

Five Horsemen of the Apocalypse:  
An Evolutionary Species Survival Theory of War and Peace.  
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Abstract: A wide variety of psychological traits related to war and peace in general and to political preferences in particular fall into two rather tight clusters at opposing ends of pro-social/anti-social factors. The content of these traits and the frequencies typical of them suggest a species survival mechanism that may account for these two bi-modal human dispositions. Specifically, an oscillation between warmongering and peaceful traits is proposed. When demand on resources is perceived to be dangerously high, warmongering attitudes surface, led by warmongering leaders who promote a choosing of sides, xenophobia, prejudice, propaganda and war against outsiders. This reduces population numbers of both attackers and their enemies, bringing back into balance supply and demand. When supply is sufficient to meet demand, peaceful leaders come to the fore and lead cooperative governments and relationships between peoples, promoting survival of the species by sharing and trade.

Since the 9/11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York City we have been led to believe that terrorists are perhaps the most dangerous type of human being, justifying years of effort, hundreds of billions of dollars and thousands of military lives in response. However, in terms of deaths caused, terrorists are a minor threat to civilization when compared to the deaths caused by another type of human. This other type is responsible for tens of millions of deaths in the past 6 decades. Hitler, Stalin and Mao have each been credited personally with more than ten million deaths. Pol Pot, Edi Amin, Slobodan Milosovich, G. W. Bush and Vladimir Putin have kept the aggressive warmongering tradition vibrantly alive to the present day.

Numerous studies conducted by McConochie (McConochie, Pub 1-20ff) and independently by Nelson (Nelson, 2008) document consistent correlations between many psychological traits that tend to fall into two clusters, a pro-social, pro-civilization cluster and an anti-social, anti-civilization cluster. Table 1 presents a sample of these traits as labeled by the two researchers and as they tend to cluster and correlate with the anchor trait most characteristic of their cluster.

Table 1. Pro-social and anti-social psychological traits. (Based on various studies. Almost all significant at the .05 level or better.)

	McConochie studies	Nelson studies	
Anti-social traits. (If two traits are listed, the first is for McC, the second for Nelson).	Correlations between trait and warmongering endorsement.	Correlations between trait and militarism. (Males) (Females)	
Authoritarianism	.59		
Social dominance orientation	.46	.52	.45
Religious fundamentalism; Religious/moral Imposition	.60	.34	.30
Prejudice (anti-Muslim)	.80		
Xenophobia	.39		
Endorsement of military dictatorship government	.57		
Endorsement of special interest group democracy	.37		
Social disenfranchisement	.74		
Human rights endorsement	-.51	-.52	-.34
Pro-social traits:	Human rights endorsement.	Interpersonal cooperativeness.	
Kindly religious beliefs; Universal Orientation	.59	.43	.11
Endorsement of public democracy; Empathic concern	.35	.54	.42
Endorsement of a peaceful foreign policy; Perspective Taking.	.80	.45	.27
Endorsement of sustainability	.86		
Endorsement of cooperation.	.42		
Warmongering endorsement	-.51		

The proportions of citizens who fall into these two categories in times of relative peace in their community can be estimated by computing the number of

citizens with mean item scores of 3.5 or above on a five-point Likert scale measure of each trait. Typically in such a scale most statements are written in a pro-trait format, e.g. measuring warmongering endorsement with "Waging war against enemies is a natural and desirable human behavior". A score of 3 is "neutral", 4 is "agree" and 5 is "strongly agree". Thus, a person who agrees with every pro-trait item in the scale would have a mean item score of 4, indicating that he agrees with warmongering overall.

Similarly, a measure of human rights endorsement made up of statements such as "Slavery is wrong", can provide a measure of the proportion of citizens who endorse that trait at the "agree" or "strongly agree" level. Adjusting the cut-off level to 3.5 includes those who are neutral on some items but agree with most of the items in the scale. Table 2 provides a sample of typical frequency data for the pro-social and anti-social traits in question, using 3.5 and above as the cut-off.

Table 2. Percentages of persons who endorse pro-social and anti-social traits (based on samples usually of 100 to 200 or more American adults).

