UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

DEFICIT BEFORE DISHONOR: THE UNIQUE ROLE OF HONOR CULTURE ENDORSEMENT IN MOTIVATING SUPPORT FOR PROTECTIONIST ECONOMIC POLICY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By MICHAEL GERARD DOERGE JR.

Norman, Oklahoma

2026

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DEFICIT BEFORE DISHONOR: THE UNIQUE ROLE OF HONOR CULTURE ENDORSEMENT IN MOTIVATING SUPPORT FOR PROTECTIONIST ECONOMIC POLICY

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR
THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Mauricio Carvallo, Chair

Dr. Michael Givel

Dr. Lara Mayeux

Dr. Erin Freeman

Dr. Huajian Cai

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Acknowledgments

It is with tremendous respect that I thank my committee for their support, mentorship, and friendship beyond the classroom or laboratory. To Dr. Mauricio Carvallo, I cannot express enough appreciation for the years spent teaching me how to be a conscientious and resilient social scientist. Your guidance has helped me to grow as a student, teacher, and person. Your impact will stay with me throughout my life and career. To Dr. Michael Givel, for leading me through two thirds, or more, of my graduate political science education. It is due to your instruction and lasting influence that I can call my work political psychology. To Dr. Lara Mayeux, thank you for all that you have done for the department and for encouraging students and staff alike when times got tough and others would have faltered. I aspire to possess your wisdom and aplomb. To Dr. Erin Freeman, for seeing me through my earliest teaching experiences all the way to the conclusion of my schooling with this work. Your endorsement continues to open doors in my professional endeavors. For Dr. Cai, no one has been as enthusiastic, contemplative, and motivated to take on this fascinating yet difficult work than you. I look forward to working together as equals now.

To the staff at the University of Oklahoma including Cambria Cotner, Jen DuBois, Rachel Moore, Lincoln Torrey, and Emma Cockrell. Without your daily efforts, our students would not be half as successful and confident as they come to be. To the remaining faculty members in the Social Area and beyond, Dr. Nicole Campbell, Dr. Jenel Cavazos, Dr. Michael Sladek, and Dr. Michael Wenger. The years we spent together have been some of the most educational and validating of my career thus far. Thank you all for your time and energy. Finally, to my dear graduate student friends, those alongside me in their own journeys, I hope someday I can repay tenfold all the care and encouragement you've shown me over these several years.

To my father, in all my learning, you've taught me to think but not make thoughts my aim, to meet with triumph and disaster but treat those two imposters the same. Your legacy is in this work, in more ways than just our name. To my mother, my first advocate for pursuing a career in psychology. This work is the culmination of your patience, devotion, and educational achievements as much as it is mine. To my sister, you set the standard and blazed a trail for me through your own academic and professional quest. As I continue forward, I do my best to live up to the example you've set. And to my brother, my best friend, when all else failed I knew I could believe in the you that believed in me. There has been no more selfless, thoughtful, or truly good man in my life than you.

To my darling wife, Kathleen, I cherish you beyond measure as a paragon of tenacity and consideration. You study, question, and experience this world in a way few else are capable of or are willing to do. As you have come to know me fully, I have fully known you as a steadfast friend, an advocate for the weak, a virtuous professional, and a guardian always ready. I am carried to the conclusion of my training by the love that you, and your family, have shown me. Thank you always, my beloved.

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Abstract

Support for protectionist economic policies has grown in the United States despite extensive evidence documenting their long-term economic drawbacks. Although previous research has primarily explained support for protectionism through ideological orientations or economic considerations, the present research examines whether endorsement of the culture of honor provides a broader psychological framework for understanding these attitudes. Across three studies, this research investigated the role of honor endorsement in predicting support for protectionist economic policies and identified the psychological processes through which this relationship emerges. Study 1 demonstrated that honor endorsement predicted protectionist attitudes above and beyond political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation. Study 1 also examined associations between honor endorsement and several proposed correlates of protectionism, including in-group bias, national self-reliance, national reputation concerns, perceived economic threat, and evaluations of international trade governance. Study 2 tested whether national self-reliance and reputation concerns explain the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionism. Study 3 experimentally manipulated perceptions of national economic threat to examine how threat influences support for protectionist policies and whether these effects are moderated by honor endorsement. Across all three studies, honor endorsement was consistently associated with stronger support for protectionist policies. Collectively, the findings suggest that honor culture functions as a distal cultural orientation that shapes concerns about national independence, reputation, and economic vulnerability, thereby providing a broader psychological framework for understanding support for protectionist economic policies beyond traditional ideological explanations.

Deficit Before Dishonor: The Unique Role of Honor Culture Endorsement in Motivating Support for Protectionist Economic Policy

> "There are those who say that America should simply erect a wall and live within its own borders economically… Just when the advantages of expanded trade have become so dramatic, we are again hearing the voices of retreat here in our own country."

- Bill Clinton, 1995

> "We have to make sure America writes the rules of the global economy. And we should do it today, while our economy is in the position of global strength."

- Barack Obama, 2015

> "For decades, our country has been looted, pillaged, raped, and plundered by nations near and far, both friend and foe alike … But it's not going to happen anymore."

- Donald Trump, 2025

Through recent years, the United States has moved towards a more protectionist and less cooperative approach to international relations. Daily headlines share reports of new tariffs (Irwin, 2017; Pitas, 2024), reductions in foreign aid to long-standing allies (DeSilver, 2025; Knickmeyer et al., 2025), withdrawals from important trade agreements (Bouët & Laborde, 2018; MacIsaac & Duclos, 2020), and retreats from international organizations that are central to global cooperation (Mason & Nichols, 2025; Yamey & Titanji, 2025). Economists, public

officials, political commentators and even former presidents have argued that these shifts undermine the United States' credibility and could lead to long-term economic and diplomatic costs (Behsudi, 2024; Bush & Blair, 2016; Kutlina-Dimitrova & Lakatos, 2017; Reuters, 2024; Rice, 2024). Despite these warnings, policymaker and public support for protectionist policies has grown (Akhtar et al., 2024; Bacchus, 2024; Friedhoff, 2024; Gracia, 2024). This raises an important question: if cooperative international policies generally benefit both the United States and the global economy, why do protectionist policies continue to resonate with citizens and policymakers?

Before seeking to answer this question, it is necessary to remember that U.S. foreign policy has never followed a single, predictable, path. Rather, a historical analysis of U.S. strategies for international cooperation would reveal these behaviors vary widely. For instance, Thomas Jefferson's 1801 statement that the U.S. should seek "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, *entangling relationships with none*" contrasts sharply with the approaches of later administrations which have more often promoted global institutions, immersive interventions, and economic or political cooperation through a liberal international order (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1999; Jefferson, 1801; Kaufman, 2021).[1] Scholars argue that these systems of cooperation are now in decline both as the U.S. and global environment experience new conflicts, crises, and populist social movements that challenge the systems which allow for such cooperation (Ikenberry, 2020; Steinberg, 2021; Weiss & Wallace, 2021).[2]

[1] Moving beyond the U.S., albeit in many ways championed by the U.S. since WWII, a liberal international order (LIO) has been the common language of global politics centering on collective desire for more open economies, human rights protections, the rule of law, powerful and trustworthy supranational bodies, and the defense or expansion of democratic regimes and ideals (Fioretos 2019; Lake et al., 2021).

[2] Although directionality is unclear, protectionism and other maladies fill the vacuum left by a receding LIO while the U.S. and broader global environment must redefine their goals and strategies for cooperation (Eliasson & Garcia-Duran, 2024; Kintaş & Üstün, 2026; Lobell & Ernstsen, 2021).

This range of policy positions thus reveal how debates and research around the appropriate level of U.S. global integration are not new and often require reappraisal as times, goals, and systems change. Thus, as past work has explored strategic, economic, and political explanations for different foreign policy preferences, far less research has examined the psychological and social processes that may shape current public support for protectionist policies. Understanding these powerful mechanisms will be important for explaining recent moves toward economic self-protection and decreased cooperation[3]. This unique angle may even offer a new answer to the question of *why* these policies persist.

The Power of Public Opinion in International Relations

One might assume, given the media and research attention around the first and second Trump administrations, that Donald Trump's personal rhetoric may be responsible for these major shifts in public opinion. This attribution is not entirely appropriate, nor does it capture earlier historical examples of divisive U.S. international policies mentioned above (Kaufman, 2021). In a related but similarly incomplete account of public support influencing foreign policy, research from the 2000s and earlier suggested that foreign policy issues were too complex for the average voter to develop well-defined attitudes, leaving public opinion especially susceptible to political leaders' messaging and party platforms (Hiscox, 2006). These arguments held that support for foreign policy specifically followed a top-down development process where political leaders set the tone around policies for constituents to follow, especially for workers in unskilled labor or with less education (Ardanaz et al., 2013). However, as of the late 2010's, this theory has faced considerable scrutiny and more recent research has determined that conformity with one's social or political in-group's attitude towards foreign policy has greater influence on the

[3] For the purposes of this work, when issues of cooperation are mentioned, they should be understood in terms of cooperation under the LIO, despite its currently unsteady authority.

individual's attitude than specific leadership's messaging, from bottom-up rather than top-down, and that the individual's attitude has more impact on actual policy decision making than previously thought (Kertzer & Zeitzoff, 2017). Expanding on this, recent empirical studies have identified that public opinion can significantly influence leaders' actual political decision making, specifically for issues of foreign policy and international relations (Chu & Recchia, 2022; Peez & Bethke, 2025).

It may be true too that as nations such as the U.S. experience these moments of heightened antagonism, the constituent's influence on policy becomes increasingly less meaningful. Recent studies by organizations such as Freedom House, Brookings, and the Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem) have documented rising authoritarianism and reductions in personal and political freedom both in the U.S. and around the world, suggesting democratic backsliding, and thus reducing the viability of public opinion in shaping policy (Freedom House, 2026; Williamson, 2023). Perhaps the most damning testimony highlighting both global and the U.S.'s specific political struggles comes from V-Dem's most recent Democracy Report, wherein the U.S. falls in it categorization from a liberal democracy, a form of democracy that ensures checks-and-balances with protections for civil rights and freedoms, to an electoral democracy, one that simply ensures fair elections with broad suffrage and basic freedoms (Nord et al., 2026). As democratic systems grow weaker, trust in the representative system and expressions of constituent desires may change in turn, though not always in predictable directions (Devine, 2024; Palacios, 2025). Economic analyses have also found that regressive democratic systems themselves tend to promote harsh and uncooperative policies which then in turn elicit stronger backsliding and may eventually begin a self-sustaining downward cycle of obstructive international policies and democratic decline (Abera, 2025).

While these circumstances call into question the influence and directionality of public opinion on foreign policy actions, these same sources argue for the longevity of democracy and the eventual resurgence of representative regimes (Freedom House, 2026). Furthermore, research shows that these reductions in representativeness are not occurring uniformly across the U.S., with some states showing improvements in voter engagement, fairness, and public opinion influence in recent years (Grumbach, 2024). Even globally, many metrics of lost freedom may be overstated and, in practice, not as damning for political representation as may be initially perceived (Little & Meng, 2024). Furthermore, in the greater conversation of the influence by public opinion, some portion of rising authoritarianism must be attributed to the voters themselves as an ideology that gains or loses support depending on current issues facing citizens (Jacob, 2025). This again suggests that as representativeness may appear to wane, reducing the power of the constituent, reactive push-back may still lead to greater support for representation and a revival of democratic values empowering public opinions where actual policies, such as international relations or trade, are expected to again be derived from bottom-up voter choice and public opinion. Lastly, it bears repeating that even though representation may revive, there are significant challenges in ensuring policymakers follow the will of voters rather than their own self-interests or lobbyist groups. Recent work has identified that more-often-than-not policymakers are ambivalent towards constituent desires and yet, there remain strategies and hope for more equal representation through social movements and reforms (Page & Gilens, 2020). All told, the lack of consensus for both the state of political freedom and effective representation leaves more optimism for the influence of public opinion than it removes.

In total, this novel understanding of the power in unified public opinions towards foreign policy decision making, and the seemingly resilient representative systems thus relied on, opens

the field of research into how social systems may influence individual policy attitudes and subsequent shifts in actual international relations and global trade. Furthermore, these findings provide a foundation for the current research that individual attitudes, and where/when/why these attitudes change, are an impactful and necessary subject of study to understand the United States' international relations and modern turn towards uncooperativeness and protectionism. If public opinion remains a meaningful influence on foreign policy, then understanding why protectionism resonates with citizens requires examining the broader motivational systems that drive these processes. It is known that protectionist preferences frequently emerge from in-group biases, threat perceptions, nationalistic concerns about status, international shifts in oversight, and beliefs in the value of economic self-reliance. The following sections build on these foundations to clarify how each of these forces contribute to contemporary protectionist attitudes.

Protectionism

Protectionism is an economic strategy defined by prioritizing domestic interests and limiting foreign cooperation to protect a nation's economy from international competition, stabilize or grow domestic industries, and promote national self-sufficiency (Brittanica, 2025; Campanella, 2023). Protectionist policies typically take the form of tariffs, import restrictions, and unilateral trade agreements that favor domestic producers, often at the expense of broader international cooperation (Chatzky et al., 2020). Although such policies may yield short-term benefits at the macroeconomic level, they are widely viewed as harmful to consumers and inconsistent with longstanding evidence that free trade is linked to economic prosperity. In most cases, any early gains awarded through protectionism are quickly offset by stagnation or economic backsliding (De Bolle & Zettelmeyer, 2019; Kutlina-Dimitrova & Lakatos, 2017; Reuters, 2024).

While protectionism sometimes appears alongside isolationist sentiment, the two represent distinct orientations. Isolationism reflects a desire to reduce a state's involvement in foreign affairs by avoiding military entanglements, limiting international aid, and preferring greater political and commercial independence (Crothers, 2011; Doenecke, 2017). Historically, support for isolationism in the U.S. has fluctuated in response to economic conditions, military performance, and presidential approval (Kertzer, 2013; Urbatsch, 2010) while recent polling also suggests renewed public interest in reducing the U.S.'s role in global affairs (Jones, 2023; Smeltz, 2024). Together, these trends help explain why isolationism is often discussed in the same conversations as protectionism as both involve some preference for national self-reliance and self-determination. However, isolationism is neither the focus of the present work nor the primary driver of the policy attitudes examined here. Instead, the emphasis in this work is on economic protectionism as a targeted international trade strategy with its own psychological and cultural foundations.

Protectionism as In-Group Bias

To begin explaining protectionist tendencies, we start at the group level, where protectionism has been generally derived from concerns about threats to national identity or economic security, concerns that are deeply intertwined with social psychological processes. Of these processes, the most well-defined is Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (1979), which offers that individuals base their identity in the groups they are members of, that individuals naturally desire positive social identities from their groups, and that individuals may derogate or view outside social groups as less than their own since comparisons that elevate one's group may result in positive feelings of self-esteem (Shayo, 2020). These resulting tendencies are referred to as in-group bias.

Building on this view, research has shown that when individuals face competition between their in-group and an out-group, they may express stronger identification with their in-group and favor outcomes that maximize relative group success over absolute in-group success. In practice, this means making choices that could harm one's in-group if doing so ensures that an out-group fares worse, thereby widening relative success by comparison (Brown, 2020; Sidanius et al., 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Protectionist policies can thus be understood as a strategy that seeks in-group relative success even at an in-group cost, as protectionism is consistent with in-group biases and enhanced competition (Mutz & Kim, 2017).

Past research further applies in-group biases to protectionist policies through the antecedent factor of ethnocentrism in predicting support for protectionism. Ethnocentrism is understood as the view that one's own ethnic in-group is the center of social importance and that any ethnic out-groups, by comparison, are considered lesser (Alsughayir, 2013). Ethnocentric beliefs have been found to produce lower evaluations of foreign countries, immigrants, and outsourcing labor overseas, which in turn predicts support for protectionist policies as foreign countries, their industries, and their imported goods are perceived more poorly than domestic industry and its workers (Naoi, 2020; Mansfield & Mutz, 2013). In experimental studies, even simply changing a corporation's name from a presumed ethnic in-group to an ethnically ambiguous, or potential out-group, name can evoke poorer attitudes and protectionist values for individuals higher in ethnocentrism, regardless of one's economic background (Sabet, 2013). From this understanding, endorsing ethnocentric beliefs would motivate protectionist economic policies as an extension of in-group biases and comparative social preferences rather than rational material gains or losses.

Much like the relationship between ethnocentrism and protectionism is the powerful relationship of nationalism with protectionist policy. Nationalism is the extreme belief that one's nation is superior to all others and that an individual's devotion to their nation should supersede any other individual or group interests (Druckman, 1994). Not to be confused with patriotism, defined as love or devotion for one's nation, nationalism places greater concern on derogations of other states and on enhancing one's perception of their nation, often to unrealistic levels, as well as a staunch defense of one's nation. Simply put, endorsers of nationalism are averse to international integration or cooperation and are highly supportive of protectionism while tending to also be averse to free trade (Mansfield & Pevehouse, 2022; Margalit, 2012). This is due in part to nationalistic views promoting competition and conflict with other states to reinforce the belief that one's nation remains superior, or due to overestimations of a state's likelihood to win in military or economic confrontation (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Lebow, 2020).

In these contexts, *economic nationalism* has been defined to explain strategies that prioritize and advance domestic industries against international markets or powers (Pryke, 2012). Specifically, economic nationalism promotes restrictions on imports, exclusion of foreign workers, and extending state controls over trade and property, with the end-goal being a unified, self-reliant, and powerful national economic identity (De Bolle & Zettelmeyer, 2019; Pryke, 2012; Peukert, 2020). While these strategies and motivations can of course be understood as operationalizations of protectionism and are often used synonymously, economic nationalism has been argued to be distinct from protectionism in that attitudes of supremacy motivate economic nationalism, whereas protectionism may remain at least somewhat a more strategic, morally benign, policy approach that can come about without necessitating aggressive nationalistic

positions, even though they remain closely associated in theory and practice (D'Costa, 2012; MacIsaac & Duclos, 2020; Wicaksana, 2019).

Regardless, individual attitudes of nationalism support the belief that foreign groups and nations are inherently lesser than one's own, driving support for protectionist policies that can be understood to result from in-group biases and efforts to enhance feelings of self-esteem or positive regard for one's in-group above other states (Honeker, 2023). In the context of protectionism, and when directly comparing nationalism with ethnocentrism, protectionism is more often framed and detailed through a political, national, lens rather than an ethnic focus. As well, when considering the individual constituents that make up nationalistic and ethnocentric groups, there exists numerous policy or behavioral support overlaps between nationalistic values that are not equally expressed between ethnic groups, supporting the two values as distinct in both their makeup and political outcomes although often considered interchangeable, especially in the context of protectionism (Bizumic et al., 2019; Rosenblatt, 1964; Sheppard et al., 2023). Stated another way, it is supported that while differing ethnic groups in the U.S. may be highly nationalistic, these ethnic groups may then still adhere to different, and potentially competing, ethnocentric values (Sheppard et al., 2023). Furthermore, while cultural or identity concerns may manifest within protectionism such as through stringent immigration policy and may then be more closely related to values of ethnocentrism or xenophobia, the higher order themes these protectionist concerns rely on remain the protection, sovereignty, or status of a nation, and are not due by ethnocentric values alone (Honeker, 2023). Thus, moving forward, in-group biases regarding national allegiance will be operationalized through measures of nationalism, as it remains the clearest and one of the most widely studied connections between in-group beliefs and economic policy outcomes.

Protectionism as a Reaction to Threat

One's economic status and access to money can support feelings of security and safety as funds are utilized to secure basic physical needs such as food and shelter (Howell et al., 2013). Threats to one's economic safety can manifest at the individual level through personal expectations of financial hardship from lost jobs or higher prices for goods, at the group level via perceptions of collective financial challenge such as a national recession or declining market indices, and as with individual level economic threats, can be understood as group level security threats (Fritsche & Jugert, 2017). Economic threats are often and easily transposed into physical security threats and can evoke similar down-stream attitudes or reactions when threat is made salient. For instance, recent debates around trade have been framed as a conflict that threatens the U.S.'s national security and subsequently evokes war-hawklike reactions where once stood discussions of cooperation (Van Aaken & Kurtz, 2019). Furthermore, in conversations of immigration, the common 'job stealing' immigrant myth appeals to many right-wing populists as a justification for aggressive defensive, sometimes offensive, actions against foreign workers even when much economic analysis has debunked such myths (Finley & Esposito, 2019; Ho, 2018; Hogan & Haltinner, 2018). When we approach economic policy as inherently representing a state or individual's security and survival, we can make the connection that trade policies may be similarly subject to threat, conflict, and fear motivations as would be a nation's security policies (Johnston, 2013).

