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Marissa McNeace

*Winthrop University*, mcneacem2@winthrop.edu

Jeffrey Sinn

*Winthrop University*, sinnj@winthrop.eduFollow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/wmrb>Part of the [Theory and Philosophy Commons](#)

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# Moral Foundations Theory vs. Schwartz Value Theory: Which Theory Best Explains Ideological Differences?

Marissa T. McNeace  
Jeffrey Sinn, Ph.D. (Mentor)

## ABSTRACT

This research examines ideological differences between liberals and conservatives using Schwartz Value Theory (SVT) to analyze claims made by Moral Foundations Theory (MFT). While MFT consists of five scales to measure moral reasoning (Harm/Care, Fairness/Reciprocity, Purity/Sanctity, Ingroup/Loyalty, and Authority/Respect), SVT consists of ten scales that can be grouped into four main categories (Openness to Change, Self-Transcendence, Conservation, and Self-Enhancement). Based on SVT, we created four Moral Forces scales (MF4) using the two response formats of the MFT. Our scales are the following: Obedience, Status, Universalism, and Self-Direction. Data was collected through social media and university classes in the format of online and paper surveys. Using stepwise regression, MF4's scales of Obedience and Universalism emerged as the best predictors for self-reported conservatism. For social-issue conservatism, MF4's Obedience and Universalism were also the best predictors that emerged. Lastly, for economic-issue conservatism, Fairness from MFT and MF4's Self-Direction and Universalism emerged as predictors. Our findings suggest that the MFT measures the moralization of values rather than moral foundations. Additionally, the MF4 identifies moralized values undetected by MFT and thereby provides a more accurate picture of liberal-conservative differences. The logic of this is that other values can be moralized or translated into the MFT "language" and thus they will be treated as moral values.

## INTRODUCTION

Both Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) and Schwartz Value Theory (SVT) have been used to explain ideological beliefs (Graham, Haidt, Nosek, 2009; Graham et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2012; Schwartz et al., 2014). This paper focuses in on these two competing frameworks for understanding how these values and morals influence political ideology. Schein and Gray (2015) have challenged MFT's claim to have identified specific moral "foundations" (i.e., discrete sensor-like systems attuned to specific phenomena) while other theorists suggest that SVT might provide an even broader framework for recognizing the plurality of moral concerns (Schwartz et al., 2014; Sinn, 2016). This paper offers a direct comparison of the two conceptual schemes by rewriting SVT constructs using the response formats of the principal MFT measure, the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ) (Graham et al., 2011).

### *Moral Foundations Theory*

Haidt (2008, p.70) defines moral systems as interlocking sets of values, practices, institutions, and evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate selfishness and make social life possible". Haidt here strives to broaden the conception of morality beyond the traditional focus on harm and fairness. MFT theorists suggest three additional moral domains: spiritual purity, ingroup loyalty, and respect for authority (Haidt, 2008; Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Graham et al., 2011). MFT categories the traditional morals into the "individualizing" foundation, which is made up of two sets of moral intuitions of Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). These foundations are called "individualizing" because they enable social life by protecting the individual. The Harm/Care foundation thus reflects values such as gentleness, nurturance, and kindness. In other words, it arises from attachment processes and

enables our ability to empathize with others. The Fairness/Reciprocity foundation entails altruism, or the selfless concern for others' well-being (Graham et al., 2011).

In the effort to broaden morality, MFT defines a "binding" morality. The 5 sets of moral intuitions included in the "binding" foundation include those in "individualizing" foundation plus three others (Authority/Respect, Ingroup/Loyalty, and Purity/Sanctity) (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Authority/Respect concerns followership, leadership, and an individual's respect for traditions. Ingroup/Loyalty captures a "one for all, all for one" concept, reflected in patriotism and personal sacrifice for the good of the group. Lastly, Purity/Sanctity addresses religious concerns such as living in a "noble" or morally uncontaminated way. These added moral intuitions in the "binding" foundation seek to enable community differently, that is, not by protecting individuals (as the "individualizing" foundation sees it) but by ensuring people put the needs of the community first (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009).

