

Stanford | Center on Global Poverty
and Development

Public Opinion and Decisions about Military Force in Democracies

Michael Tomz

Jessica L. P. Weeks

Keren Yarhi-Milo

January, 2018

Working Paper No. 1027

Public Opinion and Decisions about Military Force in Democracies

Michael Tomz
Department of
Political Science
Stanford University
tomz@stanford.edu

Jessica Weeks
Department of
Political Science
University of Wisconsin-Madison
jweeks@wisc.edu

Keren Yarhi-Milo
Department of
Politics
Princeton University
kyarhi@princeton.edu

Version: January 7, 2018

Abstract: Previous research has used observational data to study the link between public opinion and decisions about military force. We take a complementary approach, by using experiments to examine two mechanisms—responsiveness and selection—through which opinion could shape policy. We tested responsiveness by asking members of the Israeli parliament to consider a crisis in which we randomized information about public opinion. Parliamentarians were more willing to use military force when the public was in favor, and believed that contravening public opinion would entail heavy political costs. We tested selection by asking citizens in Israel and the U.S. to evaluate parties/candidates, which varied randomly on many dimensions. In both countries, foreign policy proved as electorally significant as economic and religious policy, and far more consequential than non-policy considerations such as gender, race, and experience. Overall, our experiments imply that citizens affect policy by incentivizing incumbents and shaping who gets elected.

I. Introduction

How does public opinion affect foreign policy in democracies? This has been a subject of longstanding controversy, with profound implications for politics.¹ As many have documented, democracies behave differently from autocracies in military disputes, trade, alliances, and other forms of international conflict and cooperation.² Some theorize that these differences arise because public opinion carries more weight in democracies, or because citizens in democracies have unique preferences about foreign affairs. Accordingly, a growing body of research focuses on the foreign policy attitudes of the mass public as a way to gain insight about international relations.³ If public opinion proved inconsequential in democracies, however, scholars would need to rethink prominent explanations for the democratic peace, trade protectionism, and other regularities in world affairs.

¹ For reviews and recent contributions, see Aldrich et al. 2006; Baum and Groeling 2010; Baum and Potter 2008, 2015; Gelpi 2017; Kertzer and Zeitzoff 2017; Milner and Tingley 2016; Reifler et al. 2011.

² E.g. Russett and Oneal 2001; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Mansfield et al. 2000; Leeds 1999, 2003.

³ E.g. Herrmann et al. 1999; Gelpi et al. 2009; Trager and Vavreck 2011; Levendusky and Horowitz 2012; Johns and Davies 2012, 2014; Press et al. 2013; Chaudoin 2014; Kertzer et al. 2014; Stein 2015; Kertzer and Brutger 2016; Milner and Tingley 2016; Quek 2016; Spilker et al. 2016; Flores-Macias and Kreps 2017; Herrmann 2017; Prather 2017; Tingley 2017; Bell and Quek 2018; Brutger and Kertzer Forthcoming; Tanaka et al. 2017.

The connection between public opinion and foreign policy is also normatively important. If leaders routinely ignore public opinion on matters such as war, trade, and immigration, is this apparent lack of representation a flaw that democracies need to address? If, on the other hand, leaders follow public opinion even when citizens lack expertise, would it be better to insulate elected leaders and the larger foreign policy establishment from public pressure? Before judging whether democratic institutions ought to be reformed, we need to know how closely the foreign policies of democracies reflect the will of the people, and why.

Although previous scholars have made valuable progress in studying the role of public opinion, they have also faced roadblocks that reflect the limitations of available data. With very few randomized experiments about the link between public opinion and foreign policy, scholars have needed to rely on observational data. They have, for example, used historical records to measure the correlation between public opinion and foreign policy decisions; analyzed surveys in which citizens ranked foreign policy relative to other factors that might influence their vote; and used post-election surveys to estimate how much foreign policy might have shaped electoral outcomes.

These approaches, though insightful, face challenges inherent to observational research, including selection bias, reverse causation, and confounders. Moreover, little research has directly measured how leaders think about the connection between public opinion and foreign policy. In this paper we take a fresh approach by presenting a series of experiments involving policymakers and voters. Our experiments reveal how and why public opinion affects decisions about military force, one of the most important dimensions of foreign policy.

We begin by distinguishing two pathways—responsiveness and selection—through which the public could shape foreign policy outcomes (Stimson et al. 1995; Fearon 1999). First,

incumbent leaders may respond to public opinion out of concern that rebuffing the public could be politically costly. Second, the public could select parties or candidates whose foreign policy preferences reflect their own, whether or not those policymakers respond to public pressure after taking office.

To test the responsiveness mechanism, we provide the first experimental evidence about how leaders at the highest levels incorporate public opinion into decisions about foreign policy. Our experiment presented 87 current and former members of the Israeli parliament with a foreign policy crisis, in which we randomized information about how the public wanted to respond. The experiment revealed that, all else equal, policymakers were more likely to support the use of military force when the public was in favor. For additional insight we asked about the likely consequences of making military decisions that conflicted with public preferences. The vast majority of parliamentarians expected that the government would pay significant political costs if it failed to heed public opinion.

To test the selection mechanism, we embedded experiments in surveys of citizens in two different political contexts: Israel and the United States. Participants evaluated hypothetical parties (in Israel) or presidential candidates (in the United States), which varied randomly in their positions on foreign, economic, and religious policy, as well as on non-policy attributes. In both countries, foreign policy exerted a powerful and consistent effect on voting preferences. Foreign policy proved at least as important as economic and religious policy, and far more consequential than non-policy attributes such as gender, race, and political experience.

Our studies build upon previous research in several ways. By using randomized experiments to address problems of selection bias, reverse causation, and confounders, we put causal inferences on firmer footing. By recruiting not only ordinary citizens but also

policymakers at the highest level, we are able to test key mechanisms and document how they operate. And by combining data from Israel and the United States, we gain confidence that our conclusions are likely to hold in diverse political settings. Overall, our study advances a longstanding debate by providing experimental evidence that public opinion affects foreign policy in democracies, both by influencing leaders once they take office, and shaping who gets elected in the first place.

II. How Might Public Opinion Affect Foreign Policy?

In nearly all democracies, citizens delegate power to political representatives. Rather than making policies themselves through public assemblies and national referendums, citizens elect leaders to make policies on their behalf. Although representative democracy is often praised for being efficient, it creates the potential for principal-agent problems: elected officials may implement policies that contradict the will of the people. How can citizens in representative democracies influence the foreign policy choices of their elected leaders?

Responsiveness

Most international relations scholarship has focused on *ex-post* solutions to the principal-agent problem: after taking office, policymakers may feel pressure to *respond* to current public opinion and/or expectations about future opinion. Policymakers might worry that ignoring current opinion could prove costly during their time in office. Unfavorable public opinion could, for example, make it harder to surmount institutional checks on war powers (Morgan and Campbell 1991), raise funds for foreign interventions (Flores-Macias and Kreps 2013), and amass the political capital to achieve other international and domestic goals (Howell and

Pevehouse 2007; Gelpi and Grieco 2015). Policymakers may also anticipate that pursuing unpopular policies could contribute to defeat in the next election or reduce their margin of victory, thereby weakening their mandate to govern in the future (Fiorina 1981).

Many influential theories in international relations are premised on the sanctioning mechanism. According to selectorate theory (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003), public opinion encourages leaders to be cautious about initiating military disputes. Knowing that angry voters might unseat them, democratic leaders strive to avoid military operations that might be expensive or unsuccessful. Similarly, Reiter and Stam (2002) argue that democratic leaders are careful about initiating military conflict for fear that an adverse domestic reaction could stymie other policy objectives and compromise future electoral outcomes.⁴

The assumption that leaders respond to public opinion also underlies the literature on domestic audience costs (Fearon 1994). Audience cost theory assumes that democratic leaders are cautious about making threats, because they believe that domestic audiences—in democracies, voters—will punish them for making threats and failing to follow through. This insight has been extended to other commitments, including promises to aid allies (Leeds 2003) and other forms of international cooperation (Leeds 1999). If leaders are not responsive to public opinion, however, then this mechanism is unlikely to drive behavior in international politics.

Past scholarship has leveraged observational data to test the responsiveness mechanism. These studies have produced important insights, but they have also faced challenges associated with observational research, including selection bias, reverse causation, and confounders.

⁴ Baum and Potter (2015) argue that responsiveness is easiest in countries with robust opposition parties and a free press.

Research has also been constrained by the paucity of data from the perspective of leaders who make foreign policy. Below, we review four approaches to studying responsiveness and highlight why it has been difficult to estimate the causal effect of public opinion.

