OVER THE HILL AND OVER THE RIDGE:

EFFECTS OF AGE ON CONGRESSIONAL VOTING FOR MILITARY DISPUTES

by

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(Under the Direction of Daniel W. Hill Jr.)

ABSTRACT

International relations scholars have sought to understand why, and under what circumstances, states go to war. The United States Congress plays an important role in the initiation and escalation of force of the United States military. Given this, it would be helpful to identify potential predictors for how members of Congress vote in regards to military use of force. Specifically, this study looks at how the age and veteran status of a member of Congress affects the way in which they vote. The overall population of members of Congress see an increase of support for military action as age increases. However, veterans in Congress exhibit a steady decline of support for military action as they age, while non-veterans experience a steady increase. We can then conclude that the continuing trend of an older Congress, with a decline of veterans in office, has potential implications for voting outcomes on defense policy.

INDEX WORDS: Age, Veteran Status, United States Congress, State Leaders, Public Opinion, Militarized Interstate Disputes, Use of Force, Roll Call Votes

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

International relations scholars have sought to understand why, and under what circumstances, states go to war. As we cannot personify states, it is important that we address the people behind them that make the decisions. The executive branch has long been identified as the sole instrument of foreign policy decision making for the United States, especially in matters involving the United States military and its employment in war matters. Although the United States Congress has been granted the authority to raise and maintain US troops, and their approval is constitutionally required for the deployment of US troops, scholars of history and of political science have concluded that the role of Congress in the use of US military force is minimal, if not irrelevant. This convention has finally begun to be questioned and testing has shown that Congress does in fact matter. Given this, it would be beneficial to explore what factors may influence members to vote in support, or opposition, of a forceful foreign policy. The purpose of this study then is to determine how we may expect them to vote in legislation related to militarized interstate disputes. Given the lack of literature on this subject, we had to base our theories in research done on state leaders and public opinion. This study finds that members of Congress behave more like state leaders when voting on militarized interstate disputes (MIDS). As members of Congress age, they are more likely to support MIDS. However, veteran status modifies this effect, as veterans become less supportive as they age.

CONGRESS MATTERS

The convention that Congress was irrelevant to MIDS was finally put to the test by Howell and Pevehouse (2005), which found that this was unreliable and that Congress does in fact influence use of force. When considering the major uses of force and United States MIDS, there are clear indicators of congressional influence. They examined congressional characteristics involving series of partisanship measurements, such as the presence of a unified government, percent of presidential party in Congress, and the strength of the presidential party's power. Other domestic political factors that were examined and found to be significant in multiple models were unemployment rates, the current MIDS involvement of the US, and whether it took place during the Cold War. Ultimately, they concluded that Congress plays a pointed role in determining the use of force, disparaging those studies that ignore and assume it away as being insignificant and thus exclude it from their models.

Furthermore, the notion exists that the executive branch is restrained by Congress only in ceremony, but that it may act unilaterally and simply ask for forgiveness rather than ask for permission. While this may be the case at times, we now know that Congress does in fact matter. Determining the direct link between Congressional preference and their voting behavior seems more valuable than the final outcomes of MIDS initiation. By studying this, we are able to strengthen the causal mechanism between driving factors for preference and the way in which they are exhibited. Understanding how our Congress votes on legislation holds policy implications and potentially electoral consequences, as we are directly affected by these.

Evaluating congressional characteristics was the first step and we now know that Congress does in fact matter and can affect the outcomes of the US military use of force, specifically on whether the President will initiate such force. The next step then is to determine if

we can expand upon characteristics of the individual members that make up these Congresses, to determine which ones serve as predictors for defense policy vote outcomes. Since Congress has been largely ignored as a critical actor in the use of force, the literature is sparse in exploring how their individual characteristics affect their decision-making in the use of force. On the occasions that Congress is in fact studied, it is generally done so in aggregate measures, analyzing the percentages or averages of certain characteristics of the Congress, and the outcome that is being explained is the final passing or failure of legislation.

Past research has tested the effects of generational cohorts on the way members of Congress vote (Michael et al, 2009) and found that among black members of Congress, only the Baby Boomer generation, those who were born between the years of 1943-1960, was significant in predicting voting behavior across a range of issue types being measured. Public opinion research has also delved into the role of generations on attitudes toward military action (Schuman & Rieger, 1992; Słomczyński & Shabad, 2010). It is curious then to see if these generational effects are truly causal in understanding these policy preferences, or if age is the real culprit.