Pro-social traits:		Anti-social traits:	
Trait	Percent	Trait	Percent
Kindly religious beliefs	90	Warmongering endorsement	5
Public democracy endorsement	91	Military Dictatorship	.5 (1/2)
Positive foreign policy endorsement.	89	Special interest group democracy	18
Sustainability endorsement.	86	Authoritarianism	less than 5
Cooperation vs. competition.	67	Social Dominance Orientation	less than 5
		Religious fundamentalism	6
Mean percent	85	Mean percent	5
Median percent	89	Median percent	less than 5

These percentages document an approximately 18 to one ratio between the pro-social and anti-social types. The fact that there are approximately 5 percent warmongers and 5 or 6 percent religious fundamentalists and something less than 5

percent authoritarians led the present author to the hunch that these three traits may be related to each other in some very fundamental way.

Examination of the content of these traits further supports this theory and suggests how they are related: Effective war requires warriors who are blindly obedient to war leaders and willing to dominate members of the military below themselves in the chain of command. Warmongering requires choosing sides. Authoritarianism endorsement entails rigid respect for authorities above oneself and dominance of those below. Social dominance is the mind-set of oppressively controlling others. Religious fundamentalism involves blind acceptance of religious doctrine, in-group favoritism and out-group prejudice and hostility. Religious fundamentalism also involves a view of god (God) as punishing of wrong-doers and the belief that one's in-group is special and favored relative to peoples of other religions.

Similarly, the high proportion of citizens who fall in each of the pro-social clusters suggests that these traits somehow complement each other. The content of these traits also suggests a fundamental interdependence between them: Persons who endorse one human right tend to endorse the others. They endorse respect for a wide range of diverse religious beliefs and kindness toward other people, as do those of the Kindly Religious Orientation. They prefer a separation of church and government but government protection to worship as one chooses. (This Kindly Religious Orientation was defined by factor analysis of a sample of beliefs from major world religions. It and fundamentalism are the two primary factors.) The kindly religious orientation includes the belief that god (God) appears in many forms for many peoples and is forgiving of wrongdoers. Human rights endorsement includes endorsement of sustainable policies and programs and promotion of international good will and cooperation and government serving all citizens and via direct participation of those citizens, as reflected in Common Good Democracy endorsement, aka public democracy.

#### Correlations between the traits.

Table 3 presents correlations between the core traits in each cluster, demonstrating their statistical closeness within each of the two separate clusters. These correlations are taken from a variety of studies by the author and from research reports by others as well.

Table 3. Correlations demonstrating pro-social and anti-social clusters.

Pro-social cluster: The Five Horsemen of Hope:

	Human rights	Kindly religious beliefs	Positive foreign policy	Sustainable policies and programs	Common good democracy endorsement
Human Rts	1.00				
Kindly religious beliefs	.65	1.00			
Positive foreign policy	.60	.41	1.00		
Sustainable.	.72	.68	.71	1.00	
Common good democracy	.35	.52	.38	.54	1.00

Anti-social cluster: The Five Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

	Warmongering	Religious Fundamentalism	Authoritarianism	Social Dominance	Endorsement of Military Dictatorship and Special interest group democracy
Warmongering	1.00				
Relig. fundament.	.60	1.00			
Authoritarianism	.56	.57-.77	1.00		
Social dominance orientation	.46	.04	.20-.50	1.00	
Endorsement of Military Dictatorship and special interest group democracy	.57, .37	.38	.16	?	1.00
Social Disenfranchisement	.74	?	?	?	.52, .40

The question marks indicate need for additional research to provide data on suspected substantial relationships. Social Disenfranchisement is added as an aside. It is the present author's term for his measure of the Eidelson worldviews, a highly reliable 80-item measure. These worldviews are injustice, vulnerability, distrust, helplessness and superiority.

While the terms "Five Horsemen of the Apocalypse and Five Horsemen of Peace are coined, they are arbitrary in number, as there are many more than 5 traits in each cluster. The ones included above appear to be the core traits representative of each cluster.

### A species survival theory.

History and anthropology teach the ubiquitous nature of warfare between groups of humans. Biology teaches the territorialism of many species and their willingness to fight members of their own species as necessary to assure access to territory and life-support resources. Rapidly increasing population seems to put stress on resources and increased warmongering. The world population has increased dramatically during the past century, facilitated by religious restrictions on birth control and by medical and sanitary technologies that have reduced disease and death and by agricultural technologies that have reduced starvation. This rapid increase in population has been accompanied by a parallel increase in massive murders of citizens at the hands of their own leaders (Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Edi Amin, South American dictatorships in the late 20th Century), massive deaths of citizens through genocide (Holocaust, Rwanda, Serbia/Croatia, Darfur), and massive deaths through civil and international wars (World Wars I and II, Korean war, "Dirty Wars" in South America, Iraq wars, etc.).