MFT scholars have most famously applied their five-factor model to explain ideological differences between liberals and conservatives (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Haidt, 2012). MFT theorists suggest that liberals apply a narrower type of morality. In contrast, MFT holds that conservatives draw upon a broader sense of morality that includes the binding foundations. MFT thus suggests that different approaches to morality can explain liberal-conservative differences (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). This difference can be seen in different understandings of loyalty, such as whether one should follow orders given by a commanding officer if one finds those orders immoral. Conservatives would be more inclined to believe that obeying is a moral duty, drawing on the "binding" foundation including authority and respect as part of moral reasoning (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Graham et al., 2011). Liberals, however, would be more inclined to see loyalty as less relevant than their assessment of the harm and fairness issues related to the orders (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009;

Graham et al., 2011). In other words, liberals would be more inclined than conservatives to imagine cases where disobeying orders would be the moral thing to do. MFT might thus attempt to explain ideological distinct reactions to social protest movements, such as Black Lives Matter, by suggesting that liberals and conservatives' difference in morality oppose such movements because they deem respect for authority as a moral issue.

#### *Criticisms of Moral Foundations Theory*

Research has in fact shown that liberal and conservatives differ in their endorsement of across the five domains of MFT (Graham, Haidt, Nosek, 2009). However, others argue that MFT is not discovering new differences, but merely rebranding or rediscovering well-established ideological ones. They argue that the "binding" foundations simply rebrand Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) and that the "individualizing" foundations are simply the reverse of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) (Federico, Weber, Ergun, & Hunt, 2013; Sinn, n.d.; Sinn & Hayes, 2016). The Dual Process Model (DPM) (Duckitt, 2001) presents RWA and SDO as the two principle sociopolitical attitudes shaping prejudice and ideology. DPM theorists view RWA as a type of defensive ethnocentrism, which means that RWA reflects a desire for cohesion and ethnic devotion that entails anti-outgroup attitudes and pro-in-group attitudes (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). Similarly, the "binding" foundations emphasize ingroup favoritism and deference to authority (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009).

Similarly, MFT also (accidentally) rediscovers SDO. The so-called "individualizing" foundations (Harm and Fairness) encompass basic concerns related to empathy and egalitarianism. These are the very sorts of concerns rejected by those scoring high on Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) (Duckitt, 2001). Those high in SDO tend to be low in empathy, and favor group-based dominance and intergroup ethnocentrism. Others have also argued that the so-called "individualizing" foundations are misnamed, as they in fact represent a broader set of concerns better labeled as universalism (Sinn & Hayes, 2016).

### *Schwartz Value Theory*

Schwartz Value Theory (SVT), attempts to specify basic human values and the relationships among those values (Schwartz, 1992). Like MFT, it has been used to explain ideological differences (Schwartz et al., 2012; Schwartz et al., 2014). It represents ten personal values in a circular continuum (see Figure 1). The position of values relative to one another reflects the relationships among the values. This is shown by a positive correlation between adjacent values and negative correlations between opposing values. For example, universalism and benevolence correlate positively whereas universalism and power correlate negatively.



Figure 1: SVT model of relations among 10 basic values (Schwartz, 1992)

The ten values fall along two orthogonal axes: *conservation* vs. *openness to change* and *self-enhancement* vs. *self-transcendence* (Schwartz 1992). *Conservation* values focus on safety of society and self, avoiding conflict, and the following of social expectations and norms (e.g. security, conformity, tradition). They oppose *openness to change* values which concentrate on autonomy and expression (e.g. Self-Direction, Stimulation, and partly Hedonism). On the other axis, *Self-enhancement* values emphasize control/dominance, personal success, and pleasure for oneself (e.g. Power, Achievement, and partly Hedonism) and oppose self-transcending values (e.g. Universalism and Benevolence). SVT accurately predicts a range of political views (Schwartz et al. 2014). For

example, the findings show self-transcendence values predict support for civil liberties, conservation values for blind patriotism, and self-enhancement values for free-enterprise.