Meaningful differences exist between the two. Age is a constant across all periods of time in the sense that a sixty-year-old voting on an issue today would be the same as a sixty-year-old voting on an issue in one hundred years. Alternatively, generational cohorts are more rigid. A sixty-year old in 1997 will not be accounting for the same as a sixty-year-old in 2017 who falls into the Baby Boomer generation nor one in 2037, who falls into a generation yet to be determined and being affected by events that have yet to occur. Therefore, age is more generalizable and potentially salient across time.

Next, we want to examine the effects of age when veteran status is also considered. Since we are examining legislation that directly relates to the use of military force, it is important that we consider the military experience of those who vote on these issues. Though it is intuitive, the literature confirms that serving in the military affects the policy preferences of legislators. We may expect that these effects are amplified when voting on the use of force, thus leading members of Congress who are also veterans to vote differently than civilians in Congress due to concepts such as group identity and shared trauma. The argument is that the socialization of the military experience is greater than the socialization of any age group, and thus any age effects are reduced when accounting for veteran status of legislators.

The goal for this study is to begin a line of inquiry into individual characteristics of members of Congress and their effects on the way these individuals vote, beginning with age. Furthermore, if there is an age effect on how members of Congress vote in military disputes, we want to know if veteran status modifies this effect at all. In order to answer these questions, however, we must first address a much larger epistemological question. Since this is a mostly unchartered course of research, there is little to suggest how we should expect age to affect members of Congress in their roll call voting behavior. Therefore, we must resort to examining literature that speaks to other actors involved in the attitudes and decision making related to militarized disputes; specifically, we will look at state leaders and the general public. In doing so though, we find that there are conflicting results between the effects of individual characteristics on support for militarized disputes by both state leaders and the public. As state leaders age, they become more likely to initiate militarized disputes (Horowitz et al., 2005). Conversely, as members of the public increase in age, they become less likely to support military action in response to interstate conflict (Schuman & Rieger, 1992. Słomczyński & Shabad, 2010).

This leaves us with a body of literature in which we cannot be certain of its application when studying the members of Congress. We will attempt to review the theoretical bases for both sub-populations and their support for military action, evaluating their merits as they relate to members of Congress and discussing why we may expect Congress to behave in a similar way. We will then test these under the framework of congressional roll call votes related to war powers to gain a clearer picture of how we may expect members of Congress to vote, ultimately seeking to answer the question: Do members of the United States Congress behave similar to state leaders or similar to the public?

CHAPTER 2

AGE

Prior research analyzes certain demographics of members of Congress, such as gender

and race, but is devoid of the effects of age. This gap in literature may be just as important,

however, as the variance between ages is even larger than between race and gender. There are

currently two 87-year old members of Congress, John Conyers (D-MI) and Louise Slaughter (D-

NY) and the youngest member of Congress, Elise Stefanik (R-NY) is 32 years old, which

provides a 55-year age range in the current US Congress. It then could be meaningful to

understand any decision-making differences based on age, to be used as an aid in predicting the

likelihood of the United States' initiation of militarized disputes. While we certainly would not

expect this to be the only predictor of Congressional approval, it may be a piece of the puzzle

which has been missed in previous literature attempting to explain roll call voting behavior on

the matter.

There has been a shift in the age of Congress, with the average age of both houses

steadily increasing since 1981.[1] In fact, it has increased by approximately ten years in age.[2] This

has been explained by rising incumbency rates, leading to later (voluntary) retirements and even

deaths in office; the aging of the US population; and older candidates in first-time elections

(Moore & Hibbing, 1992; Maltzman et al., 1996; Lowe, et al., n.d.). Simultaneously, the number

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[1] http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-CONGRESS_AGES_1009.html
[2] Average age in 1981: 49.85 (Dem: 50.9, Rep: 48.8); Average age in 2011: 58.4 (Dem: 60.8, Rep: 56)

of veterans, both in the US population as well as their representation in Congress has been steadily decreasing since about 1970 and 1985, respectively. [3]

Any time that demographics change in our legislature, it is important that we seek to understand if and how these affect the substantive outcomes of Congress. However, there has been a gap in the literature examining the isolated effects of age, as well as those of veteran status on the voting behaviors of members of Congress. Given the aging Congress, if we find significance in our results, then we are one step closer to being able to make meaningful estimates of how we expect Congress to behave in the coming years regarding military use of force.