The available data on psychological traits related to warmongering has suggested to the author a species survival function of warmongering and its counterpart, peace and trade promotion.

The formal theory has these specific postulates:

1. Humans vary on a variety of traits that when expressed promote species survival.
2. There are two major modes of these traits, one suitable for warmongering and the other for peaceful cooperation. Some humans are more inclined by virtue of elevations on specific psychological traits to promote conflict and war while others are more inclined to promote cooperation and peace.

3. Persons who happen to be relatively high on the several traits that are related to warmongering will always be seeking opportunities to promote war, whether it is needed by the species at the moment or not.

4. When stress between available resources and population demands on them is high and/or people perceive this stress to be high, people are more easily persuaded by warmongering leaders to believe propaganda, hate their neighbors and wage war.

5. Approximately 75 percent of humans are relatively easily persuaded by fear propaganda to follow authoritarian, warmongering leaders, especially when people perceive threat, e.g. from terrorists or militant foreign groups or nations.

6. Persons high on religious fundamentalism and authoritarianism endorsement are particularly easily organized and led politically to follow such leaders.

7. Persons who happen to be relatively high on the several traits that are related to peaceful coexistence will always be promoting peaceful cooperation between peoples.

8. When there are enough resources to meet population demand, and/or people perceive this to be so, people will be more inclined to follow the urgings of peace-promoting leaders.

9. The particular manifestations of war and peace in any given society and period of history will be complex and influenced by a wide variety of circumstances and factors. These manifestations may be observed, measured and discussed by experts in terms of various factors or causes: economic, technological, political, ideological, sociological, cultural, religious, etc.

10. The two psychological trait complexes described above will, to an important degree, always underlie and contribute to the manifestation of war and peace. Understanding them can enlighten discussions of war and peace and their impact on species survival.

11. These two poles are likely to be readily evident in political factions or parties in a given culture.

12. Species survival has been assisted in part because population is reduced by war, starvation and disease when resources are scarce and in part because trade, sharing and other peaceful and cooperative behaviors surface in times of plenty.

13. Warmongering in the 20th and 21st century no longer serves a species survival function because death rates by disease and starvation have been too dramatically reduced by medical and food technologies. Birth control technologies

have not been sufficiently promoted to control birth rates. Some religious traditions resist birth control. World population is doubling about every 35 years in spite of the tens of millions of persons killed via warfare in the past 100 years.

14. When and if resource depletion outruns population increases in the future in spite of gains by various technologies, warmongering may again serve a species survival function. To accomplish this, it probably will have to result in the deaths of hundreds of millions or even billions of citizens instead of tens of millions.

In short, for species survival in eons past, both peace and war have had their place. In the past century, warmongering has not been sufficient to contribute to the balance of population demand on resources. Indeed, it has simply wasted resources. Warmongering may increase in intensity in the future if demand outruns supply.

Persons high on the traits representing the two polar opposites, warmongering and peaceful cooperation, are likely to see their own inclinations as the only reasonable ones and those of the opposite pole as quite unreasonable and even pathological or evil. It seems unlikely that they can be persuaded by conflict resolution or negotiation strategies to see eye to eye, though conflict-resolution strategies may be effective with some of the less extremely motivated followers of such leaders.

Unless human population is kept in balance with resources, it seems that natural forces will periodically surface to reduce population: disease, starvation and war. Until and unless humans peacefully control population with pro-active efforts, the species seems destined to experience continuing rounds of disease, starvation and war. One way or the other, we can expect the species to survive, though perhaps at great price, considering the degradation of the environment that we are observing and the sad welfare of other species that are becoming extinct at an increasing rate.

Hopefully through science, education and more sophisticated forms of government the species can find less gruesome ways than war to maintain the needed balance between demand and supply, population and resources.

Data that informs how citizens in general and psychologists in particular can minimize war and promote peace.

The studies that have led to the above data and insights have also produced data that, along with other psychological research data, imply specific things that citizens and professionals of various disciplines can do to minimize war and promote peace.