### *Comparing SVT and MFT*

Unlike MFT, SVT recognizes fundamental tradeoffs that MFT doesn't address (Schwartz et al., 2012). As suggested in the earlier example about the morality of following orders, conservatives are inclined to moralize loyalty while liberals are not. The SVT suggests this tension as conformity and universalism are not adjacent. However, MFT treats each foundation as independent (Graham, et al., 2011). It thus does not consider that some values may conflict with others. Therefore, liberals might not endorse certain MFT foundations not because their morality is narrower, but because they may endorse values MFT ignores.

SVT may also suggest a more complete depiction of conservative motivation by considering motivations overlooked by MFT (Schwartz et al., 2012). From the SVT perspective, what MFT labels "binding" may also involve self-enhancement motivations (power and achievement; Schwartz, et al., 2012). DPM research supports this reasoning as both RWA and SDO drive conservatism (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). In short, MFT may be missing an SDO motivation behind conservatism.

SVT also explains liberal motivation differently than MFT. Rejecting the "individualizing" label, SVT suggests liberal motivation reflects self-transcendence values such as benevolence and universalism based (Schwartz et al., 2014). This explains why liberals are more concerned with nature and foreign aid, whereas conservatives are not. This potentially could be a better representation of liberal motivations than the "individualizing" label of MFT because it captures more than harm and fairness, which are only part of the overall motivations of liberals. Additionally, the labeling of "individualizing" might be a poor description of what others have argued is a broader, more inclusive construct, namely universalism (Sinn & Hayes, 2016). Therefore, SVT may offer a better framework for

understanding both conservative and liberal motivations.

#### *Constructing the Empirical Test*

Based on the above, we can summarize the different explanations of ideological differences as follows: MFT suggests liberals rely on a narrower set of morals/values while SVT argues that different ideologies represent tradeoffs between conflicting morals/values. To empirically test these competing hypotheses, we operationalized SVT in a way that makes it directly comparable to the principal measure of the MFT, the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ; Graham, et al., 2011). We make two principal changes. First, we reduce from ten to four the number of SVT values so that the five-factor MFT would not be disadvantaged by measurement specificity. We identified four values we believed would capture the essential tradeoffs driving ideological differences. These were Obedience (reflecting Tradition, Conformity, and some Purity), Status (Power and Achievement), Universalism, and Self-Direction. Second, we wrote items for these constructs using the two formats from the MFQ (see Methods).

Operationalizing SVT items in the MFQ format will also offer insights into what the MFQ is measuring. Utilizing the MFQ format for a separate set of constructs will help determine the extent to which the MFQ is measuring distinct and discrete moral *foundations* or simply *one possible* set of moralizations from a broader set of values. Others have suggested that the plurality of moral beliefs requires not separate and discrete foundations, but a more general process of moralization (Schein & Gray, 2015). If successful, the operationalization of SVT constructs overlooked by MFT (e.g., Self-Discipline) as “moral” values would undermine the “foundational” claims made by MFT.

#### *Current Study*

To test the competing explanations for ideological differences offered by SVT and MFT, we created the Moral Forces 4 (i.e., MF4) operationalization of SVT values using the scales and instructions of the MFQ (Graham, et al., 2011; see Methods). We test the following hypotheses: (1) The MF4 scales will (a) show acceptable internal reliability, (b) an internal

pattern of correlations consistent with SVT (i.e., positively between Obedience and Status and between Universalism and Self-Direction; negatively between Obedience and Self-Direction and between Universalism and Status), and (c) correlate with self-reported political conservatism (Obedience and Status positively, Universalism and Self-Direction negatively). (2) In simultaneous multiple regressions predicting self-reported conservatism, we predict models based on the MFQ and MF4 will account for approximately equal amounts of variance (despite the MF4 having fewer scales). (3) In stepwise regression analyses with all nine scales as potential predictors of (a) self-reported conservatism, (b) social-issue conservatism, and (c) economic-issue conservatism, the MF4 scales will account for variance unexplained by MFT scales.