As we see conflicting results in effects of age on state leaders and on the public in determining their policy preferences and attitudes regarding military use of force, it is necessary that we discuss in deeper detail what these differences are and how we may expect members of Congress to relate to or diverge from either.

STATE LEADERS

It has been found that state political leaders are more likely to initiate and to escalate militarized disputes as age increases (Horowitz et al., 2005). There are a couple of causal mechanisms theorized to drive this effect. The first mechanism addresses the individual leader, considering their experience in office. It says that as age increases, it is likely that the leader has spent more time in office, allowing more confidence based off their experience to take full control and to make more risky decisions, such as initiating conflict. Furthermore, it presumes that the older the leader, the more credibility they have been able to accrue. Horowitz et al. use

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[3] http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/by-the-numbers-veterans-in-congress/

the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton presidencies as an example, exhibiting that President Bush had extensive foreign policy experience which afforded him the ability to take chances in military intervention, whereas the younger President Clinton was a newcomer with zero practical exposure to foreign policy decision-making, putting greater constraints on his ability to make these risky decisions.

The second mechanism looks at this idea of time horizons, used in psychology and economics. It makes the connection that younger leaders have longer careers to look forward to and so they need not take any risks that could damage their potential for this; they also are able to make decisions that will have benefits, or payoffs, that extend long-term. Both being young and being at the beginning of their career, allows for longer time horizons, which causes a *play it safe* decision-making strategy, seeking to sustain rather than to define. Conversely, older leaders are nearing the ends of their careers so they have a shorter time horizon. This could be a result of no longer needing to consider facing electoral consequences. However, what is an even more daunting driving factor is that of legacy building. As older leaders are approaching the ends of their careers, they are concurrently running out of opportunities to create a lasting legacy of their tenure, so taking risks such as initiating conflict may be more appealing with this short time horizon. Additionally, it is noted that older leaders are also more likely to deal with medical problems where the possibility of death is just as easily the cause of the short time horizon as is the remaining time in office, also leading to a desire to leave a legacy before having to leave office (Post & Robins, 1993). The example used for this was Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin who took risks in an attempt to redeem Israel, for which his actions had a converse effect. But since he was nearing death, the consequences could be perceived as worth the potential payoff. Ultimately, when examining the decision-making processes of older and younger leaders,

we are considering the need for instant gratification versus long-term payoffs, as well as weighing the costs and benefits within these time frames.

Moreover, when age is interacted with regime type, the age of the leader is still positively significant in democratic regimes. It is found that as the democratic leader age increases, so does the likelihood to initiate a militarized dispute. This is important to note since we are examining these mechanisms in the United States, a democratic state. Therefore, we should expect that if members of Congress behave as state leaders then they should also experience this increased likelihood of initiating militarized disputes as their age increases.

CONGRESS AS STATE LEADERS

Congress is similar to state leaders in regard to accountability of the American political system, where the beliefs and policy preferences of members are easily measured and made available to the public, also opening members up to potential scrutiny. When making decisions on how to vote on any given policy, they must consider their own personal values and ideology, along with those of lobbying groups, campaign funders, constituents, and their colleagues in the legislature.

Additionally, there are real consequences to the way in which Congress votes. The outcomes of roll call votes on the House and Senate floor result in changes to the federal body of law and, in cases of the use of military force, life or death in war and potential diplomatic or domestic responses to such. It may be logical then that Congress should behave similar to state leaders because they are acting as an arm of the government in key decision making for which they are held accountable. They should be expected to weigh their choices more heavily and to

give greater consideration to the issues than if they did not have this authority. This leads to the first hypothesis.

H_1: *Members of Congress behave similar to state leaders, and thus older members of Congress are more likely to vote in support of militarized disputes.*

CONGRESS DIFFERS FROM STATE LEADERS

Although Congress bears a resemblance to state leaders in their decision-making process, there are still many distinctions that make it implausible to assume that they behave the same. A key difference between members of Congress and the state leaders is the quantity of each in the nation that they serve. For the United States, there is one state leader in the President, whereas there are one hundred senators and up to four hundred thirty-five representatives, resulting in a culpability ratio of 1:535, where the plenipotentiary carries the totality of consequences of their decisions, but Congress may spread the accountability among all 535 members involved in voting on the legislation, even if the decision and outcome is the same as that of the state leader. When state leaders make decisions on foreign policy and enact their policies, they are held accountable by the same domestic actors as the members of Congress as well as by foreign leaders; these decisions also hold the same real consequences as those made by the legislative branch. But the burden of the outcomes of these policies then lies on the sole individual leader.