Thinking rationally, protectionism as a national policy is understood as a strategic response to global economic uncertainty, rising competition, and crises (Campanella, 2023; Sang, 2020). At the individual level, research suggests that protectionism is supported as a self-defensive reaction by those threatened with economic competition or globalization; more often

those with (or from regions with) lower education attainment, employment rates, and income (Bearce & Jolliff Scott, 2019; Becker et al., 2017; Owen & Johnston, 2017). For these threatened groups, protectionism plays into their fears and is positioned as the solution to perceived failures of globalization in providing equitable economic outcomes for all, even though it may not objectively improve their economic security. These groups may also feel marginalized and experience lower self-esteem in the face of economic threat and thus, protectionist policies are instrumental in safeguarding local psychological wellbeing against the threat of globalization (Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2017; Dent, 2020). This reaction reverses for individuals less at risk to economic instability, who may be wealthier or employed in higher-skilled labor fields that stand to benefit greater from expanded markets (Ardanaz et al., 2013; Essig et al., 2021). However, when evaluating economic challenge as a direct transgression or attack from trading partners, protectionism instead can be wielded as a form of retaliation against transgressors (Reich, 1983). This notion thus inspires further study into perceptions of international trade as dangerous or threatening and in protectionism's role in reacting to such a threat.

Empirically, we find some support for protectionism as a security reassurance reaction among a Chinese sample in response to American trade antagonism, and more broadly across a variety of policy operationalizations regardless of one's economic standing, yet no study has experimentally connected perceptions of economic threat and protectionism as a retaliatory strategy with a modern American sample (Johnston, 2013; Steinberg & Tan, 2023). What has been found with a U.S. sample is that increased perceptions of threatening competition with China or any foreign entity that is not overtly aligned with the U.S. decreases support for U.S. open-trade deals (Essig et al., 2021; Kerner et al., 2020). China specifically is more often believed to benefit from U.S.-China trade relations and has been named in nationally

representative surveys to be the single greatest threatening country to the U.S. as both an economic and national security danger with many Americans supporting tough stances on trade going forward (Huang, et al., 2025; Silver et al., 2021; Younis, 2021). Furthermore, economic research supports that trade expansion of China into the U.S. has indeed slightly increased domestic unemployment and reduced wages for certain local markets (Autor et al., 2013, 2016), suggesting that trade and globalism may rightfully be viewed at fault in causing economic hardship close to home by some individuals. To boot, recent work has leveraged threatening and misinformed statements regarding China's economic growth to manipulate support for free-trade, offering further precedence for threatening beliefs towards competing states' economic growth to be understood as relevant factors in threat-reactive trade policy decisions (Flynn et al., 2020). Overall, this approach to protectionism as a self-defensive reaction to economic or security threats suggests that a heightened concern or reactivity to national level threats may motivate impactful foreign policy decisions outside the scope of traditional rational economic theories and demands further research.

Protectionism from Lack of Governance

When speaking of international trade, there are generally less institutions conducting governance and oversight processes than would be under a nation's domestic economy or trade. In the context of protectionism, oversight and prevention has come in the form of supranational organizations like the World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), or from a hegemonic state power (Campanella, 2023; Honeker, 2023). For independent international trade and economic organizations like the World Bank and WTO, their purpose for monitoring, brokering, and enforcing trade agreements help ensure global commitments to free trade are followed and promise costly punishments for reneging on deals (Baccini & Kim, 2012). These entities, while

historically effective in promoting free trade and preventing protectionist actions, are showing signs of hardship and weakening especially after the 2008 financial crisis and have recently been called on to adapt for contemporary threats to free trade such as interrupted multilateral agreements, shifting economic zones of influence, and the U.S.'s deteriorating economic dominance (Aggarwal & Evenett, 2013; Park, 2020; Witts, 2025). Furthermore, when examining attitudes towards free-trade and international organizations, there is generally a positive correlation between the two, with stronger support for free trade resulting in greater support for international organizations and vice versa, suggesting a closeness in the psychological foundations of cooperation, trade, and governance (Honeker, 2023). Thus, if an individual's perception of international organizations, specifically those governing trade, were to diminish, we could expect similarly deprecating reactions towards free trade in favor of protectionist or domestic policies instead.

Regarding the U.S.'s grip loosening on the global economy, we must first understand Kindleberger's Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST; 1973) and the role that a dominant economic force plays in global trade. HST argues that periods of free and stable trade historically come about when a hegemon, a single dominant state, creates and maintains foreign trading rules that benefit the hegemon while providing military, economic, or legal security for the management of the global economy (Campanella, 2023; Kindleberger, 1973). Hegemons and their periods of rule in recent history include the British Empire throughout the *Pax Brittanica* period, and post-WWII U.S. during the *Pax Americana* period from 1945 to roughly the 1970's (Boron, 1994). While it can be argued that the U.S. maintained a dominating military force well past the 70's into the present, the era of U.S. control over global trade is waning while other states such as China and India are looking to lead the global economy (Dymski, 2002). This suggests not just

increased global competition and uncertainty, but a genuine loss of American regulatory power and governance across international trade systems. When a hegemon is no longer able or willing to maintain open economies, many nations may turn to independence and focus on domestic capabilities, hence, a turn to protectionist policies (Campanella, 2023). It has even been suggested that the use of protectionist policies by the U.S. has been an attempt to retain the nation's hegemonic status, although, this is unlikely to improve the actual economic prosperity or influence of the U.S. (Dilek & Ayar-Dilek, 2022). All told, protectionism is expected to emerge under our current economic environment as supranational regulatory entities and the U.S. hegemonic capacity weakens.

Protectionism as Self-Reliance

Protectionism is inherently a strategy aimed at bolstering domestic self-reliance by reducing dependence on foreign trade and insulating domestic industry from economic shocks (Britannica, 2025; Campanella, 2023). Policies such as tariffs, import quotas, and domestic subsidies function as direct expressions of self-reliant economic motives and stand in clear opposition to free-trade strategies. Although these measures are intended to strengthen national autonomy, they can sometimes produce unintended long-term challenges for workers and industries (Galtung, 1981). Public discourse reinforces the close connection between protectionism and self-reliance, with contemporary media outlets frequently describing protectionist efforts as moves toward "self-reliant" economies (Uberti, 2025). Increasingly negative public attitudes toward foreign trade, coupled with concerns about U.S. economic strength, have further fueled stronger preferences for protectionist policies (Copeland, 2025; Gracia, 2024). Messaging that highlights vulnerabilities in global markets or emphasizes the

need for domestic resilience reliably elevates support for protectionist approaches (Honeker, 2023; Walter, 2021).

The connection between economic protectionism and self-reliance has become even more salient in light of shifting global dynamics. Recent analyses point to a broader transition toward national self-sufficiency driven by geopolitical fragmentation, strategic competition, and growing uncertainty in global markets with nations adopting protectionist measures both to strengthen domestic industries and to reduce reliance on foreign actors (Kheyfets, 2025). Analyses of U.S.–India trade relations, for example, illustrate an increasing emphasis on national interests and the prioritization of economic self-reliance over heavy dependence on free-market globalization (Ahmad, 2025). During periods of economic downturn, protectionist policies may provide short-term relief, even though they can trigger higher consumer costs or retaliatory trade responses (Zhang, 2025). BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries have demonstrated this strategic balance, having used tariffs and related protections to lessen dependence on Western markets while reinforcing long-term financial sovereignty (Kurade & Bharadi, 2025).

These developments accompany a broader rethinking of globalization itself. Recent work points to a resurgence of economic nationalism that reflects structural changes in global politics and challenges earlier assumptions about interdependence (Kırıktaş, 2025). Herein, protectionism becomes a mechanism for reinforcing sovereignty and strategic advantage as global competition intensifies. This logic aligns with Friedrich List's concept of "educational protectionism," which emphasized the long-term value of developing domestic industries to achieve economic independence (Ivanov, 2025). Contemporary efforts then follow a similar trajectory, particularly in sectors tied to national security or sustainability, where shielding

domestic production from foreign competition is seen as essential for a state's success (Ivanov, 2025). Taken together, these dynamics illustrate that protectionism and self-reliance are fundamentally intertwined: protectionism strengthens national autonomy in the short term while shaping broader strategies for long-term economic resilience. As nations navigate an increasingly complex global economy, policymakers must, and voters should, balance the benefits of self-reliant policies with the potential challenges that arise when protectionist measures are applied too broadly.

Protectionism as Status or Reputation Maintenance

Political elites and citizens alike place considerable value on their nation's international status as it can yield material, social, and psychological benefits. Some nations, including the U.S., are even willing to use military force, or retaliate, to defend their status or preserve their reputation against perceived disrespect, despite the material or resource costs associated with such status-seeking behavior (Barnhart, 2016; Dafoe et al., 2014; Huberman et al., 2004; Renshon, 2017; Wolf, 2011). Playing into this importance of status, a foreign nation's gain in social standing may be perceived as a reduction in, or challenge to, one's own nation's standing since status is inherently comparative in the social international environment and is often perceived as a zero-sum game (Ferry & Udry, 2024). In this manner, a nation's status or respect exhibits similar qualities to an individual's, with importance placed on needs for self-esteem and positive social regard as the nation group acts as an extension of the individual (Wendt, 2004; Yousaf, 2015). In this pursuit of maintenance of a nation's status, respect, or reputation, protectionism may serve a unique purpose as both a somewhat-rational self-defensive measure to maintain the intrinsic benefits of national status when perceiving status threats and as a social tool by which resources are sacrificed in exchange for status enhancement.

Consistent with this broader argument, we know that constituents that derive their self-worth and align closely with the nation, i.e. nationalists, will naturally desire enhancements to their nation's status and perceive their status as superior (Druckman, 1994; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Shayo, 2020). Furthermore, under nationalistic systems, a constituent's personal status is only as great as their alignment with the nation and its standing, regardless of other measures of one's status such as financial or political elitism (Greenfeld, 1996). This national status then, and subsequent feelings of self-worth, may be credibly threatened by economic challenges or strengthening competitors and as such, may result in support for protectionist measures that mean to insulate against foreign competition and these status threats (Campanella, 2023; Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2018).

Moreover, international trade and cooperations influence or draw significantly on a nation's reputation and respect. For instance, it has been suggested that when nations are regarded with high respect, international cooperation may blossom (Wolf, 2011). Separately, when nations align with other states of positive or negative status, public perceptions may evaluate a state as having higher or lower reputation based on their associations (Gray & Hicks, 2014). As well, as a function of reputation, protectionism may benefit a state if trading entities believe a state is not afraid to cut-off trade, incentivizing partners to close deals often and frequently in the event of future credible protectionist threats (Jans et al., 1995). All told, with the earlier discussion of in-group biases, economic threat responses, shifts in international power, and nationalism, these patterns support a strong theoretical case for viewing protectionist policies as strategies through which states and their citizens seek to enhance or safeguard their international standing (Eaton & Grossman, 1985). Lastly, while open-trade policies are still known as a better strategy to combat economic hardship compared to protectionism, they are

under-supported, especially in the U.S., yet the exact reasons for why have not been tested nor determined, leaving a gap in the literature for deeper social or psychological explanations for these impractical strategies (Mansfield & Pevehouse, 2022).

Individual Differences and Protectionism

Although previous sections have discussed the debated influence of public opinion on complex policy issues, political and psychological research has long demonstrated that stable individual differences shape policy preferences. Investigations of psychological factors that contribute to protectionist attitudes have often focused on constructs such as right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social Dominance orientation (SDO). In addition, as is common in research on policy support, political ideology is often identified as one of the strongest antecedents of policy preferences, as one's position along the left-right ideological spectrum relate significantly to a wide range of downstream attitudes (Jost et al., 2008, 2009). Together, these constructs help explain the ideological and motivational foundations that predispose individuals to endorse nationalistic and protectionist viewpoints, yet they may still provide an incomplete account.

Right-wing authoritarianism reflects a personality orientation characterized by strong adherence to social norms, submission to authority, and hostility toward those who violate societal expectations (Osborne et al., 2023). Research indicates that individuals high in RWA are more likely to exhibit protectionist attitudes, as their emphasis on conformity, tradition, and social cohesion often manifests in resistance to foreign influences perceived as threats to established norms (Jedinger & Burger, 2019). Consistent with this interpretation, Mansfield and colleagues (2021) argue that growing support for right-ring populist movements and protectionist policies stems from public concerns that globalization undermines local economic stability and

one's domestic cultural identity. When individuals perceive their economic security or societal values as being at risk, they tend to realign politically toward parties that promise to restore control and safeguard national interests, a pattern particularly evident among voters who feel economically vulnerable.

Social dominance orientation, in contrast, reflects an individual's preference for hierarchical relationships among social groups and acceptance of group-based inequality (Osborne et al., 2023). Individuals high in SDO tend to hold negative attitudes toward outgroups perceived as inferior or as competitors for limited resources. This tendency aligns with findings by Jedinger and Burger (2019), who observed that both RWA and SDO significantly correlate with support for protectionist economic policies. Moreover, individuals high in SDO may rationalize protectionism as a means of maintaining social dominance, justifying such views through beliefs in the superiority of their own group (Osborne et al., 2023).

In the context of left-right political ideologies and as a political outcome, protectionism has been determined to relate with individual differences in political ideological beliefs, although this relationship remains flexible (Johnston, 2013; Naoi, 2020). Historically, right-leaning ideologies, and specifically the modern Republican Party, have campaigned for free-trade, emphasizing the desire for market expansion and often opposing protectionist or isolationist policies in the modern day (Essig, et al., 2021; Merry, 2016). Although, certain aspects or sub-ideologies of conservativism have also generally been more strongly associated with protectionism than broadly left-leaning political values (Cooper, 2021; Ehrlich & Gahagan, 2023; Spillan & Harcar, 2013). Further complicating this relationship, recent polling data from the U.S. revealed that a global focus has grown less important and is no longer a priority for conservatives and republicans (Jones, 2023; Smeltz, 2024). In recent years, Republicans have

instead prioritized reducing international trade and seeking national self-sufficiency while Democrats polled have acted as the new voice for free international trade (Kafura & Dong, 2025). This polling data furthers the suggestion that the relationship between political ideology and protectionism may not be as clearly defined as would be immediately assumed.

Importantly, support for protectionism exists across the political spectrum, although it appears to stem from different underlying values (Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2018). Whereas conservatives tend to support protectionism because it aligns with ethnocentric or nationalistic values,[4] liberals are likely to endorse protectionist policies as they perceive international trade being economically unfair and potentially harmful for lower socioeconomic groups (Foster, 2019; Van Der Waal & Koster, 2018).[5] Thus, while various individual attitudes may influence protectionism beyond political ideology, the values outlined in the sections above (self-reliance, threat perceptions, etc.) are indeed more often associated with conservativism as they align with nationalistic and self-defensive measures rather than concerns for fairness (Jost et al., 2018). As such, to best understand the impact of individual attitudes on protectionism and better address the subcomponents of ideology, the antecedents of conservativism, along with RWA and SDO, ought to be considered and established as competing prior factors in predicting protectionist

[4] Even the titles of conservative and liberal are more nuanced than often considered in psychological research. The title of conservativism varies widely from more moderate neoconservatives who support free trade while a growing number of paleoconservatives and neofascists prefer economic and cultural tightening for a variety of counterintuitive self-interests again including nationalism, authoritarianism, and xenophobia (Cooper, 2021; Foster, 2019).

[5] On the left, centrist democrat or standard liberal motivations in economic arenas are often curtailed into supporting the capitalistic status quo, which naturally leans right, although some democratic socialists and Marxists argue for radical change through a populist, class-conscious, movement that has yet to gain strong traction in the U.S. (Bougiatiotis, 2025; Foster, 2019; Rueda, 2011; Tavits & Letki, 2009). In short, and corroborating empirical data mentioned earlier, the gamut of popular political ideologies maintain a lean towards the nationalistic and authoritarian economics that accompany protectionism no matter the name or subtype of conservative and liberal voices.

policy support as they operate as succinct measures for a range of right-leaning ideologies (Harnish et al., 2018).

While individual differences such as RWA, SDO, and political ideology help explain why certain people are motivated toward protectionist policies, they still do not fully account for why themes like vigilance to threat, fierce in-group loyalty, self-reliance, and status maintenance so often cluster together in coherent patterns to support policy. To deepen this analysis, it is necessary to consider not only who is inclined toward protectionism, but the broader cultural logic that gives these motivations their structure. In other words, if RWA, SDO, and ideology explain *predispositions*, a cultural framework is then needed to explain how those predispositions are organized, reinforced, and given meaning.

The culture of honor provides such a framework. Honor cultures are characterized by strong norms surrounding personal reputation, retaliation against threats, and the defense of the in-group, norms that map closely onto the psychological themes identified above. Current research shows that honor norms shape political attitudes and responses to both domestic and international issues, often predicting policy preferences above and beyond ideology, identity, or personality traits (Barnes et al., 2014, 2016). Moreover, although honor endorsement overlaps with constructs like RWA and SDO, it remains conceptually distinct as a broader cultural system that channels threat sensitivity, group-based loyalty, and status concerns into organized patterns of political judgment (Nop & Hammond, 2025; Uskul et al., 2023).

For these reasons, the culture of honor offers a more integrated account of why protectionist attitudes resonate so strongly for some individuals. This system brings together the elements outlined in the preceding sections (perceived threat, in-group protection, self-reliance, weak oversight authorities, and status preservation) and situates them within a cultural system

that assigns them social meaning and prescribes specific behavioral and political responses. It is this cultural perspective that the current work draws on to further analyze contemporary protectionist sentiments in the United States.

The Honor Culture

At its core, the honor system emphasizes personal reputation and a willingness to defend that reputation (Brown et al., 2014; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). This defense often centers on concerns about exploitation, strong enforcement of gender norms, aggressive responses to perceived threats, and vigilance in protecting one's ingroup (Brown et al., 2009). Honor cultures differ from dignity and face cultures in that honor is upheld by both the individual and the group: honor can be lost through personal failure and must be restored through group recognition (Leung & Cohen, 2011). For men, honor is tied to self-reliance, strength, bravery, vigilance, and readiness to use violence if challenged (Barnes et al., 2012, 2014). For women, honor is maintained through chastity, loyalty, and contributions to the family unit (Pomerantz et al., 2023; Vandello & Cohen, 2003).

Historically, honor cultures arose in contexts with weak legal institutions or government oversight and where economic insecurity or pastoral livelihoods made individuals responsible for their own protection (Brown, 2016; Nowak et al., 2016). These environments incentivized reputational systems that signaled strength and discouraged exploitation (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). Although these conditions are less prominent today, the cultural logic produced then persists and remains widely represented across the Middle East, South America, Southern and Western U.S. states, and other regions shaped by similar ecological pressures (Grosjean, 2014; Travaglino et al., 2016). Individuals who value honor tend to respond strongly to insult, uncertainty, and threat, positioning honor as a meaningful lens through which to understand

preferences for policies that defend one's group, even when they come at a personal cost (Brown et al., 2009; Foster et al., 2021). As the sections below show, these cultural tendencies map closely onto the psychological pathways already identified as central to protectionism: in-group loyalty, threat reactivity, low evaluations of governance, self-reliance, and status concerns.

Honor, In-Group Bias, and Protectionism

Because honor is rooted in tightly knit relational systems, concerns about reputation and loyalty naturally extend from the family to broader social groups. Honor's emphasis on group cohesion and defense provides a useful way to understand how these dynamics map onto support for protectionist policies that prioritize the welfare and standing of one's in-groups. Honor cultures place strong emphasis on one's immediate in-group, most often the family, but this emphasis can extend outward to larger groups, including the nation, under particular circumstances (Barnes et al., 2014; Mosquera et al., 2002; Gelfand et al., 2012). At the level of the family, honor places strong emphasis on one's role within the household and the protection of family reputation, such that insults directed at a family or its members elicit greater anger among honor-endorsers than non-endorsers and are more likely to provoke retaliatory behavior (Mosquera, 2016; Mosquera et al., 2014; Uskul et al., 2015). For women in honor cultures, loyalty to the family and a willingness to sacrifice for the group are central facets of their cultural obligations (Barnes et al., 2014). At the level of extended family, honor cultures often organize around close-knit, patrilineal clans that create larger protective networks (Brown et al., 2014). Clan-based relationships help explain honor culture's documented in-group bias and, in extreme cases, lethal violence toward out-groups when an in-group member is threatened (Daly & Wilson, 1988; Thrasher & Handfeld, 2018). When applied to trade, these dynamics suggest that honor-endorsers may be especially attentive to how trade arrangements affect their in-groups and

may interpret perceived slights from foreign competitors through a reputational lens. Because protectionist policies aim to protect, stabilize, or elevate one's in-group, even at a cost, honor-endorsers may view such policies favorably, as they align with themes of self-sacrifice and group defense (Mutz & Kim, 2017).

