

Politicizing War

Democracy, Information, and Public Opinion on War

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Abstract

I develop a theory of electorate belief formation during war. I analyze a formal model which depicts the electorate's decision to retain the incumbent based on two distinct elite signals; the first signal — from the media — is unbiased but potentially inaccurate and the second — from the opposition party — is biased but potentially accurate. If the public were to receive correct information about the state of the war from an unbiased media, and the opposition were to advocate a course of action that the public would not favor if it knew the true state of affairs, is it possible that they would nonetheless replace the incumbent with the opposition? I seek to demonstrate that this scenario is in fact possible by analyzing a formal model of wartime elections. The main theoretical finding demonstrates that, even under conditions favorable to democracy, tragic outcomes are possible. It is possible for the incumbent to be disposed, ending a war that was likely to succeed. The same process can also lead to the election of the opposition party which continues to fight a war that is likely to fail. I use an original experimental design to test the latter theoretical expectation.

Key Words: Wartime Elections, Opposition Parties, Public Opinion on War

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1 Introduction

Public support for war and the approval of the President during times of war center on the evaluation of evidence of foreign policy successes and failure as reported by the media. The process of belief formation depends both on the content of news stories and the meaning or interpretation of these events by opinion leaders. There is a debate to exactly what causal mechanism drives public opinion on war. The first perspective argues that public opinion regarding war is a function of events-based information citizens consume via media sources. Events include causalities of war, battle outcomes, and whether or not specific objectives have been met. I will refer to this perspective as the events-based model, also known as the rational expectations model. The second approach understands public opinion as an extension of elite-based opinion messages which is a result of citizens' use of partisan cues and political awareness. When partisan elites agree on war policy and send a unified message, the public tends to support that policy. When partisan elites begin to diverge on the success or worthiness of a war, sending opposing messages, citizens will use elites with their preferred partisan position as a cue and this effect will be more powerful among politically aware individuals. I will refer to this as the elite-based opinion model. The current state of the literature leaves us with a puzzle regarding which theoretical explanation is driving public opinion on war.

The theory presented in this article bridges the gap between the two dominant approaches while also investigating opinion formation under conditions favorable to democratic decision-making. In the model, citizen opinion on war is a function of both events-based information from a source labeled *The Media* and elite-opinion from an actor labeled the *Opposition*. The media is assumed to be unbiased but possibly inaccurate. Elite behavior is modeled in an electoral context where politicians value not only getting elected, but some objective national welfare. The Media reports on whether the war is worth continuing or not based on the events on the ground. The Opposition knows the true state of the war and indicates whether or not they will continue the war if elected, essentially supporting or opposing the conflict in their party platform. Electoral and policy incentives of the Opposition sheds light on why elites may begin to diverge on foreign policy issues and how strategic choices on behalf of the Opposition Party may impact public opinion. Independent from beliefs on the war, the model allows the electorate's preference on domestic and economic issues to vary between the Incumbent and the Opposition. After updating their opinion regarding the war based on the information provided by both sources, and using their preferences on domestic and economic policies, the *Electorate* votes for either the Incumbent or the Opposition. Depending on who wins the election, a policy action is implemented. It is assumed that the Opposition will follow through with whatever policy action they advocated and if the Incumbent wins they will always continue the war. By separating the effects of events-based and elite-based opinion, the approach taken here will demonstrate that citizen belief formation over war is a function of both objective and biased information, yet heavily conditional on the strategic choices of elites.

The benefit to this approach is four-fold. First, by constructing a model that represents a version of democratic reality favorable to democracy, the model allows us to see if citizen decision-making can be improved writ large by enhancing the specific elements of the democratic process. Next, by asking a causes of effects question the model helps to investigate possible causal mechanisms, specifically the interaction of different information sources. Next, the model has broader implications which do apply to a subsection of the citizenry that can impact elections and policy consequences. Most importantly, the model presents

a general theory for how the public forms foreign policy beliefs about war in the context of an election and unifies the two dominant perspectives. Elections are an important democratic institution which creates incentives for the actors involved and a conduit for an open political space. By introducing elections into belief formation the model fills an important hole in the literature by identifying how public opinion is formed given electoral incentives of elites.¹ In the following sections I will introduce the model and important equilibria. The expectations from the model are then tested with an experimental analysis. First I will explore foreign policy attitudes in more detail.

2 Foreign Policy Attitudes

Senator Arthur Vandenberg, in his famous speech in the Senate on January, 10 1945, stated that we must stop “partisan politics at the water’s edge” (Vandenberg, 1945). This statement is often a common asseration and represents the idea that foreign policy, especially during times of war, is not a matter of public and partisan debate but rather national security. At the beginning of a national crisis there may be some truth to this statement. Mueller’s (1973) research uncovered the “rally-round-the-flag” phenomenon, where initially the nation’s leadership receives high levels of public support in times of crisis, especially at the beginning of a war. However, the rally effect is ethereal and dissipates quickly, especially when political opposition begins to speak out and provide a counterweight to the President. As a conflict continues politics does in fact become important and elite and public opinion can shape foreign policy actions.²

Mueller’s (1973) finding that the log of casualties is negatively associated with war support has held up for the wars in Korea, Vietnam, the Iraq War, and the war in Afghanistan. It seems to be that as the costs of a given war accumulate the public uses this information to update their support for the war. Moreover, this explanation has been extended to battle outcomes and other international events. For example, when looking at the electorate’s support for the president, Brody (1991) concludes that changes in public opinion are a response to impressions of presidential success and failure formed from the policy outcomes found in the news. More recent research in favor of the events-driven explanation argues that events on the ground indirectly affect presidential approval through beliefs about the war at hand. Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler (2009, 2005) and Gelpi, Reifler and Feaver (2007) have argued that, while casualties still influence updated beliefs, their effect is tempered by whether citizens believe the war was the right or wrong action by the government and whether the war is likely to be a success - with the likelihood of prospective success being the most important for determining the public’s willingness to tolerate casualties. For example, during recent Iraq War the authors claim that citizens measured success by “Whether Iraqis were cooperating with the United States against the insurgents” or “What services, such as education, health care, and utilities, are being provided to Iraqis” (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler, 2009, p. 198-199). If the public perceives that the mission will be a success they will continue to support the war in the face of increased casualties.³ It is clear that events-based explanations are important for understanding how the public forms beliefs during war. Although, looking at the recent Iraq War, Voeten and Brewer (2006) find that while events and casualties accounted for perceptions of the war’s success, they did not explain as much variation in support for the

¹See Gaubatz (1999) for an important overview for why democratic institutions are an important factor in foreign policy choices.

²Scholars have also shown that elite discourse can impact crisis bargaining and interstate relations by revealing private information and making communications to adversarial states more credible (Ramsay, 2004; Schultz, 2002, 1998).

³See Eichenberg (2005) for a similar finding using data from 1981-2005. Although see Gartner (2008) for an analysis in which the casualty effect is still the dominant driver behind updated beliefs, irrespective of the likelihood of victory.

war or the president. War support accounted for shifts in presidential approval better than perceived war success. The authors argue that we should look toward elite discourse to understand why events were not strongly linked with war support.

Open electoral systems present the opposition party with mixed motives. Those in the opposition care about getting elected and replacing the incumbent, but politicians also care about what is best for the nation.⁴ Supporting or criticizing the incumbent can have meaningful effects on the outcome of the war and also the outcome of the next election. Attention to, and knowledge about politics tends to be quite low on average for the American public. We also know that people vary in their general attentiveness to politics. Zaller (1992) defined political awareness as the extent to which an individual pays attention and understands the information he or she has encountered. We expect that politically aware individuals will react differently to political messages than the unaware, who may not react at all. But there is another piece of the puzzle, political predispositions. Those with higher levels of political attention and knowledge will likely have stable predispositions. Zaller (1992) and Zaller and Feldman (1992) present the Receive Accept Sample (RAS) model of public opinion. The more politically aware an individual is the more likely they are to receive a given political message but are also more likely to resist political arguments in conflict with their predispositions. When asked to give an answer on a political question, the most recent considerations “on the top of the head” will be the ones recalled from memory when survey questions are asked. Individuals answer survey questions by averaging across considerations immediately salient or accessible to them. Therefore, the content of the message matters but also who the message is coming from.

The elite-based model argues that because messages, elite cues, and political awareness play such an important role in attitude formation, the impact of event-based information is often marginalized as it get filtered through political predispositions and political discourse. For example, Larson (1996) argues that public support for U.S. military operations and public tolerance for casualties are based upon a weighing of benefits and costs which is influenced heavily by consensus (or its absence) among political leaders. When such agreement is missing, even low costs can erode public support for the intervention. Americans generally do not want lives to be sacrificed and thus costs matter, but the public relies on elites to tell them how promising and important the cause is. Consensus sends the signal that the cause is worth it, and discourse sends a signal that costs may be outweighing the benefits. Recent research by Berinsky (2009, 2007) has taken this argument a step further. Berinsky’s (2009) “elite cue theory” argues that the content of elite messages may not be the only thing driving opinion on war. Building on research which theorized that citizens can utilize simplifying heuristics to come to informed conclusions in the absence of detailed information (Popkin, 1991; Lupia, 1994; Lupia and McCubbins, 1998), Berinsky (2009) argues that partisanship, even in the absence of elite divergence, can affect public opinion. When a prominent elite supports a policy, even if parties with opposing values stay silent, the prominent elite supporting the policy can act as a reference point and thus affect public opinion toward foreign policy actions.⁵ Arena (2008) also highlights that without opposition to an incumbent government’s war, war outcomes are unlikely to affect election outcomes. Few scholars have unified the two theoretical positions and the *Wartime Elections* aims

⁴The notion of an objective national welfare or national interest is controversial. It is clear that individuals have some concept of the national interest, but each person’s concept is subjective. The model presented in this paper assumes that an objective national welfare exists in order to highlight the mixed motives of the opposition party.

⁵It has also been shown that citizen interpretations of “events” such as casualty counts can be interpreted differently based on partisanship (Gaines et al., 2007).

to do just that.⁶

3 The Wartime Elections Game

It is often said that if citizens had better sources of information, and responsibly paid attention to those sources, they could make better electoral decisions enhancing democracy. Although this is a common normative view, it may not be the case that better information and more informed citizens lead to better democratic decisions or policy outcomes. Given the many arguments about apathetic and uninformed voters (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Campbell et al., 1960), biased news media (Patterson and Donsbach, 1996; Groseclose and Milyo, 2005), parties solely motivated by electoral interest (Mayhew, 1975), and voters' tendency to use long-term partisan loyalties when updating their beliefs rather than being perfect Bayesian (Bartels, 2002), it is important to understand whether voters *could* make better decisions if these circumstances were different. It is also important to understand the way that biased and accurate information can influence vote choice in a situation where the policy outcome is yet to be determined.