Conversely, with the United States Congress, each legislator shares the diffusion of responsibility with over five hundred fellow members of Congress. This somewhat mimics the predicament of the public, as they are given the option of blame sharing (Alcañiz & Hellwig, 2011; Balla et al., 2002) in the case of fallouts. Any fallout as a result of these votes then does

not fall solely on any one member of Congress. Consequences of these negative outcomes, electoral or otherwise, should then be reduced. This was the case when measuring culpability and sentencing for people who have committed a crime (Feldman & Rosen, 1978). When study participants were presented with identical scenarios, altering only the number of criminals involved, those who committed a crime with one or more people were viewed as being less culpable than those who acted alone. Taking it a step further to analyze sentencing for actual crimes committed, perpetrators who acted alone received lengthier sentences than did those who acted with a partner or group.

There is evidence that suggests risk is avoided more often when the decision is made in a group setting as opposed to being made by an individual. Glen Whyte (1991) conducted a study where groups and individuals took on a failing investment project and were required to make decisions about how to proceed, what was referred to as the escalation dilemma. Participants were told that they were experiencing loss on their investments and were given the choice to either (1) escalate commitment by investing more with the potential to recuperate their losses and perhaps see profit, but running the risk of compounding their losses or (2) abandon the failing project, cutting the losses already incurred but avoiding any further costs. Those in groups were less likely to escalate commitment than were individuals who were making decisions. When asked how personally responsible they felt for the costs suffered in the scenario, those in groups felt less personally responsible for the losses than did individuals.

This same issue of commitment can be seen in the House vote on deployment of US ground troops to Bosnia. House Resolution 2606, prohibiting the funding of US troop deployment to Bosnia, went to the floor on November 9, 1995 and was passed 243-172. Less than a month later, on December 3rd, President Bill Clinton deployed troops to Bosnia while the

legislation was in limbo between the two chambers, awaiting the Senate vote. On December 13th,

HR 2606 failed the Senate, and the nearly identical House Resolution 2770 was introduced to the

House floor that same day where it failed 210-219.[4] We can attempt to explain this voting

discrepancy by evaluating it under the framework of the escalation dilemma. After initial success

in the House, both the executive branch and the Senate opposed this outcome. Thirty-three

representatives who initially voted *yea* and fourteen who abstained, when faced with the decision

to commit to the crusade against US deployment or to remain neutral, viewed this as dead

legislation and changed their vote to *nay*.

While there are more opportunities to displace the responsibility in Congress when

negative outcomes arise, this also means that there are less opportunities to take the glory in the

case of positive outcomes, such as the case of risk analysis for state leaders with short time

horizons. This would give us reason to believe then that perhaps members of Congress are more

likely to behave like the public than as a state leader.

Couple this with the role of members of Congress. Senators and Representatives are

elected to represent a narrow constituency of a state or district, respectively, and is to reflect the

values and best interests of these constituencies as opposed to focusing solely on the big picture

of the nation as a whole. In that respect, we may conclude that Congress is more closely

connected with the general public and plugged into the lifestyle and opinions of such. They may

work on the Hill, but they also spend a period of time in their home capitols and districts, free

from the cloud and confines of the Capitol District of Washington, D.C.

This follows with the notion that the President acts in the national interest, whereas

members of Congress are bound to potentially diverging interests relative to their own

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[4] http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/Bosnia/updates/dec95/12-03/clinton/

constituencies. These interests may not only be conflicting among one another, but may also deviate from the overall national interest. A rudimentary example to illustrate this point is to imagine an industrial town whose economy flourishes from an arms factory; if the US enters into a militarized dispute then it is likely that the demand for arms will increase and the factory can expect an influx of production, securing jobs and potentially creating more local jobs, all of which will further support the local economy. It is in the interest of this constituency to support the use of force; however, it is possible that the budgetary concerns lead the US national interest to seek diplomatic solutions in lieu of force. We could then expect the member of Congress to have preferences different from those of the President.