Moving beyond the smaller family or clan dynamics, honor also shapes reactions in defense of broader social groups, including national identities and other highly valued in-groups (Barnes et al., 2014; Gelfand et al., 2012; Uskul et al., 2019). At the national level, honor-endorsers tend to closely identify with their country and respond strongly to threats against it. This pattern reflects the strategic value of aligning oneself with powerful groups that can project strength, maintain safety, and uphold honor at a collective level. functions that can be just as important as personal honor (Barnes et al., 2014; Uskul et al., 2023). Attacks on the nation may thus be experienced as personal attacks, and threats to an honorable non-familial in-group member can provoke anger, violent reactions, or support for self-sacrifice (Brown et al., 2014; Gelfand et al., 2012; Mandel & Litt, 2013). These tendencies make honor a cultural system well suited to supporting protectionist policies, as the underlying motivation to defend in-groups can extend outward to national economic competition and international trade.

Lastly, honor cultures' emphasis on group loyalty and defense often connects directly to nationalist sentiments, especially when facing foreign economic competition (Barnes et al., 2014; Guerra et al., 2013). Among U.S. honor-endorsers in particular, there is typically strong support for the nation and reluctance to criticize it, even when criticism may be warranted (Barnes et al., 2016). Honor-endorsers may fuse their identity with the nation as national power offers protection, stability, and status; thus, critiques of the nation can be seen as undermining both the group's reputation and the individual's own safety derived from alignment with that group

(Barnes et al., 2016). As discussed previously, nationalist values are reliable predictors of support for protectionism. In this context, honor's close connection to nationalism provides a direct pathway through which honor endorsement can translate into protectionist preferences. When national identity becomes a central in-group, honor-endorsers are especially motivated to defend it, and protectionist policies offer a concrete mechanism for doing so: they restrict foreign influence, insulate domestic industries, and symbolically reaffirm national strength. This linkage helps explain why honor-endorsers may support protective trade measures even when such policies are excessive or economically counterproductive, as the perceived reputational and group-defensive benefits outweigh material costs (Mansfield & Pevehouse, 2022; Margalit, 2012; Pryke, 2012). Because honor endorsement reliably aligns with nationalistic values, nationalism becomes a meaningful expression of the same in-group protective motives that underlie support for protectionist economic policies.

Honor, Threat Perception, and Protectionism

Honor cultures cultivate heightened vigilance toward insult, exploitation, and competitive disadvantage. This sensitivity to threat—both real and perceived—offers a useful lens for understanding how honor-linked motivations shape reactions to international economic competition and increase support for protectionist responses. The honor culture is inherently alert, perceptive to threat, supportive of political conflict as a defensive reaction and, as such, may gravitate toward protectionist policies that likewise respond to perceptions of danger and competition (Brown, 2016; Fritsche & Jugert, 2017; Saucier et al., 2018). Much like protectionists, individuals from honor cultures are driven by the need to defend their social identity and status against perceived threats (Uskul & Duffy, 2012). Cross and colleagues (2012) find that individuals in honor cultures are more likely to rely on confrontational tactics when

their honor is challenged, rather than withdraw or avoid conflict. Foster and colleagues (2024) further demonstrate this tendency, showing that honor endorsers may experience greater hostile attribution bias than non-endorsers, interpreting ambiguous or emotionally neutral situations as hostile (Foster et al., 2024; Nasby et al., 1980). Other research demonstrates that, when honor is threatened, individuals may prioritize defending that honor over achieving practical goals such as employment, elevating honor needs above more instrumental economic aims (Günsoy et al., 2020).

These tendencies readily translate to perceptions of economic competition. Foreign entities may be viewed, or described by political elites and the media, as challengers to local industries, cultural values, or personal economic stability. Language portraying the United States as being "cheated" or "pillaged" by foreign businesses or immigrants likely reinforces these sensitivities and encourages honor-endorsers to interpret economic interactions as threats to be met with firmness or retaliation (Clarke, 2025; Hiscox, 2006). Under such conditions, honor-oriented individuals may be especially drawn to protectionist policies as tools for defending local enterprises and demonstrating strength in the face of outside challenges, consistent with cultural expectations that honor is upheld through resistance rather than accommodation (Cross et al., 2013).

Evidence from economic simulations provides further support for this interpretation. Studies conducted in India show that honor endorsers are more likely to interpret economic losses as insults and retaliate against business partners in trade-simulation games (Brooks et al., 2016). Brooks and colleagues (2018) argue further that honor endorsers are less likely to pursue mutual cooperation because their vigilance to possible slights and readiness to respond aggressively override long-term economic considerations, particularly when personal finances,

closely tied to safety and wellbeing, are at stake. These findings suggest that adherence to honor norms in economic interactions can produce costly outcomes by disrupting cooperation and undercutting rational optimization models that assume stable preferences and utility maximization. Taken together, these patterns indicate that honor endorsers' heightened threat sensitivity, combined with limited regard for long-term economic gains when honor is at stake, makes protectionist policies especially appealing as avenues for defending against perceived economic threats (Campanella, 2023; Kutlina-Dimitrova & Lakatos, 2017).

Honor, Low Evaluations of Governance, and Protectionism

Because honor norms emerged in contexts with limited formal governance, honor endorsers often adopt a worldview in which protection must come from within oneself or one's group, rather than from external institutions. This stance toward authority and oversight offers a useful way to understand how honor-linked expectations may foster protectionist preferences when the international system is viewed as unregulated or untrustworthy. The propagation of honor cultures historically required environments with little or no formal governance, oversight, or law enforcement (Nowak et al., 2016; Shackelford, 2005). These conditions encouraged attitudes of self-reliance, in-group allegiance, vigilance, and status defense – attitudes that may similarly shape economic preferences when individuals perceive weak or unreliable supervision at the international level.

As previously discussed, few authorities operate above the nation-state, and even fewer provide consistent oversight of international trade. This absence of supranational governance can make global economic interactions feel especially exposed or vulnerable, creating conditions in which protectionist responses appear prudent or necessary (Aggarwal & Evenett, 2013; Campanella, 2023). The historical roots of honor in pastoral economies underscore this dynamic

as well. Animal husbandry was especially susceptible to poaching, theft, and sabotage, and in the absence of formal institutions, individuals were expected to take responsibility for defending their resources, delivering justice, and securing their economic futures (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). These ecological pressures fostered a cultural orientation that emphasizes vigilance and personal responsibility in the face of external threats.

When applied to modern economic contexts, these patterns suggest that honor-endorsers may be particularly inclined to defend national industries and economic interests when they perceive insufficient oversight or protection at the international level. In such environments, protectionist policies may function as contemporary instruments of self-defense – mechanisms for asserting control, guarding against perceived exploitation, and ensuring that one's group does not rely on institutions that are viewed as weak, distant, or ineffective.

Honor, Self-Reliance, and Protectionism

Self-reliance is a central expectation within honor culture, discouraging dependence on outside help and elevating ideals of strength, autonomy, and endurance. These values offer a clear framework for understanding how honor-linked expectations can extend to economic self-reliance and make protectionist policies appear not only reasonable but morally appropriate. Self-reliance has long been recognized as a foundational component of honor cultures, though only recently has it been examined empirically as a distinct antecedent of downstream behaviors connected to honor ideology (Brown, 2016; Foster et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021).

Experimental and observational work illustrates how honor and self-reliance intersect. For instance, stigma surrounding mental health help-seeking in honor cultures, rooted in concerns about reputation, reflects broader norms that discourage vulnerability and emphasize handling challenges independently (Brown et al., 2014; Foster et al., 2020). This pattern parallels

economic contexts in which relying on external assistance, concessions, or cooperative arrangements may be interpreted as weakness or as a failure to safeguard one's own welfare. In this sense, free trade or dependence on foreign partners may be framed as inconsistent with the expectations of autonomy and strength that honor cultures value.

Within this framework, protectionist policies can function as an economic expression of self-reliance. Tariffs, import restrictions, and other protective measures align with the cultural expectation that individuals – and by extension, groups and nations – should manage threats independently and avoid reliance on outsiders (Campanella, 2023; Galtung, 1981). Just as honor norms promote personal resilience and self-sufficiency, they may also support national strategies that prioritize domestic capability and minimize external dependence. Extending the logic of honor to the national level is consistent with other honor-related tendencies, such as the elevation of group identity, concern for strength, and emphasis on defending the in-group (Barnes et al., 2014).

Honor, Status Concerns, and Protectionism

Honor systems place high importance on maintaining social standing and guarding against humiliation or loss of respect. These status-oriented motives provide a useful lens for understanding how honor-linked concerns may shape economic attitudes, particularly when national reputation or prestige is perceived to be at stake. At the state or political elite level, honor endorsement has been suggested to produce unique behaviors in international relations such as greater, and less calculated, responses to possible slights by foreign nations or competing political elites, and that states may engage in fewer bargaining stages when circumstances for negotiation arise (Joshi, 2008). The individual's honor endorsers sensitivity to negative evaluations by others has also been well documented, with reputation functioning as a central

component of the cultural system. Henry (2009) argues that in mixed-cultural environments, honor-endorsing groups may feel devalued due to their rural or pastoral origins and therefore engage in heightened status-defense strategies to protect their self-worth and prevent exploitation. Complementary findings from Ramirez-Marin and Shafa (2018) show that prosocial gestures directed at honor endorsers improve cooperation, suggesting that symbolic respect and acknowledgment of status play a meaningful role in shaping responses to economic interactions.

In political contexts, honor has also been shown to extend beyond the self to the broader social groups with which individuals identify, such as one's family or nation (Barnes et al., 2014; Mosquera et al., 2002; Pitt-Rivers, 1977). When national identity becomes fused with honor, negative evaluations from foreign states can be experienced as direct threats to social standing, prompting defensive reactions aimed at preserving the nation's reputation (Uskul et al., 2019). Under these conditions, protectionist policies may be viewed as effective tools for preserving national dignity, demonstrating resolve, and preventing foreign actors from gaining undue advantage. From this perspective, support for protectionism aligns with the broader cultural expectation that honor must be defended collectively when challenged.

A similar pattern appears in competitive economic and political environments. Nowak and colleagues (2015) find that threats to status elicit powerful emotional and behavioral responses among honor endorsers, including aggression aimed at restoring or protecting social standing. These dynamics mirror findings in international negotiation research: Aslani et al. (2016) show that individuals from honor cultures often employ more competitive bargaining strategies, reflecting a culturally shaped emphasis on toughness, resolve, and the avoidance of humiliation. At the national level, Demirtaş-Bagdonas (2013) describes how conflicts between

honor-endorsing states, such as Israel and Turkey, can be sustained by reciprocal concerns about honor and reputational standing, even when such standoffs carry substantial economic or military costs.

Taken together, these patterns suggest that honor-linked status concerns are well positioned to fuel support for protectionist economic policies, particularly when foreign competitors are perceived as challenging national reputation or attempting to exploit domestic markets (Mansfield & Pevehouse, 2022; Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2018). In this sense, protectionism aligns with the cultural imperative to defend collective standing, project strength, and prevent status loss in the international arena.

The Current Research

Given that protectionist policies rarely support long-term economic growth, a central question for this work is why these policies continue to be proposed and, in many cases, strongly supported (Behsudi, 2024; Kutlina-Dimitrova & Lakatos, 2017; Rice, 2024). The previous sections outlined several explanations that appear in the literature, ranging from in-group bias and economic threat, to skepticism of governance, self-reliance, status concerns, and individual differences such as political ideology, RWA, and SDO. Together, these themes point to consistent patterns of motivations behind protectionism, but they do not fully explain why protectionist policies can feel intuitively right or justified for so many people, even when they run counter to standard economic advice.

The culture of honor offers a way to address this gap. As discussed above, honor norms are relatively common in the United States and align closely with the same psychological tendencies that show up around protectionism: concern with threats, a strong focus on protecting one's in-groups, doubts about distant or higher-level authorities, a preference for doing things

"on one's own," and a strong sensitivity to status and reputation (Brown, 2016; Vandello et al., 2009). Because these honor-related values overlap with the motivations that support protectionism, endorsement of honor culture may serve as a broader organizing framework that helps tie these tendencies together, rather than leaving them as separate pieces. In this way, honor values may provide a distinct basis for protectionist attitudes that are not fully captured by political ideology, RWA, or SDO alone (Nop & Hammond, 2025; Uskul et al., 2023). Rather than viewing self-reliance, threat sensitivity, nationalism, reputational concerns, and distrust of external authorities as independent predictors of protectionism, honor culture may help explain why these tendencies co-occur. In this sense, honor values may function as a broader cultural framework that organizes multiple motivations relevant to protectionist attitudes.

To identify the mechanisms through which honor values may shape protectionist attitudes, this research focuses on five constructs that appear consistently across both the honor and protectionism literatures. These include (a) beliefs in national self-reliance (Campanella, 2023; Foster et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021); (b) concerns about the reputation and status of one's group (Cross et al., 2013; Dafoe et al., 2014; Renshon); (c) perceptions of national threat (Brown, 2016; Fritsche & Jugert, 2017; Uskul & Duffy); (d) doubts about national or international governance (Aggarwal & Evenett, 2013; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994); and (e) in-group preferences expressed through nationalism (Barnes et al., 2014; D'Costa, 2012; Guerra et al., 2013; Mansfield & Pevehouse, 2022). These themes have typically been studied separately in either the protectionism or honor literature. Bringing them together under an honor framework allows this research to ask whether honor values help organize these motivations into a coherent pattern that motivates individuals toward protectionist views, and under what conditions those views are likely to be stronger.

The present research examines whether endorsement of honor culture predicts support for protectionist policies and whether this relationship operates through psychological tendencies shared by both honor traditions and protectionist attitudes. **Study 1** establishes the basic associations among honor values, protectionist attitudes, and the five constructs described above, while accounting for political ideology, RWA, and SDO. **Study 2** investigates whether the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionism depends on beliefs in national self-reliance or concerns about group reputation and status. Finally, **Study 3** experimentally tests whether economic threat increases support for protectionist policies and whether honor endorsement amplifies these responses. Taken together, these studies provide an initial, systematic examination of honor culture as a potential motivational framework underlying contemporary protectionist attitudes in the United States. The current studies will test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a. Higher honor endorsement will be positively correlated with support for protectionist policies and with the five constructs of interest (self-reliance, reputation concerns, nationalism, national threat perceptions, and poor evaluations of governance). (Study 1)

Hypothesis 1b. Higher honor endorsement will be positively associated with support for protectionist policies above and beyond past explanations of RWA, SDO, and ideology. (Study 1)

Hypothesis 2. Honor endorsement will predict stronger support for protectionist policies among individuals who strongly endorse national self-reliance values. Among individuals low in self-reliance, honor endorsement will show little or no relationship with protectionist policy support. (Study 2)

Hypothesis 3. Honor endorsement will predict stronger support for protectionist policies among individuals who strongly endorse national reputation concerns. Among individuals low in

reputation concerns, honor endorsement will show little or no relationship with protectionist policy support. (Study 2)

Hypothesis 4. Honor endorsement will predict stronger support for protectionist policy attitudes when participants are exposed to a national-threat stimulus compared to a control condition, particularly among individuals who strongly endorse national self-reliance values or reputation concerns. (Study 3)

Together, these hypotheses outline a stepwise approach to testing whether honor endorsement provides a meaningful psychological foundation for protectionist attitudes and determines when this foundation becomes especially important. The following studies move from basic correlational evidence to more targeted tests of moderation and, finally, to an experimental design that introduces perceived national threat. Beginning with Study 1, this work focuses on establishing the basic pattern of associations between honor endorsement, protectionist support, and the five constructs of interest.

Study 1

Study 1 provides an initial test of the proposed relationship between honor endorsement and support for protectionist policies. Specifically, this study examines whether honor endorsement is associated with protectionist attitudes and with the five theoretically relevant constructs identified earlier: national self-reliance, reputational concerns, nationalism, national threat perceptions, and evaluations of international trade governance. In addition, the study evaluates whether honor endorsement predicts protectionist attitudes above and beyond established predictors such as political ideology, RWA, and SDO.

Methods

Participants

Participants were 787 undergraduate students enrolled at a large public university in the Southwestern U.S. with ages ranging from 18 to 45 (M = 18.8, SD = 1.9). The sample was predominantly non-Hispanic White (n = 567) and primarily female (n = 649). The remaining participant ethnic makeup was comprised of Asian (n = 82), Latin/Hispanic (n = 59), Black (n = 47), Native American (n = 26), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (n = 4), and Middle Eastern participants (n = 2). Participants received course credit toward in-class participation requirements for completing the study.

Materials

Study 1 was delivered as an online survey hosted on the Qualtrics platform. Participants first responded to demographic questions (age, gender, etc.) followed by political belief measures, three measures assessing the culture of honor, measures assessing RWA and SDO, and lastly completed measures assessing the five constructs of interest and protectionist policy support. All Study 1 scale measures are available in Appendix A.

Conservativism (CONS; α = .67). This two-item measure assessed the degree to which participants align themselves with liberal or conservative political camps and if these alignments influence one's economic policy leanings (Harnish et al., 2017). The two items were: "To what extent do you identify as liberal versus conservative?" and "To what extent do you agree with 'economic conservative' policies (economic conservativism means a belief in less government spending on social programs, lower taxes, deregulation of the economy, free trade, etc.)?" Participant responses were recorded from 1 (Very Liberal) to 7 (Very Conservative) and from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree), respectively.

Honor Culture Endorsement (HONOR). Following prior work on honor culture, endorsement was assessed using three measures that capture distinct facets of honor (Barnes et

al., 2014). The nine-item Honor Concerns Scale (HC; α = .91; Ijzerman et al., 2007) assessed general concern for having an honorable reputation, with items such as "I think that honor is one of the most important things that I have as a human being" and "My honor is the basis for my self-respect." The 16-item Honor Ideology for Manhood Scale (HIM; α = .95; Barnes et al., 2012) measured endorsement of masculine facets of honor, with items such as "A real man doesn't let other people push him around" and "A real man will never back down from a fight." Lastly, the 12-item Honor Ideology for Womanhood Scale (HIW; α = .94; Barnes et al., 2014) assessed endorsement of feminine facets of honor, with items such as "A good woman never tolerates disrespect" and "A respectable woman knows that what she does reflects on her family name." For all three scales, participants responded from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA; α = .87). The Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale, shortened to 14-items by Mavor and colleagues (2010; 2012), assesses adherence to traditional conservative values, submission to authority, and support for aggressive political control beliefs (Altemeyer, 1998). An example item being "Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn." Participants responded from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; α = .85). The eight-item version of the SDO scale measured beliefs about social group equality versus hierarchy (Ho et al., 2015; Pratto et al., 1994). An example item being "Group equality should not be our goal" and responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Country Self-Reliance (C-REL; α = .80). The eight-item country-level self-reliance scale assessed the extent to which participants believe a country should prioritize economic self-

reliance and self-sufficiency over international cooperation. This measure was developed specifically for the present study and was informed by prior research on both personal self-reliance (Joplin et al., 1999; Wang et al., 2021) and national economic self-reliance (Amin et al., 2022; Meng, 2023). Example items include "Countries should be self-reliant" and "Countries should be ashamed to ask for help from other nations." Participants responded from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Country Reputational Concerns (C-REP; α = .97). The 19-item country reputation scale was developed in our laboratory for use in ongoing research on national reputation concerns. The scale measures the importance of national reputation for participants personally. Example items include "It is important to me that the U.S. is seen as a country that supports good causes" and "It is important to me that the U.S. is taken seriously by other countries." Participants responded from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Nationalism (NAT; α = .85). As an operationalization of in-group preferences and out-group derogation, an 11-item, modern and validated, nationalism scale was utilized (Huddy et al., 2021). Example items include "Generally speaking, the U.S. is a better country than most other countries" with responses ranging from one (Strongly Disagree) to seven (Strongly Agree) and "How important is it to have lived in the U.S. for most of one's life?" with responses ranging from 1 (Not at all important) to 7 (Very Important).