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

Respondents were 175 student and non-student participants. The participants were collected through social media and undergraduate courses offering extra credit for completion. An alternative assignment was offered for extra credit for students that did not want to participate in the study. We excluded 43 participants who missed more than one of the attention check items embedded within the survey, as well as 3 individuals who excluded four or more items across the survey, leaving 129 participants (93 women, 30 men, and 6 other). Participants identified as Caucasians (49.6%), African Americans (32.8%), Multiracial (6.1%), Hispanics/Latinos (4.6%), and other (6.9%). The average age was 21.05 years (SD=6.78).

### **Procedure**

The survey was completed either online or on paper in class and was self-paced. The survey was prefaced with an informed consent page. On the online surveys, participants had to complete an “instructional manipulation check,” or an initial attention check item. This was a question about TV viewing that participants were instructed to skip. If participants answered, they were given a second chance. If they answered again, they were unable to continue.

Participants may have received extra credit in a course; however, no participants were financially compensated. A debriefing followed the survey.

### Measures

Our self-report survey contained the MFT's MFQ, our new Moral Forces (MF4) scale, self-report measures of economic and social conservatism, and demographic questions.

#### *Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ)*

Respondents completed the 30 item MFQ (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). This included the "individualizing scales," Harm/Care ( $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=.69$ ,  $\alpha=.564$ ) and Fairness/Reciprocity ( $M=3.74$ ,  $SD=.59$ ,  $\alpha=.511$ ), and the "binding" scales, Authority/Respect ( $M=2.99$ ,  $SD=.81$ ,  $\alpha=.595$ ) Ingroup/Loyalty ( $M=2.67$ ,  $SD=.86$ ,  $\alpha=.621$ ), and Purity/Sanctity ( $M=2.89$ ,  $SD=1.03$ ,  $\alpha=.764$ ) with six items per foundation.

#### *Moral Forces*

We created a Moral Forces scale (MF4) based on SVT (Schwartz, 1992). We first identified four composite constructs we expected to be particularly relevant for predicting political ideology. These were Obedience (Conformity and Tradition), Status (Power and Achievement), Universalism, and Self-Direction. The obedience scale was designed to capture RWA motivations and the "binding" foundations of MFT (Authority/Respect, Ingroup/Loyalty, and Purity/Sanctity). Status was designed to capture SDO-related motivations opposing universalizing. Universalism was designed to capture that SVT construct plus Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity, or the "individualizing" foundations. Lastly, Self-Direction was designed to capture that SVT construct and to oppose Obedience. We wrote two sets of separate items for each scale utilizing the two response formats of the MFQ (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). We wrote the MF4 scale items using the two response formats of the MFQ (Graham, et al., 2011), moral relevance and moral judgment. For the moral relevance questions, participants were instructed to respond to the following question: "When you decide whether something is right or wrong,

to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking? Please rate using a Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not at all relevant*) to 5 (*extremely relevant*)". For the moral judgment items, participants were told to respond to the following statement: Please read the following sentences and indicate your disagreement or agreement for each statement using a Likert Scale ranging from 0 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Following SVT methodology, the participants' responses were centered based on their average responses. We then administered these 48 items in the survey and conducted a reliability analysis on for each scale, picking the top three items in each format for each scale. This left us with six questions per scale (three per format) with the following reliabilities: Obedience ( $\alpha=.802$ ), Status ( $\alpha=.709$ ), Universalism ( $\alpha=.755$ ), and Self-Direction ( $\alpha=.777$ ).

#### *Economic Conservatism and Social Conservatism*

We wrote items to measure this construct based on how people responded to issues, with some coming from Everett (2013) and others constructed and written by us. The issues used for economic conservatism were raising the minimum wage, welfare benefits, and higher taxes on the wealthy. These items were all reverse scored. The issues used for social conservatism were: always siding with your country (right or wrong), patriotism, sex education in public schools (reverse scored), safe and convenient access to abortion (reverse scored) and preventing Muslim immigration. Participants responded to the question of "Please indicate your level of agreement with the following items" using a Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 10 (Strongly Agree). This left us with the following reliabilities: Economic Conservative Issues ( $M= 3.76$ ,  $SD= 1.97$ ,  $\alpha= .683$ ) and Social Conservation Issues ( $M= 3.75$ ,  $SD=1.76$ ,  $\alpha= .763$ ).