The first approach involves estimating the correlation between public opinion and foreign policy, for instance by observing whether leaders increase defense spending when the public becomes more hawkish (e.g. Page and Shapiro 1983; Russett 1990; Bartels 1991). Scholars employing this approach acknowledge, however, that “when opinion and policy correspond, it is extremely difficult to sort out whether public opinion has influenced policy, or policy has influenced opinion, or there has been some mixture of reciprocal processes; or, indeed, whether an outside factor, by affecting both, has produced a spurious relationship.” Problems like these are unfortunately “a curse of nonexperimental sciences” (Page 1994, 26, 28).

A second approach compares foreign policy across institutional contexts. Scholars have, for example, studied whether democracies, in which public opinion is thought to have more sway, pursue different foreign policies than non-democracies (Bueno de Mesquita et al 2003; Reiter and Stam 2002).⁵ Although insightful, this approach offers only indirect evidence about the role of public opinion and has been criticized on the grounds of confounding (Green et al. 2001). After all, democracies and dictatorships differ on various dimensions—many hard to measure and control—that could produce differences in foreign policy even if the public played no role.

⁵ Scholars have also compared types of democracies (Baum and Potter 2015) and contrasted term-limited leaders with leaders facing re-election (e.g. Potter 2016; Carter and Nordstrom forthcoming).

A third approach involves measuring the price leaders have paid for defying public opinion. Research has examined whether democratic leaders historically suffered public backlash or fell from power when they lost wars and enacted other unpopular foreign policies (Chiozza and Goemans 2011; Croco 2015; Snyder and Borghard 2011). This research strategy is prone to selection bias: when the anticipated costs are high, leaders will avoid bucking public opinion, depriving researchers of the opportunity to observe the penalties for going against public sentiment (Schultz 2001). Recognizing this problem, scholars have begun using experiments to estimate how potentially unpopular decisions might affect public opinion (Trager and Vavreck 2011; Levendusky and Horowitz 2012; Kertzer and Brutger 2016). However, these experiments have been conducted on citizens; we still know relatively little about whether *leaders* expect to be punished/rewarded, and how they weigh these expectations in their decision calculus.

Finally, scholars could study responsiveness by finding out how leaders think about the public. Few studies have adopted this approach, either by directly asking leaders how much they take public opinion into account (e.g., Powlick 1991) or analyzing archival records to infer how much public opinion affected foreign policy decisions (e.g., Foyle 1999).⁶ While this approach has many advantages, policymakers might not be fully conscious of their decisionmaking criteria, and archival records might not allow researchers to isolate the role of public opinion. Moreover, interviews and archival data could be affected by social desirability bias, i.e., policymakers casting their decisionmaking in socially approved terms. While it is difficult to say whether policymakers believe they would be praised for responsiveness or criticized for heeding

⁶ Scholars have, however, interviewed elites to answer other questions about foreign policy (e.g., Mintz 2004; Herrmann and Keller 2004; Hafner-Burton et al. 2014; Bayram 2017).

the whims of foreign policy amateurs, the possibility of bias makes it important to complement observational approaches with additional methods. Our experiments shed new light on the responsiveness mechanism by providing direct data on the perceptions of elites and addressing some of the limitations of observational approaches.

Selection

Less research in international relations has focused on a second solution to the principal-agent problem: citizens can *select* leaders based on expectations about the foreign policies the leader would pursue if elected. By empowering like-minded leaders (ones with foreign policy preferences similar to their own), citizens can minimize the risk that representatives would want to act against the public's wishes. Voters can use various sources of information, including campaign statements, party platforms, and past decisions, to infer whether candidates are "good types," i.e., "likely to be principled and share the public's preferences" (Fearon 1999, 57). Because selection takes place before leaders enter office, selection is an *ex-ante* solution to the principal-agent problem.

Selection does not require voters to have detailed views on every specific policy issue. Research shows that voters hold core foreign policy postures: broad, abstract beliefs—such as about the proper role of military force or desired degree of engagement in world affairs—that inform specific foreign policy preferences (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987a, b). Voters can use these "superordinate beliefs" to guide their thinking on foreign policy issues and select like-minded leaders (Holsti 2004, 55).

It is important to recognize how selection differs from responsiveness. Selection reduces the likelihood of shirking, not by incentivizing politicians with carrots and sticks, but by

empowering politicians whose own preferences match what the voters want. Thus, selection can be effective even when citizens cannot punish politicians for stepping out of line, and even if leaders are unresponsive to public pressure once elected. Nonetheless, the two mechanisms can complement each other to tighten the correspondence between public opinion and foreign policy.⁷

The selection process has important theoretical and normative implications. A growing body of scholarship shows that the ideologies, experience, and demographic characteristics of leaders affect decisions about the use of military force (Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis 2015; Saunders 2011; Colgan 2013). It is therefore vital to understand how citizens select the types of leaders who will represent them. To what degree do voters use information about the foreign policy preferences of candidates as a criterion when voting? How does foreign policy compare in importance to other electoral considerations, including domestic policy, party affiliation, experience, gender and race? If citizens assign significant weight to foreign policy when casting their ballots, thereby selecting like-minded leaders, they should be able to influence international relations whether or not leaders respond to additional public pressure after taking office.

Previous research about the selection mechanism has used public opinion surveys to estimate how positions on foreign policy affected support for candidates in actual elections (e.g. Page and Brody 1972; Aldrich, Sullivan and Borgida 1989; Gelpi, Reifler, and Feaver 2007; Gadarian 2010). This approach, though useful, is susceptible to selection bias. Politicians have incentives to choose platforms that will garner electoral support, so the platforms in real elections rarely represent the full range of positions politicians could have taken if they were not

⁷ On the interaction between selection and responsiveness/sanctioning, see Fearon 1999.

acting strategically to maximize their votes. The strategic behavior of candidates can lead researchers to underestimate the effects of foreign policy on voting. When citizens agree about the direction that foreign policy should move, politicians face incentives to converge on that dimension, effectively neutralizing foreign policy as a campaign issue and leaving citizens to vote on other considerations. Thus, in observational datasets, foreign policy may appear electorally unimportant at precisely the moments when it would have made the biggest difference. More generally, the fact that political actors behave strategically makes it difficult to know the counterfactual: how much support would leaders have garnered if they had not selected their foreign policy positions with an eye toward winning the election?⁸

A second challenge is reverse causation. In the 2004 U.S. election, proponents of the Iraq War tended to vote for Bush, whereas opponents of the war generally voted for Kerry. One might conclude that attitudes about foreign policy affected which candidate people supported, but Berinsky (2009) argues that the relationship flowed in the opposite direction: support for Bush versus Kerry affected whether individuals approved of the war. Unfortunately, with observational data, it is difficult to estimate the weight of each causal pathway while holding the opposite pathway constant.

Finally, confounders impede observational research about selection. When the foreign policies of candidates are correlated with their domestic policies, as in many historical elections, it is difficult to disentangle how much of the correspondence between voter preferences and candidate positions is due to foreign policy, versus agreement on other issues. Similarly, the

⁸ Selection bias also affects research on other policy dimensions, complicating efforts to compare across policy domains.

foreign policy positions of candidates could coincide with personal attributes such as gender, race, religion, political and military experience, and place of origin. The confluence of many electorally relevant factors makes it difficult to isolate the effects of foreign policy preferences.

Taking a different tack, researchers have analyzed polls about the “most important problem” facing the country. In these polls, voters often rank domestic problems higher than foreign ones, leading some to conclude that foreign policy has low salience and is typically unimportant in elections (Almond 1950; Busby and Monten 2012). However, issues can be electorally consequential, even when they are not ranked first in the public mind. Moreover, surveys about the “most important problem” conflate two distinct considerations: whether the issue is seen as important, and whether the status quo on that issue is seen as problematic (Wlezien 2005). Foreign policy can be an important criterion for selecting leaders, not only to deal with current problems, but also to avoid or address future problems.

In summary, due to the inherent limitations of observational data, we remain unsure about whether and how public opinion affects foreign policy. In the remainder of this article, we complement observational studies by taking an experimental approach. Our experiments, administered to policymakers and voters, test the responsiveness and the selection mechanisms while addressing many problems that arise in observational research.

