant, still be interpreted (Byrne et al. 1989; Millsap and Kwok 2004). When examining the structure of the foreign policy goals, one has to keep in mind the ordinal nature of the items (see Muthén and Asparouhov 2002). In contrast to multiple-group confirmatory factor analyses with continuous variables, one cannot distinguish between the invariance of factor loadings and the invariance of intercepts. Instead, the invariances of factor loadings, intercepts and thresholds have to be considered in common (Millsap and Yun-Tein 2004; Davidov et al. 2011: 160-161).
5. Statistical analyses and results

The model proposed in Figure 1 achieves a good fit in 1978 only.\(^{11}\) In the other years, the CFI is between 0.91 and 0.92 - well below the recommended threshold of 0.95 - and RMSEA values between 0.08 and 0.09 indicate a rather mediocre fit (MacCallum et al. 1996). A look at the modification indices reveals that there is a considerable error covariance between the promotion of human rights and the protection of weaker nations. As interventions to protect weaker nations against foreign aggressions are often justified by impending human rights violations, these covariances make substantive sense. Furthermore, in 1986 and 1994, substantial covariances between the defense of allies’ security and the securing of energy supplies become apparent. These links between the two items might be elicited by the developments in the Middle East. Events and crises like the Iranian Revolution or the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait might have made the Americans aware of their dependence on Arab oil. These additional error covariances lead to acceptable goodness-of-fit measures in all years, with RMSEA values below 0.07 and CFIs above 0.94. These revised models are simultaneously estimated in the configural model, where all factor loadings and thresholds are allowed to vary between the groups. This model obtains an acceptable fit with a CFI of 0.954 and a RMSEA of 0.066. All in all, one can state that at the most basic level the structure of foreign policy beliefs persisted over the years. The end of the Cold War did not lead to a complete reconfiguration of foreign policy belief systems.

However, it is possible that some of the items of a dimension gained in prominence while others became less relevant. This would hint toward larger revisions within the general structure of foreign policy beliefs, as people might attach different meanings to the dimensions. If the loadings and thresholds change considerably over time, one can therefore neither speak of stability nor compare means between the different groups. In order to explore whether the structure of the foreign policy belief systems changed over time remained unaltered, one therefore has to constrain factor loadings and thresholds to be equal in the different groups. However, after constraining factor loadings and thresholds, the CFI drops by 0.01, indicating considerable noninvariance in the model. A look at the modification indices reveals that the largest misfits occur in 1994. Especially the supply with energy behaves differently compared to the other years. This might be another consequence of the war against Iraq three years before. In addition, the improvement of living conditions in less developed countries and the goal of promoting democracy in foreign countries seem to have different parameter estimates as well. The experiences of the humanitarian missions in the early 1990s might have led to these shifts. Furthermore, the goal of strengthening the UN exhibits a large modification index value in 1986. Therefore, the factor loadings and thresholds of these four items have been released in the

\(^{11}\) The model parameters are estimated with Mplus, Version 6. In order to take into account the categorical nature of the data, the WLSMV estimator is used. Reported are the results of the Delta parameterization (Muthén and Muthén 1998-2010). The use of the Theta parameterization leads to essentially similar results.
respective years, while the factor scales have been fixed at one (Muthén and Muthén 1998-2010: 434), resulting in the final model displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Revised three-dimensional model of U.S. foreign policy beliefs, 1978-2002

The goodness-of-fit measures of the revised constrained model even exceed the values of the configural model (see Table 1), which hints toward partial invariance of the foreign policy belief systems over the years. It is especially striking that the belief structure of 2002 closely resembles the one of 1978. However, changes occurred after the end of the Cold War, as the relevance of some items in defining the different dimensions changed to a lesser degree in 1986 and to a larger extent in 1994. The general public obviously adapted its foreign policy belief systems in accordance with foreign policy developments. But the conversion of the Cold War belief systems seems to have come to an end in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Maybe the reconfiguration was interrupted by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, which led to a revival of the foreign policy thinking of the Cold War.

The belief structure of 2002 is not only nearly identical to the one in 1978, the degree of multilateral, militarist and protectionist sentiments is also very similar at the two points in time. The only difference is the degree of militarism among U.S. citizens, which is only slightly higher in 2002. A larger change occurred between 1978 and 1986, when protectionist sentiments receded. The largest shifts, however, took place in 1994: the American public became less multilateral and less militarist compared to the years before, and protectionism rose again to the level of 1978. It seems plausible to suggest that the end of the Cold War on the one hand and the disillusioning experiences with humanitarian interventions in the years before on the other led to these shifts in foreign policy

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12 Keeping in mind the change in survey mode in 2002, there could indeed be more differences between 1978 and 2002. If one takes into account the face-to-face respondents only, militarist sentiments decrease slightly, while there is a considerable decline of multilateralist orientations.

13 The mean changes are essentially the same in a model with full measurement invariance (which has a considerably worse fit, of course).
orientations of the Americans. These changes toward a less active foreign policy did not last long, however. Both multilateral and especially militarist orientations rose to a level comparable to the Cold War again. Compared to 1994, when the general public became tired of military and humanitarian international involvement, U.S. citizens seemed to be willing to respond to the challenges of international terrorism both militarily and in humanitarian ways.