#### *Demographics*

Participants reported their state of residence, the size of their home town/city, their education level, household income, race, gender, age, religious affiliation and self-rated political ideology (overall, social, and economic) from 1 (Strongly Liberal) to 7 (Strongly

Conservative) or 8 (Libertarian, other, don't know).

## RESULTS

**Table 1.**

*Correlations for MFQ and MF4 with Measures of Conservatism*

Morality	Self-Reported Conservatism	Social Issue Conservatism	Economic Issue Conservatism
MFT			
Fairness	-.36*	-.24*	-.32**
Harm	-.14	-.05	-.12
Authority	.50**	.32**	.44**
Loyalty	.41**	.32**	.41**
Purity	.51**	.29**	.44**
MF4			
Universalism	-.49**	-.42**	-.45**
Self-direction	-.46**	-.42**	-.48**
Obedience	.59**	.38**	.54**
Status	.39**	.32**	.36**

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 1 compares correlations between MFQ and MF4 scales with self-reported conservatism. All five MFT scales correlated significantly, except Harm, replicating previous results (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Similarly, all MF4 scales correlated with conservatism. Similar patterns are seen with scales of economic- and social-issue conservatism. Additionally, the pattern of correlations among the MF4 scales are consistent with the circumplex structure of SVT; both Obedience and Status correlate positively,  $r(129) = .243$ ,  $p = .005$ , as do Universalism and Self-direction,  $r(129) = .387$ ,  $p < .001$ . In contrast, both Status and Universalism correlate negatively,  $r(129) = -.687$ ,  $p < .001$ , as do Obedience and Self-direction,  $r(129) = -.596$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Table 2.**

*Regression Analyses Comparing MFT and MF4 Predicting Conservative Self-Identification*

	$R^2$	b	SE	$\beta$
MFT	.45**			
Fairness		-1.33***	.31	-.39
Harm		.15	.28	.05
Authority		.49	.28	.20
Loyalty		.26	.26	.10
Purity		.67**	.21	.34
				$F(5,92) = 14.9$
MF4	.43***			
Universalism		-.85*	.37	-.28
Self-direction		-.03	.38	-.01
Obedience		.97***	.23	.46
Status		.08	.38	.03
				$F(4,92) = 17.2$

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 2 shows simultaneous regression analyses for both the MFQ and MF4 scales. Among the MFQ scales, only Fairness and Purity reached significance. Among the MF4

scales, only Universalism and Obedience reached significance. Overall variance accounted for was similar between the MFQ,  $R^2 = .45$ , and the MF4,  $R^2 = .43$ . The  $F$  for MF4 was slightly larger,  $F(4,92) = 17.2$ , than for the MFQ,  $F(5,92) = 14.9$ .

Tables 3 through 5 present stepwise regressions predicting three different operationalizations of conservatism. In each step, the regression analysis chooses the next best predictor from all remaining MFQ and MFT scales to maximize the overall amount of variance explained.

**Table 3.**

*Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Self-Identified Conservatism*

	Self-identified Conservatism			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Obedience	.59***	.46***	.45***	.46***
Universalism		-.30**	-.25**	-.27**
Fairness			-.22**	-.30**
Harm				.17*
$\Delta R^2$		.07**	.04**	.02*
Total $R^2$	.34***	.41***	.45***	.47***

Note. Beta values shown.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 3 examines self-reported conservatism. Here the M4 scales of Obedience and Universalism emerged as the best predictors, but the MFQ scales of Fairness and Harm also accounted for unique variance.

**Table 4.**

*Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Social Conservatism*

	Social-issue Conservatism			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Obedience	.57***	.45***	.34***	.33***
Universalism		-.29***	-.26***	-.18*
Loyalty			.26**	.31***
Fairness				-.26***
$\Delta R^2$		.07**	.04*	.06**
Total $R^2$	.32***	.39***	.43***	.49***

Note. Beta values shown.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 4 examines social-issue conservatism. Once again Obedience and Universalism were the best predictors followed by the MFQ scales of Loyalty and Fairness.

