



# The Association Between Views on Globalization and Belief in Government's Moral Obligation to Address Climate Crisis



Reana Akthar, Applied Data Analysis, Wesleyan University

## Introduction

- While the impact of the climate crisis is felt across the world, those in the Global South disproportionately bear the consequences of environmental degradation caused by wealthier nations. Recognizing this, individuals in the United States hold significant power to advocate for meaningful action and hold their governments accountable in addressing the climate crisis.
- Existing research reveals that globalization benefits high-income countries environmentally while exacerbating degradation in middle-income nations (Alfalih, 2023). Understanding the connection between views on globalization and a person's belief in their government's moral obligation to address climate change is important for designing policies that support those most vulnerable to the climate crisis. This research aims to bridge this gap by exploring the relationship between views on globalization and a person's belief in the United States federal government's moral obligation to address the climate crisis (Ngcamu, 2023).

## Methods

### Sample

- National Survey on Energy and the Environment (NSEE), which represents the adult, non-institutionalized population of the United States. The Fall 2017 survey included longitudinal questions on climate change beliefs and support for state and federal policies addressing climate change.
- This sample has 929 respondents who are 18 or older. They were interviewed on telephone in English between October 4 and November 19, 2017. The numbers were dialed up to 10 times to make sure there is representativeness.

### Measures

- Views on globalization were measured through a respondent's level of agreement with the statement, "Overall, Americans have benefited from globalization and free trade with other countries," with 1 being strongly disagree to 4 being strongly agree. To capture a respondent's belief in America's moral obligation to address the climate crisis, their level of agreement with the statement, "Rich countries have a moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions" was used, with 1 indicating that a country has a moral obligation and 0 indicating that a country does not. Political leaning is another categorical variable, with 1 representing "conservative," 2 representing "moderate" and 3 representing "liberal."

## Research Questions

How does a person's views on globalization impact their belief that the United States, a wealthy nation, has a moral obligation to address the climate crisis? How will a person's political leaning influence the relationship between globalization and a government's moral obligation?

## Results

### Univariate

- 39% of respondents "somewhat agree" that Americans have benefited from globalization and free trade with other countries and 37.4% "strongly agree" with the statement, suggesting that more than half of the respondents have a positive understanding of globalization.
- 74.5% of respondents believe that rich countries have a moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gases, while 25.5% of respondents do not believe that rich countries have a moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gases.

### Multivariate

- The respondents who hold liberal political views are likelier to believe that America, as a rich nation, has a moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gases, even if they do not believe globalization has benefited Americans.
- Respondents with conservative political views are less likely to believe that America has a moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gases. The odds ratio for liberals is 4.9, suggesting that liberals are 4.9 more likely than conservatives to support a rich nation's moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gases. P-value < 0.0001.

### Bivariate

- Chi-Square analysis showed that the 83.7% of respondents who agree that globalization has benefited Americans tend to believe that the United States has a moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gases.
- Views on globalization were significantly associated with a government's moral obligation to address the climate crisis,  $X^2 = 42.6$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p$ -value < 0.0001.
- The logistic regression indicated that the more respondents who believe that Americans have benefited from globalization tend to believe that the government has a moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gases. The odds ratio is 1.6, suggesting that as a respondent increases in their level of agreement, they are 1.6 more likely to believe that the government has a moral obligation to address the climate crisis.

Figure 2. Logistic regression with second explanatory variable (political views)

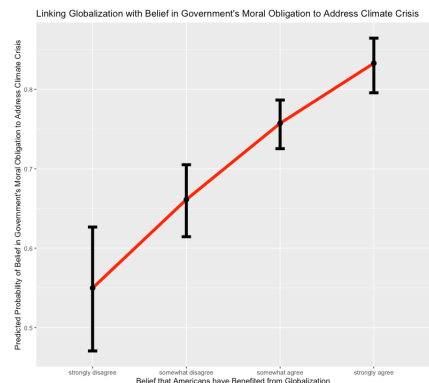
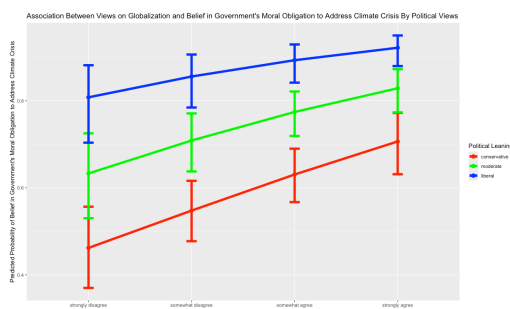


Figure 1. Logistic regression with main explanatory and response variables

## Discussion

- The findings demonstrate a significant relationship between views on globalization and a respondent's belief that America, as a rich nation, has a moral obligation to address the climate crisis by reducing greenhouse gases.
- In addition, a person's political leaning as liberal or conservative is likely to influence their views on America's responsibility to take action that would protect people of the Global South from global warming, with liberals holding the belief that America does have a moral obligation to act and conservatives holding the belief that America does not have a moral obligation to act.

Alfalih, A. A. (2023). The Ecological Impact Assessment of Globalization Dimensions and human capital: A dynamic approach in the case of selected fossil fuel-rich countries. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 30(16), 47712–47726. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-023-25655-9>

Ngcamu, B. S. (2023). Climate change effects on vulnerable populations in the Global South: A systematic review. *Natural Hazards*, 118(2), 977–991. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11069-023-06070-2>