



# Examining the Relationship of Moral Foundations with Empathy and Moral Identity

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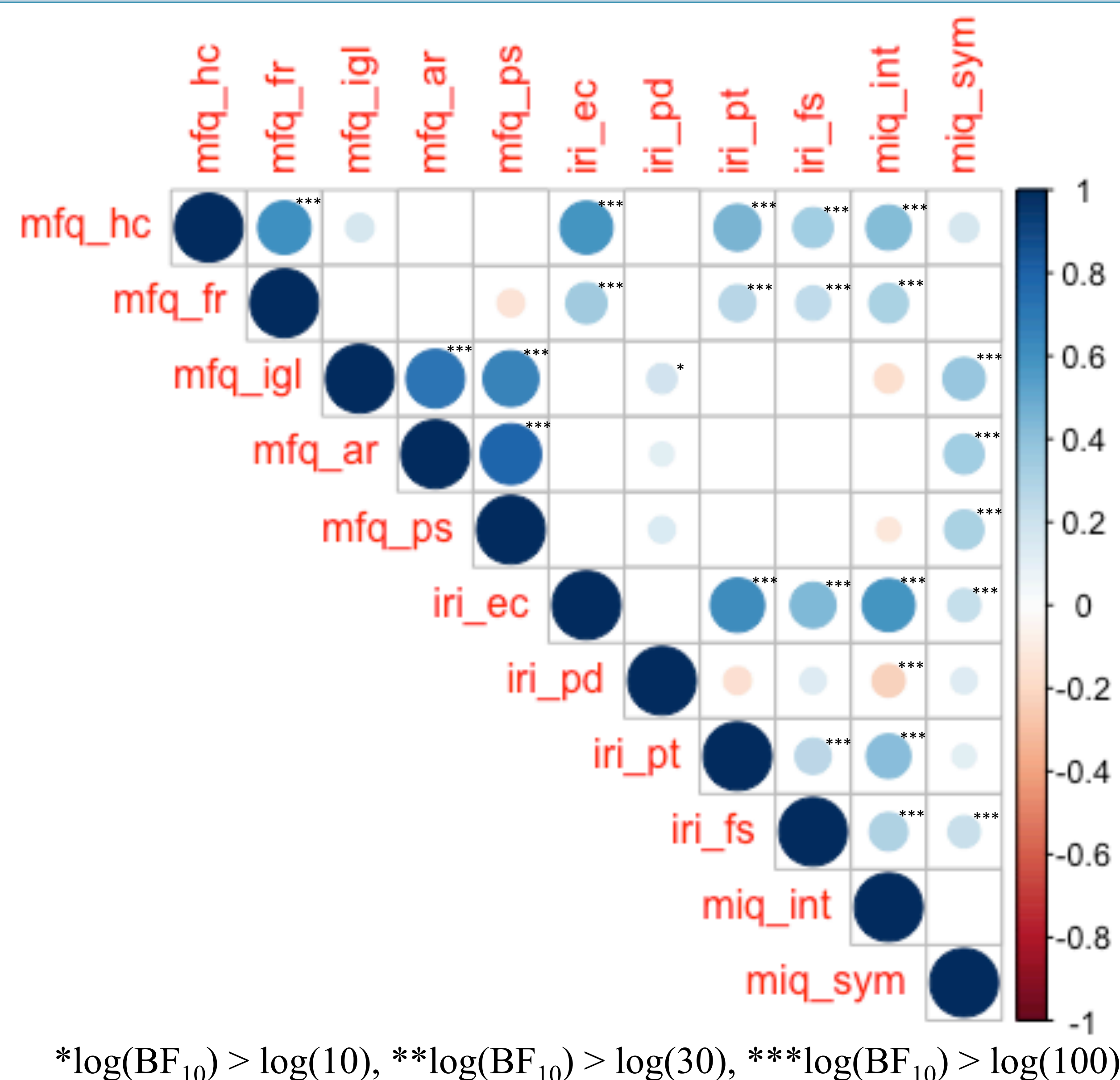
## Introduction

- In the present study, we examined the relationship between **moral foundations, empathic traits, and moral identity.**
- There are five moral foundations proposed by **Moral Foundations Theory (MFT).**
  - **Individualizing foundations: Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity**
  - **Binding foundations: Ingroup/Loyalty, Authority/Respect, Purity/Sanctity.**
- Much work has been done on MFT alone, as well as how empathic traits and moral identity influence moral behavior.
- Few studies have explored the relationship between these three concepts.
- Exploring how MFT relates to empathy and moral identity may contribute to a better understanding of the connection between moral judgment and moral behavior.