III. Testing Responsiveness

We first examined whether politicians respond to public opinion when making decisions about the use of military force. To answer this question, we recruited a unique sample of current and former members of the Israeli legislature (the Knesset) and administered a survey with an embedded experiment. The survey was fielded between July and October 2015. Of 288 current and former MKs with contact information at the time of our study, 87 (approximately 30%) answered our survey.⁹

By focusing on the Israeli Knesset, we gained valuable insight into leaders who actually make foreign policy. Israel is a parliamentary democracy in which elected members of the Knesset also populate the executive branch. Many legislators are, therefore, directly involved in decisions about the use of force. Moreover, Israeli election cycles are short, political turnover is common, and coalitions are fluid, creating opportunities for many members to serve on the cabinet at some point in their political careers. By surveying current and former members of the Knesset, we are not only sampling lawmakers, but also accessing the beliefs of current, former, and potentially future members of the executive branch. Consistent with these expectations, participants in our study had impressive leadership experience. Roughly 67% had served on the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee; 34% had served as Prime Minister, Vice-Prime Minister, or Minister; and an additional 9% had acted as served as a Deputy Minister.

We designed an experiment to test the effect of public opinion on support for a hypothetical military strike. Each MK considered the following vignette:

“We would like your opinion about the following hypothetical scenario.

⁹ The appendix provides details for all studies in this article.

Ten armed terrorists emerged from an underground tunnel in northern Israel, close to the border with Lebanon. The terrorists were planning to attack a Jewish town, take civilian hostages, and bring them back to Lebanon. The IDF caught some of the terrorists, but others escaped back into Lebanon. Several IDF soldiers were wounded during the operation.

The cabinet discussed whether Israel should send special forces and planes to attack the terrorist bases in Lebanon.

The security establishment is divided over whether Israel should carry out this military operation. Supporters say the operation would punish the terrorists, reduce the threat from the tunnels, and deter future attacks. Opponents say the operation would lead to IDF casualties, would cause terrorists to retaliate against Israeli cities, and would escalate into a large-scale military conflict.”

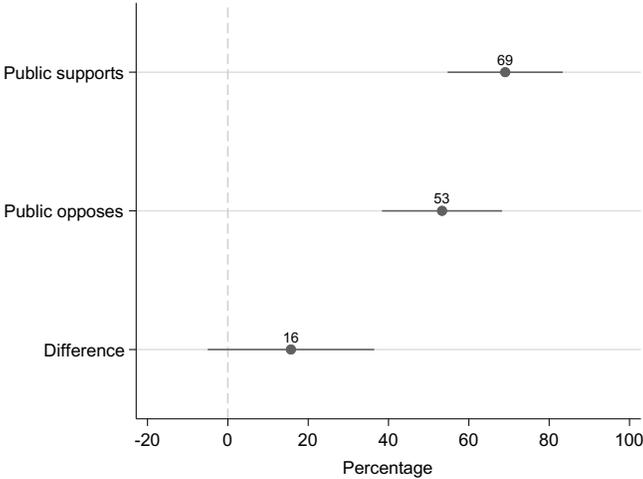
We then randomized information about public support for a military operation. Half of the MKs were told that public opinion was strongly in favor of military action, while the other half were told that the public firmly opposed the idea:

“The public strongly [supports/opposes] taking military action against the terrorists. The media has covered the situation extensively, and polls show that more than 75% of voters think Israel [should/should not] attack the terrorist bases. Citizens have started demonstrating [for/against] the military action and sending letters to their representatives.”

Having manipulated perceptions of public support for military action, we asked: “In this situation, would you favor or oppose sending special forces and planes to attack the terrorist bases?”

Figure 1 shows the percentage of MKs who supported a military strike, conditional on the randomized treatment they received. Support for a military strike was nearly 16 percentage points higher when a majority of citizens favored a strike, than when most citizens opposed a strike. The estimated effect, though large, falls just shy of conventional standards for statistical significance; the p -value associated with the treatment effect is .135 for a two-sided test and .068 for a one-sided test. When dealing with elite samples, it would be difficult to gain more precision. To detect an effect of this size at a significance level of .05, we would have needed responses from 290 MKs, more than the number of living MKs for whom we found contact information. (Given these constraints, the sample is not large enough to support precise estimates for smaller demographic or political subgroups.) We believe the treatment effect is informative, even if not estimated with the precision one sometimes sees in large surveys of the mass public.

Figure 1: Effect of Public Opinion on Support for Military Strike



Note: Horizontal lines depict 95% confidence intervals.

When presenting the scenario, we randomized information about public opinion as a whole, instead of varying sentiments within the respondent's own political party. We did this to avoid administering implausible treatments to MKs from predominantly dovish or hawkish parties, who might have doubted the suggestion that most within their own party supported (or opposed) military action. Having shown that MKs care about public opinion in general, though, it seems likely that MKs would care even more about the views of their own co-partisans and swing voters. In this sense, our experiment establishes a lower bound on how MKs would have responded if we could have manipulated information about the opinions of specific voter groups.¹⁰

We supplemented the experiment by directly asking about the importance of public opinion. "In general," we inquired, "when you consider whether to use military force against a foreign adversary, to what extent do you take domestic public opinion into account?" Responses to this item, which appeared in a separate part of the survey, reinforce our experimental findings. Only 3% of MKs said that they did not consider public opinion at all; 26% indicated that they weighed public opinion to a small extent; 38% reported giving medium consideration to public opinion; and the remaining 33% said that public opinion influenced their military decisions to a large or very large extent.

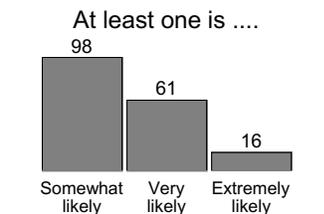
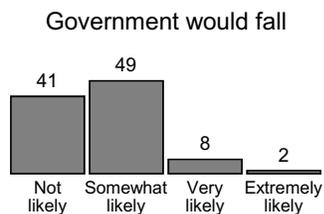
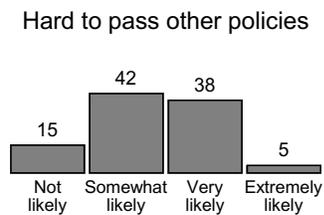
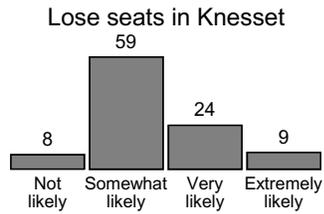
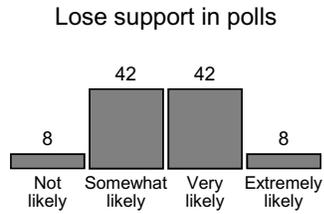
¹⁰ We randomized information about current public opinion. Some MKs could have viewed the treatment not only as a measure of current sentiment, but also as a harbinger of future opinion. Nonetheless, the treatment effect might have been larger if we had explicitly randomized information about what opinion would be on the eve of a Knesset election.

Were answers to this question tainted by social desirability bias? It is hard to know for sure, but three factors help minimize such concerns. First, respondents were guaranteed anonymity, reducing the incentive to respond in socially desirable ways. Second, it is unclear whether any lingering biases would cause MKs to overstate or understate the role of public opinion. Some policymakers might see value in appearing deferential to ordinary citizens, but others might want to portray themselves as autonomous, relying on their own expertise and values when making decisions about military force. Third, the responses corroborate our experimental findings, by suggesting that public opinion exerts a substantial but not overdetermining effect on elite decisions about war.

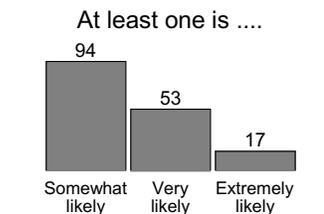
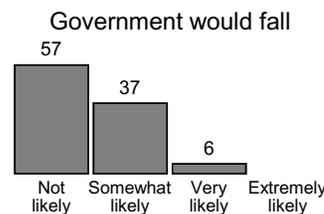
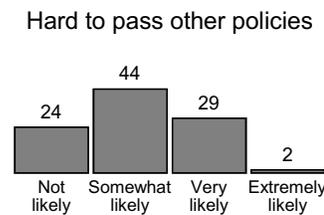
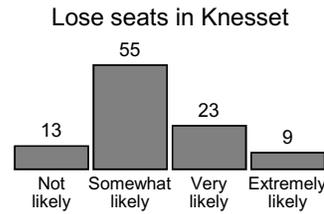
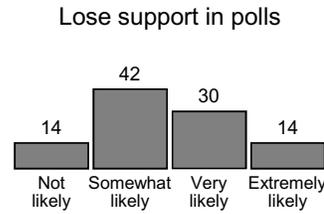
For insight about *why* MKs pay close attention to public preferences, we measured perceptions of the consequences of failing to heed public opinion. “We would now like you to think about Israel’s use of military force more generally. Please consider the following hypothetical situations.” The first hypothetical situation involved an unpopular war: “Suppose an Israeli government was considering whether to go to war against a foreign adversary. If the public strongly opposed the war, but the government nonetheless decided to go war, please rate the likelihood that each of the following events would happen in the short term.” We asked whether the government would lose support in the polls; lose seats in the Knesset; find it difficult to get support for other foreign and domestic policies; and fall from power. MKs indicated whether each potential consequence was extremely likely, very likely, somewhat likely, or not likely. In a similar way, we elicited expectations about what would happen if the government failed to engage in a war that the public wanted.