National Economic Threat Perception (THREAT; α = .65). The four-item economic threat scale in this study uses language specific to economic competition with China to assess perceived threat to the U.S. This scale is novel to this study, but the use of China-specific threat wording reflects prior work on trade attitudes such as those conducted in Pew research efforts and other empirical policy research (Flynn et al., 2022; Kerner et al., 2020; Silver et al., 2021).

Example items include “The United States’ trade deficit with China is a very serious problem” and “The development of China as an economic power is a critical threat that the U.S. must face.” Responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

International Trade Governance (GOV; α = .77). To assess beliefs about, and trust in, international governance over trade, a 21-item novel scale was developed using work from Jungherr and colleagues (2018). The scale introduces the World Trade Organization (WTO) as an example governing body over international trade and asks participants to evaluate trade organizations such as the WTO. Example items include “Trade organizations like the WTO are effective at overseeing free trade,” “Trade organizations like the WTO are growing weaker,” “Trade organizations like the WTO benefit the U.S.,” and “Trade organizations like the WTO make me feel economically more secure.” Responses range from 1 (Completely Disagree) to 7 (Completely Agree).

Protectionism (PROTECT; α = .85). The primary outcome measure for Study 1 is a novel six-item scale of protectionism based on Meng (2023), Essig and colleagues (2021), and Jungherr and colleagues (2018). Items assess support for protectionist policies such as imposing or reducing tariffs, limiting imports, reducing international trade, and favoring U.S. companies over foreign companies. Example items include “The U.S. government should reduce international trade to protect American jobs in our developing industries” and “The U.S. government should impose tariffs on foreign products in industries that compete with U.S. businesses.” Participants responded along a scale from 1 to 6 with respective anchors “Do not support at all,” “Do not support,” “Only slightly do not support,” “Only slightly support,” “Support,” and “Very much support.” No middle option, such as a “no opinion” was offered to avoid fence-sitting or ambiguous answering.

Factor Analysis. Because some measures were developed solely for the present work and were not otherwise validated, exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) and confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted to evaluate the internal factor structure and psychometric properties of the measures. EFAs were assessed first for all novel measures of Study 1 to identify latent dimensions present without an imposed structure. CFAs then tested the proposed 1-factor model fit for the novel measures. Consistent with prior research, and since Study 1 has a large sample size (n > 400), the sample of Study 1 was divided into two even halves by randomization for the EFA (n = 393) and CFA (n = 394) analyses (Kyriazos, 2018; Lorenzo-Seva, 2022). See Appendix B for factor analysis results.

Results

HONOR Dimension Reduction

Following prior honor culture work, a principal components analysis (PCA) was used to form a single honor endorsement index variable (HONOR) for ease of analysis (Barnes et al., 2014; Bock et al., 2019). The PCA demonstrated that the HIM, HIW, and HC variables loaded significantly onto a single factor ($p < .001$). The one dominant factor that emerged (eigenvalue = 2.16) explained 72.01% of the variability in the honor scales. This honor factor was utilized throughout the ensuing regression and correlation analyses to test this study's main hypotheses.

Correlation Analyses

Pearson correlations examined the bivariate relationships among honor endorsement, protectionist attitudes, the five proposed mechanisms, and the ideological covariates. As shown in Table 1 (see Appendix C), all variables included were significantly positively correlated with both honor endorsement and support for protectionism (ps <.001), supporting that greater honor endorsement positively correlated with support for protectionist policies and all five key

constructs of country reputation, country self-reliance, national economic threat perception, nationalism, and critical beliefs surrounding international government systems. The covariates of political conservatism, RWA, and SDO also demonstrated positive significant correlations with both honor endorsement and protectionism, supporting their continued use as covariates in later analyses.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Lastly, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to directly test hypothesis 1b and confirm that honor endorsement predicts protectionist policy support even when accounting for ideology, RWA, and SDO. The overall regression model predicted protectionism from honor endorsement, RWA, SDO, and political conservatism and was statistically significant, explaining 22.30% of the total variance ($F(4,782) = 56.11$, $R^2 = .22$, $p < .001$). The model also revealed that individual differences in honor endorsement significantly predicted support for protectionism ($\beta = 0.19$, $t(782) = 5.13$, $p < .001$) even with the included covariates. Of the covariates, only conservativism remained significantly related to support for protectionist policy ($\beta = 0.32$, $t(782) = 7.47$, $p < .001$). For remaining model results see Table 2 (Appendix D).

Discussion

The findings from Study 1 provide initial support for the proposition that endorsement of honor culture is associated with stronger support for protectionist economic policies. Consistent with Hypotheses 1a and 1b, individuals who more strongly endorsed honor values also reported greater endorsement of national self-reliance, reputational concerns, nationalism, perceptions of national economic threat, and skepticism toward international trade governance. Moreover, honor endorsement remained a significant predictor of protectionist attitudes after accounting for political ideology, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation. Together, these

findings suggest that honor culture may contribute unique explanatory value beyond traditional ideological explanations while also being associated with a broader constellation of psychological tendencies that have been linked to protectionist attitudes.

While this study advances prior literature by supporting a cultural pathway for understanding economic protectionist policy, the work has not yet demonstrated a specific model by which to evaluate the relationships, nor has this work utilized experimental design for a casual finding. These limitations to Study 1 will be addressed in Studies 2 and 3 respectively. As well, this work relies on a college-student sample that may not necessarily be representative of the average voter, although it is true that the students sampled in Study 1 are endorsers of the same cultural system as their families and communities that would be reflected in a nationally-representative sample. Similarly, while the students of this sample may not be as well-versed or attentive to economic policy, the cultural influences they rely on for their beliefs would be the same as a potentially more attentive adult sample, suggesting that an issue of uninformed answers may not be necessarily relevant nor harmful to this study's findings. Nevertheless, later studies (see Study 3) do utilize adult samples and will ensure the findings here are generalizable beyond a collegiate sample.

Lastly, the outcome variable of protectionism used in Study 1 (PROTECT), while relying greatly on past work surveying protectionism, is novel to this study and has not been formally statistically validated. There is the possibility, although unlikely, that this outcome measure is inappropriately detecting relationships where alternative outcome measures assessing protectionism would not. Furthermore, this measure does not have a middle-point, "no opinion," anchor. Again, while unlikely, the PROTECT scale may be exaggerating the relationships found in Study 1. As such, Study 2 will utilize a separate, previously validated, outcome variable by

which to assess protectionist policy support that does offer a middle-point anchor and may provide greater generalizability across various themes of protectionist policy.

Study 2

Study 2 extends the findings from Study 1 by examining how the relationship between honor endorsement and support for protectionist policies is structured. Whereas Study 1 established that individuals who more strongly endorse honor values also report greater support for protectionist policies, Study 2 investigates the psychological role of two constructs that emerged as particularly relevant to this relationship: national self-reliance and country reputational concerns. In addition, Study 2 addresses an important methodological limitation of Study 1 by incorporating a previously validated measure of protectionist attitudes alongside the protectionism measure developed for the present research. Replicating the findings across multiple measures provides a stronger test of the robustness and generalizability of the observed relationships.

The theoretical framework developed throughout this manuscript proposes that honor culture functions as a broader cultural orientation that gives rise to a constellation of beliefs relevant to protectionist attitudes. Among these beliefs, national self-reliance and concerns about national reputation occupy a particularly important position as they reflect two defining characteristics of honor systems. Honor cultures emphasize personal and collective independence, discourage reliance on outsiders, and encourage individuals and groups to defend their social standing and public reputation. When these values are extended from interpersonal relationships to the national level, they may shape how individuals evaluate international policies concerning economics and trade.

One possibility is that these beliefs strengthen the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. Individuals who strongly endorse honor values may be especially supportive of protectionist policies when they also believe that the United States should remain economically self-sufficient or when they place considerable importance on maintaining the nation's reputation and status in the international community. Under these conditions, protectionist policies may be viewed not only as economic decisions but also as symbolic expressions of national strength, independence, and resistance to external influence.

An alternative possibility, however, is that national self-reliance and country reputational concerns represent more proximal psychological processes through which honor endorsement is associated with protectionist attitudes. Rather than amplifying the influence of honor values, these constructs may help explain why individuals who endorse honor culture are more likely to support protectionist policies. Distinguishing between these possibilities is theoretically important since moderation and mediation imply different psychological mechanisms. Moderation would suggest that honor endorsement predicts protectionism only under certain motivational conditions, whereas mediation would suggest that honor culture influences protectionist attitudes indirectly yet consistently through more specific beliefs regarding national independence and reputation.

Accordingly, Study 2 was designed primarily to evaluate whether national self-reliance and country reputational concerns moderate the relationship between honor endorsement and support for protectionist policies. Because the study also includes validated measures of the proposed psychological constructs, it additionally provides an opportunity to evaluate alternative explanatory models should the predicted moderation effects not emerge. Examining both possibilities offers a more comprehensive understanding of how honor culture may contribute to

contemporary protectionist attitudes while simultaneously strengthening confidence in the validity and generalizability of the findings obtained in Study 1.

Methods

Participants

Participants were 360 undergraduate students enrolled at a large university in the southwestern United States. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 57 (M = 19.4, SD = 2.7). The sample was predominantly non-Hispanic White (n = 229) and female (n = 233). The remaining participant ethnic makeup was Latin/Hispanic (n = 51), Asian (n = 37), Black (n = 20), Native American (n = 14), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (n = 1), and had few participants that refused to answer (n = 8). Participants received course credit in exchange for completing the study.

Materials

Study 2 followed procedures similar to those used in Study 1. Participants completed an online survey administered through Qualtrics that included demographic questions, measures of political ideology, honor endorsement, right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), social dominance orientation (SDO), national self-reliance, country reputational concerns, nationalism, perceived economic threat, evaluations of international trade governance, and support for protectionist policies.

The primary methodological difference between Studies 1 and 2 was the inclusion of a previously validated measure of protectionist attitudes to evaluate whether the relationships observed in Study 1 generalized across different operationalizations of protectionism. In addition, Study 2 included an expanded measure of perceived national economic threat and measures of financial worry and family income to evaluate potential economic confounds.

Unless otherwise noted, all measures were identical to those administered in Study 1. Newly introduced measures are described below. Complete scale items are provided in Appendix E.

Financial Worry (WORRY; α = .83). Financial worry was assessed with five items, measuring participants' concerns regarding their current and future financial well-being. Items assessed worries related to employment, financial security, and the cost of living while avoiding direct references to international trade. The scale was adapted from previous research examining financial insecurity and economic concerns (Essig et al., 2021; Jessop et al., 2005; Kertzer, 2013). Example items include “How worried are you about your current financial situation” and “How worried are you about the cost of living.” Responses were set on a scale from 1 (Not at all Worried) to 5 (Very Worried).

Updated Economic National Threat Perception (THREAT-U; α = .89). Study 2 employed an expanded 10-item measure of perceived national economic threat. Compared to the four-item measure used in Study 1, this version assessed broader concerns regarding U.S. economic security, including threats to domestic businesses, employment, wages, and unfair international trade practices. Unlike the Study 1 measure, the revised scale did not reference China specifically, allowing assessment of generalized perceptions of economic threat associated with international trade. Example items include “Buying foreign products and increased trade threatens American businesses” and “Other countries use unfair trade tactics to steal American money.” Responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Cultural and Economic Protectionism (CEP; α = .82). To examine the robustness of the findings across measures of protectionism, participants completed the validated CEP scale (Huddy et al., 2021). This five-item measure assesses support for both economic and cultural forms of protectionism. Example items include “The U.S. should limit the import of foreign

products in order to protect its national economy" and "The U.S.'s media should give preference to American films and programs." Participant responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Filler-Enhanced Protectionism (PROTECT-F; α = .83). To reduce demand characteristics, four filler-items regarding economic or environmental policies, unrelated to trade and not included in the analysis for this measure, were added to the outcome measure PROTECT from Study 1, making the total items now 10. Examples of the filler items include "The U.S. government should draft regulation to restrict air pollution" and "The U.S. government should ensure higher education institutions only receive funding for programs that benefit U.S. national goals." Participants again responded along a scale from 1 to 6 with respective anchors "Do not support at all," "Do not support," "Only slightly do not support," "Only slightly support," "Support," and "Very much support." Again, no middle option, such as a "no opinion" was offered to avoid fence-sitting or ambiguous answering.

Factor Analysis. As with Study 1, novel measures introduced in Study 2 were not previously validated and thus exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) and confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted to assess internal structure and psychometric properties of only these new measures. Due to Study 2's smaller sample size ($n < 400$), EFAs and CFAs will use the entire dataset without dividing in half as was done for factor analyses of Study 1 (Kyriazos, 2018; Lorenzo-Seva, 2022). CFAs will again assume 1-factor for the measures tested. See Appendix F for factor analysis results.

Results

HONOR Dimension Reduction

Following previous honor research (Barnes et al., 2014; Bock et al., 2019), PCA was conducted to determine whether the three honor measures could be represented by a single honor endorsement index. The HIM (α = .95), HIW (α =.93), and HC (α = .89) scales loaded strongly onto a single component (all *ps* < .001). The resulting factor (eigenvalue = 2.14) accounted for 71.28% of the total variance and was used as the composite HONOR variable in all subsequent analyses.

Correlation Analyses

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine bivariate associations among honor endorsement, the proposed psychological constructs, the ideological covariates, demographic variables, and the two protectionism measures (CEP and PROTECT-F). Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and correlations are presented in Table 3 (see Appendix G)

Replicating the findings of Study 1, honor endorsement was positively associated with both the PROTECT-F and CEP (both *p*s < .001). Both C-REP and C-REL, were positively associated with PROTECT-F ($p = .004$; $p < .001$). However, only C-REL was significantly associated with CEP ($p < .001$), whereas the association between C-REP and CEP was not statistically significant ($p = .300$).

The remaining proposed mechanisms showed generally consistent relationships with honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. Updated national economic threat (THREAT-U) and nationalism (NAT) were positively correlated with HONOR ($r = .38$ and .52, respectively, both *ps* < .001), CEP ($r = .50$ and .51, respectively, both *ps* < .001), and PROTECT-F ($r = .49$ and $r = .37$, respectively, both *ps* < .001). In contrast, international trade governance attitudes (GOV) were not significantly associated with HONOR ($r = .07$, $p = .177$) and were only

marginally associated with PROTECT-F ($r = .10$, $p = .053$), although they remained positively associated with CEP ($r = .27$, $p < .001$).

Among the covariates, political conservatism (CONS), right wing authoritarianism (RWA), and social dominance orientation (SDO) were significantly correlated with honor endorsement (HONOR), the proposed mechanisms, and both protectionism measures (PROTECT-F, CEP), supporting their inclusion as covariates in subsequent analyses. Participant gender was also significantly associated with HONOR ($p < .001$), PROTECT-F ($p = .025$), and CEP ($p = .002$), indicating that men reported higher honor endorsement and stronger support for protectionist policies than women. Ethnicity, family income, and personal financial worry (WORRY) were not consistently associated with the primary variables of interest ($ps > .088$) and therefore were not included as covariates in the subsequent analyses.

Simple Moderation Analyses

Hypothesis 2 and 3 predicted that national self-reliance and country reputational concerns would moderate the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. Four moderation models were estimated using Hayes' (2022) PROCESS macro (Model 1) with political conservatism, RWA, SDO, and participant gender entered as covariates. All models mean centered continuous variables for ease of interpretation and to reduce the potential for multicollinearity.

Country Reputation as Moderator. The moderation model predicting CEP was statistically significant ($F(7,349) = 18.07$, $R^2 = .27$, $p < .001$). Honor endorsement did not significantly predict CEP ($p = .258$), whereas country reputational concerns demonstrated a significant positive main effect ($b = 0.14$, $t(349) = 2.67$, $p = .008$). Political conservatism, RWA, and SDO were significant covariates ($p = .020$, .003 and .002, respectively) whereas gender was

not (p = .283). Contrary to Hypothesis 3, the predicted HONOR × Country Reputation interaction was not significant (ΔR^2 = .00, F(1,349) = 0.18, p = .675). See Appendix H, Figure 1.

When PROTECT-F served as the outcome variable, the overall model was again significant (F(7,350) = 10.94, R^2 = .18, p < .001). Honor endorsement was not a significant predictor (b = 0.07, t(350) = 1.55, p = .123), whereas country reputational concerns remained a significant positive predictor (b = 0.13, t(350) = 3.05, p = .003). Political conservatism and RWA were significant covariates (p = .049 and .003, respectively) whereas the SDO and gender were not (ps > .3). The Honor × Country Reputation interaction was again not significant (ΔR^2 = .00, F(1,350) = 0.03, p = .918). See Appendix I, Figure 3.

National Self-Reliance as Moderator. Replacing country reputation with national self-reliance produced a significant model predicting CEP (F(7,349) = 25.67, R^2 = .34, p < .001). Honor endorsement was not a significant predictor (p = .216), whereas national self-reliance demonstrated a positive main effect (b = 0.39, t(349) = 6.65, p < .001). Political conservatism and RWA remained significant covariates (p = .005 and .034, respectively) whereas SDO was marginally significant (p = .069). The predicted HONOR × Self-Reliance interaction, was not significant (ΔR^2 = .00, F(1,349) = 0.70, p = .402). See Appendix H, Figure 2.

A similar pattern emerged for PROTECT-F. The overall model was significant (F(7,350) = 13.25, R^2 = .21, p < .001). National self-reliance remained a significant predictor (b = 0.24, t(350) = 4.78, p < .001), whereas honor endorsement demonstrated only a marginal positive association (b = 0.09, t(350) = 1.89, p = .060) although not as strong as the main effect of C-REL which was again significant in the positive direction. Political conservatism and RWA were significant covariates (p = .014 and .047, respectively) whereas SDO and gender were not (ps

>.1). Again, the predicted HONOR × Self-Reliance interaction was not significant (ΔR^2 = .00, $F(1,350) = 0.03$, p = .874). See Appendix I, Figure 4.

Taken together, none of the four moderation models supported Hypotheses 2 or 3. Although national self-reliance and country reputational concerns consistently demonstrated positive main effects, neither construct moderated the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes.

Follow-Up Parallel Mediation Analyses

Given the broader research interest beyond moderation alone, and the absence of moderation effects, follow-up parallel mediational analyses were conducted using Hayes' (2022) PROCESS macro (Model 4) to examine whether national self-reliance and country reputational concerns statistically mediated the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes.

For CEP, the total effect of honor endorsement was significant (β = 0.12, *SE* = 0.06, $t(351) = 2.01$, p = .045) and explained 25.10% of the total variance in CEP. After controlling for both mediators however, the direct effect was no longer significant (β = 0.01, *SE* = 0.06, $t(351)$ = 0.27, p = .786). The total indirect effect through the C-REP and C-REL mediators was significant (β = 0.10, 95% CI [0.04, 0.16]). Both specific indirect effects were independently significant through country reputational concerns (β = 0.05, *SE* = 0.02, 95% CI [0.01, 0.09]) and national self-reliance (β = 0.05, *SE* = 0.03, 95% CI [0.004, 0.110]).

An identical pattern emerged for PROTECT-F. Honor endorsement demonstrated a significant total effect (β = 0.12, *SE* = 0.05, $t(352) = 2.57$, p = .010) and explained 23.06% of the total variance in PROTECT-F. However, the direct effect became not significant after accounting for the two mediators (β = 0.04, *SE* = 0.05, $t(352) = 0.94$, p = .350). The total indirect effect was

significant (β = 0.10, 95% CI [0.04, 0.16]) and both specific indirect effects were independently significant through country reputational concerns (β = 0.06, *SE* = 0.02, 95% CI [0.02, 0.10]) and national self-reliance (β = 0.04, *SE* = 0.02, 95% CI [0.003, 0.089]).

Discussion

Study 2 sought to clarify how honor endorsement is associated with support for protectionist policies by examining the roles of national self-reliance and country reputational concerns. Although the predicted moderation effects were not supported, the findings revealed a more informative pattern. Across both measures of protectionist attitudes, national self-reliance and country reputational concerns statistically accounted for the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionism. These findings suggest that these constructs are better understood as psychological mechanisms through which honor values are associated with protectionist policy preferences rather than as conditions that strengthen or weaken this relationship.