The game begins with Nature (N) selecting the true state of a current war, ω . The war can be worth continuing or not, which is denoted by $\bar{\omega}$ and $\underline{\omega}$, respectively.⁷ With probability q , N sets $\omega = \bar{\omega}$, and with probability $1 - q$, N sets $\omega = \underline{\omega}$, where $\underline{\omega} < 0 < \bar{\omega}$. The war is worth continuing if and only if $\omega = \bar{\omega}$.

In the next move of the game N sends a noisy signal, $s \in (l, h)$, to the Media (M), about ω ; l signifies the war is not worth continuing and h signifies the opposite. With probability $\alpha \in (0.5, 1)$, M receives an accurate signal and with probability $(1 - \alpha)$, M is given an inaccurate signal. Real world reporting is not completely accurate and there are many instances where the media has inaccurately reported facts in their haste to report events.⁸ While media inaccuracy is well reported, the debate on media bias is still open. In my model the media is assumed to be an unbiased actor which reports the events on the ground (i.e. nature's noisy message) honestly to the Electorate (E) and is not a strategic actor.⁹

The model incorporates elite opinion into E 's decision with a policy specific message from the Opposition Party (O), who knows the true state of the war. After the public receives M 's signal, O advocates either continuing or ending the war if they win the subsequent election, $\rho \in \{c, e\}$. I assume that ρ predicts O 's policy decision if elected and that the incumbent will always advocate continuing their own foreign policy. O 's benefit for holding office is represented by $\beta \in (0, 1)$. Rather than assume that the opposition is only driven by electoral ambition (Mayhew, 1975), I allow them to have some positive value over some objective national welfare. O 's value for the national welfare is private but the public knows that its value is distributed at a rate of $\iota \sim u[0, \bar{\iota}]$. They know that all values on that distribution, including some max-

⁶An important exception is that of Baum and Groeling (2010, 2009). The authors have offered their "elasticity of reality" theory which argues that during the early stages of a conflict elites have a lot of leeway when framing foreign policy decisions. However, as time progresses and more information is revealed by the media, citizens can come closer to learning the true state of the world and elites will have a harder time framing foreign policy events.

⁷"Worth continuing" could be interpreted in several ways. It could mean that the war is likely to be a success. It could also mean that the objective is vital for national security. The general interpretation here is that the benefits of the war outweigh the costs. Interpreted in this way, ω is a common values or valance issue, where voters desire that the benefits outweigh the costs.

⁸Americans are aware that the media is inaccurate. A 2009 PEW Study found that, "Just 29% of Americans say that news organizations generally get the facts straight, while 63% say that news stories are often inaccurate (PEW, 2009).

⁹The debate about news media bias is ongoing. There seems to be a growing consensus that the news media has a slight liberal slant (Groseclose and Milyo, 2005). The driving force behind the bias is likely the views of journalists as opposed to other explanations (Sutter, 2001; Patterson and Donsbach, 1996).

imum value, are equally possible. This assumption is different from much of the research on elite cues. As Gaubatz (1999) notes, politicians may be election maximizers, but cannot look as if election is their sole priority. Political actors must appeal to the public as having some care for the national welfare.

The model also allows the public to value issues besides the war when going to the polls. For example, during the 2004 election, where the Iraq War was a powerful issue, Malhotra and Krosnick (2007) find that President Bush’s handling of the war in Iraq, the economy, and terrorism all had an impact on vote choice. In the model, $\zeta \in [-1, 1]$ represents the value of the incumbent relative to O with respect to economic or other domestic issues. This term may represent retrospective evaluations, prospective evaluations, differences in policy platforms, or combination thereof. The value of ζ is common knowledge.

In the final move of the game, E decides whether to retain the incumbent or elect O . The choice of the “Electorate” is conceptualized as the aggregate decision of all voters in the polity. There is a tradition of scholars looking at public opinion in the aggregate (Page and Shapiro, 1992; Mueller, 1973). Berinsky (2009) argues that it is important to understand what predicts opinion at the individual level. For example, my model does not take into account the partisanship of the electorate, even though we know that partisanship is an excellent predictor of individual opinion during times of war (Berinsky, 2009) and also tends to shape individual interpretations of events (Bartels, 2002; Gaines et al., 2007). Other scholars have argued that individuals use partisan cues in a cognitive system of “motivated processing”, where partisan cues reinforce prior attitudes and new information that conflict with prior beliefs is discounted (Taber, Cann and Kucsova, 2009; Taber and Lodge, 2006; Abramowitz, 1978). Even if large portions of the electorate are perceiving messages in a biased way, as long as a pivotal portion of the electorate updates without perceived bias, the predictions of my model are relevant. As Berinsky (2009, p. 191) notes, “True Independents - those individuals who do not lean toward either of the two political parties - represent only a small portion of the voting public... at key times, however, the 5 percent of the electorate that does not hold partisan attachments may play a decisive role in elections”. Berinsky’s (2009) quote is based on the findings of Keith et al. (1992). They find that nearly 10% of the public do not have some party identification and that about 5% of this group votes; in a tight election this 5% can significantly matter. Recently, (Jackson and Tan, 2012) have analyzed several formal models of information disclosure, where possibly biased experts reveal information to voters before they vote on two alternatives. The authors analyzed models with a single voter and multiple voters and found that “in strategic terms, the outcome of the voting state is determined entirely by the incentives of the pivotal voter, and so characterizing the equilibria amounts to characterizing equilibria with many experts and just one voter” Jackson and Tan (2012, p. 4). Similar formal models investigating trustee vs. delegate representation have also used a unified electorate (Fox and Shotts, 2009; Canes-Wrone and Shotts, 2007). In the model, E ’s decision is based on their belief over the continuation of the war and which candidate is closer to their economic and domestic policy preferences.

In the model, when E retains the incumbent, O receives ω_l while E receives $\omega + \zeta$. If E elects O , and O had set $\rho = c$, O receives $\beta + \omega_l$ and E receives ω . If O sets $\rho = e$, deciding to end the war, O receives β and E receives 0. As noted above, the Opposition Party knows the true state of the war and this is private information. The Electorate knows that the Opposition possesses that information, but they also know that the Opposition values the objective national welfare on a uniform distribution, so that all possible values are equally possible. After receiving both messages from the Media and the Opposition, the Electorate updates

their prior belief q to q_s^ρ . There are four updated beliefs over the war that E may have, given the different combination of signals, each of which can be found in the proofs in the Appendix. Multiple equilibria can be derived from the model; I will present two of the most interesting equilibria here which are concerned with the conditions under which sub-optimal outcomes are possible.¹⁰

3.1 Opposing Victory

I will demonstrate that there exists several equilibria to the game where the Electorate makes a sub-optimal electoral decisions under the relatively favorable conditions set out in the *Wartime Elections Game*. Under the set of **Opposing Victory** equilibria the true state of the war is worth continuing and the Electorate prefers the Incumbent on economic and domestic issues.¹¹ The Media reports whatever signal it receives from Nature; in the most interesting case the Media reveals the true state of the war accurately. The Opposition party presents their platform which advocates an end to the conflict irrespective of the Media's signal with a specific probability based on their electoral ambition and their value for the national welfare. The Electorate updates their belief and mistakenly believes the war isn't worth continuing even after the Media correctly revealed the true state of the world. The Electorate then chooses the Opposition party, which ends the war even though the Media revealed the war was worth continuing and they favored the Incumbent on domestic and economic issues. In this case the biased signal is dominant, allowing the Opposition to politicize the war to get into office, clouding democratic accountability. This gives us our first proposition.

3.1.1 Proposition 1

\exists a semi-separating equilibrium where the true value of $\omega = \bar{\omega}$; $\xi \geq 0$; O signals $\rho = e$ with probability $\frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}}$ when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$ and signals $\rho = e$ when $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; M correctly reports $s = h$ or M mistakenly reports $s = l$; and E elects O with the belief $q_h^e \leq \hat{q}^e \Rightarrow \frac{q_{i\bar{\omega}}^\beta(\alpha)}{q_{i\bar{\omega}}^\beta(\alpha)+1(1-q)(1-\alpha)} \leq \frac{-(\omega+\xi)}{\bar{\omega}-\omega}$ or $q_l^e \leq \hat{q}^e \Rightarrow \frac{q_{i\bar{\omega}}^\beta(1-\alpha)}{q_{i\bar{\omega}}^\beta(1-\alpha)+1(1-q)(\alpha)} \leq \frac{-(\omega+\xi)}{\bar{\omega}-\omega}$.¹²

In the game, when O politicizes the war by signaling they will bring it to an end if elected, E 's belief over whether the war is worth continuing becomes mathematically prominent. If E chooses the Incumbent the war continues and they receive, $q_h^e(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^e)(\underline{\omega} + \xi)$ in expectation, where q_h^e is E 's belief that the war is worth continuing based on both the signal from the Media and the Opposition. If E chooses the Opposition, the war will end and they will receive 0, which is obviously better than a war with a negative value. We can rewrite this in terms of E 's belief that the war is worth continuing, which must be greater than the cut-point based on whether the war is worth continuing in expectation. If E 's belief is greater than the cut-point I have called \hat{q}^e , they will vote for the Incumbent.¹³

¹⁰Several separating equilibria can be found in Section C of Appendix A which demonstrate conditions under which M reports correctly, O behaves honestly, and E makes the optimal choice concerning conflict.

¹¹There are technically two Opposing Victory Equilibria, one where the media correctly reports that the war is worth continuing and the other where they inaccurately report that it is not. The former is more interesting than the latter, as the media accurately tells the public that the war is worth fighting, yet the public believes the deceptive Opposition.

¹²Proposition 1 actually contains both versions of **Opposing Victory**. The only mathematical difference between the two is the posterior beliefs E holds over the true value of the war. I focus on the more interesting of the two, where the Media reports the correct state of the war.

¹³Notice that \hat{q}^e does not depend on E 's beliefs, so only the one threshold is necessary for both versions of Opposing Victory. We must compare q_h^e and q_l^e to \hat{q}^e , as to be sure that both values of M 's signal may satisfy the inequality.

$$E's \text{ Beliefs} \begin{cases} q_h^e = \frac{q_{\bar{\omega}}^{\beta}(\alpha)}{q_{\bar{\omega}}^{\beta}(\alpha) + 1(1-q)(1-\alpha)} \\ q_l^e = \frac{q_{\bar{\omega}}^{\beta}(1-\alpha)}{q_{\bar{\omega}}^{\beta}(1-\alpha) + 1(1-q)(\alpha)} \end{cases}$$

$$\text{Cut-Point} \left\{ q_h^e \geq \frac{-(\omega + \xi)}{\bar{\omega} - \omega} \equiv \hat{q}^e \right.$$

When O does not politicize the war by signaling that they will continue the conflict if elected, the public's belief over the war becomes less prominent because no matter which candidate they vote for it will continue. In this case E focuses their decision on which candidate is closer to their preferences on domestic and economic issues. The **Opposing Victory** equilibrium assumes that E favors the Incumbent on issues other than the war. Thus, if O signals they will end the war, the Incumbent will win the election as $\xi \geq 0$. It may be in O 's best interest to politicize the war and try to alter E 's belief about whether it is worth continuing. If O signals that they will end the war if elected, and they win the election, they receive β , the value for being elected. If O signals that they will continue the war, they will not be elected and they will receive ωl , the product for the value of the war and the value for the national welfare.