Figure 2: Expected Consequences of Going against Public Opinion

Effects of Waging an Unpopular War



Effects of Avoiding a Popular War



Note: Percentage of MKs selecting each option.

As Figure 2 reveals, Israeli decision-makers anticipated adverse consequences both for waging an unpopular war, and for avoiding a popular war. When it came to fighting an unpopular war, nearly all of the MKs (98%) thought that at least one of the adverse outcomes was somewhat, very, or extremely likely; 61% deemed at least one consequence to be very or extremely likely; and 16% thought that at least one was extremely likely. If the government stayed out of a popular war, 94% of MKs thought that at least one of the four adverse outcomes was somewhat, very, or extremely likely; 53% thought at least one was very or extremely likely; and 17% thought that at least one was extremely likely. Given the seriousness of the consequences we listed and the high proportion of MKs anticipating these results, we conclude that the repercussions of going against the public loom large for Israeli politicians.

One might wonder whether results based on Israeli Knesset members would generalize to elites in other democracies. In some senses, Knesset members represent a hard case for testing the responsiveness mechanism. The Arab-Israeli conflict has made decisions about military action commonplace for Israeli policymakers, and mandatory military service has further exposed Israelis to situations involving military force. Because terrorist attacks are familiar, Israeli policymakers presumably hold *a priori* preferences about how to react, which could reduce the effect of new information such as public opinion (Mintz et al. 1997). For these reasons, our estimates would underestimate policymaker responsiveness.

At the same time, protracted conflict between Israel and its neighbors could make foreign policy especially important to Israeli voters, increasing policymakers' incentives to be responsive. To shed light on this issue, we fielded experiments on the mass public in both Israel and the U.S. Our experiments, discussed below, reveal that foreign policy is a weighty electoral consideration for voters in both countries. This suggests that Israeli policymakers should not be

unique in expecting domestic political consequences for their foreign policy decisions.

In sum, we have presented unique micro-level evidence about the responsiveness mechanism. In our experiment, members of the Israeli Knesset shifted their views about military action in response to randomized information about public opinion. When asked directly, the vast majority said that public opinion played a role in decisions about military force and anticipated that rebuffing the public would bring serious political consequences.

IV. Testing Selection in Israel

We now consider the selection mechanism. To what extent do citizens select representatives on the basis of foreign policy, and how does foreign policy compare to other electoral considerations? As a step toward answering these questions, we hired iPanel, a respected Israeli polling firm, to recruit a representative sample of 1,067 Jewish adults in March 2016.¹¹

The survey began by measuring respondents' preferences on foreign, economic, and religious policy. Since selection does not require voters to have detailed views on every specific policy issue, we focused on overarching postures that guide citizens' views. Our survey measured hawkishness (a.k.a. militarism), one of the core dimensions structuring foreign policy attitudes. "On matters of foreign affairs and security," we inquired, "do you support a dovish (left) or a hawkish (right) approach?" In our sample, 9% of participants classified themselves as

¹¹ iPanel recruited subjects using benchmarks for gender, age, education, and area of residence. For other studies using iPanel, see e.g. Ben-Nun Bloom et al. 2015 and Grossman et al. 2015. We focused on the Israeli Jewish population because online polling companies cannot reliably sample the minority Israeli Arab population.

“definitely dovish”; 27% said they were “more dovish than hawkish”; 39% deemed themselves “more hawkish than dovish”; and 25% said they were “definitely hawkish.”

To quantify preferences about economic policy, we followed the Israeli National Election Study by asking: “About the structure of economic life in the country, do you support a capitalist or a socialist approach?” Responses were definitely socialist (11%), more socialist than capitalist (53%), more capitalist than socialist (30%), or definitely capitalist (5%). Finally, to capture views about religious policy, we inquired: “To what extent should the government require Jewish religious traditions in public life?” The options were never (36%), sometimes (40%), often (16%), or always (8%).

After measuring respondents’ policy preferences, we asked them to evaluate pairs of political parties, which was appropriate given that Israelis vote for parties rather than individual candidates. Our preface explained, “On the following screens we will describe a number of political parties. The parties are hypothetical; they are not actual parties in Israel today. The vast majority of candidates in each party are Jewish, and each party is expected to pass the electoral threshold and enter the Knesset. Please read the descriptions carefully, and then tell us which party you would prefer.”

We then displayed a table that described two parties, A and B, which varied randomly on seven dimensions: foreign, economic, and religious policy; party size; and the military experience, political experience, and gender of the party leader. We portrayed policies along the same broad spectra we used to measure respondents’ preferences. Thus, each party’s foreign policy was randomly assigned to be definitely dovish, more dovish than hawkish, more hawkish than dovish, or definitely hawkish. Likewise, economic policies ranged from socialist to capitalist, and religious policies ranged from never requiring to always requiring Jewish religious

traditions in public life. The economic and religious policy spaces were intentionally wide, to avoid suppressing the apparent importance of those issues relative to foreign policy.

When describing the military experience of each party leader, we randomized whether the leader had served only the mandatory minimum, had risen to the rank of junior officer, or had attained the rank of senior officer. For political experience, we randomly drew an integer between 0 and 30 to represent the number of years the party leader had been in national politics. Finally, we indicated whether the party leader was male or female, and we mentioned whether the party was (or was not) one of the three largest parties in the political system. We randomized the order in which respondents saw these considerations.

We intentionally randomized each of the seven dimensions independently to produce diverse combinations, including ones not common in current Israeli politics. This approach not only avoided multicollinearity, but also allowed us to estimate the consequences of taking the full range of policy positions, including ones that might be electorally disadvantageous.

We concluded by asking, “If you had to choose, which party would you vote for?” We repeated the exercise with three additional pairs of parties: C versus D, E versus F, and G versus H. Thus, each participant reviewed eight party profiles, giving us a large number of judgments about an extremely rich political space.¹²

¹² Before asking respondents to choose between the parties, we measured attentiveness by asking whether the parties were identical or different on each of the seven dimensions. The table remained on the screen, so respondents did not have to answer from memory. Our analysis focuses on the 1,067 (out of 1,277) respondents who correctly answered at least 85% of the

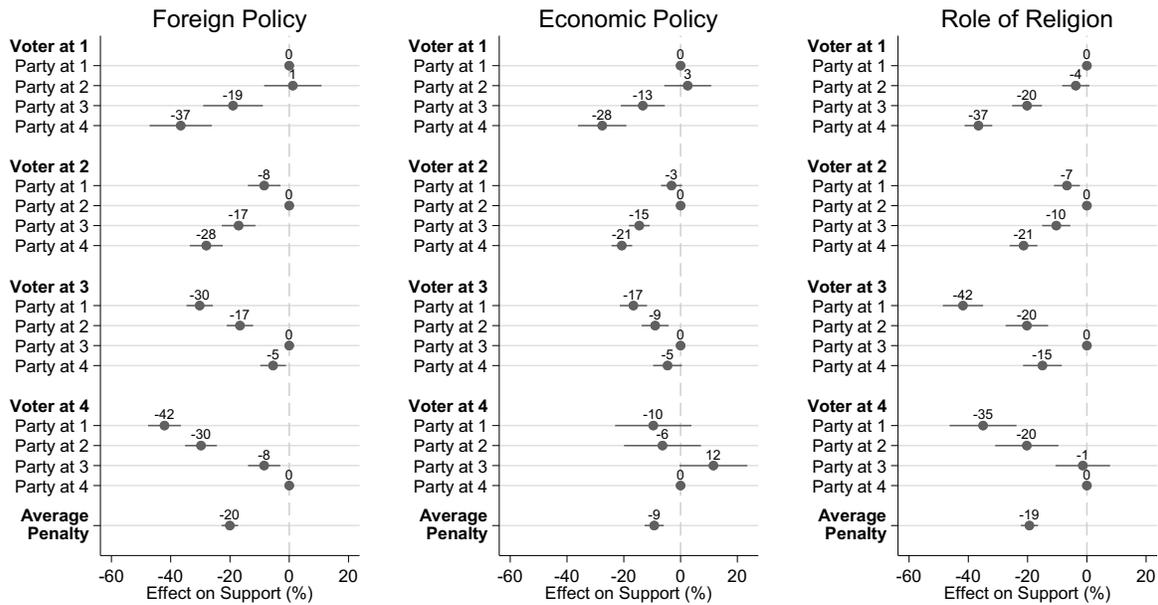
We simplify the discussion by presenting the effect of each attribute, averaging over all the other dimensions of the experiment. To quantify the effect of gender, for example, we measure how much better (or worse) parties with male leaders fared in our experiment, averaging over all other characteristics the party might have, and over all characteristics the opposing party might have.