Contrary to Hypotheses 2 and 3, neither national self-reliance nor country reputational concerns significantly moderated the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. Across all four moderation models, the interaction terms were consistently nonsignificant, indicating that honor endorsement was not more strongly associated with protectionism among individuals who placed greater importance on national self-reliance or national reputation. Instead, both self-reliance and reputational concerns demonstrated robust positive main effects across the protectionism measures, suggesting that these beliefs independently contribute to support for protectionist policies.

Although the moderation hypotheses were not supported, the parallel mediation analyses offered a coherent explanation for these findings. Across both protectionism measures, the

association between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes was fully mediated by national self-reliance and country reputational concerns. Once these variables were included in the model, the direct relationship between honor endorsement and protectionism was no longer significant, whereas both indirect effects remained statistically reliable. This pattern suggests that honor endorsement may operate as a more distal cultural orientation that shapes more proximal beliefs regarding national independence and reputation, which in turn are associated with support for protectionist policies.

This interpretation is still consistent with the broader theoretical framework proposed throughout this manuscript. Rather than viewing honor culture as a direct predictor of protectionist attitudes, the present findings suggest that honor values may foster a constellation of beliefs emphasizing national self-sufficiency, sensitivity to national reputation, and concerns regarding the nation's standing relative to other countries. These beliefs appear to provide the more immediate psychological bases for protectionist policy preferences. Consequently, the findings extend previous work by suggesting that honor culture contributes to protectionism not simply because individuals endorse honor values, but because those values are reflected in beliefs concerning how nations should behave in the international arena.

Importantly, these findings also help distinguish cultural explanations of protectionism from more traditional ideological accounts. Study 1 demonstrated that honor endorsement predicted protectionist attitudes above and beyond political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation. The present findings build on that observation by identifying two psychological processes through which this unique association appears to emerge. Although the current data remain correlational and therefore cannot establish causal mediation, the observed pattern is consistent with the proposition that honor values

influence support for protectionist policies indirectly through beliefs emphasizing national self-reliance and reputation.

The use of two conceptually distinct measures of protectionist attitudes further strengthens confidence in these conclusions. The mediation models produced highly similar results across both the validated Cultural and Economic Protectionism (CEP) scale and the filler-enhanced PROTECT-F measure, suggesting that the observed relationships are not dependent on a single operationalization of protectionism. Nevertheless, several differences between the outcome measures are noteworthy. Country reputational concerns were significantly associated with PROTECT-F but not with CEP, and honor endorsement demonstrated somewhat stronger relationships with PROTECT-F across several analyses. These differences likely reflect conceptual distinctions between the measures. Whereas PROTECT-F focuses primarily on support for economic protectionist policies, CEP also includes items reflecting broader cultural protectionism, such as preferences for American media and cultural products. Because the present research is principally concerned with economic protectionism, PROTECT-F appears to provide the more appropriate outcome measure for subsequent analyses.

Taken together, Study 2 refines the theoretical model proposed in this research by suggesting that national self-reliance and country reputational concerns function as more proximal psychological processes linking honor endorsement to support for protectionist policies. Rather than demonstrating that these variables alter the strength of the honor–protectionism relationship, the findings suggest that they help explain why that relationship exists. Study 3 builds on this revised framework by experimentally manipulating perceived national economic threat to examine whether situational threat causally influences protectionist attitudes and whether honor endorsement shapes individuals' responses to those circumstances.

Study 3

Study 3 extends the first two studies by moving beyond correlational evidence to experimentally examine how perceptions of national economic threat influence support for protectionist policies. Study 1 established that individuals who more strongly endorse honor values also report greater support for protectionist attitudes. Study 2 further suggested that this relationship is statistically explained by beliefs emphasizing national self-reliance and country reputational concerns. Together, these findings support the proposition that honor culture functions as a broader cultural orientation that shapes more proximal beliefs regarding national independence and status. An important remaining question however, is whether these relationships become more salient when individuals perceive that the nation is facing an economic threat.

Honor cultures are characterized by heightened sensitivity to threats, exploitation, and status loss, as well as strong normative expectations that such threats should be met with decisive defensive responses. Although these processes have been studied primarily through interpersonal contexts, similar psychological dynamics may emerge when threats are directed toward the nation rather than the individual. Messages portraying the United States as economically vulnerable, unfairly treated by foreign competitors, or losing international influence may activate concerns regarding national strength, autonomy, and reputation. Under these circumstances, protectionist policies may be viewed not only as economic interventions but also as symbolic efforts to defend the nation's independence and restore its standing relative to other countries.

To evaluate this possibility, Study 3 experimentally manipulated perceptions of national economic threat using realistic news-style articles describing either a threatening or relatively neutral outlook for the U.S. economy and international trade. This design provides a stronger test

of causal influence than the observational approaches employed in Studies 1 and 2 by allowing direct examination of whether exposure to threatening economic information changes support for protectionist policies.

The primary purpose of Study 3 was to determine whether experimentally induced perceptions of national economic threat alter the relationship between honor endorsement and support for protectionist policies. Based on the theoretical framework developed throughout this manuscript, it was predicted that honor endorsement would be more strongly associated with protectionist attitudes following exposure to threatening economic information than following exposure to a neutral economic scenario. Because Study 2 identified national self-reliance and country reputational concerns as central psychological processes associated with honor endorsement, the present study also examined whether these constructs further conditioned individuals' responses to the experimental manipulation.

At the same time, Study 3 was designed to evaluate a broader theoretical possibility. If honor culture represents a distal cultural orientation that shapes responses to perceived national threats, experimentally inducing economic threat may activate psychological processes that promote support for protectionist policies regardless of whether the predicted three-way interactions emerge. Consequently, the study provides an opportunity not only to evaluate the proposed moderated moderation model but also to examine how experimentally induced perceptions of national economic threat contribute to the broader relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes.

By integrating an experimental manipulation with the theoretical framework developed in the previous studies, Study 3 provides the strongest test of the proposed model. Whereas Studies 1 and 2 established that honor endorsement is reliably associated with protectionist attitudes and

identified psychological mechanisms underlying this relationship, Study 3 examines whether exposure to national economic threat changes these associations and therefore provides a more rigorous assessment of the causal processes linking honor culture to support for protectionist economic policies.

Methods

Participants

Participants were 201 adults recruited through Prolific to complete an online study examining personality and political attitudes. Recruitment quotas were used to approximate the demographic composition of the U.S. population based on current U.S. Census estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Participants received $4.00 for completing the study, which required a median participation time of 22 minutes.

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 81 (M = 42.0, SD = 16.2). The sample included 97 women, 102 males, and 2 transgender participants. The ethnic composition was predominantly non-Hispanic White (n = 153, 76.0%), followed by Black (n = 24, 12.0%), Latin/Hispanic (n = 12, 6.0%), Asian (n = 8, 4.0%), Native American (n = 3, 1.5%), and Middle Eastern participants (n = 1, 0.5%). Politically, 101 participants identified as independents, whereas 50 identified as Republicans and 50 as Democrat.

Materials and Procedure

Study 3 employed the same core measures used in Study 2, including honor endorsement (HONOR), , national self-reliance (C-REL), country reputational concerns (C-REP), perceived national economic threat (THREAT-U), international trade governance attitudes (GOV), nationalism (NAT), political conservatism (CONS), right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), social dominance orientation (SDO), financial worry (WORRY), and the filler-enhanced protectionism

measure (PROTECT-F). Demographic information, including gender, ethnicity, and family income, was also collected. The principal methodological innovation in Study 3 was the introduction of an experimental manipulation designed to induce realistic perceptions of national and economic threats. Participants were randomly assigned to either a threat condition or neutral condition.

Following completion of all pre-manipulation measures, participants read one of two news-style articles describing the current state of the U.S. economy and international trade. Participants assigned to the threat condition (dummy coded as 2) read an article emphasizing economic vulnerability (Atkinson, 2025; Nash et al., 2020; Vaitilingam, 2019), unfair treatment by foreign competitors (Chu, 2025), increasing trade deficits (Revell, 2025), job losses (Batabyal, 2020; Cerullo, 2025), and declining international competitiveness (Baskaran, 2025; Lewsey, 2024; Phillips, 2016; Woodward, 2020). The article incorporated themes intended to evoke concerns regarding national autonomy, exploitation, and economic decline (Butz & Yogeeswaran, 2011). Participants assigned to the control condition (dummy coded as 1) read a structurally comparable article describing a more balanced economic outlook that discussed routine economic fluctuations without emphasizing threat, exploitation, or national decline. Both articles were modeled after contemporary news reporting and are reproduced in Appendix J.

Immediately following the vignette, participants completed an eight-item manipulation check assessing perceived national economic threat and pessimism regarding the future of the U.S. economy (MC). This scale was developed for this study utilizing previous work from Matsaganis and Seo (2014) and Marjanovic and colleagues (2013). Example items included “The U.S. is facing a serious economic threat” and “I feel pessimistic about the future of the U.S. economy.” All items were rated on seven-point Likert-type scale from “Strongly disagree” to

"Strongly agree." This measure was used to confirm that the threat vignette successfully increased perceptions of national economic threat relative to the control condition (see Appendix K).

After completing the study measures, participants were fully debriefed regarding the purpose of the experimental manipulation. Participants were informed that the news articles had been created specifically for research purposes and did not represent actual news reports or economic forecasts. Participants were then compensated through the Prolific platform.

With the only novel measure introduced in Study 3 being the economic threat manipulation check (MC), only this scale was not previously validated or assessed in prior analyses. Thus, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted in line with previous studies. As with Study 2, the current study's smaller sample size ($n < 400$) means the EFA and CFA analysis will be conducted using the entire dataset (Kyriazos, 2018; Lorenzo-Seva, 2022). See Appendix L for factor analysis results.

Analytic Strategy

Consistent with Studies 1 and 2, principal components analysis (PCA) was first conducted to create a composite honor endorsement variable from the Honor Ideology for Manhood, Honor Ideology for Womanhood, and Honor Concerns scales.

Pearson correlations were then computed to examine relationships among honor endorsement, the proposed psychological mechanisms, ideological covariates, and protectionist attitudes. Independent-samples *t*-tests and analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation on both perceived national economic threat and support for protectionist policies.

The primary hypotheses were tested using Hayes' (2022) PROCESS macro (Model 3), which estimated moderated moderation models examining whether the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes differed as a function of experimental condition and either national self-reliance or country reputational concerns. Political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, financial worry, and ethnicity were included as covariates in all models.

Because the primary interaction effects were not fully supported, additional moderated mediation and simple mediation analyses were conducted using Hayes' (2022) PROCESS macro (Models 7 and 4 respectively) to examine whether experimentally induced perceptions of national economic threat statistically explained the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes among participants assigned to the threat condition.

Results

Honor Dimension Reduction

Consistent with Studies 1 and 2, a PCA was conducted to create a composite measure of honor endorsement. The HIM ($\alpha = .940$), HIW ($\alpha = .927$), and HC ($\alpha = .880$) scales loaded significantly onto a single component ($p < .001$). The resulting factor had an eigenvalue of 2.28 and accounted for 76.07% of the total variance. This composite HONOR variable was used in all subsequent analyses.

Correlation Analyses

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine the associations among honor endorsement, the proposed psychological constructs, ideological covariates, demographic variables, the manipulation check, and support for protectionist policies (Table 4, Appendix M).

Consistent with Studies 1 and 2, honor endorsement was positively associated with the PROTECT-F (p <.001) and national self-reliance (C-REL, p <.001). Unlike the previous studies, however, honor endorsement was not significantly correlated with country reputational concerns (p =.108). Honor endorsement was also unrelated to the economic threat manipulation check across the full sample, whereas PROTECT-F was positively associated with perceived national economic threat following the manipulation.

Political conservatism, RWA, SDO, participant ethnicity, and financial worry demonstrated significant correlations with multiple study variables, including the outcome variable of protectionist attitudes, supporting their inclusion as covariates in all subsequent analyses. Participant gender and family income showed few associations with the primary variables and therefore were not included as covariates.

Manipulation Check

To evaluate the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation, independent-samples t-tests compared manipulation check scores between the threat and control conditions. Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity was satisfied ($F(2, 199) = 0.25$, $p = .614$). Participants assigned to the threat condition ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 1.1$) reported significantly greater perceptions of national economic threat than participants assigned to the control condition ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 1.1$), ($t(199) = -3.05$, Cohen's $d = -.43$, $p < .001$).

An ANCOVA controlling for political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, financial worry, ethnicity, and family income produced the same conclusion. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was met (Modified Breusch-Pagan $p = .314$), and the experimental manipulation remained significant after adjustment ($F(1, 194) = 11.72$, $\eta p^2 = .06$, $p < .001$). Bonferroni-adjusted comparisons indicated significantly higher

manipulation check scores in the threat condition (M = 5.0, SE = .10) than in the control condition (M = 4.5, SE = .10), ($p < .001$). Together, these analyses indicate that the threat vignette successfully increased perceptions of national economic threat.

Effects of the Experimental Manipulation on Protectionist Attitudes. Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to examine whether exposure to the threat vignette influenced support for protectionist policies. Levene's test again supported homogeneity of variance (F(2, 199) = 1.58, p = .211). Participants exposed to the threat vignette (M = 3.8, SD = 1.0) reported significantly greater support for protectionist policies than participants in the control condition (M = 3.5, SD = 1.1), (t(199) = -2.06, Cohen's d = -.29, p = .021).

To evaluate this effect while accounting for potential covariates, an ANCOVA was conducted. The assumptions of the analysis were satisfied (Modified Breusch-Pagan p = .278). Political conservatism and right-wing authoritarianism were significantly associated with protectionist attitudes, whereas the remaining covariates were not. After controlling for these variables, the effect of experimental condition on PROTECT-F was no longer statistically significant (F(1, 192) = 1.30, ηp^2 = .01, p = .255). Adjusted means also did not differ significantly between the threat (M = 3.7, SE = .09) and control (M = 3.6, SE = .08) conditions.

Baseline Equivalence. To examine the success of random assignment, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) compared the threat and control groups on all variables measured before random assignment. Significant differences were observed for HONOR (p = .009) and national self-reliance (p = .002), whereas no significant differences were detected for the remaining pre-manipulation variables (all $ps > .05$). These findings are reported here for completeness and are considered further in the Discussion.

Moderated Moderation Analyses

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the effect of honor endorsement on protectionist attitudes would depend jointly on the experimental manipulation and either country reputational concerns or national self-reliance. These hypotheses were tested using Hayes' (2022) PROCESS macro (Model 3) with all models mean centering continuous variables.

Country Reputation Model. The moderated moderation model including country reputational concerns significantly predicted protectionist attitudes ($F(12,188) = 10.29$, $R^2 = .40$, $p < .001$). Honor endorsement demonstrated a marginally positive association with PROTECT-F ($b = 0.38$, $t(186) = 1.78$, $p = .076$), whereas neither country reputation nor experimental condition produce significant main effects ($ps > .25$).Political conservatism and right-wing authoritarianism remained significant covariates.

Neither the HONOR × Reputation interaction, the Reputation × Condition interaction, nor the predicted three-way interaction (HONOR × Reputation × Condition) reached statistical significance (all $ps > .20$). See Appendix N, Figure 5.

National Self-Reliance Model. Replacing country reputation with national self-reliance produced a similarly significant overall model ($F(12, 188) = 11.01$, $R^2 = .41$. $p < .001$). Honor endorsement significantly predicted protectionist attitudes ($b = 0.68$, $t(188) = 2.76$, $p = .006$), whereas national self-reliance and experimental condition did not produce significant main effects. Political conservatism and right-wing authoritarianism again remained significant covariates.

Of the interaction terms, only the Honor × Condition interaction reached statistical significance ($b = -0.31$, $t(188) = -2.05$, $p = .041$). Neither the Honor × Self-Reliance interaction nor the Self-Reliance × Condition interaction was significant, and the predicted three-way

interaction (Honor × Self-Reliance × Condition) was not significant (p = .205). See Appendix N, Figure 6. Taken together, the moderated moderation analyses did not support Hypothesis 4.

Mediation Analyses

Because the hypothesized moderated moderation models were not supported, additional analyses were conducted to explore whether participants' perceptions of national economic threat statistically accounted for the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. Specifically, we examined whether the indirect association between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes through perceived national economic threat differed across the threat and control conditions.

A moderated mediation model was estimated using Hayes' (2022) PROCESS Model 7, with treatment condition specified as the moderator of the first-stage path between honor endorsement and perceived national economic threat. Political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, financial worry, and ethnicity were included as covariates in the model.

The overall index of moderated mediation was not statistically significant (Index = .02, SE = .04, 95% CI [-.08, .10]), indicating that the indirect effect of honor endorsement on protectionist attitudes through perceived national economic threat did not differ significantly between the threat and control conditions. Likewise, the interaction between honor endorsement and treatment condition predicting perceived national economic threat was not significant (b = 0.08, ΔR^2 = .00, p = .593). Together, these findings do not support a moderated mediation model.

Although moderated mediation was not supported, examination of the conditional indirect effects revealed a more nuanced pattern. Among participants assigned to the threat condition, the indirect effect of honor endorsement on protectionist attitudes through perceived

national economic threat was statistically significant (b = 0.07, SE= .04, 95% CI [.00, .15]). In contrast, the corresponding indirect effect for participants assigned to the control condition was not significant (b = 0.05, SE = .05, 95% CI [-.02, .15]). Because the overall index of moderated mediation was nonsignificant, these conditional indirect effects should be interpreted cautiously and are best viewed as exploratory rather than evidence that the indirect effects significantly differed across experimental conditions.

To better understand these findings, separate simple mediation models (PROCESS Model 4) were estimated within each experimental condition. Among participants assigned to the threat condition (n = 98), the total effect of honor endorsement on protectionist attitudes was not statistically significant (β = 0.16, SE = .12, t(91) = 1.39, p = .169). Likewise, the direct effect remained nonsignificant after accounting for perceived national economic threat (β = 0.07, SE = .11, t(91) = 0.59, p = .556). However, the indirect effect through perceived national economic threat was significant (β = 0.10, 95% CI [.01, .20]), suggesting that participants' perceptions of economic vulnerability statistically accounted for the association between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes following exposure to the threat vignette.

For comparison, the same mediation model was estimated among participants assigned to the control condition (n = 103). In this group, honor endorsement remained directly associated with protectionist attitudes, whereas the indirect effect through perceived national economic threat was not statistically significant (p = .277). Although these analyses should be interpreted cautiously because they were conducted following the primary hypothesis tests and the overall moderated mediation model was not supported, they suggest that perceptions of national economic threat may represent a psychological process through which honor endorsement

becomes associated with protectionist attitudes when individuals are exposed to threatening economic information.

Discussion

Study 3 extended the previous studies by experimentally examining whether exposure to national economic threat influences the relationship between honor endorsement and support for protectionist policies. Whereas Studies 1 and 2 relied on correlational designs, the present study introduced an experimental manipulation to examine whether perceptions of national economic threat alter these relationships. More broadly, Study 3 provided the strongest test of the theoretical framework proposed throughout this dissertation by evaluating whether a situational threat activates the psychological processes through which honor values are associated with support for protectionist policies.

The first objective of Study 3 was to determine whether experimental manipulation successfully increased perceptions of national economic threat. Results clearly supported this expectation. Participants who read the threat vignette perceived significantly greater economic threat than participants assigned to the neutral condition, indicating that the manipulation successfully altered participants' perceptions of the national economy. This finding provides confidence that the experimental materials successfully manipulated perceptions of national economic threat and therefore establishes the validity of the subsequent analyses examining protectionist attitudes.

The manipulation also produced an initial increase in support for protectionist policies, suggesting that exposure to information emphasizing national economic vulnerability can increase preferences for protectionist economic policies. However, this effect was no longer statistically significant after controlling for political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism,

social dominance orientation, financial worry, and demographic characteristics. These findings suggest that although situational economic threat can influence protectionist attitudes, its effects are relatively modest compared to more stable ideological orientations. This pattern is consistent with previous political psychology research demonstrating that political ideology represents one of the strongest predictors of economic policy preferences. Rather than replacing these ideological explanations, the present findings suggest that perceptions of economic threat operate alongside them, contributing additional, but comparatively smaller, variance in support for protectionist policies.