Trade policy literature reinforces this point that the President and US Congress present with different outcomes from each other when making foreign policy decisions, attributing this to the difference in constituencies to which they answer. Michael Hiscox (1999) illustrated this with the shift of authority of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act (RTAA) from Congress to the President. He found that there were distinct and significant changes in outcomes when the President took over the decision-making power. Particularly, trade liberalization was made possible in the US, resulting from the reduction of logrolling where interests crossing Congressional district lines could concentrate their efforts, providing for more accurate representation of the national interests that was previously unfeasible. This leads us to our null hypothesis.

Consequently, there is another group of people often studied in the literature regarding their attitudes and support towards militarized disputes: the public. Just as Congress holds similarities to state leaders, there are also reasons to believe that perhaps they behave more like the general public than they do state leaders, so we will explore this avenue next.

PUBLIC OPINION

The literature appears to be split when examining the general population, which does not face the same dilemmas as political elites on the same subject matter. A survey study of US attitudes toward the Gulf War conducted a series of tests on the relationship between historical analogies, generational effects, and support of the US military force in Iraq (Schuman & Rieger, 1992). To begin with, they asked if the situation with Saddam Hussein in Iraq was a fair comparison with Adolf Hitler in Germany in the 1930s or with the US involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s. Additionally, respondents were asked which historical analogy was most fitting: Hitler in Germany or US involvement in Vietnam. Finally, they were asked if they supported or opposed the Gulf War. All questions were asked both before the Iraqi war began and during the war. The majority of respondents both before and during the war agreed that the Hitler analogy was fair, favored the Hitler analogy to the Vietnam analogy, and supported the Gulf War. Furthermore, it was found that older respondents were more likely to choose the Hitler analogy and those who chose the Hitler analogy were more likely to support the war. However, there was not a direct causal link between the two. In fact, when the direct effect of age was tested, it was found to have practically no effect or a negative effect.

Similar results were produced from a study on Polish public support for military action against terrorism which found that age either had no significant effect or a negative effect on support for the military action (Słomczyński & Shabad, 2010). Generational effects were significantly positive for the older generations or no significance, depending on the model, and the younger generational periods were significantly negative across most of the models. It is important to note that the generational periods were based off Polish events and may not be relevant to the US population.

Overall, we can see that age in relation to the public and its attitudes toward military use of force has either negative effects or no effects. Given these varied results for age and generational effects at the public and elite levels, it is important to conduct a study that addresses the particular actor that we are interested in- in this case, that is members of Congress.

CONGRESS AS THE PUBLIC

We may believe that Congress behaves similar to the general public because they share similarities with one another. Members of Congress are still members of their communities in the sense that they still reside in their constituencies part-time and are not confined to the political realm of Washington D.C. While legislators are often considered to be out of touch with the citizens they represent, they are far more connected than state leaders and experience a far greater amount of interaction and communication with the people they serve. These mechanisms are where we derive the second hypothesis.

> H_2: *Members of Congress behave similar to the public, and thus older members*
> *of Congress are less likely to vote in support of militarized disputes.*

CHAPTER 3

VETERAN STATUS

MILITARY SOCIALIZATION

Veterans have significant difference of opinions than non-veterans, or civilians, on matters of the military (Schreiber, 1979). While there are no significant differences in opinions of government affect, international affairs/cosmopolitanism, and authoritarianism-related issue areas, it was found that veterans have significantly higher pro-military opinions than do nonveterans. This effect held true even when certain dimensions controlled for age, which would lead us to believe that the socialization of the military has a stronger effect on feelings towards the military than does age.

While it is reasonable to expect that those who have served in the military are more likely to be supportive of the military, there are a number of mechanisms at play causing this to be the case. One of these is group identity, coming from social psychology, which says that people who belong to a group tend to have pride in and support others who are members of the same group; this is the idea behind nationalism which is discussed in international politics (Anderson, 2016). Also derived from psychological roots is the mechanism of shared trauma. Especially for those service members who have served in war and combat zones, the common experience of enduring this grave adversity is sufficient to link them to one another with this exclusive hardship that outsiders are unable to understand (White, 2015; Tyson, 2007; Nuttman-Shwartz et al., 2002; Leskela et al., 2001).