We first consider how the foreign, economic, and religious positions of parties affected support at the polls. The left side of Figure 3 shows the effects of foreign policy. As shorthand, we represent each policy position with a number: 1=definitely dovish, 2=more dovish than hawkish, 3=more hawkish than dovish, and 4=definitely hawkish. We estimated how these four groups of voters responded to parties that agreed or disagreed with their own opinions.

The left side of Figure 3 shows that voters awarded substantially less support to parties with distant foreign policy views, than to parties who concurred with them about foreign policy. For instance, dovish voters (voters at 1) gave 37 points less support to hawkish parties (parties at 4) than to parties who shared their dovish ideal point. Likewise, hawkish voters (people at 4) awarded 42 points less support to dovish parties (parties at 1) than to parties who sympathized with their own hawkish preferences. These effects were not unique to extreme voters; moderate voters penalized deviations, as well. Moderate doves (voters at 2) were 28 points less supportive of parties at 4 than of parties at 2. Similarly, moderate hawks (voters at 3) were 30 points less supportive of parties at 1 than of parties at 3.

attention checks. The appendix shows that the effects were similar, but smaller, when we included inattentive respondents.

Figure 3: Effects of Policy Positions in Israel

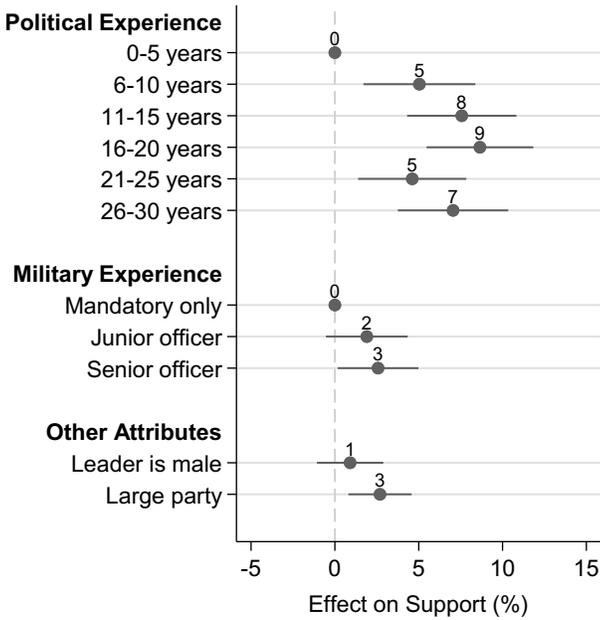


The second and third columns of Figure 3 present analogous estimates for economic and religious policy. To summarize the estimates and compare the electoral importance of the three policy dimensions, the bottom row of each panel gives the average penalty that voters assigned to a party that did not share his or her ideal point on that dimension (averaging across the twelve ways that parties and voters could diverge). The average penalty for being out of step with the voter on foreign policy was 20 percentage points, compared to 9 points for economic policy and 19 points for religious policy. We conclude that in Israeli elections, foreign policy is as important as religious policy and more important than economic policy.

Foreign policy also outweighed the four non-policy attributes in our experiment. Figure 4 summarizes the average effect of the party leader’s political experience, military experience, gender, and the size of the party. The top portion shows that, other factors equal, parties guided by leaders who had been in national politics for more than five years performed substantially better than otherwise comparable parties with less experienced leadership. The middle portion

shows that Israelis preferred leaders with extensive military experience. Overall, parties led by former senior officers performed 3 points better, and parties led by former junior officers performed 2 points better, than parties whose leaders had left the military after satisfying their mandatory service. Finally, the bottom portion presents the average effect of gender and party size. Israeli voters did not, on average, show a preference for male leaders over female ones. Voters also threw 3% more support behind large parties than behind other otherwise comparable parties that did not rank among the top three. This could be taken as evidence of strategic voting: supporting large parties that might stand a better chance of forming governments and leading coalitions.

Figure 4: Effects of Non-Policy Attributes in Israel



We ran many auxiliary tests, presented in the appendix, to confirm the robustness of our findings. First, we checked that our results were robust to the specification of the dependent variable. In addition to asking which party subjects preferred, we measured the strength of their

preferences, and we asked them to rate each party individually on a scale of 0 to 10. When we operationalized our dependent variable to take into account the strength of voters' preferences, or studied party ratings rather than the comparisons between the parties, our conclusions about the absolute and relative effects of foreign policy remained unchanged.

Second, we investigated whether the effects of foreign policy were conditional on the stances parties took on other issues. The average penalty for deviating from voters' foreign policy preferences was similar, regardless of whether the party took leftist positions on both economic and religious policy, espoused right-wing positions on the economy and religion, or took mixed stances. We also wondered whether foreign policy might be more consequential for parties with moderate positions on other issues. To evaluate this possibility, we distinguished parties with moderate positions (2 or 3) on both economic and religious policy, parties with an extreme position (1 or 4) on either economic or religious policy, and parties with extreme positions in both policy areas. Foreign policy proved highly consequential, regardless of the party's moderation or extremism in other areas.

We then checked whether the effects of foreign policy depended on non-policy characteristics of the party or party leader. We found that foreign policy was equally important for small and large parties, and did not vary according to the party leader's military experience, number of years in politics, or gender.

Finally, we investigated whether the weight of foreign policy varied across different types of voters. In our analysis, foreign policy swayed subjects regardless of the voter's gender, age, education, income, military service, religiosity, and ideology. The appendix shows that the effects were the same, if not stronger, when we restricted attention to the most politically interested and involved members of society.

In sum, our evidence indicates that foreign policy profoundly affected support for parties in Israel. Our experiments, which randomly and independently manipulated the foreign policy positions of parties, allowed us to estimate the effect of foreign policy while addressing problems of selection bias, reverse causation, and confounders. Foreign policy swayed voters regardless of the parties' other attributes, and mattered to voters across the social, economic, and political spectrum.

V. Testing Selection in the U.S.

To assess the generalizability of our findings, we replicated our selection experiment in the United States, with minor adjustments for the American political context. While both Israel and the U.S. are established democracies, they differ in important ways, including electoral system, size, geographic location, and threat environment. Finding similar results in the U.S. would increase confidence that the effects of foreign policy generalize to other democracies.

In April 2017, Survey Sampling International recruited a sample of 1,420 U.S. adults, chosen for demographic representativeness according to age, education, gender, income, race, and region. As in the Israeli experiment, we began by asking subjects about their preferences over foreign policy. "Some people think military force should be used frequently in U.S. foreign policy. They are called 'hawks.' Other people think U.S. foreign policy should be based on diplomacy, and the U.S. should rarely if ever use military force. They are called 'doves.' Which approach to U.S. foreign policy do you prefer?" Roughly 15% said they were definitely dovish, 50% described themselves as more dovish than hawkish, 27% were more hawkish than dovish, and the remaining 9% identified as definitely hawkish.

To capture preferences about economic policy, we inquired: “Some people favor capitalist economic policies. They think the government should play only a small role in the economy, and should let the market determine economic outcomes. Other people favor socialist economic policies. They think the government should play a large role in the economy by regulating businesses and redistributing income. Which approach to U.S. economic policy do you prefer?” Around 5% were definitely socialist (large government role), 28% were more socialist than capitalist, 39% were more capitalist than socialist, and 28% were definitely capitalist (small government role).

Finally, to measure views about the role of religion in government, we asked: “How big of a role do you think religion should play in shaping government policy in the United States?” The options were no role (favored by 46% of respondents), small role (21%), medium role (20%), or large role (14%).

We then presented a table with two hypothetical presidential candidates, A and B. The candidates varied randomly in their foreign, economic, and religious policy positions, as well as four non-policy attributes: home region (Northeast, South, Midwest, or West), race (White, Black, or Hispanic), gender, and political experience (years in politics, from 0 to 30).¹³ We concluded by asking, “If you had to choose, which candidate would you vote for?” The options were definitely Candidate A; probably Candidate A; probably Candidate B; and definitely

¹³ To control perceptions of religion, we portrayed all candidates as Christian. We intentionally chose not to include information about the candidate’s political party in this experiment; below we present a follow-up experiment in which we varied party affiliations.

Candidate B. We repeated this exercise three times, yielding data on four candidate pairings per respondent.¹⁴

Figure 5: Effects of Policy Positions in the U.S.