Table 1: Foreign policy belief systems in 1978, 1986, 1994, and 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Multilateralism</th>
<th>Militarism</th>
<th>Protectionism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting human rights</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the standard of living in LDC</td>
<td>0.74/0.87(^a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening the UN</td>
<td>0.56/0.62(^b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combating world hunger</td>
<td>0.77</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defending allies' security</td>
<td>0.59</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting democracy</td>
<td>0.72/0.87(^a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protecting weaker nations</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting jobs of American workers</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing adequate energy supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.66/0.57(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting American business interests</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Error covariances:
- Promoting human rights and protecting weaker nations: 0.20
- Securing energy supply and defending allies' security: 0.20\(^c\)

Mean changes 1978-1986:
- Promoting human rights: 0.07
- Improving the standard of living in LDC: 0.03
- Strengthening the UN: -0.24\(^***\)

Mean changes 1978-1994:
- Promoting human rights: -0.26\(^***\)
- Improving the standard of living in LDC: -0.42\(^***\)
- Strengthening the UN: 0.08

Mean changes 1978-2002:
- Promoting human rights: -0.02
- Improving the standard of living in LDC: 0.11\(^*\)
- Strengthening the UN: -0.10

CFI: 0.955
RMSEA: 0.057
\(\chi^2\) WLSMV difference testing: 104.001 (df=38) p<0.001

Reported are unstandardized factor loadings. All factor loadings are significant at p<0.001.
\(^a\): p<0.05, \(^b\): p<0.01, \(^c\): p<0.001. \(^d\): factor loading fixed at 0.

In order to explore the development of foreign policy belief systems in the U.S. general public in the first decade of the new millennium, an additional model covering the years 1998, 2002 and 2010 is estimated (see Figure 2 above). Generally, fit indices of the three separate models are in need of improvement: RMSEA values are mediocre, and in 1998 and 2002 CFI are below 0.92. Nevertheless, the largest improvement in model fit can be obtained by adding an additional factor loading in 2010: the goal of combating international terrorism does not only contribute to the militarism dimension, but also negatively to multilateralism. This pattern hints towards a growing overlap between the militarism and the multilateralism dimension: Multilateral Americans became more skeptical of the goal of combating international terrorism, which was the central objective of the U.S. government for the last
years, while unilateral-minded citizens still tend to advocate the worldwide war against terror. In 1998 and 2002, in contrast, no significant cross-loading of the terrorism indicator on militarism can be observed. This prompts to a growing tiredness of anti-terrorism efforts among multilaterals, probably caused by the long-lasting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the related disagreements with many close allies of the United States. Furthermore, the modification indices of all three models suggest an error covariance between the promotion of human rights and the protection of weaker nations against foreign aggression, as it was the case in the 1974-2002 model. These steps lead to a considerable increase in both fit values, leading to an acceptable fit of the revised models.

An acceptable fit is also obtained by the configural model (CFI=0.960, RMSEA=0.066). All in all, the general structure of U.S. foreign policy belief systems did not change remarkably between 1998 and 2002, while there were some minor reconfigurations between 2002 and 2010 (concerning the changing role of the international terrorism goal). When the parameters and thresholds are constrained to be equal, however, CFI drops to 0.953. Even if this decrease is still in the acceptable range, it seems worthwhile to take a look at the modification indices to explore where the deterioration in model fit stems from. Three sources stand out: Firstly, the error covariance between promoting and defending human rights in other countries and the protection of weaker nations is considerably different in 2010. Therefore, the error covariance is allowed to vary in 2010. Secondly, the combat terrorism and the prevent proliferation indicators exhibit different factor loadings in 2002. It seems reasonable to suggest that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 contributed to the changed meaning of the two indicators on the militarism dimension, as both goals became much more important in the aftermath of the attacks. Therefore, the two factor loadings in 2002 and the error covariance in 2010 are allowed to vary (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Revised three-dimensional model of U.S. foreign policy beliefs, 1998-2010
With regard to the results of the multiple group confirmatory factor analysis in Table 2, the factor loading of combat international terrorism in 2010 attracts attention. The loading of this indicator on militarism is greater than one. From a statistical perspective, factor loadings greater than one are possible when the respective indicator loads on two or more factors. In such a case, factor loading are regression coefficients and not correlations. However, such factor loadings greater than one might be indicative of a high degree of multicollinearity in the model (Brown 2006: 187). Therefore, the results might indicate a growing overlap between the militarism and multilateralism dimensions. Multilateral attitudes seem to become more strongly related to non-militarist sentiments.