**Table 5.**

*Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Economic Conservatism*

	Economic-issue Conservatism		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Fairness	-.50***	-.48***	-.43***
Self-Direction		-.27***	-.20*
Universalism			-.19*
$\Delta R^2$		.07**	.02*
Total $R^2$	.25***	.32***	.34***

Note. Beta values shown.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 5 examines economic-issue conservatism. Here the MFQ scale of Fairness was the best predicted, but the MF4 scales of Self-Direction and Universalism also improved the model fit.

## DISCUSSION

MFT claims to have broadened morality and explained differing ideological beliefs with their five discrete, quasi-physiological sensors of morality. As hypothesized in Hypothesis 1a, MF4 scales did show acceptable internal reliability, and correlated with self-reported political conservatism. This suggests that our measure does indeed predict the endorsement of political conservatism. Alongside this, we successfully replicated the correlations between the MFT foundations and self-identified conservatism, excluding harm (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Within this, a substantial correlation ( $r = -.359$ ) was found between Fairness and conservatism. MFT theorists claim that conservatives have a broader morality than liberals because they utilize all the “Moral Foundations” roughly equally. However, the fact that the negative correlation between Fairness and conservatism is substantially larger than zero suggests that conservatives are endorsing it substantially less. This disputes MFT’s claim that conservatives utilize the five foundations more equally. This also supports the trade-off logic underlying SVT (Schwartz, et al., 2012). However, the reliabilities of the MFT scales (Harm/Care,  $\alpha = .564$ , Fairness/Reciprocity,  $\alpha = .511$ , Authority/Respect,  $\alpha = .595$ , Ingroup/Loyalty,  $\alpha = .621$ , and Purity/Sanctity,  $\alpha = .764$ ) are low, calling into question the coherence of these constructs. Overall, the MF4 scales performed better. First, the MF4 scales showed better

reliabilities (Obedience,  $\alpha = .802$ , Status,  $\alpha = .709$ , Universalism,  $\alpha = .755$ , and Self-Direction,  $\alpha = .777$ ).

Second, as predicted in Hypothesis 1b, the pattern of relationships among the MF4 measures fit the tradeoff pattern expected for, with Obedience and Status correlating positively, Obedience and Self-Direction correlating negatively, Self-Direction and Universalism correlating positively, and Status and Universalism correlating negatively. Third, as predicted in Hypothesis 1c, each scale within the MF4 correlates with self-reported conservatism. This suggests that MFT may not have identified the only relevant moral differences between liberals and conservatives and that the MFQ may be measuring moralization, rather than functionally discrete “foundations.”

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the MF4 and MFQ would account for about equal amounts of variance in self-reported ideology. As shown in Table 2, this hypothesis was supported. While the MFQ accounted for 45% of the variance, the MF4 accounted for 43%. In both cases, only two of the predictors reach significance (i.e., Fairness and Purity for MFQ, Universalism and Obedience for MF4). However, we note that the F value is higher for the MF4, because it requires fewer degrees of freedom. Given the importance MFT gives to parsimony (Graham et al., 2011), this difference is important. Our analyses here suggest that MF4’s four factor theory explains almost as much variance as the MFQ with a smaller number of factors. Additionally, the success of our alternative set of scales calls into question MFT’s presumption of having discovered “foundational” differences and suggests instead that a range of moral values can be moralized differently between liberals and conservatives. Our result also undermines MFT in finding Fairness the best predictor of conservatism. This negative relationship undermines the MFT assertion that liberals and conservatives endorse the “individualizing” foundations roughly equally (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). The only reason this set of predictors can account for 45% of the variance is due to Fairness, a



predictor that MFT suggests should be near zero.