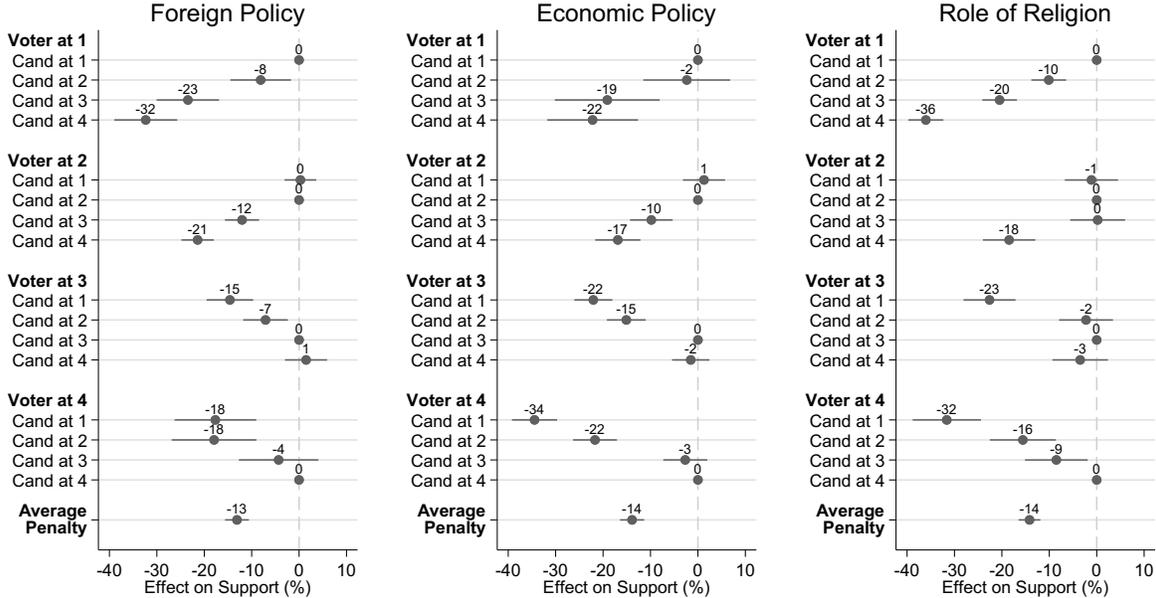


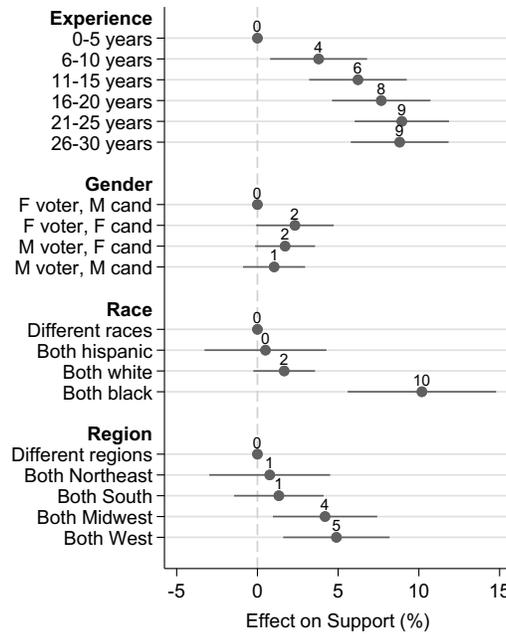
Figure 5 shows that foreign policy had powerful effects in the U.S. Dovish voters (people at 1) were 32 percentage points less supportive of candidates with hawkish platforms (candidate at 4). Other groups of voters reacted similarly, extending substantially less support to candidates whose foreign policy views diverged from their own. The effects of foreign policy were not only large in an absolute sense, but also comparable to the effects of economic and religious policy. The bottom row of Figure 5 summarizes the average penalty for deviating from the voter’s ideal point. On average, mismatches on foreign policy sapped support by 13 percentage points. The

¹⁴ As in Israel, we administered simple attention checks. We restricted our analysis to the 1,420 (of 2,051) respondents who answered at least 85% of the attention checks correctly. See the appendix for similar patterns when we included inattentive respondents.

effects for economic and religious policy were similar: around 14 points, on average. These findings confirm that the powerful effects of foreign policy are not specific to Israel.

Non-policy attributes mattered to a lesser degree. Figure 6 shows that region, gender, and race had minor effects on preferences over presidential candidates, though voters rewarded candidates who had spent more extensive time in politics by up to 9 percentage points, on average.

Figure 6: Effects of Non-Policy Attributes in the U.S.



Finally, we probed the robustness of our findings (see appendix). As in Israel, the effects of foreign policy remained strong regardless of the specification of the dependent variable; candidate stances on economic and religious policies; the candidates' home region, political experience, gender, and race; and voters' gender, age, race, education, income, religion, religiosity, party affiliation, and home region. As in Israel, the effects were slightly stronger among the politically active and those interested in politics.

For the experiment described above, we intentionally omitted information about candidates' partisan affiliations because our goal was to isolate the effect of policy positions. If we had independently varied party labels, which convey information about policy, many candidates' policy positions would have contradicted their party membership. For example, respondents would have encountered Republican candidates advocating socialist economic policies, and Democratic candidates supporting a major role for religion in politics— combinations that are not very plausible today. Subjects who encountered such candidates might doubt their policy positions, party allegiance, or both.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to ask whether foreign policy influences support for candidates when voters know the party affiliations of candidates. To answer this question, we designed a follow-up experiment, fielded via MTurk in September of 2017 on a diverse sample of 1,462 U.S. adults.¹⁵ This experiment retained the core design of the main study, with a few necessary changes. First, we presented pairs of candidates with competing party affiliations: Candidate A was a Democrat and Candidate B was a Republican, or vice versa.¹⁶ Second, to avoid potential contradictions between party and policy, we held all economic policies constant at “more capitalist than socialist” and set all religious policies as allowing a “small role” for religion in shaping government policy. As in our previous experiment, we independently randomized gender, race, political experience, and foreign policy.

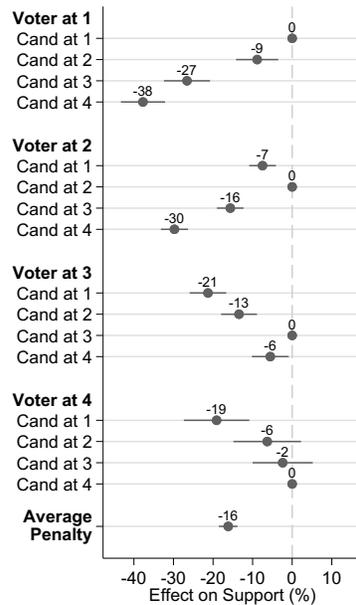
¹⁵ In our sample, 31% identified as Democrats, 37% identified as Republicans, and the remainder were independent or affiliated with other parties.

¹⁶ We dropped the mention of the home region so that the number of candidate attributes (policy positions and non-policy attributes) remained at seven, as in our main experiment.

As expected, partisanship mattered greatly. Other factors equal, Democratic voters favored candidates from their own party 76% of the time and Republicans favored co-partisans 79% of the time. Independents were indifferent to party, choosing the Democratic candidate just under half of the time. Personal attributes such as political experience, gender, and race showed similar patterns to our main U.S. study (see the appendix).

Despite the powerful pull of party, foreign policy positions remained important. Figure 7 shows the effect of foreign policy when subjects chose between Democratic and Republican candidates. As in our main study, voters were much more likely to support candidates whose foreign policy positions matched their own. For example, dovish voters (voters at 1) were 38 percentage points less likely to favor strong hawks (candidates at 4). On average, voters were 16 points less likely to prefer candidates whose foreign policy positions diverged from their own. The appendix further breaks down the effects by voters' party affiliation, showing that candidates' foreign policy positions matter regardless of subjects' partisanship. The effects of foreign policy were not unique to Independent voters: Democrats and Republicans were often willing to cross party lines on the basis of foreign policy.

Figure 7: Effect of Foreign Policy in the U.S., with Party Labels



Our experiments revealed that foreign policy had a large effect on support for presidential candidates in the U.S., even when voters chose between a Democratic and a Republican. One might wonder, however, whether we fielded our surveys at a time when foreign policy was unusually salient, e.g. important, to American voters. To assess this possibility, we turned to the most common measure of the relative importance of policy issues in the U.S.: survey data about the “most important problem” facing the country. While these data confound the importance of issues with their status as a “problem” (Wlezien 2005), readers might be interested in seeing how 2017 compares to other years on this widely-used indicator of foreign policy salience. We therefore tallied the percentage of respondents naming a foreign-policy-related issue as the most important problem facing the U.S. in April and September 2017, the months when we fielded our

U.S. surveys, and compared them to historical data.¹⁷ Around 15% (April) and 12% (September) of respondents named a foreign policy issue as the most important problem facing the country. This compares to a median of 23% between the years 1939 and 2015.¹⁸ Thus, in 2017 the perceived importance of foreign policy (as measured by most important problem) was lower than usual, increasing our confidence that the powerful effects of foreign policy uncovered in our experiments are not unique to 2017, and may often be even larger.