Since E knows that ι is positive and uniformly distributed they know that all possible values of ι are possible up to some maximum value, I call $\bar{\iota}$. Therefore, $\frac{\beta}{\bar{\omega}\bar{\iota}}$ is the probability that O will play $\rho = e$ when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$. O 's actual decision will be dependent on the size of ι and $\bar{\omega}$. The larger $\bar{\omega}$ or ι the less likely O will be to signal that they will end the war. The more O values the outcome of war or national welfare, the less likely the **Opposing Victory** equilibrium is to hold. Provided $q_h^e < \hat{q}^e$ and $q_l^e < \hat{q}^e$, O 's strategies are incentive compatible by construction and the **Opposing Victory** equilibrium is established.

I have shown that it is possible for the Opposition Party to advocate ending a war worth continuing irrespective of what an unbiased news media reports. The driving force behind this result is the Opposition's desire to get elected combined with the fact that the Electorate knows that they are also driven by the national welfare. Scholars have often argued that the principal motivation of legislators is to be elected and reelected. But in this case, the Electorate can be influenced by the Opposition precisely because they know that sometimes the Opposition is acting counter to their electoral ambition and in the national welfare, making the biased signal dominant. This explanation for public opinion regarding war is based on elite cues, but it does not assume that the public blindly follows partisan heuristics. Rather, public opinion is a function of a rather attentive public which has access to unbiased sources of information and updates accordingly. In the next section I will show another tragic result where the public elects the Opposition party which continues a war that is going poorly.

3.2 Prolonging Defeat

Under the **Prolonging Defeat** equilibrium the true state of the war is not worth continuing. In this scenario the Electorate prefers the Opposition on domestic and economic issues. It would seem like the Opposition would be honest under these conditions and signal that they will end the war, after all the Electorate prefers them on issues other than the war. However, the Media mistakenly reports that the war is optimal and worth continuing. If the Electorate believes that the war is worth fighting and the Opposition honestly reports that it is not, the Electorate's decision will be influenced by their updated belief about the war, which they believe is worth fighting, and economic and domestic policies other than the war. Under these

conditions it is beneficial for the Opposition Party to report that they will continue the war, knowing that if they do not differentiate and politicize their wartime policy with respect to the Incumbent, they will win the election. Since this is a pooling equilibrium the Electorate cannot learn from the Opposition's signal because no matter what the true state of the war, they give the same message. Therefore, the Electorate's belief is based only on the Media's signal which we know can be inaccurate.

3.2.1 Proposition 2

\exists a pooling equilibrium where the true value of $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; $\xi \leq 0$; O signals $\rho = c$ regardless of ω ; M mistakenly reports $s = h$; and E elects O with the belief $q_h \geq \hat{q}^e$.

Since O pools their signal, E's belief about the war is simply their anterior beliefs given M's signal. When O signals they will continue the war, domestic and economic issues become more important in E's utility, which we have assumed are in O's favor ($\xi \leq 0$). As long as O does not politicize the war they are guaranteed to win the election. However, if O does politicize the war by signaling that they will bring it to an end, E's decision becomes influenced by whether they think the war is worth continuing and domestic issues. If $q_h \geq \hat{q}^e$, which is assumed to be true for this equilibrium, E will be more likely to reelect the Incumbent. If O signals that they will continue the conflict they receive $\beta + (\omega\iota)$, if they signal that they will bring it to an end they receive $\omega\iota$. It must be true that $\beta + (\omega\iota) \geq \omega\iota$ for any value of ω and ι . Provided that $q_h \geq \hat{q}^e$ holds, the equilibrium is established.

$$E's \text{ Beliefs } \begin{cases} \frac{\alpha q}{\alpha q + (1-\alpha)(1-q)} \\ \frac{(1-\alpha)q}{(1-\alpha)q + \alpha(1-q)} \end{cases}$$

This is consistent with Arena's (2008) finding that in order for war to matter to an election there must be opposition to the incumbent government, which politicizes the issue. Without differentiation, elections will be decided on issues outside of the war.¹⁴ Arena (2008) finds that the presence of opposition magnifies the effect of war outcomes on electoral outcomes and that most wars that have good outcomes for the government have some level of support from the potential opposition. Governments that make concessions during war, but are not criticized by the opposition have a relatively good probability of staying in office. According to his empirical evidence, the probability that the incumbent stays in office following a military victory during a war in which they were criticized by the opposition was 0.98. It is very bad for the opposition to be on the "wrong side of history".¹⁵

Other research suggests that support for war that some scholars find early in a conflict, and attribute to low casualty counts and beliefs of success, are actually a function of elite consensus rather than rational expectations (Berinsky and Druckman, 2007). The Wartime Election game suggests that both sources of information - elite opinion and events-based information - can matter, but are highly dependent on one another. Given that elites are motivated by election and the policy preference best for the nation, and

¹⁴It is important to note that under these conditions the Opposition Party would inherit a war which is sub-optimal. There may be several implications once the Opposition takes control of the war. They may be punished for the war they decided to continue. However, they may not be held accountable for the "Incumbent's" war. This is a question beyond the scope of this paper.

¹⁵It is important whether the outcome of the war is eventually known or unknown because it is still ongoing. In the equilibria I present here, even if the war was worth continuing, but the public believes the opposite, and the Opposition chooses to end it, the prevailing wisdom is likely to be that the war wasn't worth continuing. The same is not true if the Opposition continues a war that is not worth fighting, because at some point they will have to face the consequences of that decision.

have better information than the electorate, they can choose to manipulate the information environment to obtain national sub-optimum outcomes that maximizes their utility. This has significant implications for international relations theories, such as formal models of the democratic peace, which argue that executive constraint and electoral accountability drives democracies not to fight each other or to select wars they believe they can win. In the Wartime Elections Game accountability becomes blurred as elites politicize wars for electoral gain. The next section presents an experimental test of the **Prolonging Defeat** equilibrium.

4 The War With Moldavia

In order to test the theoretical expectations from the **Prolonging Defeat** equilibrium an original experiment is used. The study is comprised of an on-line survey experiment using the *Qualtrics* research suite. The design of the experiment is a single treatment design built around a series of vignettes read by the participants. The treatment in the experiment is variation in the Opposition's signal; after being given a fixed election vignette which paints the picture of a war as worth continuing and a struggling economy, the Opposition party either gives a speech indicating they will continue the war, criticizing the incumbent on the economy (on the equilibrium path speech) or a speech indicating they will end the war, criticizing the incumbent on both the war and the economy (off the equilibrium path speech). The experiment tests two important factors: (1) Will the probability of voting for the Opposition decrease if they veer off the equilibrium path? and (2) Will the Electorate vote how the model predicts after being given the appropriate signals? Based on the behavior of respondents in the experiment we can extrapolate which signal a strategic Opposition party would give. The next section will describe the experimental design in more detail.

4.1 Participants

The sample consists of a set of approximately 600 undergraduates enrolled in political science classes from the University at Buffalo, SUNY and Buffalo State, SUNY. While all the courses were in political science, many of these classes were at the introductory level giving a good variety of majors. Of those that answered the gender question (607 respondents), there were about 357 (58%) males and 250 (41%) females in the sample. About 95% of the respondents were between the ages of 19 and 25, but the age range was between 18 and 53, with about 2% of the respondents being over 30 years old. In terms of partisanship, it should not be surprising, given a sample of undergraduate students, that 59% of the sample self identified as Democratic, 31% as Republican, and 9.3% as Independent. Out of the 650 students that began the experiment, 602 completed it making it to the last question - about a 9.2% drop off rate, which is fairly good.

Compensation for the experiment was extra credit given by the professors that agreed to distribute the study to their students. Studies have shown that generalizing from student samples to certain target populations, such as elite decision makers (Mintz, Redd and Vedlitz, 2006), may be problematic. The population that matters in this study is the set of American voters, and while it is not plausible that students behave like Presidents or elite military commanders, it is not hard to image that students can behave like voters. In order to make sure that my results are not an artifact of a student sample, I also used a set of respondents from Amazon's *Mechanical Turk* which contained respondents with larger incomes, variation in education level, variation in geographical region, and other important factors. The experiment took approximately 8 to 10 minutes to complete and consisted of reading two vignettes and then immediately answering a series

of questions. The dependent variable - vote choice - was asked immediately after the last vignette so that any other questions would not produce post-treatment effects.

4.2 Experimental Design

Each subject in the experiment received two vignettes. The first is a hypothetical election vignette which contains four pieces of information: (1) Describe a current war with Moldavia; (2) The state of the economy; (3) The state of the war; and (4) The Mass Media's aggregate signal regarding the war. The scenario depicts a dispute between two hypothetical countries, Moldavia and Vasaria.¹⁶ Moldavia, the belligerent nation, has invaded the bordering nation of Vasaria claiming that Moldavia is the rightful owner of several provinces that are heavily saturated with the natural resource bauxite, which is vital to aluminum production. The vignette continues to explain that Moldavia is trying to acquire nuclear weapons and that access to Vasaria's bauxite will help move their program forward. In the vignette the U.S. obtained a Security Council resolution, the President obtained a unanimous Congressional resolution, public support for war initiation was at 70%, and a defensive attack was launched with several allies to liberate Vasaria. This information is designed to set the stage for a war that was initially popular from the beginning in terms of international and domestic support, but does not reveal any information about whether the mission is worth continuing.

The second piece of information in the fixed election vignette regards the economy. Recall that in the **Prolonging Defeat** equilibrium the Electorate favors the Opposition on issues other than the war. Respondents are told that the economy is struggling and in a slow recovery period. They are told that the unemployment rate has dropped from 7.6% to 7.1% and that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew 1.8% in the second quarter of the current year and that the previous year's growth was 2% percent. The point of this information is to try and set the ξ parameter in favor of the Opposition ($\xi < 0$).