To better understand the predictive utility of each set of scales, we also conducted three stepwise hierarchical regressions predicting in turn self-reported conservative, social-issue conservatism and economic-issue conservatism. As we predicted in Hypothesis 3a, some of the MF4 scales emerged as better predictors of self-reported conservatism relative to the MFQ scales. The MF4 scales of Obedience and Universalism appear to be potent predictors for self-reported conservatism, emerging as the best two predictors before the MFQ's Fairness and Harm. This suggests that MFT underspecifies the exact moral differences between liberals and conservatives. This also suggests that describing liberal morality as "individualizing" may not be accurate given the predictive value of Universalism. We note in passing that Harm likely performed differently (loading positively) given that two of the original Harm items were dropped to improve the scale's reliability.

The results also supported Hypothesis 3b, which predicted MF4 scales would emerge as predictors of social-issue conservatism. Once again, MF4's scales of Obedience and Universalism emerged and accounted for more variance than MFT's Loyalty and Fairness. We do note, however, that even after Obedience is entered, MFQ's Loyalty emerges as the third best predictor of social conservatism. This suggests that the Loyalty scale captures something relevant to conservatives that our Obedience scale fails to address.

As hypothesized in Hypothesis 2c, MF4 scales accounted for variance unexplained by MFT scales in issue-based economic conservatism. MFT's Fairness is important, but so are MF4's Self-Direction and Universalism. No "binding" factors emerged as significant. This suggests that neither "binding" nor obedience concerns drive economic conservatism, but that rejecting fairness, self-direction, and universalism do. The fact that no positive predictor emerged as a predictor of economic conservatism also suggests that conservative morality here is narrower rather than *broader* relative to liberal morality.

Additionally, only Universalism and Fairness were significant predictors across all three operationalizations of conservatism. The fact that these were always negative predictors calls into question the idea that conservatives have a broader morality than liberals.

Overall, our results offer a strong corrective to MFT's claim to explain ideological differences. Our ability to translate SVT constructs into "morality" scales based on the two MFQ formats suggests that MFT has not discovered the root causes of liberal-conservative differences. By showing that other values can be moralized in the same fashion as the MFQ scales suggests that the MFQ might instead be detecting differences in moralizations rather than the key "foundations" of morality. Our results also suggest that MFT is incomplete as a model of the moral differences between liberals and conservatives. Obedience and Universalism (reversed) appear to be potent (arguably *better*) predictors of conservatism.

More takeaways from this study include the general pattern of multiple scales acting as negative predictors for conservatism, such as Universalism, Self-Direction, etc. This suggests that MFT is wrong in its claim that conservatives have a broader morality. Instead, it suggests conservatism entails the rejection of moral concerns. Our findings also provide additional support for previous critics of MFT as a model of ideological differences (Federico, Weber, Ergun, & Hunt, 2013; Sinn, n.d.; Sinn & Hayes, 2016). More specifically, these studies discuss MFT missing the following critical factor in liberal motives: Universalism (Sinn & Hayes, 2016).

We should note, however, that we found little evidence in the stepwise directions for a role of the MF4 Status scale in predicting conservatism. This might suggest that the moralization of status is less important than other concerns. Alternatively, it could be that a better set of items, perhaps more focused on power, could produce a scale that would perform better. Additionally, Status may too closely reflect an opposing set of values relative to Universalism such that its predictive power is overwhelmed by that of Universalism.

## LIMITATIONS

Our results would be stronger if replicated in a more diverse sample. A large part of our sample came from those who had just taken a general sociology course. This course explores topics such as poverty, power, inequality and other topics that could impact the scope and nature of moral reasoning. Our study also used issue-based measures that were based on a relatively small set of items. A broader set, or separate set, of items might reveal different results. Finally, experimental work is needed to better understand the causal nature of the relationships our data suggests. One cannot assume that what our findings suggest as truth until it is future explored. This could be seen in the example of seeing if there are experiences (such as taking a sociology course, as previously stated) that might increase the levels of universalism over time.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

For future studies, the idea of replicating this study in a different type of sample would be good to confirm if our findings are generalizable to populations other than college students. Alongside this, one could also do an exploratory factor analysis with all the items within the MF4 and MFT. This would possibly let us see if we can simplify down the nine scales. It could be that some of the current factors could be combined (e.g., Obedience, Purity, and Authority might load on one factor).

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