VI. Conclusion

There has been much debate about whether and how public opinion influences foreign policy. Previous research has made valuable contributions but faced challenges inherent to observational research. In this article we complement previous work by using randomized experiments to test two mechanisms—responsiveness and selection—through which public opinion could affect foreign policy. Our experiments, administered to both elites and voters, shed new light on an important debate while addressing problems of selection bias, reverse causation, and confounding that have hampered observational research.

Our experiments confirm that politics does not stop at the water's edge. We tested responsiveness by administering an experiment to members of the Israeli Knesset, and found that

¹⁷ We used the Gallup aggregate survey data (news.gallup.com/poll/1675/most-important-problem.aspx). To identify issues related to foreign policy (external relations), we applied the coding rules described in Heffington et al. (2017). Where Gallup reported that less than 0.5% of respondents had given an answer choice, we rounded down to 0.

¹⁸ We used the *Marpor1_perc* variable in the annual time series by Heffington et al. (2017).

views about military action changed as a function of randomized information about public support for a military strike. Moreover, when asked directly, most Israeli policymakers reported that bucking public opinion would entail significant political costs.

To test for selection, we fielded experiments on the mass public in both Israel and the United States, and found that voters treated foreign policy as a major criterion for voting. When foreign policy positions were exogenously assigned, voters strongly preferred parties or candidates whose foreign policy positions matched their own. In both countries, foreign policy was as important as economic or religious policies, and far more potent than non-policy considerations such as gender, race, or political experience. Moreover, in the United States, many voters crossed party lines to support candidates who shared their foreign policy views.

These findings have important empirical, theoretical, and normative implications. Broadly, our findings suggest that scholars can gain insight into foreign policy by studying the opinions of ordinary citizens, an approach taken by a large recent wave of international relations scholarship. By demonstrating that leaders respond to public pressure when making foreign policy, and that citizens strive to select leaders whose foreign policy preferences match their own, this article underscores the value of recent efforts to measure and explain the preferences of citizens.

Moreover, our experiments bolster many influential theories of international relations in which citizens play a prominent role in shaping foreign policy. The long list includes, for example, work on liberalism (Moravcsik 1997), the democratic peace (Doyle 1986; Maoz and Russett 1993), selectorate theory (Buono de Mesquita et al. 2003), audience costs (Fearon 1994), diversionary war (Gelpi 1997), the democratic advantage (Lake 1992; Reiter and Stam 2002), two-level games (Putnam 1988; Milner 1997), and theories about how citizens help enforce

international law (Dai 2005; Simmons 2009) and promote international cooperation (Leeds 1999; McGillivray and Smith 2008). These theories, and many more, presume a strong connection between domestic opinion and foreign policy.

Our evidence that foreign policy plays an important role in elections also has implications for theories about the effect of leaders on foreign policy. Recent work demonstrates that the ideologies, experience, and demographic characteristics of leaders shape decisions about war (Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis 2015; Saunders 2011; Colgan 2013). We contribute to this growing literature by uncovering the criteria citizens use to select their leaders. Our experiments reveal that, when voting, citizens place heavy weight on the foreign policy positions of parties and presidential contenders. Citizens also select on the basis of experience and demographic variables such as gender and race, albeit to a lesser degree. By illuminating the electoral processes that contribute to variation in leader type, we show an important way in which the public can influence international relations.

Our findings suggest many productive avenues for future research. We focused on public opinion about security policy, but scholars could adapt our experimental approach to explore the effect of public opinion on decisions about international trade, foreign aid, and climate change.¹⁹ Following the lead of Trager and Vavreck (2011), scholars could also use experiments to study how voters select leaders on the basis of foreign policy outcomes, while holding constant the leader's choice of strategy.

Future scholarship could further investigate to what extent political elites can manage

¹⁹ For reviews of research on these policy areas, see Guisinger 2017; Milner and Tingley 2013; Bernauer 2013.

public preferences and perceptions. While some scholars have argued that elites can shape what the public thinks (e.g. Berinsky 2009; Saunders 2015), others do not see public opinion as being at the command of policymakers (Gelpi 2010; Kertzer and Zeitzoff 2017).²⁰ New experiments, building on the methods described here, could shed additional light on these questions.

Our findings also raise questions about whether responsiveness and selection are more powerful in some political contexts than in others. For instance, leaders may be more responsive when they are eligible for re-election and face serious political competition, leading to differences between parliamentary and presidential systems and dual versus multiparty environments (Risse-Kappen 1991; Baum and Potter 2015). Responsiveness and selection could also be weaker when politics are highly polarized (Jacobs and Shapiro 2000; Guisinger and Saunders 2017). Finally, both responsiveness and selection should depend on public attention to foreign policy—e.g. the salience of foreign policy—which could vary both across and within countries as a function of geographic location, security relationships, and political structures. These are rich areas for future research.

Our experiments also raise important normative questions. We found that citizens use foreign policy as a criterion in choosing their representatives, and that representatives are sensitive to public attitudes once in power. This is good news from the standpoint of political representation. However, the powerful role of public opinion underscores the importance of educating citizens to make sound decisions about weighty matters such as the use of military force abroad. Future research should deepen our knowledge of how voters form opinions about

²⁰ Still others have found that elite cues are important only in some issue areas (Guisinger and Saunders 2017) or in some time periods (Baum and Groeling 2010).

foreign affairs, who they look to for information, and how to increase the likelihood that the public will make sensible judgments about international politics.

References

- Aldrich, John H., John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida. 1989. "Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review* 83(1):123–41.
- Aldrich, John H., Christopher Gelpi, Peter Feaver, Jason Reifler, and Kristin Thompson Sharp. 2006. "Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9(1):477–502.
- Almond, Gabriel A. 1950. *The American People and Foreign Policy*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Arian, Asher, André Krouwel, Mark Pol, and Raphael Ventura. 2011. "The Election Compass: party Profiling and Voter Attitudes." In *The Elections in Israel 2009*, eds. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, 275–98. New Brunswick: Transaction.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1991. "Constituency Opinion and Congressional Policy Making." *American Political Science Review* 85(2):457–74.
- Ben-Nun Bloom, Pazit, Gizem Arikan, and Marie Courtemanche. 2015. "Religious Social Identity, Religious Belief, and Anti-Immigration Sentiment." *American Political Science Review* 109(2):203–21.
- Baum, Matthew A., and Tim J. Groeling. 2010. *War Stories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Baum, Matthew A., and Philip B.K. Potter. 2008. "Relationships between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11:39–65.
- Baum, Matthew A., and Philip B.K. Potter. 2015. *War and Democratic Constraint*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bayram, A. Burcu. 2017. "Due Deference." *International Organization* 71(S1):S137–63.

- Bell, Mark S., and Kai Quek. 2018. "Authoritarian Public Opinion and the Democratic Peace." *International Organization* 72(1).
- Berinsky, Adam J. 2009. *In Time of War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bernauer, Thomas. 2013. "Climate Change Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16:421–48.
- Brutger, Ryan, and Joshua D. Kertzer. Forthcoming. "A Dispositional Theory of Reputation Costs." *International Organization*.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow. 2003. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Busby, Joshua W., and Jonathan Monten. 2012. "Republican Elites and Foreign Policy Attitudes." *Political Science Quarterly* 127(1):105–42.
- Carter, Jeff, and Timothy Nordstrom. Forthcoming. "Term Limits, Leader Preferences, and Interstate Conflict." *International Studies Quarterly*.
- Chaudoin, Stephen. 2014. "Promises or Policies? An Experimental Analysis of International Agreements and Audience Reactions." *International Organization* 68(1):235–56.
- Chiozza, Giacomo, and Hein Erich Goemans. 2011. *Leaders and International Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Colgan, Jeff D. 2013. *Petro-Aggression*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Croco, Sarah E. 2015. *Peace at What Price?* New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dai, Xinyuan. 2005. "Why Comply? The Domestic Constituency Mechanism." *International Organization* 59(2):363–98.
- Doyle, Michael W. 1986. "Liberalism and World Politics." *American Political Science Review* 80(4):1151–69.