The third section of the election vignette describes the state of the war, ω . This section is designed to paint a picture of a war worth continuing, but not without significant struggle. The vignette works by indexing information to elite sources mimicking a news outlet (Bennett, 2012). For example, the hypothetical general Mark Tramer states, "the U.S. and its allies have won every major battle of the war". However, the mock think tank, the *American Security Foundation*, reports that "the current administration's projections for success may be too optimistic and that there are still major obstacles to overcome". Respondents are told that casualties are rising and the U.S. is engaged in daily combat. The fictional Secretary of State, Denis Robinson, argues that "defending Vasaria is vital to the national welfare of the United States and its allies. Vasaria resides over approximately 20% of the world's supply of bauxite and is an important partner in world trade". The vignette goes on to list casualties and economic costs; casualties in the war have reached 850 killed and 1,500 injured, while the cost of the war is up to \$375 billion. These costs are juxtaposed against previous actual wars (e.g. Korea, Vietnam, the First Iraq War) with two figures which highlight that the War with Moldavia is relatively low in costs, but not the lowest. The vignette also indicates that public support for the war has dropped from 70% when it began to 60% in its current state. Finally, it reveals that the incumbent would continue the war if elected. In the aggregate this portion of the first vignette is designed to signal that the war is worth continuing ($\bar{\omega}$) but not without future costs, which could indicate

¹⁶The war scenario used here has some precedence in experimental political science literature. Mintz (2004) has used a similar hypothetical war scenario based on the first Iraq war to test their poliheuristic decision making theory.

that the information being revealed may be too optimistic.

The last section of the first vignette literally states, “While there are several news outlets that have either praised or condemned the War, the majority of the mass news media have reported that the war is worth continuing in terms of a cost vs. benefit analysis.” This sentence explicitly sets the Media’s signal to $s = h$. All respondents receive this fixed election scenario. The treatment is a randomization of the Opposition Presidential Candidate’s speech.

4.3 The Opposition’s Signal

In the experiment there are two vignette scenarios which are randomly distributed to subjects. The “control” group received the *On the Equilibrium Path* speech. In keeping with **Prolonging Defeat**, the Opposition criticizes the Incumbent on the economy, but tells the Electorate that, if elected, they would continue the War with Moldavia ($\rho = c$). When this signal is given, the model would predict that the Electorate would vote for the Opposition Party Candidate. The “treatment” group receives the *Off the Equilibrium Path* speech. In this speech the Opposition Party Candidate criticizes the Incumbent on the war, specifically stating,

“We cannot afford to lose any more brave solders or spend billions more dollars on this conflict... Moldavia has resorted to insurgent tactics which have escalated U.S. deaths in recent months... It is time to leave the defense of Vasaria to that country’s armed forces and focus on our domestic policies and the economy... When I am elected President of the United States I will take control and end this war.”

In this speech the Opposition also mentions the economy, but mainly focuses on the war setting $\rho = e$. The model would predict that, as long as the Electorate believes the war is worth continuing, if the Opposition politicizes the war by stating they would bring it to an end, the Public would be more likely to elect the Incumbent. Immediately after reading the election vignette and a randomized opposition speech, respondents are asked for their vote choice in the election - this is the dependent variable.

4.4 Hypotheses

H₁: When looked at as an aggregate election, for those that believe the war is worth continuing, the Opposition Party Candidate will win the election when they give the On the Equilibrium Path Speech and loose the election when they give the Off the Equilibrium Path speech.

H₂: Individual respondents who believe the war with Moldavia is worth continuing, will be less likely to vote for the Opposition Party Candidate, after receiving the Off the Equilibrium Path Treatment.

The theory models the electorate as a single actor. The experiment, however, can differentiate between the aggregate electorate and the individual respondent, but the primary unit of analysis is the individual. It simplifies the model to view the Electorate as a single entity, but we can also think of the model as predicting individual responses based on the respective signals. To test the hypotheses, the next section presents a series of Chi-Square tests and Logistic Regressions using the experimental data. It is important to note, that we should not expect the treatment to be significant unless the respondent believes the war is worth continuing. In the *Prolonging Defeat* equilibrium we assume that the aggregate electorate’s belief over

the war crosses the necessary threshold \hat{q}^e and believes that the war is worth continuing. If this condition is not met then the Opposition party no longer needs to strategically “prolong defeat”.

4.5 Results

The simplest way to look at the experimental data is to aggregate the results of the control and treatment conditions as if they were separate elections. Table 1 shows these results. The first election represented by the first column, shows the aggregate results when the Opposition Party gave the On the Equilibrium Path Speech. The second election represented by the second column, shows the aggregate election results when the Opposition Party gave the Off the Equilibrium Path Speech. The Opposition Party loses both elections, and they obtain more votes and lose by a smaller margin when they deviate from the equilibrium path. The results are not significant using a Chi-Square test, where the probability that the observations expected if the relationship between the two nominal variables is random was 0.22. But recall, the more important effect is for respondents that believe the war with Moldavia is worth continuing.

It is also important to note that historical circumstances can affect experiments. This study took place during and directly after the 2012 Presidential election. I hypothesize that many respondents, consciously or subconsciously, conflated the “Incumbent” with Barack Obama and the “Opposition” with Mitt Romney. Given that a large majority of the respondents identified with the Democratic Party, it is highly plausible that vote choice is correlated with the 2012 Election, which is acting as an unobservable variable biasing votes against the Opposition.¹⁷

[Table 1, About Here]

Table 2 presents the results for the two separate elections, but this time both columns subset on respondents who believed the war was worth continuing and received the On or Off the Equilibrium Path speeches, respectively. In the case where respondents believe the war is worth continuing and receive the Off the Equilibrium Path Speech, the Opposition Party Candidate loses the election, getting only 25.17% of the total vote. This is compared to the first column where respondents believed the war is worth continuing and receive the On the Equilibrium Path Speech. Under this condition the Opposition still loses but receives a larger portion of the vote at 38.15%. Each column’s Chi-Square statistic is based on a separate test where the column shown is compared to the group that received the given treatment but did not believe the war is worth continuing. As can be seen, the second column was statistically different from a random distribution, highlighting the difference between scenarios where the war was, and was not, politicized. While the Opposition still loses the election when they stay on the equilibrium path, the results do align with the **Prolonging Defeat** prediction. While I cannot reject the null for H_1 , it can be said that this scenario comes much closer to the model’s prediction and it is clear that the Opposition Party Candidate does better when they stay on the equilibrium path than when they deviate, for voters who believe the war was worth continuing.¹⁸

¹⁷The experiment was conducted in two waves: (1) The Fall 2012 Semester and (2) The Spring 2013 Semester. A majority of the respondents came from the first wave during the election and many responses were collected in October and November of 2012. The second wave of the experiment was conducted in February of 2013 which is still pretty close to the 2012 presidential election. Nevertheless, I analyzed the same data for the Spring 2013 Semester sub-sample (290 total respondents) and the results are the same.

¹⁸Lincoln once said, “Don’t change horses in midstream” referring to changing presidents during wartime. This could be one explanation for why the Opposition isn’t fairsing better in these hypothetical elections. Voters may not want to change Presidents because of the general uncertainty surrounding the Challenger. See Weisberg and Christenson (2007) for a discussion of the 2004 wartime election, President Bush’s leadership image, and the war on terror.

[Table 2, About Here]

The experiment can also be analyzed at the individual level using logistic regression to predict the probability of voting for the Opposition. Recall that the election vignette paints a picture of a struggling economy and a current war that seems successful but has mounting costs. Both Opposition Candidate Speeches are highly negative and the Incumbent never gets to explicate their message. The treatment alone should not present statistically significant results. To truly test the prediction we have to analyze the interaction between the treatment and the belief regarding the war. Model 1 in Table 3 presents the most direct test of H_2 . The table shows that the Off the Equilibrium path treatment increases the likelihood that the respondent will vote for the Opposition Candidate, but for those that believe the war with Moldavia is worth continuing, who also receive the off the equilibrium path treatment, the likelihood of voting for the Opposition significantly decreases.

[Table 3, About Here]

[Table 4, About Here]

Table 4 presents the predicted probabilities from the basic model in Table 3. The causal mechanism in the **Prolonging Defeat** equilibrium is the Electorate's belief about the war. When the Electorate believes the war is worth continuing and the Opposition politicizes the war, the war becomes more prominent in the Electorate's calculus and the Opposition loses the election. However, if the Opposition states they will continue the war, economic and domestic policy becomes more influential to the public, which is assumed to be in favor of the Opposition. Strategically, the Opposition states they will continue the war and goes on to win the election. In the experimental condition, this prediction is clearly borne out. When the respondent believes the war is worth continuing, and the Opposition states they will end the war if elected, the respondent votes for them with the lowest probability and the difference is statistically significant.

Figure 1 plots each predicted probability surrounded by their confidence intervals. When respondents receive the on the equilibrium path treatment, whether they think the war is worth continuing or not does not significantly change their probability for voting for the Opposition, as the confidence intervals for series 1 and 2 overlap. The biggest difference is between series 3 and 4; when the respondent does not believe the war is worth continuing and receives the speech criticizing the war they are very likely to vote with the Opposition (as high as 0.71), but when they believe the war is worth continuing and receive the speech criticizing the war, respondents have the lowest probability of voting for the Opposition (as low as 0.19). This is stark evidence for the theoretical expectation that the politicization of war changes the electoral calculus of voters. As Arena (2008) points out, when both parties have the same issue position on war, the impact that policy area has will be minimal.

[Figure 1, About Here]

Another important difference is that between series 2 and series 4. This is the difference between the on and off the equilibrium path treatment for those that believe the war is worth continuing. The difference is very close to statistical significance at the 0.05 level and shows that when respondents believe the war is worth continuing, the Opposition does better by staying on the equilibrium path (with the confidence intervals overlapping by 0.02). The basic model from the experiment clearly bears out the prediction of **Prolonging Defeat** and highlights that the causal mechanism in the formal model - the Electorate's belief

that the war is worth continuing - is also the independent variable driving the empirical results.

After the experiment was over and the dependent variable and primary independent variables were asked, respondents answered a series of questions which allow us to investigate other explanatory factors. Respondents were asked whether the Opposition's speech was convincing, how strong their preference was for the candidate they chose, how important the war was in their decision, how confident they are in the media, whether they think the media is liberally biased, whether they had a family member in the military, whether war is ever an acceptable policy, party identification, whether the government should intervene in the economy (ideology measure), the proper level of government services (ideology), how often they discuss politics with others (participation), and a series of knowledge question to gauge whether they read the vignettes closely (e.g. how many casualties there were and which natural resource Vasaria had in abundance). Model 2 in Table 3 presents a logistic regression with all the control questions included. It is clear that the finding from the basic model holds and many of the included independent variables are not significant. There are a few variables that deserve to be highlighted.