Table 2: Foreign policy belief system in 1998, 2002, and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Multilateralism</th>
<th>Militarism</th>
<th>Protectionism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting and defending human rights in other countries</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combating world hunger</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening the United Nations</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping to bring a democratic government to other nations</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons</td>
<td>0.64/0.35/0.64^a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combating international terrorism</td>
<td>0.00/0.00/-0.51^a</td>
<td>0.69/0.50/1.10^a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting the jobs of American workers</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing adequate supplies of energy</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing trade deficit with foreign countries</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Error covariances:
- Promoting human rights and protecting weaker nations: 0.30/0.30/0.12^a

Mean changes 1998-2002:
- Multilateralism: 0.20**
- Militarism: 0.13*
- Protectionism: 0.11

Mean changes 1998-2010:
- Multilateralism: -0.60***
- Militarism: -0.60***
- Protectionism: 0.04

CFI: 0.959
RMSEA: 0.059
χ²/df: 92.857 (df=23) p<0.001

Reported are unstandardized factor loadings. All factor loadings are significant at p<0.001.
*: p<0.05, **: p<0.01, ***: p<0.001.
Fit indices baseline model: CFI=0.960, RMSEA=0.066.
^a Factor loadings/error covariances for 1998/2002/2010; factor loadings of combat international terrorism on multilateralism are fixed at 0.00 in 1998 and 2002.

Regarding the mean differences between 1998 and 2002, one can see a slight increase concerning multilateral and militarist orientations. This is in accordance with the increase between 1994 and 2002 in Table 1. Again, one should be aware of the change in survey mode; mean differences could therefore be overestimated. In contrast to the slight increases after 1998, the means of multilateralism and militarism move clearly in the opposite direction in 2010 (the decrease is probably even underestimated because of the change to online instead of face-to-face). American citizens became
much less militarist and multilateral in the first decade of the new millennium.\textsuperscript{14} This development probably reflects the growing tiredness of international responsibility and involvement. Neither the use of force nor humanitarian approaches were welcomed by the U.S. general public to deal with international problems, compared to the decades before.

6. Conclusion

The structure of foreign policy belief systems of American citizens proved to be remarkably stable over time. In every year analyzed, multilateralism, militarism and protectionism lent coherence to American foreign policy belief systems. Neither the end of the Cold War nor the attacks of 9/11 nor the resulting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq led to a fundamental revision. Some adoptions to changing international circumstances can be observed, however: After the end of the Soviet Union, Americans became considerably less multilateral and less militarist. Furthermore, there were signs of partial reconfigurations in the foreign policy belief systems in the early 1990s, as the meaning of the three underlying dimensions shifted slightly. Nonetheless, the foreign policy orientations of 2002 closely resemble those of the Cold War again. This indicates that orientations toward communism were not integral parts of the foreign policy belief systems during the 1970s and the 1980s, as the general foreign policy belief structure outlived the collapse of the Soviet Union, just as Ole R. Holsti predicted in 1992.

However, a concrete enemy seems to be necessary for the continued existence of the belief systems, as the beginning changes in the early 1990s show. As the war against terrorism replaced the danger of communism, foreign policy orientations were brought into line again. But the long-lasting war against terror left its mark on the foreign policy orientation of the American people as well. They became not only remarkably less militarist and multilateral. There are also indications of beginning revisions in the belief systems. Obviously, considerable portions of the Americans not only grew weary of the war against terror. The goal of combating terrorism became incompatible with multilateral sentiments as well. This development could point to a growing polarization between multilateral non-militarists and unilateral militarists. Such a clear divide could be problematic for foreign policy decision makers: They are not only confronted with a population which is more and more unwilling to get involved internationally. They have furthermore fewer possibilities to form coalitions within the population when necessary, as there are two clearly opposing camps.

However, some limitations have to be noted: Although the general three-dimensional structuring is supported by the analyses and large parts of the literature, problems could arise by the limited extent of the foreign policy goals available. As the universe of possible foreign policy goals is perhaps not sufficiently covered, additional dimensions have been possibly missed. Furthermore, some goals have proven to be too problematic to be included in the analysis, as they contribute to more than one single

\textsuperscript{14} The mean differences do not change when the model is held fully invariant.
dimension. These indicators might hint to less differentiated belief structures. Such a suspicion is supported by high correlations between the militarism and multilateralism dimension. This problem arises partly because of the available militarism items: They can be considered as second-best indicators only. Eventually, the final model specification depends to a considerable extent on the subjective judgment of the investigator. Torn between the demands of a preferably parsimonious model and a model fit as high as possible, others might come to different assessments of the necessity of additional factor loadings or error covariances.

Future research should review the results with better suited data, even though the long-term perspective can probably not be upheld due to the lack of appropriate data. However, more elaborated models could provide valuable insights into the nuances of the different dimensions. Scholars could also shed light on the question whether the changes in recent years are a consequence of the growing polarization in domestic politics in the United States. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see whether these shifts are permanent or whether they will regress when the wars in Afghanistan and against international terrorism will come to an end.
## Table A1: Importance of foreign policy goals in the U.S. general public, 1974-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>74</th>
<th>78</th>
<th>82</th>
<th>86</th>
<th>90</th>
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<td>Combating world hunger?</td>
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<td>Limiting climate change?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Reported are percentages of "very important" (in contrast to "somewhat important", "not important at all", and "don't know").

References