- Fearon, James D. 1994. "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes." *American Political Science Review* 88(3):577–92.
- Fearon, James D. 1999. "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians." In *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, eds. Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Flores-Macías, Gustavo A., and Sarah E. Kreps. 2013. "Political Parties at War." *American Political Science Review* 107(4):833–48.
- Flores-Macías, Gustavo A., and Sarah E. Kreps. 2017. "Borrowing Support for War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(5):997–1020.
- Foyle, Douglas C. 1999. *Counting the Public In*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gadarian, Shana Kushner. 2010. "Foreign Policy at the Ballot Box." *Journal of Politics* 72(4):1046–62.
- Gelpi, Christopher. 1997. "Democratic Diversions." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41(2):255–82.
- Gelpi, Christopher. 2010. "Performing on Cue?" The Formation of Public Opinion toward War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54(1):88–116.
- Gelpi, Christopher. 2017 "Democracies in Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(9):1925–49.
- Gelpi, Christopher, Peter D. Feaver and Jason Reifler. 2009. *Paying the Human Costs of War*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

- Gelpi, Christopher, and Joseph M. Grieco. 2015. "Competency Costs in Foreign Affairs." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2):440–56.
- Gelpi, Christopher, Jason Reifler, and Peter Feaver. 2007. "Iraq the Vote." *Political Behavior* 29(2):151–74.
- Green, Donald P., Soo Yeon Kim, and David H. Yoon. 2001. "Dirty Pool." *International Organization* 55(2):441–68.
- Grossman, Guy, Devorah Manekin, and Dan Miodownik. 2015. "The Political Legacies of Combat." *International Organization* 69(4):981–1009.
- Guisinger, Alexandra. 2017. *American Opinion on Trade*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Guisinger, Alexandra, and Elizabeth N. Saunders. 2017. "Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues." *International Studies Quarterly* 61(2):425–41.
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., Brad L. LeVeck, David G. Victor, and James H. Fowler. 2014. "Decision Maker Preferences for International Legal Cooperation." *International Organization* 68(4):845–76.
- Heffington, Colton, Brandon Beomseob Park, and Laron K Williams. Forthcoming. "The 'Most Important Problem' Dataset (MIPD)." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*.
- Herrmann, Richard K. 2017. "How Attachments to the Nation Shape Beliefs About the World." *International Organization* 71(S1):S61–84.
- Herrmann, Richard K., and Jonathan W. Keller. 2004. "Beliefs, Values, and Strategic Choice." *Journal of Politics* 66(2):557–80.
- Herrmann, Richard K., Philip E. Tetlock, and Penny S. Visser. 1999. "Mass Public Decisions to Go to War: A Cognitive- Interactionist Framework." *American Political Science Review* 93(3):553–73.

- Holsti, Ole R. 2004. *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Horowitz, Michael C., Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis. 2015. *Why Leaders Fight*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Howell, William G., and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2007. *While Dangers Gather*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley. 1987a. "How Are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured? A Hierarchical Model." *American Political Science Review* 81(4):1099–1120.
- Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley. 1987b. "The Means and Ends of Foreign Policy as Determinants of Presidential Support." *American Journal of Political Science* 31(2):236–58.
- Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Benjamin I Page. 2005. "Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?" *American Political Science Review* 99(1):107–23.
- Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2000. *Politicians Don't Pander*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Johns, Robert, and Graeme AM Davies. 2012. "Democratic Peace or Clash of Civilizations?" *Journal of Politics* 74(4):1038–52.
- Johns, Robert, and Graeme AM Davies. 2014. "Coalitions of the Willing?" *Journal of Peace Research* 51(6):767–81.
- Kertzer, Joshua D., and Ryan Brutger. 2016. "Decomposing Audience Costs." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1):234–49.
- Kertzer, Joshua D., Kathleen Powers, Brian C. Rathbun, and Ravi Iyer. 2014. "Do Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Preferences?" *Journal of Politics* 76(3):825–40.

- Kertzer, Joshua D., and Thomas Zeitzoff. 2017. "A Bottom-Up Theory of Public Opinion about Foreign Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3):543–58.
- Lake, David A. "Powerful Pacifists." *American Political Science Review* 86(1):24–37.
- Leeds, Brett Ashley. 1999. "Domestic Political Institutions, Credible Commitments, and International Cooperation." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(4):979–1002.
- Leeds, Brett Ashley. 2003. "Alliance Reliability in Times of War." *International Organization* 57(4):801–827.
- Levendusky, Matthew S., and Michael C. Horowitz. 2012. "When Backing Down Is the Right Decision." *Journal of Politics* 74(2):323–38.
- Mansfield, Edward, Helen Milner and B. Peter Rosendorff. 2000. "Free to Trade." *American Political Science Review* 94(2):305–22.
- Maoz, Zeev, and Bruce Russett. 1993. "Normative and Structural Causes of the Democratic Peace, 1946–1986." *American Political Science Review* 87(3):624–38.
- McGillivray, Fiona, and Alastair Smith. 2008. *Punishing the Prince*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Milner, Helen V. 1997. *Interests, Institutions and Information*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Milner, Helen V., and Dustin Tingley. 2013. "Public Opinion and Foreign Aid." *International Interactions* 39(3):389–401.
- Milner, Helen V., and Dustin Tingley. 2016. *Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mintz, Alex. 2004. "Foreign Policy Decision Making in Familiar and Unfamiliar Settings." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(1):91–104.

- Mintz, Alex, Nehemia Geva, Steven B. Redd and Amy Carnes. 1997. "The Effect of Dynamic and Static Choice Sets on Political Decision Making." *American Political Science Review* 91(3):553–66.
- Moravcsik, Andrew. 1997. "Taking Preferences Seriously." *International Organization* 51(4):513–53.
- Morgan, T. Clifton, and Sally Howard Campbell. 1991. "Domestic Structure, Decisional Constraints, and War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35(2):187–211.
- Page, Benjamin I. 1994. "Democratic Responsiveness?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 27(1):25–29.
- Page, Benjamin I., and Richard A. Brody. 1972. "Policy Voting and the Electoral Process." *American Political Science Review* 66(3):979–95.
- Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1983. "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *American Political Science Review* 77(1):175–90.
- Popkin, Samuel L. 1991. *The Reasoning Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Potter, Phillip B.K. 2016. "Lame-Duck Foreign Policy." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 46(4):849–867.
- Powlick, Philip J. 1991. "The Attitudinal Bases for Responsiveness to Public Opinion among American Foreign Policy Officials." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35(4):611–41.
- Prather, Lauren. 2017. "Values at the Water's Edge." Working paper, University of California, San Diego.
- Press, Daryl G., Scott D. Sagan, and Benjamin A. Valentino. 2013. "Atomic Aversion." *American Political Science Review* 107(1):188–206.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1988. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics." *International Organization*

42(3):427–60.

Quek, Kai. 2016. “Are Costly Signals More Credible?” *Journal of Politics* 78(3):925–40

Reifler, Jason, Thomas J. Scotto, and Harold D. Clarke. 2011. “Foreign Policy Beliefs in Contemporary Britain: Structure and Relevance.” *International Studies Quarterly* 55(1):245–66.

Reiter, Dan, and Allan C. Stam. 2002. *Democracies at War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Risse-Kappen, Thomas. 1991. “Public Opinion, Domestic Structure, and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies.” *World Politics* 43(4):479–512.

Russett, Bruce M. 1990. *Controlling the Sword*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Russett, Bruce and John R. Oneal. 2001. *Triangulating Peace*. New York: Norton

Saunders, Elizabeth N. 2011. *Leaders at War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Saunders, Elizabeth N. 2015. “War and the Inner Circle: Democratic Elites and the Politics of Using Force.” *Security Studies* 24(3):466–501.

Schultz, Kenneth. 2001. “Looking for Audience Costs.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45(1):32–60.

Simmons, Beth A. 2009. *Mobilizing for Human Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Snyder, Jack, and Erica D. Borghard. 2011. “The Cost of Empty Threats.” *American Political Science Review* 105(3):437–56.

Spilker, Gabriele, Thomas Bernauer, and Víctor Umaña. 2016. “Selecting Partner Countries for Preferential Trade Agreements.” *International Studies Quarterly* 60(4):706–18.

Stein, Rachel M. 2015. “War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies.” *American Political Science Review* 109(3):556–73.

- Stimson, James A., Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89(3):543–65.
- Tanaka, Seiki, Atsushi Tago, and Kristian S. Gleditsch. 2017. "Seeing the Lexus for the Olive Trees?" *International Interactions* 43(3):375–96.
- Tingley, Dustin. 2017. "Rising Power on the Mind." *International Organization* 71(S1):S165–88.
- Trager, Robert F., and Lynn Vavreck. 2011. "The Political Costs of Crisis Bargaining." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3):526–45.
- Wlezien, Christopher. 2005. "On the Salience of Political Issues." *Electoral Studies* 24(4):555–79.