First, it is easy to see that Democrats were more likely to vote for the Incumbent than the Opposition. The sign for Republicans is also negative but not significant. As stated above, I think this finding can be attributed to the fact that the experiment took place during the 2012 Presidential election and respondents equated the Opposition with Republican candidate Mitt Romney. It is also clear that if the respondents had a strong preference for the the candidate they chose, they were less likely to vote for the Opposition. A comforting finding, that indicates that the treatments were effective, is that when the Opposition's speech was convincing to respondents they are much more likely to vote for the Opposition. Finally, those that finished the experiment and answered the casualties question correct were more likely to vote for the Opposition, potentially because they were more likely to read the vignettes and speeches more closely.¹⁹ None of the other independent variables even came close to statistical significance at the 0.05 or 0.10 levels. Overall, the results of the full model confirm the **Prolonging Defeat** prediction.

Model 3 in Table 3 presents a trimmed model, including only the variables that were found to be significant. Table 5 presents the predicted probabilities for a logistic equation with the interaction term stacked against the Incumbent and in favor of the Opposition. Figure 2 present the predicted probabilities with confidence intervals. The prediction is for a respondent that found the Opposition's speech convincing, did not have a strong preference for their chosen candidate, was a Democrat, and answered the casualties question correct. These values place the respondent heavily in favor of the Opposition. In every case but one, the predicted probability for voting for the Opposition is greater than half. The only cell where the predicted probability for voting for the Opposition is significantly below 50% is when the respondent believes the war is worth continuing and received the off the equilibrium path speech. In this particular case, predicted probability 2 on the graph is not statistically significant from predicted probability 4, but given the evidence compiled this far it is clear that the Opposition is still better off staying on the equilibrium path when respondents believe the war is worth continuing. Series 3 and 4 of Figure 2 again highlight the consequences of politicizing a war - the electorate becomes divided and the war becomes an important issue in the decision calculus of voters.

¹⁹I also ran a model where I included whether the respondents answered the natural resource question correct and the result are the same.

[Table 5, About Here]

[Figure 2, About Here]

4.6 Mechanical Turk Reduced Experiment

Since student subjects are often criticized as being insufficient for various reasons - such as the fact that they tend to be younger, tend to be more liberal, or tend to have lower incomes - I have conducted a sub-experiment using Amazon's *Mechanical Turk* (MTurk) to get access to a different set of respondents. MTurk is an on-line web-based platform for recruiting and paying subjects to perform tasks. MTurk allows researchers to access a large pool of subjects at a much lower costs in terms of both time and money. Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) argued that MTurk is a valuable subject recruitment tool. MTurk tends to have a more representative and diverse subject pools in terms of demographic characteristics than student convenience samples. For this study, the MTurk on-line labor pool was used to provide a check on my student sample.

The MTurk recruitment process involves paying subjects a fee for completing a task. I offered 0.50 cents to complete an abridged version of the experiment described above. The vignettes contained no figures and non-essential content was removed. In the end, the MTurk experiment was not significantly shorter than the original and contained all the information already discussed in the previous sections. The average time per assignment was 8 minutes, compared to 10 minutes for the student sample. In total, I was able to acquire 138 MTurk subjects. The sample was 54% male and 46% female. The average age for respondents was 36 years old, and the range was between 18 and 66 years old - much more diverse than the student population. In terms of education, 10.87% had a high school diploma or GED, 22.46% had some college, 7.25% had a 2-year degree, 39.86% had a 4-year degree, 14.49% had a masters degree, and 5.07% had a doctoral or professional degree. The average income range was between \$30,000 and \$39,999, with 51.45% of the subjects making less than \$30,000 and 34.05% making \$40,000 or more. All the respondents were from the United States, except one, which was from Canada. Subjects also came from all over the U.S. with good regional variation. In terms of partisanship, 45.65% was Democratic, 21.74% was Republican, and 31.16% was Independent. The M-Turk experiment was conducted in April of 2013 and the results were acquired quickly. A huge benefit to M-Turk is that respondents were required to complete the experiment before they received the compensation, this led to a very minimal drop-off rate, as most subjects that began the task completed it.²⁰

Table 6, Model 1 presents the results from the basic logistic regression. The results reinforce the students sample. Table 7 and Figure 3 contain the predicted probabilities from the basic model. Again, the difference between respondents that believe the war is worth continuing and receive the on the equilibrium path speech (0.46) and respondents that believe the war is worth continuing and receive the off the equilibrium path speech (0.21) are very close to being significantly different from each other, as the confidence intervals overlap by only 0.078. When foreign policy is politicized it becomes highly salient and the difference between series 3 and 4 is statistically significant. The expectations of the *Wartime Elections Game* and the **Prolonging Defeat** equilibrium are clearly borne out. When the treatment is effective, and the respondent

²⁰This also stems from offering fair compensation. My MTurk respondents earned an average of over \$5.00 an hour for most batches and this gives a good incentive to take-on and complete the task.

believes the war is worth continuing, they are significantly less likely to vote for the Opposition Party when they campaign on ending the war.

[Table 6, About Here]

[Table 7, About Here]

[Figure 3, About Here]

Model 2 in Table 6 presents a model with the entire set of control variables. The only significant control variable in the model is whether or not the Opposition's Speech was convincing. The variable of interest for the experiment, the interaction between the treatment condition and the belief for whether the war is worth continuing, is marginally significant at the 10% level and has the correct sign. I suspect that with a larger sample size the effects would be more sharp. One thing to highlight is the Democrat and Republican variables. In the MTurk experiment the signs on each variable are in the right direction but do not reach significance. This may highlight a difference between the student sample and the MTurk sample and the time-line of the experiments. The M-Turk experiment took place in April 2013, while the other experiment took place between, during, and directly after the 2012 Presidential election. The MTurk results seem to show that as we move further from the election and possibly a less politically savvy sample, the unconscious or conscious effect of conflating the Opposition with Mitt Romney disappears.²¹ Overall the MTurk experiments demonstrate more evidence for the expectation of the model and provide a good robustness check on the larger student sample.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

I have presented two interesting equilibria from the *Wartime Elections Game* in which the Opposition behaved strategically in their quest to be elected. The two solutions presented yield unexpected results given the normatively favorable assumptions. The game provides the public with an unbiased but potentially inaccurate news media and an opposition party that values some objective national welfare in conjunction with winning the election. Rather than simply mirroring partisan conflict among elites, the public is Bayesian and utilizes the information environment to update their beliefs when making their decisions. Under these conditions it is still possible for democratic decision making to lead to suboptimal policy outcomes.

The research question of whether citizens can make decisions that are in their best interest without having the political knowledge to do so has been an important part of the American politics literature (Lupia and McCubbins, 1998; Lupia, 1994, 1992; Popkin, 1991). Scholars have found that elite cues, such as party identification (Popkin, 1991) or which groups supports a ballot proposition (Lupia, 1994) can allow citizens to make decisions which are consistent with their preferences even when they know little else. The Wartime Elections game demonstrates that even if we allow the public to be well informed, it is still possible for them to make decisions that are not consistent with their preferences if they had complete information.

²¹Democratic respondents were not more likely to vote for the Opposition like the student sample. This could be because the experiment took place further away from the 2012 election. But it may also represent a sample less interested in politics, given that the students sample came entirely from political science classes. I expect that it is a combination of both elements.

The model also shows that both events-based information and elite cues can be significant for public opinion formation. In the **Prolonging Defeat** equilibrium the inaccuracy of the Media's signal and its influence on public opinion drives the Opposition's decision not to politicize the war. For the **Opposing Victory** equilibrium the Opposition attempts to alter the Electorate's belief by politicizing the war, making it the most salient issue. By modeling public opinion during wartime elections as a set of strategic decisions we are able to understand public opinion as a function of the upcoming political contest and the Opposition's desire to win. Wars can be highly salient issues during elections and can make or break the Incumbent president. The theory provides an explanation for why the opposition may break rank with the incumbent even when they initially voted in favor of war.

The results also have implications for research which links democratic accountability to war initiation, continuation, and electoral results. For example, many scholars have argued that democracies are different from autocratic regimes because those in power require relatively high levels of public approval to initiate and continue conflicts. When the electorate doubts whether a war has brought more benefit than reward they will use elections to punish the incumbent (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson, 1995). Accountability has also been used to explain why democracies are more likely to choose conflicts they are likely to win, while also being more likely to accept draws or even defeats the longer a war is waged (Reiter and Stam, 2002). However, the model suggests that even under conditions where a war is worth continuing and the incumbent should be rewarded, strategic resistance to the conflict by the opposition party may be the dominant signal, causing an end to the incumbent's reign. The possibility that the public is unable to come to the correct conclusion given the relatively generous assumptions is problematic for theories which identify clear lines of democratic accountability as a driving force behind foreign policy decision making, especially war policy.

The model presents a new way to understand public opinion and war termination. While the primary goal was to investigate the effects of biased and accurate signals, the model is a broad theory of public opinion. Although my results are only possibilities, the model helps us to think about public opinion and war differently.²² Few scholars have unified the two theoretical positions of elites cues and events-based updating. By modeling and empirically testing decisions in terms of an election, the theory comes closer to uncovering why strategic political actors may take a different stance on the war from when it was first proposed and how that signal can affect public opinion and the results of an election, specifically for independents.

The *Wartime Elections* game provides a theoretical construct for understanding public opinion during wartime and its potential impact on elections. It builds on events-based and elite-based theories but offers a different conclusion. When the public perceives the Opposition to have a relatively high value for the national welfare, they are more likely to believe that their message is genuine, and end a war that was worth continuing. This happens even when the Media has reported the correct conclusion. The biased signal can be dominant because the unbiased signal is known to be inaccurate. However, when the war is going poorly, it is possible that the Opposition will fail to politicize the war because doing so could cause them to lose the election, specifically when the media has inaccurately signaled that the war is worth fighting. Both of these possibilities are tragic and the fact that they can be derived from assumptions favorable to

²²This is akin to what Clarke and Primo (2012) call an exploratory model, which is used to investigate possible causal mechanisms.

democracy is counterintuitive. The ability to derive surprising conclusions from highly normative assumptions tells us that the relationship between democratic accountability and war is highly complex and that changing or altering the way the electorate consumes and uses information may not actually lead to better electoral decisions.