## 1. Authoritarian engineering of inhumane behavior.

Classic and well-known simulated electric shock and prison studies by psychologists Stanley Milgram and Philip Zimbardo document how easy it is for authorities to persuade about 75 percent of normal citizens to participate in inhumane behavior toward their fellow citizens.

Research by the present author also helps explain how a minority of anti-social citizens can get control of governments, as Hitler's Nazi party did in the 1930's. The trait of warmongering endorsement correlates significantly and positively with lying and conniving politically, violence-proneness, xenophobia, propaganda use, a messianic self-image, and religious fundamentalism. Religious fundamentalism in turn correlates with valuing religion highly as a guide to virtually all of one's life decisions. Fundamentalists and warmongers also endorse authoritarianism. Persons of this sort tend to think very much alike and bow reflexively to authoritarian leadership. Thus, they are relatively easily organized politically.

70 percent of citizens see themselves as defensive warriors, willing to fight wars only to defend their countries. 25 percent prefer to have no active part in wars, wanting organizations like the United Nations and other efforts to resolve international conflicts. 5 percent endorse invasive, preemptive war, reflecting the warmongering endorsement trait. Thus, for a government run by a minority to motivate sufficient numbers of citizens to war, they must find a way to persuade the 70 percent of defensive warriors to action.

Herman Goering, Hitler's second in command, when interviewed by a psychologist while awaiting trial for war crimes after World War II, explained how leaders do this, motivating citizens to war with lies and propaganda:

Why, of course, the people don't want war. Why would some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best that he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece. Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia nor in England nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along....That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.@ (Gilbert, 1947)

Thus, it behooves us to find ways to keep warmongering leaders out of government.

## 2. Keeping dangerous, warmongering-prone leaders out of government.

Psychologists can urge governments, political parties, journalists and educators to inform citizens of the above facts, deliberately keep authoritarian persons out of government leadership positions, discourage propaganda and xenophobia, and promote positive foreign policy and peace-promotion mechanisms including effective population control measures, peace treaties and trade agreements.

Psychologists can encourage their national professional associations to develop programs for warning psychologists of early signs of totalitarian governments which may try to recruit psychologists for nefarious activities, such as torture in military prisons, or persecute and silence psychologists through research funding grants or even abductions and murder, as has happened in South American countries during the past few decades.

The many significant and substantial correlations between warmongering and other publicly observable traits make it possible to create a scale for rating politicians "from afar", from their speeches, voting records, church activities and other behavior. The author has done this, developing a warmongering-proneness scale. This scale (The McConochie Warmongering-Proneness scale...McWAP) has provided initial scores on 25 historical and recent political figures, with a Cronbach alpha reliability of .98 and a validity coefficient of .90 with an independent rating of warmongering behavior (McConochie, Pub #1). Scores of recent interest include those for John Kerry ( 2.14) and G. W. Bush (4.00), compared to those for Mandela (1.61), Gandhi (1.71), Jimmy Carter (1.73), Alexander the Great ( 3.73), Stalin (4.21) and Hitler (4.50).

Journalists and peaceful political parties can be encouraged to use such instruments for screening candidates for political office and inform the general public before voting.

The correlations between education levels on the one hand and warmongering endorsement and related anti-social traits on the other tend not to be significant, implying that general education is unlikely to affect levels of these traits in the general public. Nor is it likely that such education would prevent persons particularly high on these traits from seeking their expression in gaining control of governments and waging war. It only takes one warmonger and a handful of followers to get control of large groups of citizens and governments and wreak havoc with

persecution, terror, a police state and war. General education is unlikely to rid nations of these traits and individuals.

Another reason to doubt the value of general education to effect warmongering as a trait is the fact that this trait correlates substantially with religious fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is correlated with indifference to scientific information if it conflicts with religious beliefs. Thus, fundamentalists are unlikely to listen to scientifically informed arguments aimed at changing their beliefs. Therefore, instead of changing persons with these traits, mechanisms must be put in place to keep people high on the traits of warmongering and religious fundamentalism traits out of political power.

### 3. Empowering the pro-social majority.

One way to protect nations from warmongering and promote peace is to politically empower the majority of citizens who hold peaceful traits, including human rights endorsement, kindly religious beliefs and endorsement of public democracy. Approximately 90 percent of citizens fall in this category.