The primary purpose of Study 3 was to evaluate whether national economic threat strengthened the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes, particularly among individuals high in national self-reliance or country reputational concerns. Contrary to Hypothesis 4, neither moderated moderation model supported this prediction. Neither national self-reliance nor country reputational concerns significantly altered the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes under conditions of experimentally induced economic threat. Accordingly, the data does not support the proposition that these variables function as higher-order boundary conditions that amplify the influence of honor values during periods of perceived national vulnerability.

Although these findings did not support the hypothesized moderated moderation model, they nevertheless provide useful theoretical information. The absence of significant three-way interactions suggests that the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes may be more stable than originally proposed. Rather than requiring multiple psychological conditions to be simultaneously present, honor values may exert relatively consistent associations with protectionist attitudes across different situational contexts. This interpretation is

consistent with the findings from Studies 1 and 2, in which honor endorsement demonstrated robust relationships with protectionist attitudes across multiple analytic approaches.

At the same time, the significant interaction between honor endorsement and experimental condition observed in the national self-reliance model suggests that situational context may still influence how honor values are translated into political attitudes. Although this interaction was not further qualified by national self-reliance and therefore does not support the full theoretical model, it indicates that exposure to threatening economic information may alter the strength of the association between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. Consequently, the present findings suggest that situational economic threat may influence the expression of honor values, even if this influence is less complex than originally hypothesized.

Because the moderated moderation analyses did not support the proposed model, additional mediation analyses were conducted to further explore the psychological processes linking honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. The overall moderated mediation model was not statistically significant, indicating that the indirect effect through perceived national economic threat did not differ significantly across the threat and control conditions. Consequently, these analyses do not provide evidence that the mediational process itself was significantly moderated by exposure to the experimental manipulation.

Nevertheless, examination of the conditional indirect effects revealed an informative pattern. Among participants exposed to the threat vignette, perceived national economic threat statistically accounted for the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes, whereas this indirect effect was not observed in the control condition. Because the overall index of moderated mediation was not significant, these findings should be interpreted carefully and not as confirmatory, but as exploratory evidence. Even so, they suggest an

intriguing possibility. Individuals high in honor endorsement may not simply endorse protectionist policies regardless of context. Instead, they may indeed become more supportive of such policies when they perceive that the nation is economically vulnerable or threatened. From this perspective, honor endorsement may influence political attitudes indirectly by shaping individuals' interpretations of national circumstances rather than by directly influencing policy preferences themselves.

When considered together with the findings from Study 2, these results suggest a more comprehensive theoretical framework than originally proposed. Study 2 demonstrated that national self-reliance and country reputational concerns statistically accounted for the association between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. Study 3 extends these findings by suggesting that perceived national economic threat may represent an additional psychological process through which honor values become associated with support for protectionist policies. Although these mediational mechanisms were examined independently rather than simultaneously, the collective findings across the two studies suggest that honor culture functions as a distal cultural orientation that shapes more immediate beliefs regarding national autonomy, international reputation, and economic vulnerability. These proximal perceptions, in turn, appear to contribute significantly to support for protectionist economic policies.

More broadly, Study 3 contributes to the growing literature examining cultural influences on political attitudes. Existing explanations of protectionist preferences have largely focused on ideological variables such as political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation as well as economic self-interest and perceived economic threat. The present findings suggest that honor culture provides an additional perspective for understanding these attitudes. Across all three studies, honor endorsement consistently demonstrated

meaningful associations with protectionist attitudes after accounting for these established predictors. Although the present research does not suggest that honor culture replaces existing ideological explanations, it indicates that cultural value systems may shape how individuals interpret narratives emphasizing national decline, foreign competition, economic exploitation, and threats to national independence. Consequently, honor culture appears to represent an important, yet previously overlooked, cultural framework through which individuals evaluate economic policy.

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, although Study 3 experimentally manipulated perceived national economic threat, many of the remaining variables including honor endorsement, national self-reliance, and protectionist attitudes were measured rather than manipulated. Consequently, the mediation analyses represent statistical models rather than demonstrations of causal psychological processes. Second, baseline differences emerged between experimental groups on honor endorsement and national self-reliance despite random assignment. Although such differences may occur by chance in randomized experiments and do not necessarily indicate failures of randomization, they nonetheless warrant caution when interpreting the findings (Bland & Altman, 2011; De Boer et al., 2015). Third, the mediator assessed participants' immediate perceptions of economic threat following the manipulation and therefore reflects their subjective reaction to the experimental materials. Future research should determine whether conceptually distinct measures of perceived national vulnerability produce similar findings. Finally, although the manipulation successfully increased perceptions of economic threat, its influence on protectionist attitudes was relatively modest after controlling for ideological covariates. Future research should therefore examine stronger or more personally relevant manipulations of national threat, including geopolitical conflict, economic sanctions,

immigration, or international competition, to determine whether similar psychological processes emerge across different forms of perceived national vulnerability.

Overall, Study 3 provides the strongest test of the theoretical framework advanced throughout this work. Although the hypothesized moderated moderation model was not supported, the findings substantially refine the proposed model by identifying perceived national economic threat as a potentially important proximal psychological process linking honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. When considered together with the findings from Studies 1 and 2, the present results support the broader conclusion that honor culture functions as a distal cultural orientation that influences economic policy preferences through beliefs concerning national self-reliance, national reputation, and perceptions of national vulnerability. Collectively, these findings extend existing explanations of protectionism by demonstrating that cultural values, in addition to ideological orientations and economic considerations, contribute to understanding why some individuals express greater support for protectionist economic policies.

General Discussion

The present research examined whether honor culture contributes to support for protectionist economic policies and sought to clarify the psychological processes through which this relationship emerges. Across three studies employing complementary observational and experimental designs, individuals who more strongly endorsed honor values consistently reported greater support for protectionist policies. Although several of the predicted moderation and moderated moderation hypotheses were not supported, the findings across the three studies converged on a more informative conclusion. Rather than functioning primarily as a contextual moderator, honor culture appears to operate as a broader cultural orientation that influences more

proximal beliefs regarding national self-reliance, national reputation, and perceived economic threat, which in turn are associated with support for protectionist economic policies.

Study 1 established the basic relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes. Consistent with the proposed framework, honor endorsement was positively associated with support for protectionist policies even after accounting for political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation. Honor endorsement was also consistently related to the five theoretically derived constructs proposed throughout this research, including national self-reliance, country reputational concerns, perceived economic threat, nationalism, and evaluations of international trade governance. These findings provided initial support for the proposition that honor culture contributes unique explanatory value beyond traditional ideological explanations of protectionist attitudes.

Study 2 extended these findings by examining the psychological role of national self-reliance and country reputational concerns. Although these variables did not moderate the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes as originally predicted, they consistently demonstrated strong direct associations with protectionist preferences and statistically mediated the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionism across two conceptually distinct measures of protectionist attitudes. These findings suggest that honor endorsement may be better understood as a distal cultural orientation that gives rise to more specific beliefs concerning national independence and reputation, which subsequently shape policy preferences.

Study 3 further extended this framework by introducing an experimental manipulation of perceived national economic threat. The manipulation successfully increased perceptions of national economic threat and produced an initial increase in support for protectionist policies.

Although the predicted three-way interactions were not supported, participants' reactions to the threat manipulation statistically mediated the relationship between honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes within the threat condition. These findings should be interpreted cautiously as the moderated mediation model was not significant and the conditional mediation analyses were exploratory. Nevertheless, together with the findings from Study 2, they are consistent with the possibility that perceptions of national vulnerability represent another proximal psychological process through which honor values may influence support for protectionist policies.

Collectively, the findings support a broader theoretical model than originally proposed. Rather than suggesting that honor endorsement predicts protectionist attitudes only under specific psychological conditions, the present findings indicate that honor culture functions as a distal cultural framework that shapes how individuals interpret national circumstances. Individuals who strongly endorse honor values thus appear more likely to emphasize national self-reliance, place greater importance on maintaining the country's reputation, and perceive economic threats as requiring defensive responses. These more immediate psychological orientations, rather than honor endorsement itself, appear to provide the strongest explanation for support for protectionist economic policies.

Theoretical Implications

This interpretation is consistent with broader theories of cultural values as distal influences on political judgment. Cultural belief systems rarely determine political preferences directly. Accordingly, honor culture may be viewed as an overarching cultural worldview that organizes concerns regarding national autonomy, reputation, and vulnerability, rather than as a direct predictor of specific policy preferences (Akkus et al., 2020; Barnes et al., 2014; Uskul et al., 2019). This interpretation is also consistent with the proximal-distal framework frequently

applied in cultural psychology, in which broad cultural values influence behavior indirectly through more immediate psychological processes (Bridger, 2023; Chaturvedi et al., 2011; Krieger, 2008).

The present findings also contribute to the growing political psychology literature examining the cultural foundations of economic policy preferences. Previous research has largely emphasized ideological explanations of protectionism, including political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, economic self-interest, and elite political messaging (Hiscox, 2006; Jedinger & Burger, 2019; Mansfield et al., 2021; Osborne et al., 2023; Spillan & Harcar, 2013). However, across the three current studies, honor endorsement consistently demonstrated relationships with protectionist attitudes beyond these traditional ideological predictors. The findings therefore suggest that cultural values provide an additional, and previously underexplored, framework for understanding why individuals differ in their support for international economic policies.

More broadly, the present research extends the literature on honor culture itself. Most previous honor research has focused on interpersonal aggression, retaliation, violence, hostility, and conflict (Brown, 2016; Brown et al., 2009, 2014; Nisbett & Cohen 1996). More recent work has extended honor theory to political domains involving national security and military action (Barnes et al., 2014; Saucier et al., 2018). The present research further broadens this literature by demonstrating that honor values are also associated with economic policy preferences. Specifically, the findings suggest that the same concerns regarding reputation, autonomy, and responses to threat that characterize honor cultures and its foundation for security policies may also shape how individuals evaluate international trade and economic cooperation.

Importantly, the present findings do not suggest that honor culture replaces traditional ideological explanations of protectionist attitudes. Political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation remained important predictors throughout the three studies. Rather, honor endorsement consistently explained unique variance in protectionist attitudes after accounting for these established ideological constructs, suggesting that cultural value systems provide additional explanatory power beyond political ideology alone.

Collectively, these findings extend existing explanations of protectionism by demonstrating that cultural values, in addition to ideological orientations and economic considerations, contribute to understanding why some individuals express greater support for protectionist economic policies. More broadly, the findings suggest that protectionist attitudes may be understood not only as economic or ideological preferences but also as expressions of broader cultural values concerning national identity, autonomy, and collective reputation.

Limitations

Other than the limitations discussed for each individual study, several broader limitations should be acknowledged. Although Study 3 experimentally manipulated perceptions of national economic threat, many of the principal constructs examined throughout this dissertation, including honor endorsement, national self-reliance, and country reputational concerns, were measured rather than manipulated. Consequently, the mediation findings should not be interpreted as establishing causal psychological pathways. Future experimental research that directly manipulates these psychological mechanisms would provide a stronger test of the proposed theoretical framework.

Second, the studies relied on cross-sectional survey designs for most analyses. Although the consistency of the findings across three studies strengthens confidence in the proposed

framework, longitudinal and experimental designs would provide stronger evidence regarding the temporal ordering of these relationships.

Third, the studies relied primarily on U.S. samples, limiting generalizability to societies in which honor culture and protectionist politics may operate differently (Nowak et al., 2016; Patunru, 2023; Vignoles et al., 2024; Wang, 2016). Future research should examine these relationships in other cultural contexts, particularly in regions where honor norms are more central to everyday social life or where protectionist economic policies emerge from different historical and political circumstances.

Finally, the present research focused primarily on economic protectionism. Protectionism also encompasses immigration, cultural production, language, technology, and national identity, all of which may involve somewhat different psychological processes (Huddy et al., 2021; Sharma, et al., 1994) Future research should determine whether honor endorsement similarly predicts these alternative forms of protectionism.

Future Directions

The present research also highlights several promising directions for future investigation. First, additional work should continue examining the five psychological constructs proposed throughout this manuscript, particularly perceived economic threat, governance attitudes, and in-group biases. Although all five constructs demonstrated meaningful relationships with honor endorsement and protectionist attitudes, only self-reliance, reputation, and perceived threat were examined in greater detail.

Second, future studies should experimentally manipulate honor-relevant concerns more directly. Whereas the current research manipulated perceptions of national economic threat,

future investigations could experimentally activate concerns regarding national reputation, exploitation, or collective honor to more directly test the proposed theoretical framework.

Finally, cross-cultural research comparing honor cultures with societies organized around alternative cultural logics, such as face or dignity, would provide valuable insight into whether the psychological processes identified here are unique to honor cultures or reflect broader mechanisms underlying protectionist political attitudes.

Conclusion

Overall, the present research provides the first systematic examination of honor culture as a psychological framework underlying support for protectionist economic policies. Although the predicted moderation effects received limited support, the findings consistently demonstrated that honor endorsement was associated with stronger protectionist attitudes beyond traditional ideological explanations. Rather than weakening the proposed framework, the pattern of findings refined it by suggesting that honor culture operates primarily as a distal cultural orientation that shapes more proximal beliefs concerning national self-reliance, national reputation, and economic vulnerability.

As debates surrounding globalization, international cooperation, and protectionism continue to shape modern political discourse, understanding the cultural values that underlie these attitudes becomes increasingly important. The present findings suggest that honor culture represents one such value system and therefore deserves greater consideration within political psychology, cultural psychology, and the study of international economic attitudes.

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Appendix A

Honor in Womanhood Subscale (HIW)

Instructions: Rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements using the provided scale.

1. A respectable woman knows that what she does reflects on her family name.
2. A good woman is loyal to her family members, even when they have behaved badly.
3. A good woman stands by her man at all times.
4. A respectable woman avoids any behavior that might bring shame on her family.
5. A good woman never flirts with a man who is not her husband or boyfriend.
6. A good woman teaches her children the importance of family traditions.
7. A good woman never tolerates disrespect.
8. A good woman is always truthful, even when it hurts her.
9. A respectable woman never wants to be known as being sexually permissive.
10. A respectable woman never betrays her husband.
11. A good woman always puts her family first.
12. A good woman is willing to die for her family.

Honor in Manhood Subscale (HIM)

Instructions: Rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements using the provided scale.

1. A man has the right to act with physical aggression toward another man who calls him an insulting name.
2. A real man doesn't let other people push him around.
3. A man has the right to act with physical aggression toward another man who slanders his family.
4. A real man can always take care of himself.
5. A man has the right to act with physical aggression toward another man who openly flirts with his wife.
6. A real man never lets himself be a "door mat" to other people.
7. A real man doesn't take any crap from anybody.
8. A man has the right to act with physical aggression toward another man who trespasses on his personal property.
9. A real man can "pull himself up by his bootstraps" when the going gets tough.
10. A man has the right to act with physical aggression toward another man who mistreats his children.
11. A real man will never back down from a fight.
12. A man has the right to act with physical aggression toward another man who steals from him.
13. A man has the right to act with physical aggression toward another man who vandalizes his home.
14. A real man is seen as tough in the eyes of his peers.
15. A man has the right to act with physical aggression toward another man who insults his mother.
16. A real man never leaves a score unsettled.

Honor Concerns Subscale (HC)
Instructions: Rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements using the provided scale.

1. My honor depends on the appreciation and respect that others have for me.
2. I could not have respect for myself if I did not have any honor.
3. I think that a public humiliation would be one of the situations that would violate my honor the most.
4. To maintain my honor, I have to be loyal to my family, regardless of the circumstances.
5. I think that honor is one of the most important things that I have as a human being.
6. I think that the honor of a man would be violated if he were humiliated publicly by others.
7. It is my duty to be constantly prepared to defend the honor of my family.
8. A family member would violate my honor if he/she were to do something disgraceful.
9. My honor is the basis for my self-respect.

Right Wing Authoritarianism Scale (RWA)
Instructions: In this part of our survey, we are interested in your attitudes and opinions with respect to a number of different issues. We will be presenting you with a series of statements; for each one, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with it. There is no "right" or "wrong" answer; just respond in the way that feels right for YOU.
Please make sure what is being asked of you before making your response.

1. What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path.
2. Once our government leaders give us the 'go ahead' it will be the duty of every patriotic citizen to help stomp out the rot that is poisoning our country from within.
3. The situation in our country is getting so serious, the strongest methods would be justified if they eliminated the troublemakers and got us back to our true path.
4. The only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get back to our traditional values, put some tough leaders in power, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad ideas.
5. There is nothing wrong with premarital sexual intercourse. (*Reverse coded*)
6. Everyone should have their own lifestyle, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes them different from everyone else. (*Reverse coded*)
7. There is no 'ONE right way' to live life; everybody has to create their own way. (*Reverse coded*)
8. Gays and lesbians are just as healthy and moral as anybody else. (*Reverse coded*)
9. The real key to the 'good life' is obedience, discipline, and sticking to the straight and narrow.
10. It may be considered old fashioned by some, but having a normal proper appearance is still the mark of a gentleman and, especially, a lady.
11. Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.
12. Our country needs free thinkers who will have the courage to defy traditional ways, even if this upsets many people. (*Reverse coded*)
13. Some of the best people in our country are those who are challenging our government, criticizing religion, and ignoring the 'normal way' things are supposed to be done. (*Reverse coded*)

14. We should treat protestors and radicals with open arms and open minds, since new ideas are the lifeblood of progressive change. (*Reverse coded*)

Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO)

Instructions: In this part of our survey, we are interested in your attitudes and opinions with respect to a number of different issues. We will be presenting you with a series of statements; for each one, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with it. There is no "right" or "wrong" answer; just respond in the way that feels right for YOU.

Please make sure what is being asked of you before making your response.

1. An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.
2. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
3. No one group should dominate in society. (*Reverse coded*)
4. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top. (*Reverse coded*)
5. Group equality should NOT be our primary goal.
6. It is unjust to try to make groups equal.
7. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups. (*Reverse coded*)
8. We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed. (*Reverse coded*)

Country Self-Reliance Scale (C-REL)

Instructions: Please answer the following questions about countries around the world. There are no right or wrong answers, just answer with how you feel.

1. Countries should be self-reliant
2. A country could solve more of its problems if it stopped working with other nations
3. Countries should not ask for help from other nations in solving its problems
4. Countries should solve their problems on their own
5. Strong countries should overcome difficulties by themselves
6. Countries should be able to handle whatever comes their way
7. Countries should be ashamed to ask for help from other nations
8. Countries should ask for help from other nations if they need it (*Reverse coded*)

Country Reputation Scale (C-REP)

Instructions: Please rate the extent to which you think it is important to you that other people and other countries view the United States in the following ways.

It is <u>IMPORTANT TO ME</u> that the U.S. is seen as:

1. A place with a stable economic environment
2. An honorable country
3. A country that actively participates in world affairs
4. A country that has good control of its overseas interests
5. A place where people respect the rule of law
6. Always following through on its promises
7. Trusted by other countries
8. Being capable to protect itself from external aggression
9. A democratic country
10. Taken seriously by other countries
11. Maintaining a stable political environment

12. A safe place to invest
13. Respected by others
14. Always supporting our friends and allies
15. Capable of protecting its people
16. A country that supports good causes
17. Meeting internal and external security threats
18. Always having the back of its friends and allies
19. A place where people tolerate one another

Conservativism Scale (CONS)

1. To what extent do you identify as liberal versus conservative?
2. To what extent do you agree with "economic conservative" policies (economic conservatism means a belief in less government spending on social programs, lower taxes, deregulation of the economy, free trade, etc.)?

Economic Threat Scale (THREAT)

Instructions: Read each statement and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements.

1. The development of China as an economic power is a critical threat that the U.S. must face.
2. Today, China is a greater economic power than the United States.
3. The U.S. needs to enact tougher trade policies towards China.
4. The United State's trade deficit with China is a very serious problem.

Nationalism Scale (NAT)

Instructions: Please answer the following questions about the U.S. and the world around you. There are no right or wrong answers, just answer with how you feel.

1. How important is it to have been born in the U.S.
2. How important is it to have American citizenship?
3. How important is it to have lived in the U.S. for most of one's life?
4. How important is it to speak English?
5. How important is it to be Christian?
6. How important is it to have American ancestry?
7. I would rather be a citizen of the U.S. than of any other country in the world.
8. There are some things about the U.S. that make me feel ashamed. (*Reverse coded*)
9. The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the U.S.
10. Generally speaking, the U.S. is a better country than most other countries.
11. People should support their country even if the country is in the wrong.