6 Tables and Figures

Table 1: Aggregate Election Results
Treatment

		On EQ Path	Off EQ Path	Total
<i>Vote Choice</i>	Incumbent	183 (60.60%)	167 (55.67%)	350 (58.14%)
	Opposition	119 (39.40%)	133 (44.33%)	252 (41.86%)
<i>Total</i>		302 (100%)	300 (100%)	602 (100%)

* χ^2 1.025, Prob 0.22

Table 2: Aggregate Election Results, War Worth Continuing Subsample
Treatment

		On EQ Path	Off EQ Path	Total
<i>Vote Choice</i>	Incumbent	107 (61.85%)	113 (74.83%)	220 (67.90%)
	Opposition	66 (38.15%)	38 (25.17%)	104 (32.09%)
<i>Total</i>		173 (100%)	151 (100%)	324 (100%)

*Column 1: χ^2 1.533, Prob 0.216. Column 2: χ^2 23.67, Prob 0.000

Table 3: Logit Regression, Vote For the Opposition Student Sample

	Basic Model (1)	Full Model (2)	Trimmed Model (3)
Off the EQ Path Treatment	.917 (.249)***	.719 (.312)**	.867 (.297)**
War Worth Continuing	-.149 (.238)	-.409 (.313)	-.420 (.292)
Off EQ*War Worth Cont.	-1.524 (.348)***	-1.425 (.428)**	-1.539 (.412)**
Opp. Speech Convincing		2.058 (.298)***	2.072 (.291)***
Strong Candidate Preference		-.744 (.264)***	-.724 (.256)***
War an Important Issue		-.240 (.313)	
Government Intervention in the Economy		-.130 (.155)	
Level of Government Services/Spending		-.083 (.082)	
War as Policy OK		-.226 (.293)	
Day Talk Politics		-.003 (.004)	
Democrat		-1.043 (.391)***	-1.102 (.361)***
Republican		-.248 (.438)	-.024 (.375)
Media Has Liberal Bias		.060 (.256)	
Casualties Correct		.648 (.233)***	.790 (.223)**
Family in the Military		-.012 (.220)	
Constant	-.334 (.180)*	-.020 (.718)	-1.118 (.484)**
N	599	493	537
Pseudo R ²	0.06	0.19	0.20
χ ²	49.21***	130.652***	147.931***

†Standard Error in Parentheses: *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.001

Table 4: Pred. Prob. Vote For Opp. Treat.*War Worth Cont. Basic Model, Student Sample

	<i>On EQ*War Worth Cont. (0)</i>	<i>Off EQ*War Worth Cont. (1)</i>
<i>War Worth Cont.(0)</i>	0.418	0.640
<i>War Worth Cont.(1)</i>	0.382	0.253

Figure 1: Predicted Probabilities with Confidence Intervals, Basic Model Student Sample

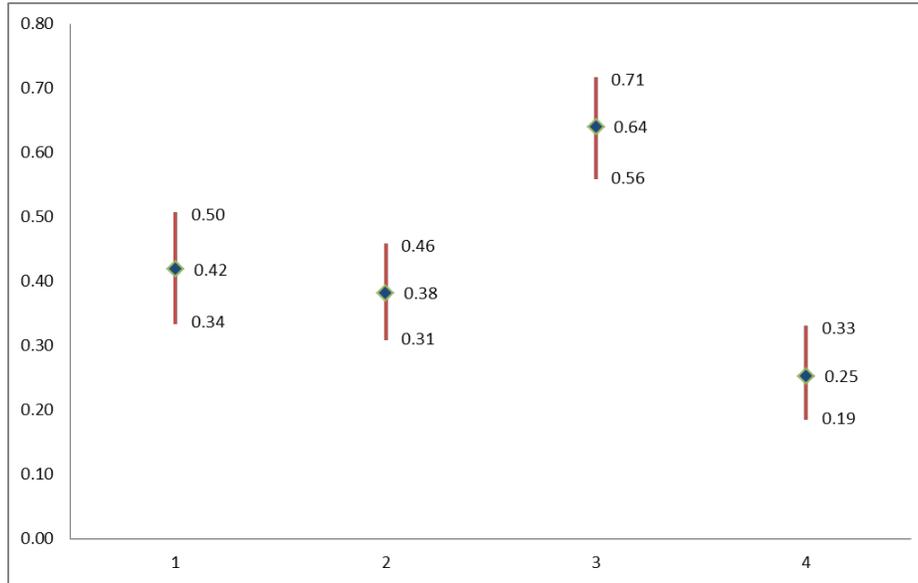


Table 5: Pred. Probab. Vote For Opp. Treat.*War Worth Cont. Trimmed Model, Student Sample

	<i>On EQ*War Worth Cont. (0)</i>	<i>Off EQ*War Worth Cont. (1)</i>
<i>War Worth Cont.(0)</i>	0.65	0.81
<i>War Worth Cont.(1)</i>	0.55	0.39

*Speech Convincing = 1; Strong Preference = 0; Democrat = 1; Rep = 0; Casualties Correct = 1.

Figure 2: Predicted Probabilities with Confidence Intervals, Trimmed Model

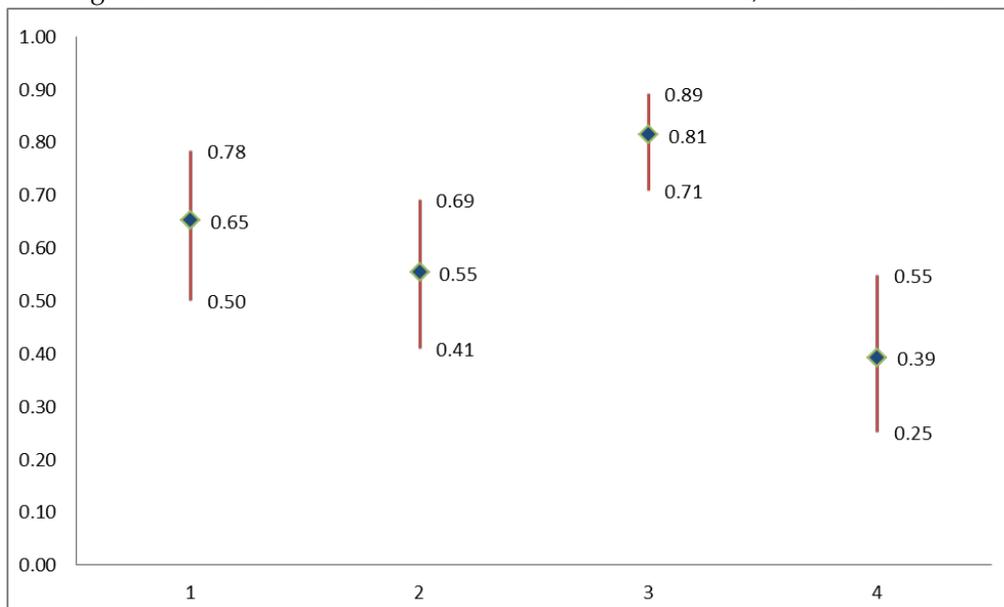


Table 6: Logit Regression, Vote For the Opposition MTurk Sample

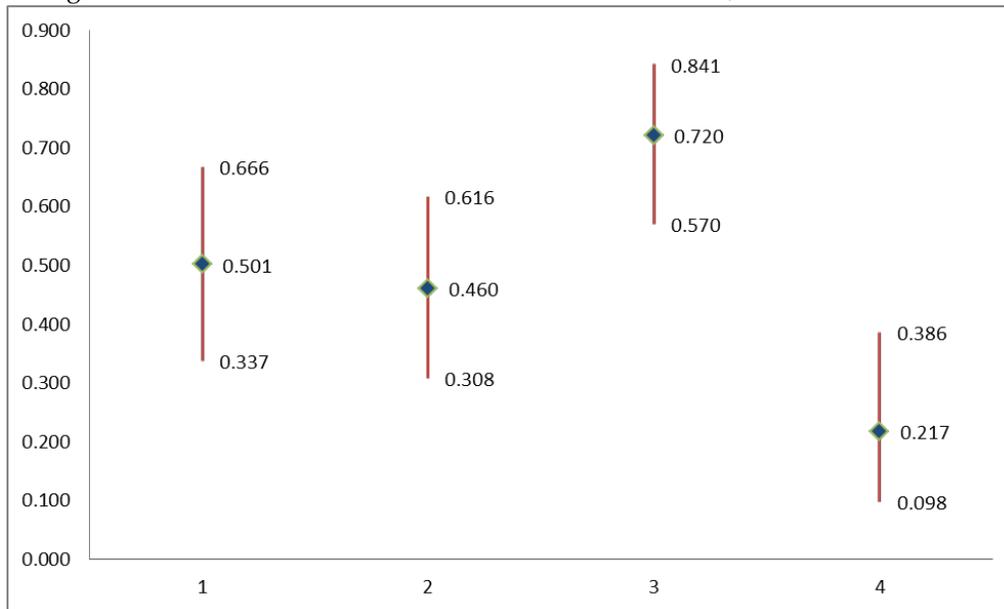
	Basic Model (1)	Full Model (2)	Trimmed Model (3)
Off the EQ Path Treatment	.969 (.500)*	.340 (.697)	.045 (.656)
War Worth Continuing	-.163 (.484)	-.691 (.702)	-.806 (.643)
Off EQ*War Worth Cont.	-2.151 (.755)***	-1.546 (.971)	-1.528 (.924)*
Opp. Speech Convincing		2.794 (.729)***	2.854 (.704)***
Strong Candidate Preference		.090 (.573)	.091 (.514)
War an Important Issue		-.360 (.744)	
Government Intervention in the Economy		-.112 (.390)	
Level of Government Services/Spending		-.118 (.149)	
War as Policy OK		-.410 (.590)	
Day Talk Politics		-.171 (.137)	
Democrat		-.180 (.804)	-.115 (.679)
Republican		.288 (.894)	.882 (.767)
Media Has Liberal Bias		.820 (.570)	
Casualties Correct		.852 (.532)	1.268 (.497)**
Family in the Military		-.542 (.524)	
Constant	0.000 (.354)	-.889 (1.625)	-2.818 (.966)***
N	138	126	136
Pseudo R ²	0.10	0.31	0.30
χ ²	19.246***	54.13***	57.141***

†Standard Error in Parentheses; *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.001

Table 7: Pred. Prob. Vote For Opp. Treat.*War Worth Cont. Basic Model, MTurk Sample

	<i>On EQ*War Worth Cont. (0)</i>	<i>Off EQ*War Worth Cont. (1)</i>
<i>War Worth Cont.(0)</i>	0.501	0.720
<i>War Worth Cont.(1)</i>	0.460	0.217

Figure 3: Predicted Probabilities with Confidence Intervals, Basic Model M-Turk



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Appendix

A Opposing Victory Equilibrium (Semi-Separating)

A.1 Proposition 1

\exists a semi-separating equilibrium where the true value of $\omega = \bar{\omega}$; $\xi \geq 0$; O signals $\rho = e$ with probability $\frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}}$ when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$ and signals $\rho = e$ when $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; M correctly reports $s = h$; and E elects O with the belief $q_h^e \leq \hat{q}^e \Rightarrow \frac{q \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}}(\alpha)}{q \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}}(\alpha) + 1(1-q)(1-\alpha)} \leq \frac{-(\omega + \xi)}{\bar{\omega} - \omega}$.