One way to do this is provide them with instruments for identifying pro-social, pro-peace political candidates from afar. The author has developed a 53-item rating scale to this end, the McConochie Constructive Leadership Attitudes scale (McCLAS) (McConochie, Pub. #19). This instrument is empirically based and is expected to have high reliability and validity.

So far only a few very tentative scores are available on this instrument, for McCain ( 2.83), H. Clinton ( 3.55), Obama (3.97), Franklin D. Roosevelt (4.30), and G. W. Bush ( 1.47). Reliability and validity coefficients will not be computed until the sample size is increased to dozens of raters. Both the McWAP and McCLAS scales are envisioned as products for use by journalists and others to quantify leadership traits related to war and peace in candidates for political office. This can help guide citizens in making voting choices.

Another way to empower the pro-social majority is to educate them sufficiently on the dangers and mechanisms of authoritarianism in order to recognize it and avoid its influence. This can include avoiding fear-mongering and propaganda of the sort explained by Goering, quoted above.

Psychologists and other professionals can help design political parties and governments less vulnerable to control by warmongers and their ilk. An example of such an effort is the author's model for a party serving the common good, the Best

Interests of the Community Overall (BICO) party (McConochie, Pub. #3, Section 3). Such efforts should be empirically based. Another possible name for such a party is the "Common Good Party" (CGP).

Data gathered by the author on government type preferences reveals that 90 percent of Americans endorse a model of government serving them as members of the community overall, as opposed to only about 20 percent who endorse the current form of democracy practiced in the United States serving citizens as members of special interest groups or economic "tribes" ("tribal democracy"). Those who endorse common good democracy tend to be pro-social and peace-oriented. Those who endorse special interest group democracy tend to endorse warmongering.

Additional data gathered via research has helped in the design of the new model of political party with a platform defined by periodic polls of the public and party members. This guarantees that the platform always appeals to the majority of voters.

Research on policy preferences of voters suggests that citizens can be depended upon to opt for peaceful, reasonable government priorities and policies (e.g. a balanced federal budget, conservation of natural resources, endorsement of peace and global warming treaties, reduced military spending, etc.). Pro-social citizens want improved government services; anti-social citizens do not. Anti-social citizens tend to trust top government leaders rather blindly; pro-social citizens do not.

In effect, data suggests that pro-social citizens can be trusted to provide an interesting and reasonable operational definition of the common good when given well-designed polls covering a wide range of content and presenting a reasonable range of choices. And, because the vast majority of citizens are "pro-social", empowering them politically can help guarantee peace.

The new party model envisioned by the author would be supported only by party member dues, have regular monthly meetings and activities in every community and recruit and groom candidates for local and regional leadership positions who would represent not their personal agendas but the party platform as defined by the most recent polls. They would be financed in their campaigns only by party dues and individual contributions, no special interest group money. The details of party meetings, structure and function can be based on polls regarding citizen preferences.

Conclusion.

Research data provides initial hints at the psychological traits underlying warmongering and more peaceful human behavior. Data also provides hints at constructive actions citizens can take to protect themselves from warmongering and empower the majority of pro-social citizens and leaders politically to promote pro-active population control methods and cooperative relationships between diverse nations and peoples to protect the planet, share resources and manage life in constructive, peaceful ways.

We must do additional studies to replicate ones already done, fill in data gaps, and explore further implications of the findings. We must network with other scientists in our own and other disciplines, especially sociologists, anthropologists, historians, educators, political scientists, politicians, ethicists, theologians, religion professors and journalists. As applied political psychologists we must look for opportunities to build empirically based and effective educational and political policies and programs, political parties and governments.

Warmongers are responsible for a great many more deaths than are terrorists. If the United States spends hundreds of billions of dollars to fight terrorism, should it not spend thousands of billions to understand and prevent warmongering?

Governments controlled by warmongers and their supporters cannot be expected to fund studies to understand and disempower warmongers. Hopefully other fund and foundation monies can be found to finance such research and activity. The welfare of civilization and of the entire biosystem is at stake.

Fortunately, research such as that reported above does not cost much money. It can provide poignant insights into the minds of warmongers and peaceful citizens and suggest mechanisms for tipping the balance of influence in the favor of the latter.

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