International Trade Governance Scale (GOV)

Instructions: To ensure international trade remains free and fair, some organizations have been established by groups of nations to have power at a global level above any individual nation's boundary. One of the primary international organizations overseeing trade is the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO's mission is to establish rules for international trade and handle disputes between countries that break trade deals or cannot form trade agreements. The following questions relate to international trade organizations such as the WTO. Please answer with your

attitudes towards these organizations now that you have learned a little bit about them. There are no right or wrong answers, just answer with how you feel.
International Trade Organizations like the WTO...

1 ... Are effective at overseeing trade (*Reverse coded*)
2. … Are effective at protecting the U.S. from being economic threats such as China (*Reverse coded*)
3. … Are trustworthy in allowing the U.S. to not be so concerned with our trade (*Reverse coded*)
4. … Ensure there is a fair playing field for all nations of the world (*Reverse coded*)
5. … Leave the U.S. more susceptible to unfair trade deals
6. … Are growing weaker
7. … Are necessary to ensure the safety of consumers (*Reverse coded*)
8. … Make me feel more economically threatened
9. … Are NOT effective at preventing the U.S. from being exploited by unfair deals
10. … Effectively punish countries that make unfair trade deals (*Reverse coded*)
11. … Ensure that consumers in the U.S. can buy goods for reasonable prices (*Reverse coded*)
12. … Protect U.S. industries and workers (*Reverse coded*)
13. … Are failing to prevent threats to the U.S. from competitors like China
14. … Threaten U.S. industries and workers
15. … Do not place U.S. interests above competing countries
16. … Do not care about the average U.S. consumer
17. … Are not powerful enough to protect the U.S.
18. … Cannot replace the U.S. as the leader of the global economy
19. … Make me feel economically more secure (*Reverse coded*)
20. … Benefit the U.S. (*Reverse coded*)
21. … Do more harm than good

Protectionism Scale (PROTECT)

Instructions: Which of the following actions, if any, do you think the U.S. government should take to promote growth of the economy?
The U.S. government should:

1. … Impose tariffs on foreign products in industries that compete with U.S. businesses
2. … Identify businesses most likely to succeed in strategic industries and offer those U.S. companies financial support
3. … Limit the import of goods from other countries to raise the cost of doing business with competing businesses or countries
4. … Financially support U.S. companies in strategic industries competing against foreign businesses that receive support from their own governments
5. … Reduce international trade to protect American jobs in our developing industries
6. … Ban or limit imports from foreign companies in strategic industries that compete with key U.S. businesses

Appendix B

Factor Analysis of Country Self-Reliance (C-REL)

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted with half the sample of Study 1 (n = 393) on the 8-item C-REL scale using principal axis factoring (PAF) with promax rotation as potential factors are expected to be correlated. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .86). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi 2(28) = 1292.28$, $p < .001$) indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for EFA.

Two factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 were retained, explaining 65.73% of the total variance. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 3.85 and explained 48.07% of the variance. Factor 2 reported an eigenvalue of 1.41 and explained 17.65%. All items loaded above .52 on factor 1 except for item 8 which loaded at .10 on factor 1 and .53 for factor 2. This is likely due to the reverse-coded nature of item 8 where artificial factors can appear due to natural differences in answering reverse-coded items and likely does not represent a separate legitimate factor (İlhan et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2016). No other cross-loadings were greater in absolute magnitude than .31.

Because this scale was intended to assess only a single underlying psychological construct of country self-reliance concerns, a follow-up confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to evaluate the fit of the hypothesized one-factor model using weighted least squares mean and variance adjusted estimation (WLSMV) with the other half of the randomly divided Study 1 sample (n = 394) as consistent with prior research (Lorezno-Seva, 2022; Park, 2023). Model fit was evaluated using chi-square (χ^2), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) with its 90% confidence interval (CI), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Overall, the model

demonstrated poor fit to the data ($\chi^2(20) = 286.61$, $p < .001$, CFI = .82, TLI = .75 , RMSEA = 0.18, 90% CI [0.17, 0.20], SRMR = .09) due to the standard cut-offs for chi-square, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA falling outside the range of good-fit and only SRMR reporting acceptable tolerance (Hu & Bentler, 1999). It is worth noting though that these cut-offs are industry standard rules-of-thumb but not concrete determinants for construct validity and are limited by certain aspects such as large sample size (Alavi et al., 2020; Marsh et al., 2004). For each scale item, standardized factor loadings ranged from .30 to .84 and were all significant at the highest level (ps < .001), indicating that the items were moderate indicators of the latent construct.

Altogether, these results provide little support for the proposed one-factor structure assessing country self-reliance. Although, regardless of ill-fitting CFA, the C-REL scale behaves as intended in other analyses, has high reliability ($\alpha = .80$), and thus may not require reformulation for its continued use in the current work (Clark & Watson; 1995; Marsh et al., 2004).

Factor Analysis of Country Reputation (C-REP)

Again, using PFA with promax rotation and the randomly selected half-sample of Study 1, an EFA was conducted for the 19-item C-REP measure. KMO verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .97). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi2(171) = 8194.58$, $p < .001$) again indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large.

Two factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 were retained, explaining 74.51% of the total variance. Factor 1 reported an eigenvalue of 13.14 and explained 69.18% of the variance while factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 1.01 and explained 5.33% of the total variance. Items loaded between .44 and .89 on factor 1. No cross-loading absolute magnitudes exceeded .29 for factor 2.

Again, because this scale was designed to assess only a single construct of country reputation concerns, a CFA was conducted to evaluate the fit of a one-factor model again using WLSMV estimation and the half sample selection. Overall, the model did not demonstrate good fit to the data ($\chi^2(152) = 1129.37$, $p < .001$, CFI = .88, TLI = .87, RMSEA = 0.13, 90% CI [0.12, 0.13], SRMR = .04) as the standard cut-offs for chi-square, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA fall outside the range of good-fit and only SRMR demonstrated acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Contrary to the fit indices, all standardized factor loadings were very high, ranging from .61 to .90, and were significant at the highest level (ps < .001) suggesting that the items were strong indicators of the latent construct.

Considering these results with the EFA, the high overall reliability ($\alpha = .97$) and corroborating correlational analyses, suggests that there is still reasonable support for the proposed one-factor structure assessing country self-reliance, even with a poor fitting CFA.

Factor Analysis of Economic Threat Perception (THREAT)

Following the above design, an EFA was conducted on the 4-item THREAT scale. KMO verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .69). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi2(6) = 301.84$, $p < .001$) supported that correlations between items were sufficiently large.

Only one factor with an eigenvalue exceeding 1.0 was retained and explained 52.40% of the total variance. This single factor reported an eigenvalue of 2.10 with item one loading at .77 on the primary factor while item two loaded at .29, item three at .68, and item four loaded at .65.

Following the single factor revealed during EFA, and since this scale was intended to assess only a single construct of economic threat concerns, a CFA was conducted to evaluate the fit of a one-factor model again using WLSMV estimation and the selected half sample group. Overall, the model demonstrated partial fit to the data ($\chi^2(2) = 19.03$, $p < .001$, CFI = .95, TLI =

.84, RMSEA = 0.15, 90% CI [0.09, 0.21], SRMR = .04) given that desirable cut-offs for CFI and SRMR are met, while chi-square, TLI, and RMSEA are not (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh et al., 2004). Looking closely, items 1, 3, and 4 reported standardized factor loadings ranging from .66 to .78 and were all statistically significant (ps < .001) indicating that these three items were strong indicators of the latent construct. Alternatively, item 2 reported a standardized estimate of .08 (p = .174), suggesting that this item alone is very poorly fitting the model and also likely bringing down the overall fit. Additionally, given the very low degrees of freedom due to having only four items, there is the possibility that the RMSEA value is artificially inflated and the true value is much lower and suggests greater fit for the overall model (Chen et al., 2009).

Given the mixed support from the CFA, specific ill-fitting item 2, and the low overall reliability (α = .65), a more appropriate scale will be developed for use in later studies.

Factor Analysis of International Trade Governance (GOV)

Following established design, an EFA was conducted on the 21-item GOV measure. KMO verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .88). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi 2(210) = 3134.01$, $p < .001$) supported that correlations between items were sufficiently large.

Three factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 were retained, explaining 52.57% of the total variance. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 6.38 and explained 30.35% of the variance. Factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 3.46, explaining 16.47%, and factor 3 had an eigenvalue of 1.21 which explained 5.76% of the total variance. All items loaded between .39 and .65 for factor 1, -.03 and .55 for factor 2, and -.02 to .37 for factor 3. Again, due to the reverse-coding utilized throughout this measure, factors 2 and 3 may be artifacts of wording rather than legitimate factors (İlhan et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2016).

Because this scale was intended to assess only a single construct of international trade governance attitudes, a CFA was conducted to evaluate the fit of a one-factor model using WLSMV estimation and the half sample selection. Overall, the model demonstrated very poor fit to the data ($\chi^2(189) = 1746.65$, $p < .001$, CFI = .39, TLI = .32, RMSEA = 0.14, 90% CI [0.14, 0.15], SRMR = .04) since all indices, except for SRMR, fall far beyond acceptable tolerances (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Furthermore, several items do not load significantly onto the one-factor model (ps > .150) and demonstrate poor standardized loadings, suggesting that the items together are not strong indicators of the latent construct.

These results, taken together with the EFA that reported three factors, suggest that this scale does not represent a one-factor model and would thus require significant correction for use in later studies if a one-factor model were necessary for future analyses. Although, since this scale is not a primary variable of concern in Study 2 or Study 3, further development would then be outside the scope of the current work and this scale may then be retained to assess only the stability of a broad trade governance concept across subject pools while not being included in the primary study analyses nor influencing core study conclusions (Hopwood & Donnellan, 2010).

Factor Analysis of Protectionism (PROTECT)

Lastly, following established design, an EFA was conducted on the 6-item PROTECT outcome measure. KMO verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .82). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi2(15) = 1006.06$, $p < .001$) again supported that correlations between items were sufficiently large.

Only one factor with eigenvalue exceeding 1.0 was retained. This factor had an eigenvalue of 3.41, explaining 56.82% of the total variance. Item 1 loaded at .72, item 2 at .55, item 3 at .82, item 4 at .54, item 5 at .80, and item 6 loaded at .71.

With the EFA supporting a single-factor model, and with this scale being designed to capture only a single construct of support for protectionism, the CFA was conducted to evaluate the fit of a one-factor model again using WLSMV estimation and the half sample selection (n = 394). Overall, the model demonstrated partial fit to the data ($\chi^2(9) = 84.16$, $p < .001$, CFI = .92, TLI = .87, RMSEA = 0.15, 90% CI [0.12, 0.17], SRMR = .06) as the standard cut-offs for CFI and SRMR demonstrate acceptable fit, while the chi-square, RMSEA, and TLI were not supportive of good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All standardized factor loadings were high, ranging from .50 to .81, and were significant at the highest level (ps < .001) suggesting that the items were good indicators of the latent construct.

These results, taken together with the EFA, the high overall reliability ($\alpha = .85$), the large sample size likely minimizing the chi-square, and corroborating correlational analyses in the expected directions, suggests that there is good support for the proposed one-factor structure assessing support for protectionist policies, even if the CFA does not fit as well as would be preferred (Alavi et al., 2020; Clark & Watson, 1995; Marsh et al., 2004).

Appendix C

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations among Study 1 Variables

Table 1. Bivariate Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	*M*	*SD*
1. HONOR	-	.47***	.48***	.26***	.19***	.41***	.38***	.51***	.13***	.37***	-	1.0
2. CONS		-	.63***	.47***	.05	.37***	.28***	.57***	.12***	.46***	4.2	1.3
3. RWA			-	.60***	-.12***	.37***	.24***	.57***	.18***	.38***	3.6	0.9
4. SDO				-	-.20***	.31***	.16***	.41***	.21***	.27***	3.2	1.0
5. C-REP					-	.09*	.23***	.14***	-.12***	.21***	5.0	1.0
6. C-REL						-	.40***	.47***	.35***	.49***	4.0	0.7
7. THREAT							-	.37***	.26***	.41***	4.2	0.7
8. NAT								-	.15***	.49***	4.0	1.0
9. GOV									-	.19***	3.4	0.4
10. PROTECT										-	3.4	0.7

$N = 787$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$

Appendix D

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression of Key Variables in Study 1

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression for Protectionism as a Function of Honor and Covariates

Variable	*b*	SE	95% CI	t	β	*p*
Intercept	2.67	.11	[2.45, 2.88]	24.46	-	< .001
HONOR	0.14	.03	[0.08, 0.19]	5.13	.19	< .001
CONS	0.17	.02	[0.12, 0.21]	7.46	.32	< .001
RWA	0.04	.04	[-0.03, 0.11]	1.11	.05	.266
SDO	0.00	.03	[-0.06, 0.05]	-0.15	.00	.880

$N = 787, R^2_{adj} = .22, p < .001$

Appendix E

Updated Economic Threat Perception (THREAT-U)

Instructions: Read each statement and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements.

1. Trade with other countries poses a serious threat to job opportunities for Americans
2. Foreign countries increasing their economic strength threatens the buying power of the U.S. dollar
3. The U.S.'s trade deficits with foreign countries put local businesses at risk of closing down
4. Other countries use unfair trade tactics to steal American money
5. International trade leads to lower wages for many workers in the United States
6. The growth of other countries economies raises prices on goods and services in the U.S.
7. When companies move production to other countries, many American workers lose their jobs and economic security
8. Other countries are trying to take advantage of American consumers, workers, and businesses
9. Buying foreign products and increased trade threatens American businesses
10. Foreign products coming into the U.S. mean that American workers will be paid less as the U.S. economy and businesses struggle to keep up

Cultural and Economic Protectionism (CEP)

Please answer the following questions regarding your attitude towards international trade. There are no right or wrong answers, it is okay if you do not have a strong education on these subjects, please just answer with how you feel.

1. The U.S. should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy
2. The U.S. should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations
3. Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in the U.S.
4. The U.S.'s media should give preference to American films and programs
5. Large international companies are doing more and more damage to local business in the U.S.

Financial Worry Scale (WORRY)

Instructions: Please answer the following questions about the following financial issues. There are no right or wrong answers, please respond with how you feel.

1. How worried are you about your current financial situation?
2. How worried are you about finding a job or keeping your current job?
3. How worried are you about having legal protections for your employment status?
4. How worried are you about the cost of living?
5. How worried are you about the economy?

Adapted Protectionism Scale with Filler Items (PROTECT-F)

Instructions: Which of the following actions, if any, do you think the U.S. government should take to promote growth of the economy?

The U.S. government should:

1. … Impose tariffs on foreign products in industries that compete with U.S. businesses
2. … Draft regulation to restrict air pollution (*Filler item*)
3. … Identify businesses most likely to succeed in strategic industries and offer those U.S. companies financial support
4. … Require manufacturers to use clean forms of energy such as solar or wind (*Filler item*)
5. … Limit the import of goods from other countries to raise the cost of doing business with competing businesses or countries
6. … Ensure higher education institutions only receive funding for programs that benefit U.S. national goals (*Filler item*)
7. … Financially support U.S. companies in strategic industries competing against foreign businesses that receive support for their own governments
8. … Reduce international trade to protect American jobs in our developing industries
9. … Enshrine equal access to federal grants and scholarships for all higher education students regardless of background or identity factors (*Filler item*)
10. … Ban or limit imports from foreign companies in strategic industries that compete with key U.S. businesses

Appendix F

Factor Analysis of Financial Worry (WORRY)

Using the same protocol as Study 1 factor analyses, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the 5-item WORRY scale using principal axis factoring (PAF) with promax rotation and the entire Study 2 sample (n = 360). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .77). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2(10) = 779.28$, $p < .001$) indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for EFA.

One factor with an eigenvalue exceeding 1.0 was retained, explaining 60.22% of the total variance. This factor had an eigenvalue of 3.01. All items loaded above .53 onto the single factor.

With one factor revealed during EFA, and because this scale was intended to assess only a single underlying psychological construct of one's personal financial concerns, a follow-up confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to evaluate the fit of the hypothesized one-factor model using weighted least squares mean and variance adjusted estimation (WLSMV). Model fit was evaluated using chi-square (χ^2), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) with its 90% confidence interval (CI), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Overall, the model demonstrated poor fit to the data ($\chi^2(5) = 110.83$, $p < .001$, CFI = .86, TLI = .73 , RMSEA = 0.24, 90% CI [0.20, 0.28], SRMR = .08) due to the standard cut-offs for chi-square, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA falling outside the range of good-fit and only SRMR reporting only acceptable tolerance (Hu & Bentler, 1999). It is again important to note that these cut-offs are standard rules-of-thumb but not concrete determinants for model fitness and are limited by certain aspects such as the low degrees of freedom artificially inflating RMSEA values (Chen et al., 2009; Marsh et al., 2004). For each scale item, standardized factor loadings ranged from .44 to .91 and were all significant

at the highest level (*ps* < .001), indicating that the items were moderate indicators of the latent construct.

Altogether, given the support for a one-factor model from the EFA, these results provide partial support for the proposed one-factor structure assessing financial worry. Regardless of ill-fitting CFA, the WORRY scale demonstrates high reliability (α = .83) and is only utilized as a possible covariate in Study 2 and 3, not as a core variable, and thus may not require changes for its continued use in the current work (Hopwood & Donnellan, 2010; Marsh et al., 2004).

Factor Analysis of Updated Economic Threat Perception (THREAT-U)

Again, through PFA with promax rotation, an EFA was conducted for the 10-item THREAT-U measure. KMO verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .90). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2(45) = 1628.34$, $p < .001$) again indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large.

One factor with an eigenvalue exceeding 1.0 was retained, explaining 51.32% of the total variance. This factor had an eigenvalue of 5.13. Items loaded between .44 and .79 onto the single factor.

Since the EFA revealed a single-factor model, and with this scale being designed to capture only a single construct of economic threat perceptions, the CFA was conducted to evaluate the fit of a one-factor model again using WLSMV estimation and the full sample of study 2. The model demonstrated partial fit to the data ($\chi^2(35) = 175.95$, $p < .001$, CFI = .91, TLI = .89, RMSEA = 0.11, 90% CI [0.09, 0.12], SRMR = .05) as the standard cut-offs for CFI and SRMR demonstrate acceptable fit, the TLI falls just short of acceptable tolerance, and the chi-square and RMSEA were not supportive of good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All standardized

factor loadings ranged from .45 to .80 and were significant at the highest level (*ps* < .001), suggesting that the items were moderate indicators of the latent construct.

When considering these results with the EFA, the high overall reliability (α = .89), corroborating correlational analyses in the expected directions, and the large improvement in this THREAT-U scale from the THREAT scale of Study 1, there is overall acceptable support for the proposed one-factor structure assessing economic threat perceptions, even if the CFA does not wholly detail good fit (Alavi et al., 2020; Clark & Watson, 1995; Marsh et al., 2004).