A.2 E's Beliefs

$$q_h^c = Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = h, \rho = c) = q_h^c = \frac{q(1 - \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}})(\alpha)}{q(1 - \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}})(\alpha) + 0(1-q)(1-\alpha)} = 1 \quad (1)$$

$$q_l^c = Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = l, \rho = c) = q_l^c = \frac{q(1 - \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}})(1-\alpha)}{q(1 - \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}})(1-\alpha) + 0(1-q)(\alpha)} = 1 \quad (2)$$

$$q_h^e = Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = h, \rho = e) = q_h^e = \frac{q \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}}(\alpha)}{q \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}}(\alpha) + 1(1-q)(1-\alpha)} \quad (3)$$

$$q_l^e = Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = l, \rho = e) = q_l^e = \frac{q \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}}(1-\alpha)}{q \frac{\beta}{i\bar{\omega}}(1-\alpha) + 1(1-q)(\alpha)} \quad (4)$$

A.3 Will O and E Abide?

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = e$ iff: $q_h^e(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^e)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h^e(\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}) \geq -(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \Rightarrow q_h^e \bar{\omega} + q_h^e \xi + \underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^e \underline{\omega} - q_h^e \xi \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h^e \geq \hat{q}^e$

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = c$ iff: $q_l^c(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_l^c)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq q_l^c(\bar{\omega}) + (1 - q_l^c)(\underline{\omega}) \Rightarrow q_h^c \bar{\omega} + q_h^c \xi + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c \underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^c \xi \geq q_h^c \bar{\omega} + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c \underline{\omega} \Rightarrow \xi \geq 0$; which is true by assumption.

O will abide by the stipulated strategy iff: $\beta \geq \omega \iota$. Thus, $\frac{\beta}{\omega \iota}$ is the probability that O will play $\rho = e$ when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$. O 's decision will be dependent on the size of ι and $\bar{\omega}$.

Q.E.D.

B Prolonging Defeat Equilibrium (Pooling On $\rho = c$)

B.1 Proposition 2

\exists a pooling equilibrium where the true value of $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; $\xi \leq 0$; O signals $\rho = c$ regardless of ω ; M mistakenly reports $s = h$; and E elects O with the belief $q_h \geq \hat{q}$

B.2 E's Beliefs

$$q_h = Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = h) = \frac{\alpha q}{\alpha q + (1 - \alpha)(1 - q)} \quad (5)$$

$$q_l = Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = l) = \frac{(1 - \alpha)q}{(1 - \alpha)q + \alpha(1 - q)} \quad (6)$$

B.3 Will O and E Abide?

O will abide by the stipulated strategy iff: $\beta + (\omega l) \geq \omega l \Rightarrow \beta \geq 0$. This will be true for any value of ω and l .

E will elect I when O sends signal $\rho = c$ iff: $q_h^c(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^c)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq q_h^c(\bar{\omega}) + (1 - q_h^c)(\underline{\omega}) \Rightarrow q_h^c \bar{\omega} + q_h^c \xi + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c \underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^c \xi \geq q_h^c \bar{\omega} + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c \underline{\omega} \Rightarrow \xi \geq 0$

E will elect I when O sends signal $\rho = e$ iff: $q_h^e(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^e)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h^e(\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}) \geq -(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \Rightarrow q_h^e \bar{\omega} + q_h^e \xi + \underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^e \underline{\omega} - q_h^e \xi \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h \geq \hat{q}^e$, which we have assumed to be true.

Q.E.D.

C Select General Separating Equilibria

C.1 Proposition 3

\exists a separating equilibrium where the true value of $\omega = \bar{\omega}$; $\xi > 0$; M correctly reports $s = h$; O signals $\rho = c$ when the $\omega = \bar{\omega}$ and $\rho = e$ when $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; and E elects I when $\xi \geq 0$ with belief $q_h^c = 1$ and elects O with the belief $q_h^e \leq \hat{q}^e$.

C.2 E's Beliefs

$$Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = h, \rho = c) = q_h^c = \frac{q(1)(\alpha)}{q(1)(\alpha) + 0(1 - q)(1 - \alpha)} \Rightarrow q_h^c = 1 \quad (7)$$

$$Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = l, \rho = c) = q_l^c = \frac{q(0)(1 - \alpha)}{q(0)(1 - \alpha) + 1(1 - q)(\alpha)} \Rightarrow q_l^c = 0 \quad (8)$$

$$Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = h, \rho = e) = q_h^e = \frac{q(0)(\alpha)}{q(0)(\alpha) + 1(1 - q)(1 - \alpha)} \Rightarrow q_h^e = 0 \quad (9)$$

$$Pr(\omega = \bar{\omega} | s = l, \rho = e) = q_l^e = \frac{q(1)(1 - \alpha)}{q(1)(1 - \alpha) + 0(1 - q)(\alpha)} \Rightarrow q_l^e = 1 \quad (10)$$

C.3 Will O and E Abide?

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = c$ iff: $q_h^c(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^c)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq q_h^c(\bar{\omega}) + (1 - q_h^c)(\underline{\omega}) \Rightarrow q_h^c \bar{\omega} + q_h^c \xi + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c \underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^c \xi \geq q_h^c \bar{\omega} + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c \underline{\omega} \Rightarrow \xi \geq 0$; which we have assumed to be true.

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = e$ iff: $q_h^e(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^e)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h^e \bar{\omega} + q_h^e \xi + \underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^e \underline{\omega} - q_h^e \xi \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h^e(\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}) \geq -(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \Rightarrow q_h^e \geq \frac{-(\underline{\omega} + \xi)}{\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}} \equiv \hat{q}^e$; in this case $q_h^e = 0$, and thus E will not elect I .

$$q_h^e \geq \frac{-(\underline{\omega} + \xi)}{\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}} \equiv \hat{q}^e \quad (11)$$

O will abide by the stipulated strategy iff: $\omega_l \geq \beta$, which cannot be true if $\omega = \underline{\omega}$ but may be true for some values of $\omega = \bar{\omega}$; given the stated equilibrium (where $\omega = \bar{\omega}$) O may play the stipulated strategy depending on their value over the national well-being and the size of $\bar{\omega}$.

C.4 Proposition 3a

\exists a separating equilibrium where the true value of $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; $\xi > 0$; M correctly reports $s = l$; O signals $\rho = c$ when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$ and $\rho = e$ when $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; and E elects O with belief $q_1^e = 0$.

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = e$ iff: $q_1^e(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_1^e)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_1^e\bar{\omega} + q_1^e\xi + \underline{\omega} + \xi - q_1^e\underline{\omega} - q_1^e\xi \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_1^e(\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}) \geq -(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \Rightarrow q_1^e \geq \frac{-(\underline{\omega} + \xi)}{\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}}$; in this case $q_1^e = 0$ and thus E will not elect I .

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = c$ iff: $q_1^c(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_1^c)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq q_1^c(\bar{\omega}) + (1 - q_1^c)(\underline{\omega}) \Rightarrow q_1^c\bar{\omega} + q_1^c\xi + \underline{\omega} - q_1^c\underline{\omega} + \xi - q_1^c\xi \geq q_1^c\bar{\omega} + \underline{\omega} - q_1^c\underline{\omega} \Rightarrow \xi \geq 0$; which we have assumed to be true.

O will abide by the stipulate equilibrium iff: $\beta \geq \omega_l$ which must be true when $\omega = \underline{\omega}$, but is not necessarily true when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$; given the stated equilibrium (where $\omega = \underline{\omega}$), O will play the stipulated strategy.

C.5 Proposition 3b

\exists a separating equilibrium where the true value of $\omega = \bar{\omega}$; $\xi < 0$; M correctly reports $s = h$; O signals $\rho = c$ when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$ and $\rho = e$ when $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; and E elects O with belief $q_h^e = 0$.

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = c$ iff: $q_h^c(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^c)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq q_h^c(\bar{\omega}) + (1 - q_h^c)(\underline{\omega}) \Rightarrow q_h^c\bar{\omega} + q_h^c\xi + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c\underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^c\xi \geq q_h^c\bar{\omega} + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c\underline{\omega} \Rightarrow \xi \geq 0$; by assumption this is not true.

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = e$ iff: $q_h^e(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^e)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h^e\bar{\omega} + q_h^e\xi + \underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^e\underline{\omega} - q_h^e\xi \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h^e(\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}) \geq -(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \Rightarrow q_h^e \geq \frac{-(\underline{\omega} + \xi)}{\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}}$; in this case $q_h^e = 0$, and thus E will not elect I .

O will abide by the stipulated strategy iff: $\beta + \omega_l \geq \beta$, which must be true when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$ but may not be true when $\omega = \underline{\omega}$. The given equilibrium does holds.

C.6 Proposition 3c

\exists a separating equilibrium where the true value of $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; $\xi < 0$; M correctly reports $s = h$; O signals $\rho = c$ when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$ and $\rho = e$ when $\omega = \underline{\omega}$; and E elects O with belief $q_h^e = 0$.

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = c$ iff: $q_h^c(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^c)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq q_h^c(\bar{\omega}) + (1 - q_h^c)(\underline{\omega}) \Rightarrow q_h^c\bar{\omega} + q_h^c\xi + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c\underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^c\xi \geq q_h^c\bar{\omega} + \underline{\omega} - q_h^c\underline{\omega} \Rightarrow \xi \geq 0$; by assumption this is not true.

E will elect I when O reports $\rho = e$ iff: $q_h^e(\bar{\omega} + \xi) + (1 - q_h^e)(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h^e\bar{\omega} + q_h^e\xi + \underline{\omega} + \xi - q_h^e\underline{\omega} - q_h^e\xi \geq 0 \Rightarrow q_h^e(\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}) \geq -(\underline{\omega} + \xi) \Rightarrow q_h^e \geq \frac{-(\underline{\omega} + \xi)}{\bar{\omega} - \underline{\omega}}$; in this case $q_h^e = 0$, and thus E will not elect I .

O will abide by the stipulated strategy iff: $\beta + \omega_l \geq \beta$, which must be true when $\omega = \bar{\omega}$ and will not be true when $\omega = \underline{\omega}$. The given equilibrium will hold.

C.7 Corollary 1

When O separates, E can learn nothing from M and thus M 's signal is irrelevant.

D Experimental Vignettes

D.1 Election Vignette

The incumbent president has been in office for about three and a half years and a Presidential Election is fast approaching. The economy is currently struggling but in a slow recovery period. The unemployment rate has decreased slowly from approximately 7.6% to 7.1% and has continued to decrease but not enough to make a significant difference. The economy has been expanding, but growth has been slow to moderate. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose 1.8% in the second quarter of this year and last years growth was 2% percent. The U.S. is also involved in a major war abroad.