## Methods

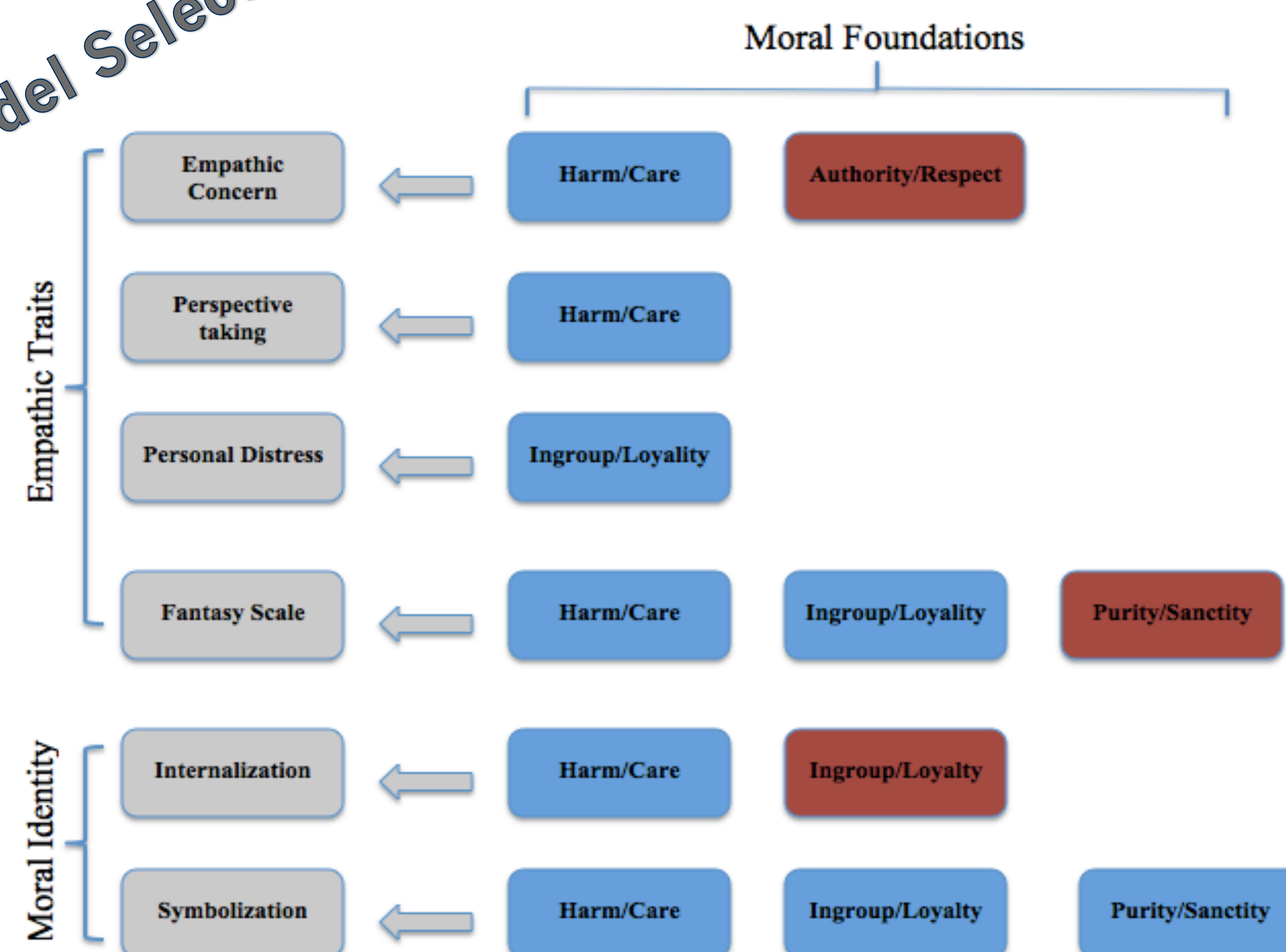
- Recruited 401 participants using Mechanical Turk (mTurk).
- Final analysis included 329 participants after detecting for bots, 179 females: Age mean=35.47, SD=9.72.
- Measured moral foundations, empathic traits, and moral identity using the **Moral Foundations Questionnaire, Interpersonal Reactivity Index** (for empathic traits), and **Moral Identity Scale.**
- Conducted classical correlation analysis along with **Bayesian correlation analysis, Bayesian ANCOVA, and Bayesian regression analysis.**
- Best model selection was ran, where the five moral foundations were set as independent variables, while empathic traits and moral identity were set as dependent variables. Regression analysis was performed to determine direction of association.

## Findings



- Bayesian correlation analysis showed empathic concern (EC) positively correlated with Harm/Care, Fairness/Reciprocity, internalization, and symbolization.
- Perspective taking (PT) positively correlated with Harm/Care, Fairness/Reciprocity, and internalization.
- Personal Distress (PD) positively correlated with Ingroup/Loyalty and Purity/Sanctity.
- Fantasy Scale (FS) positively correlated with Harm/Care, Fairness/Reciprocity, internalization, and symbolization.
- Internalization was positively correlated with Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity.
- Symbolization was positively correlated with Ingroup/Loyalty, Authority/Respect, and Purity/Sanctity.

## Model Selection



\*Blue indicates a positive association and red indicates a negative association

## Conclusions/Significance

- Results from classical and Bayesian correlation analyses demonstrated that each empathic trait and moral identity subscale was differently correlated with individual individualizing and binding foundations proposed in MFT.
- Bayesian ANCOVA and regression analysis showed how moral foundations differently contributed to various moral functionalities, empathic traits, and moral identity.
- Bayesian ANCOVA results showed that EC, PT, and moral internalization were well explained by Harm/Care, which is in line with Gray and Schein's (2012) argument that **functioning of the five moral foundations in moral judgment can be explained by Harm/Care.**
- However, several binding foundations negatively contributed to the moral functionalities.
- EC was negatively associated with Authority/Respect and internalization with Ingroup/Loyalty.
- This is consistent with the idea proposed by Hildreth et al. (2016) that there are possible **negative associations between empathy and sustained pursuit of moral values, and obeying authority and showing loyalty to one's group.**
- Moral symbolization** was predicted by both individualizing and binding foundations, which makes sense since it deals with **moral identity within social and relational contexts.**

## References

Gray, K., & Schein, C. (2012). Two minds vs. two philosophies: Mind perception defines morality and dissolves the debate between deontology and utilitarianism. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 3(3), 405-423.

Haidt, J., & Graham, J. (2007). When morality opposes justice: Conservatives have moral intuitions that liberals may not recognize. *Social Justice Research*, 20(1), 98-116.

Hildreth, J. A. D., Gino, F., & Bazerman, M. (2016). Blind loyalty? When group loyalty makes us see evil or engage in it. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 132, 16-36.