Appendix G

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations among Key Study 2 Variables

Table 3. Bivariate Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	*M*	*SD*	*α*
1. HONOR	-	.50***	.52***	.29***	-.23***	.20***	.30***	.34***	.32***	-	1.0	-
2. CONS		-	.61***	.44***	-.19***	.04	.25***	.41***	.33***	4.1	1.2	.62
3. RWA			-	.62***	-.16***	-.16**	.34***	.44***	.33***	3.5	0.9	.85
4. SDO				-	-.20***	-.29***	.30***	.37***	.18***	3.2	1.0	.83
5. Gender					-	.07	-.17***	-.16**	-.12*	-	-	-
6. C-REP						-	-.03	.05	.15**	5.4	1.0	.96
7. C-REL							-	.46***	.35***	3.9	0.8	.79
8. CEP								-	.59***	3.9	1.0	.82
9. PROTECT-F									-	3.5	0.8	.83

$N = 360$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Appendix H

Figure 1. Simple moderation of protectionist outcome preferences (CEP) as a function of honor endorsement (HONOR) among low, moderate, and high country reputation endorsers (C-REP)

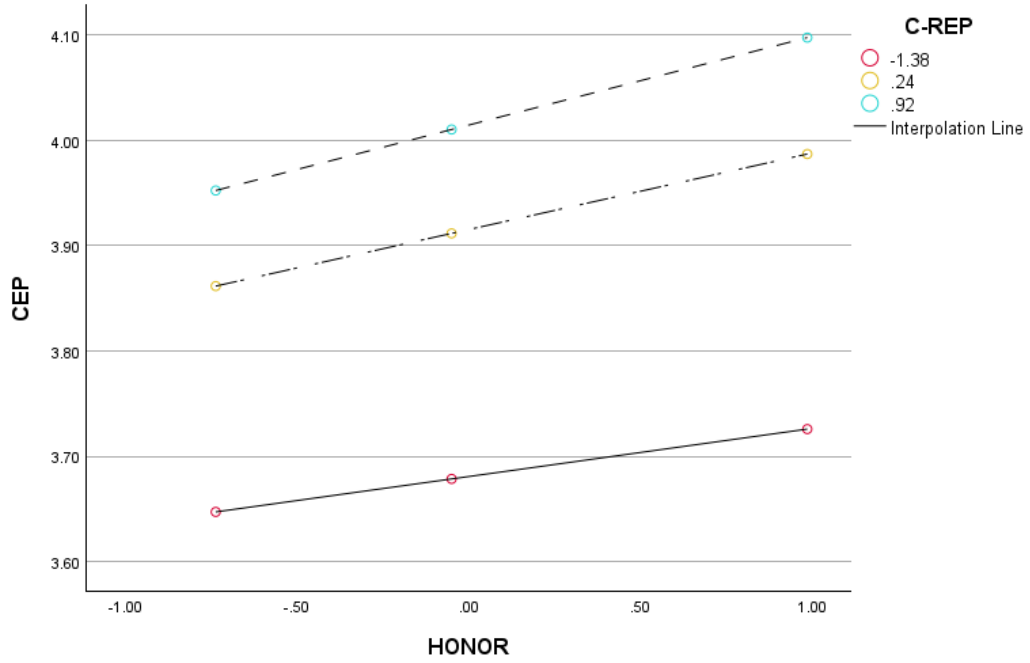
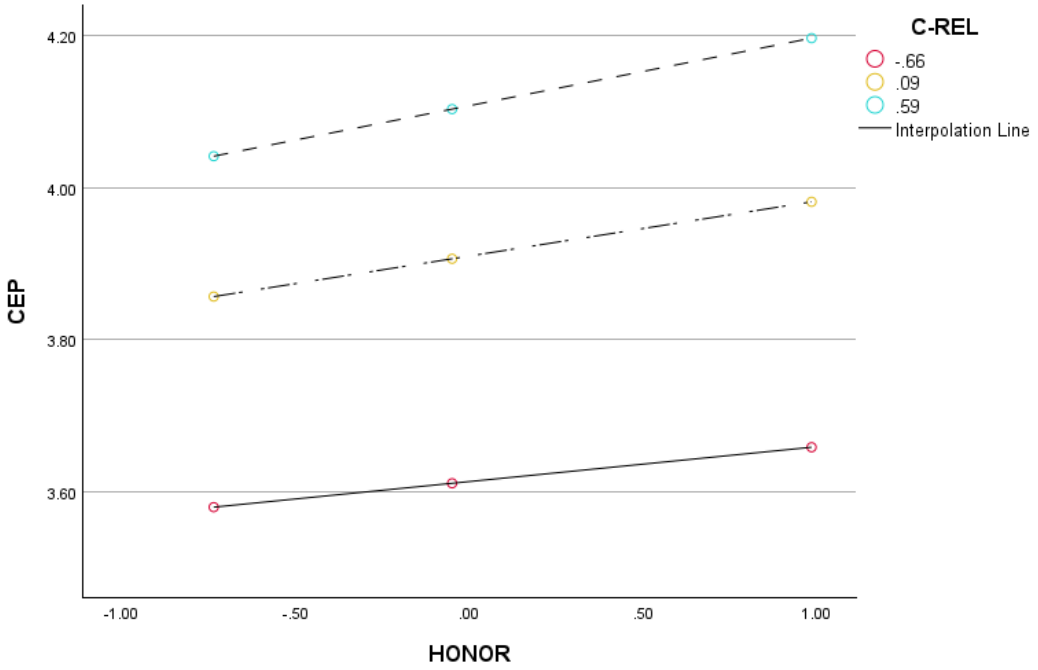


Figure 2. Simple moderation of protectionist outcome preferences (CEP) as a function of honor endorsement (HONOR) among low, moderate, and high country self-reliance endorsers (C-REL)



Appendix I

Figure 3. Simple moderation of protectionist outcome preferences (PROTECT-F) as a function of honor endorsement (HONOR) among low, moderate, and high country reputation endorsers (C-REP)

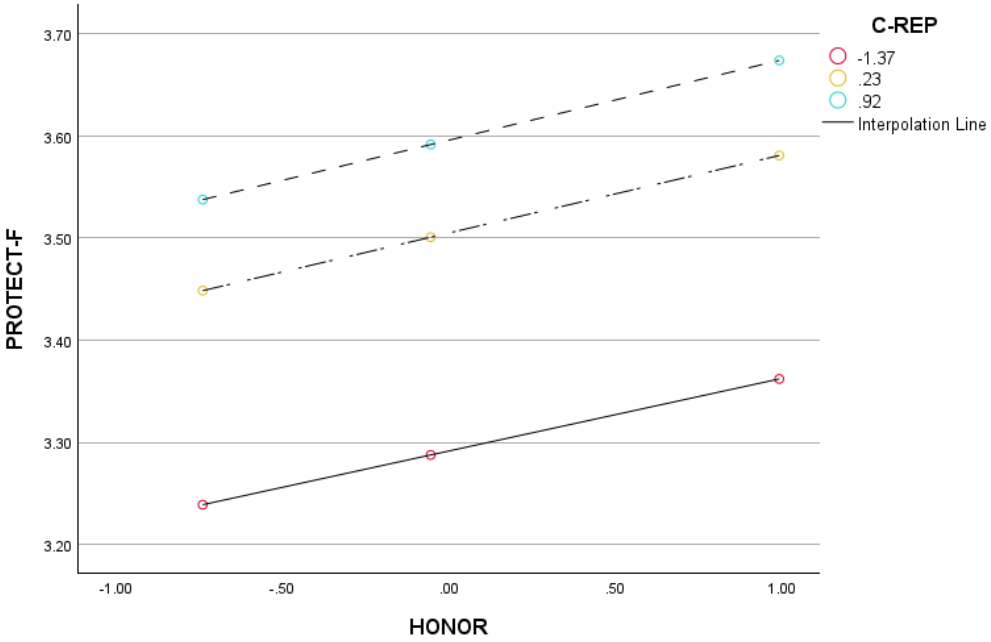
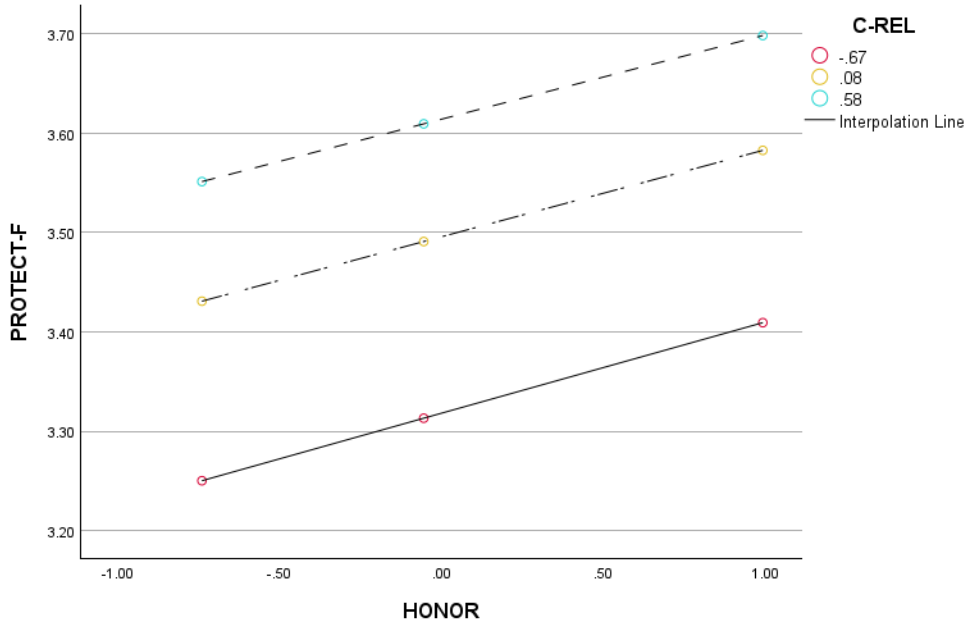


Figure 4. Simple moderation of protectionist outcome preferences (PROTECT-F) as a function of honor endorsement (HONOR) among low, moderate, and high country self-reliance endorsers (C-REL)



Appendix J

Threat Condition Vignette

Future of United States Economy and International Trade Severly Threatened

By Benjamin Wiliams – Foreign Economic Review
January 22, 2026

Recent forecasts find significantly weaker economic and trade performances for the U.S. than previously expected. Trade deficits continue to widen, leaving the country overly dependent on foreign imports. Economists warn that this reliance on international production threatens American industries and reduces opportunities for domestic workers.

Many analyses find that existing trade agreements, such as those with China or Mexico, unfairly benefit foreign economies while putting American companies and workers at a disadvantage. Critics argue that lower labor costs abroad allow foreign producers to undercut U.S. businesses, forcing companies to reduce wages, cut jobs, or move production overseas to remain competitive. Some political figures have called attention to this, arguing that foreign trade allows other countries to economically benefit while American workers and consumers bear the costs.

Various financial authorities speculate that U.S. job losses are most dangerous for working-class and young families. In key manufacturing sectors alone, hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost as factories shut down or relocate abroad where labor is cheaper. These losses often leave entire communities struggling with unemployment, declining wages, and fewer economic opportunities. With major companies increasingly concerned about staying competitive in global markets, analysts fear that job losses and wage troubles may worsen in the coming years.

As the world reacts to a weak U.S. economy, many countries may view the U.S. as a less reliable trade partner or economic leader. Long-standing partnerships could deteriorate as nations look elsewhere for stronger economic alliances. At the same time, growing dependence on foreign production may leave the U.S. economy more vulnerable to economic disruptions abroad.

In short, current trade patterns represent a serious economic threat to the United States. Rising imports and global competition reduce job opportunities, weaken wage growth, and create greater economic insecurity for many American workers and families. If these trends continue, the U.S.'s long term economic stability, security, and ability to compete globally may be significantly undermined.

Control Condition Vignette

Future of United States Economy and International Trade Holding Stable

By Benjamin Wiliams - Foreign Economic Review
January 22, 2026

Recent forecasts find that economic and trade performances for the U.S. are continuing to trend as expected. Trade deficits are still fluctuating, but some months show slimming margins where the U.S. brings in as much as it sends out or at least is exporting more goods than it has in the past. Economists note that trade balances naturally fluctuate over time depending on global demand, exchange rates, and domestic economic conditions.

Analyses on existing U.S. trade agreements, such as those with Canada or Europe, report mixed findings, although some analysts believe there is still work to be done for fair and free trade. For instance, one economic news agency reported that recent oil deals have benefitted U.S. businesses and consumers while placing increased pressure on Russia, but these deals may also be harming allies in Central and Southern Asia.

Various financial authorities speculate that American unemployment rates will even out over time, with natural fluctuations to be expected. While some jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector due to factory closures, increased government efforts to secure new investments have shown promise, specifically in profitable electronics and medical industries. With most major companies feeling neutral about the U.S.'s future, further monitoring of these trends will be needed. Analysts also suggest technological change and automation have contributed to shifts in employment across industries.

As the world responds to global power shifts, many countries may be looking for reliable trade partners and allies. Long-standing partnerships are likely to be leaned on in attempts to stabilize or grow the U.S.'s leadership, reputational standing, and economic security as it still has a foothold in the global economy. International cooperation and trade relationships should help maintain stability in global markets.

In short, the U.S. should only need to proceed normally in its international trade decisions to maintain its own economic security and authority as well as its power and influence around the globe. Many economists believe gradual adjustments will allow the U.S. to remain competitive in global trade.

Appendix K

Economic Threat Vignette Manipulation Check (MC)

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the economic consequences of current trade patterns. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinions. Please respond to each statement using the scale provided below.

1. The U.S. is currently facing a serious economic threat
2. Wages for workers in the United States are increasingly threatened.
3. Current trade trends could negatively affect my own economic opportunities
4. Trade with other countries harms many local communities in the United States.
5. I feel pessimistic about the future of the U.S. economy
6. Current trade patterns could have negative economic consequences for people like me.
7. Jobs in the United States are increasingly threatened.
8. The United States has become too dependent on trade with other countries.

Appendix L

Factor Analysis of Economic Threat Manipulation Check (MC)

Following protocol from Study 1 and Study 2, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the 8-item MC scale using principal axis factoring (PAF) with promax rotation. Because this measure was assessed after random assignment and exposure to manipulation, EFAs were first conducted separately between groups then assessed with the entire group to check for observed differences in latent structure.

For the control condition (n = 103), The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .80). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2(28)$ = 384.48, $p < .001$) indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for EFA.

Two factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 were retained, explaining 67.79% of the total variance in the control group. Factor 1 reported an eigenvalue of 4.01 and explained 50.17% of the total variance while factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 1.41 and explained 17.62%. Items loaded between .54 and .81 on factor 1. Items loaded between -.12 and .66 for factor 2.

For the treatment condition (n = 98), The KMO measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .85). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2(28) = 392.84$, $p < .001$) indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large.

Like the control condition, two factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 were retained, explaining 67.97% of the total variance. Factor 1 reported an eigenvalue of 4.33 and explained 54.06% of the total variance while factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 1.11 and explained 13.90%. Items loaded between .49 and .87 on factor 1. Items loaded between -.12 and .51 for factor 2.

Because the separate EFAs report factor structures that are highly similar, have dangerously small sample sizes when separated, and because a similar factor structure is

expected for this measure even with significantly different scale means between groups, a final EFA was conducted to confirm the factor structure for the entire dataset rather than between groups (Brown, 2015; Reise et al., 1993). Again, the KMO measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .83). Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2(28) = 767.89$, $p < .001$) indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large.

As with separate groups, two factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 were retained, explaining 67.68% of the total variance. Factor 1 reported an eigenvalue of 4.20 and explained 52.51% of the total variance while factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 1.21 and explained 15.17%. Items loaded between .55 and .81 on factor 1 and between -.12 and .51 for factor 2.

The above EFAs suggest that a whole-sample approach to the CFA is satisfactory and that multi-group CFA is not necessary as the latent factors assessed follow a standard model regardless of group assignment (Meredith, 1993; Reise et al., 1993) Because this scale was intended to assess only a single underlying psychological construct of economic threat perceptions, the CFA evaluated the fit of a hypothesized one-factor model using weighted least squares mean and variance adjusted estimation (WLSMV) in line with prior research (Park, 2023). Model fit was evaluated using chi-square (χ^2), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) with its 90% confidence interval (CI), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Overall, the model did not demonstrate good fit to the data ($\chi^2(20) = 157.51$, $p < .001$, CFI = .82, TLI = .75 , RMSEA = 0.18, 90% CI [0.16, 0.21], SRMR = .08) due to the standard cut-offs for chi-square, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA falling outside the range of good-fit and only SRMR reporting an acceptable value (Hu & Bentler, 1999). As mentioned in previous CFAs, it is important to note that these cut-offs are standard rules-of-thumb but not concrete determinants for model fitness

(Marsh et al., 2004). For each scale item, standardized factor loadings ranged from .48 to .83 and were all significant at the highest level (*ps* < .001), indicating that the items were moderate indicators of the latent construct.

Considering the above EFA and CFA, there is little statistical support for the proposed one-factor structure of the economic threat manipulation check. Although, regardless of ill-fitting CFA, the MC scale demonstrates high reliability (α = .86) and behaves as expected in subsequent analyses, suggesting that it is still useful for the purposes of mediation and correlational analyses in this work without requiring further scale development, at least in the present study (Alavi et al., 2020; Clark & Watson, 1995; Hopwood & Donnellan, 2010; Marsh et al., 2004).

Appendix M

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations among Study 3 Variables

Table 4. Bivariate Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	*M*	*SD*	*α*
1. HONOR	-	.52***	.71***	.34***	-.19**	-.23**	.11	.51***	.51***	.13	-	1.0	-
2. CONS		-	.73***	.57***	-.04	-.32***	-.07	.44***	.51***	-.16*	3.9	1.7	.82
3. RWA			-	.52***	-.16*	-.35***	.01	.50***	.57***	.01	3.2	1.3	.92
4. SDO				-	.07	-.30***	-.14*	.41***	.38***	-.09	2.8	1.3	.89
5. Ethnicity					-	.04	.11	-.10	-.15*	-.13	-	-	-
6. WORRY						-	.05	-.14*	-.15*	.30***	3.1	1.0	.83
7. C-REP							-	-.09	-.01	-.01	5.9	0.8	.92
8. C-REL								-	.43***	.11	4.0	1.0	.82
9. PROTECT-F									-	.27***	3.7	1.0	.82
10. MC										-	4.7	1.1	.86

$N = 201$, $^{*}p<.05$, $^{**}p<.01$, $^{***}p<.001$

Appendix N

Figure 5. Moderated moderation of protectionist policy support (PROTECT-F) between control condition (top) and threat condition (bottom) as a function of culture of honor endorsement (HONOR) among low, medium, and high country reputation endorsers (C-REP)

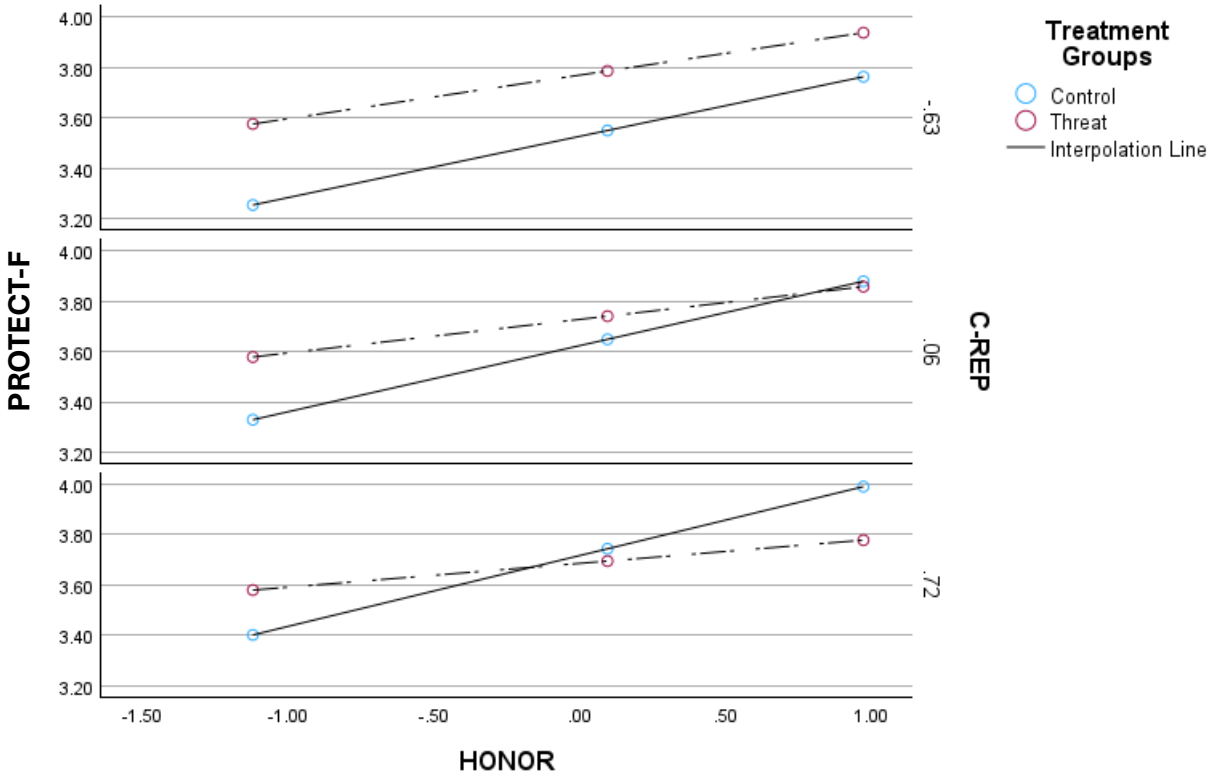


Figure 6. Moderated moderation of protectionist policy support (PROTECT-F) between control condition (top) and threat condition (bottom) as a function of culture of honor endorsement (HONOR) among low, medium, and high country self-reliance endorsers (C-REL)