Three years ago the country of Moldavia invaded the neighboring country of Vasaria which was rich in several natural resources, including iron ore, bauxite, and nickel. Moldavia claimed rightful ownership of two bordering Vasaria provinces rich in natural resources. For the last ten years, Moldavia has been focused on acquiring nuclear weapons and many security experts have argued that Moldavia could use the money from the acquisition of Vasarias natural resources to step up their weapons program. If Moldavia is successful they will control a significant portion of the world's bauxite, which is vital to aluminum production. They would be able to disrupt world markets by holding back supply, dramatically increasing prices. Vasaria is a vital trading partner with the U.S., the E.U., and the many other countries.

After obtaining a United Nations Security Council resolution and obtaining a Congressional resolution by a unanimous vote, the Incumbent administration in conjunction with several allies, launched a defensive attack from within Vasaria to liberate the nation. In a recent interview with The World Chronicle, General Mark Tramer reported that the U.S. and its allies have won every major battle of the war. However, experts at the American Security Foundation think tank reported that the current administrations projections for success may be too optimistic and that there are still major obstacles to overcome. Coalition forces are engaged in daily combat and casualties continue to rise. The Secretary of Defense Denis Robinson, in an interview with 60 Minutes, stated that defending Vasaria is vital to the national welfare of the United States and its allies. Vasaria resides over approximately 20% of the world's supply of bauxite and is an important partner in world trade.

The U.S. has approximately 200,000 troops in the region and has spent approximately \$375 billion dollars on military operations since the beginning of the war, according to the Congressional Research Service. Total U.S. casualties to date for the war has been 850 killed and another 1,800 injured. When the war began approximately 70% of the public indicated that the United States was right to attack. Currently, about 60% of the American public approves of the war. The incumbent administration indicates that if they were elected they would continue military operations in Vasaria until all objectives were complete. To place the cost of the war in context, Figures 1 and 2 compare the current conflict with past conflicts since 1950. When the war in

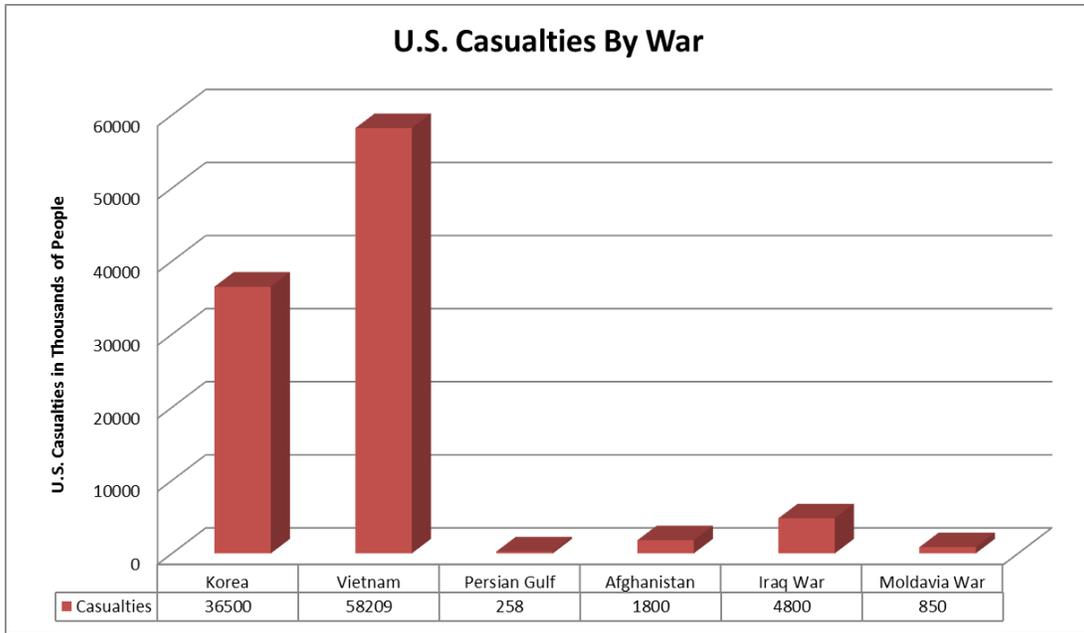


Figure 4: U.S. Casualties by War

Moldavia is compared in terms of human and financial costs it is second only to the Persian Gulf War as the least expensive war since Korea.

When looked at in the aggregate the majority of the mass news media's stories have been positive regarding the present state of the war. While there are several news outlets that have either praised or condemned the War, the majority of the mass news media have reported that the war is worth continuing in terms of a cost vs. benefit analysis.

D.2 Equilibrium Treatment Signal

Select Remarks of Current Presidential Candidate from the Opposition Party Delivered in His Most Recent Speech
 Opposition Party Candidates Speech on Jobs and the Economy
 Washington, D.C.

The most important issue in this campaign is the economy. We are entering an election year where millions of Americans are out of work and struggling. The unemployment rate is well above average and the current administration's policies have been unsuccessful at significantly reducing the number of people out of work. The United States' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose only 1.8 percent in the second quarter of this year and last year's growth was a mere 2 percent. The President's policies have made it harder for our economy to recover and the current administration does not have a plan to secure our country's future...

Every city I visit, I hear frustration and disappointment in the lack of economic progress of the past three and a half years. If I am elected president I have a plan to create over 600,000 jobs in the first year of my term. I have a plan to get the middle class back on track and help small businesses expand. We cannot afford another 4 years of the current administration's economic policies. It is time to change course and implement economic policies which grow the economy and get the U.S. out of its current economic state...

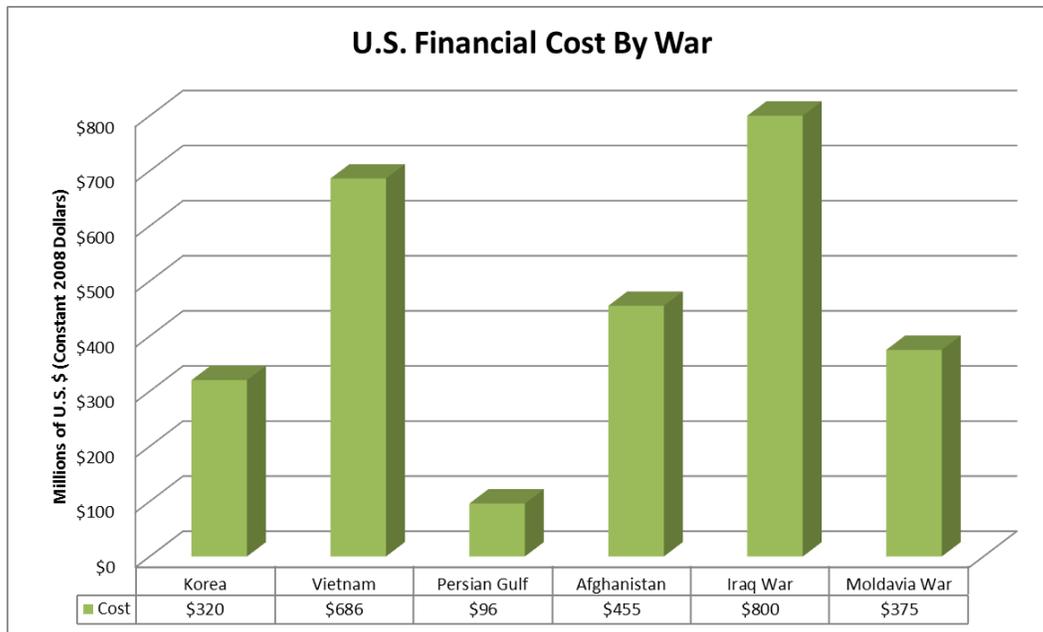


Figure 5: U.S. Financial Cost by War

Another important issue in this campaign involves the judgment of the candidates on foreign policy. We are entering an election year where the United States is actively involved in an important war. Moldavia has demonstrated that it is a belligerent nation with a desire to expand its power within its own region and across the world. This crisis is a vital threat to the safety and security of this country and the international community. And this is why I was one of the first politicians to state unequivocally that we should respond with military force as the President has done. I will continue our successful war policy, but I will not forget about how people are hurting in our current economy...

Not only are my economic policies better, but I have a plan to enhance our education system, cut-down political corruption, significantly reduce crime, and get our country back on a track toward prosperity. We have a sacred duty to restore the promise of America. And we will do it. We will do it because we believe in America...

May God bless this great nation, the United States of America.

Thank you all very, very much.

D.3 Off the Equilibrium-Path Signal

Select Remarks of Current Presidential Candidate from the Opposition Party Delivered in His Most Recent Speech

Opposition Party Candidates Speech on The War in Moldavia
Washington, D.C.

One of the most important questions in this campaign involves the judgment of the candidates on foreign policy. We are entering an election year where the United States is actively involved in an important war. Moldavia has demonstrated that it is a belligerent nation with a desire to expand its power within its own region and across the world. However, this crisis fails to be a vital threat to the safety and security of this country or the international community...

The incumbent President immediately responded to Moldavias invasion of Vasaria by obtaining

a United Nations resolution and then sending 200,000 U.S. troops into combat. When it came time to confront Moldavia's invasion of Vasaria with an international coalition united in its resolve and purpose, the President displayed fortitude, skill, and leadership. However, as the war raged on it was clear that the President's policies have failed to achieve victory and led us into a long and costly war. We have been in Vasaria going on three years now, and Moldavia still holds several Vasaria cities and sends more troops every month. Sadly, we have lost 850 brave soldiers and almost 2,000 injured men and women fill our VA hospitals. The U.S. must withdraw from this war, but the current administration's strategy is to continue to fight a high-priced conflict, for which the benefits will not outweigh the costs...

We cannot afford to lose any more brave soldiers or spend billions more dollars on this conflict. The war has already cost U.S. taxpayers \$375 billion. It is estimated that the war could cost almost \$600 billion over the next few years, as the U.S. escalates its presence in the region. As it stands now, U.S. and allied forces have forced Moldavia out from most Vasaria provinces and the war has become a quagmire. Moldavia has resorted to insurgent tactics which have escalated U.S. deaths in recent months. We cannot afford another Vietnam or Iraq War. It is time to leave the defense of Vasaria to that country's armed forces and focus on our domestic policies and the economy, for which the President's policies have also been a failure. The current policies of the administration are ineffective at achieving their stated foreign policy goals and have led the U.S. into a conflict that can last ten years or more...

When I am elected President of the United States I will take control and end this war. My administration will bring our military personnel home to their families within a swift timeline of less than a year. My administration will transfer the responsibility of security back to Vasaria. Going forward, I will retain a transitional force of U.S. troops in Vasaria with a different mission: advising and assisting Vasaria's Security Forces; supporting Vasaria troops in targeted missions against Moldavia strong-holds; and protecting our civilians. Our troops have been valiant during this conflict and we thank them for their dedication and bravery. It is time we bring them home.

May God bless this great nation, the United States of America.

Thank you all very, very much.