Knowing that veterans are socialized differently than citizens and that this is reflected in their support for the military and its endeavors, it is intuitive to say that veterans in Congress will vote differently in matters of the US military than would nonveteran members of Congress. This chapter will explore how the effects of military socialization and veteran status play into the legislative decision making of those who enter into Congress after military service.

THE POWELL DOCTRINE

Following the Vietnam War and its universally-recognized failure on the part of the US military, a new rule of thumb for its use came about, known as the Powell Doctrine. Developed by General Colin Powell (ret.), former Joints Chief of Staff, in conjunction with former Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, it stated that the US military was not a pawn to be used at will in international affairs, but rather that it should only be used when it meets a certain set of conditions which makes it a viable option. These conditions are as follows: (1) there are "vital national interests" at stake; (2) there is a clear intention and commitment to winning; (3) there are clear political and military objectives; (4) the forces used are determined by what is necessary to achieve these objectives; (5) there is public and Congressional support; and finally, (6) all other options have been exhausted and US forces are the "last resort" (Correll, 2014; Lafeber, 2009; Middup, 2011).

Military scholars have come to the partial consensus that the United States failed in Vietnam (Correll, 2014; Middup, 2011; McMaster, 1997), not because it lacked the resources or military strength but rather that it lacked the resolve which Vietnam exhibited. The government did not abide by what became the conditions of the Powell Doctrine, expending insufficient effort toward the conflict and not being willing to commit what was necessary to win. The lack

of public support for the US involvement only further hindered the willingness to do adjust and increase supply of troops to the conflict. Morale of those service members deployed was depleted before they were ever able to begin, and the population at home faced a culture of protests and unrest in opposition to the military action. The creation of the Powell Doctrine was intended to prevent the United States from finding itself in this lose-lose predicament a second time. We then can expect that veteran members of Congress would follow these conditions when voting on defense policies.

VOTING ON DEFENSE POLICY

Members of Congress who are also veterans vote differently regarding the American use of force than do civilian members of Congress (Gelpi & Feaver, 2002). They looked at congressional characteristics, specifically at the ratio of veterans to civilians that make up the Congress, finding that veterans' preferences align with the military's preferences more than civilians; therefore, the more veterans in civilian leadership, the more the civilian policy reflects these military preferences. This literature evaluates the military preferences of the Powell Doctrine and finds that veterans in Congress are less likely to approve initiation of military force than their civilian counterparts, though when they do, they escalate the militarized dispute at a higher rate and approve of greater use of force. Therefore, we can expect that the greater the proportion of veteran members of Congress, the lower the likelihood of the US initiating force. The limitation of this study then is that it looks at the percentage of veterans in the legislature as a predictor for the initiation of militarized interstate disputes. However, MIDS are not always necessarily preceded by congressional action. It is an assumption they are making, which could lead to a gap in their causal chain. If there is no bill put to a vote on the floor regarding the

military action, then there is no way to determine if the congressional characteristics had an effect on the initiation or escalation, or lack thereof, of a militarized dispute. We will attempt to fill in this gap to determine the causal effects of congressional characteristics on policy outcomes, which could then lead to the level of military action.

Based on defense policy more broadly, Bianco (2005) attempted to build on these findings to determine if the decline of veterans in Congress has resulted in significant changes in legislative outcomes related to defense and foreign policy, expecting that these be the issues most affected by military socialization. He found that there were small effects of systematic outcomes, although there were significant results to suggest that there are changes in policy outcomes. He suffers some of the same limitations as Gelpi & Feaver in that he examines the aggregate measures of Congress in make-up and legislative outcomes. By only looking at aggregate data, he weakens the causal mechanism since it is still not a direct link. When we examine individuals, we gain a clearer picture of the effects of veteran status on the votes of each member of Congress, strengthening this causal mechanism.

The evidence suggests that veteran attitudes regarding the military differ from nonveterans in that they are more positive. When age was controlled for, this effect of military socialization was still significant. Additionally, following the Powell Doctrine, we can observe that veterans in Congress vote differently than civilians when it comes to initiating militarized disputes and the level of force used. Given the totality of these findings, there is reason to believe that the veteran status of a member of Congress will offset the effects of age, as the effects of militarization are greater. This informs our third hypothesis.

H₃: Members of Congress who are also veterans are less likely to vote in support of militarized disputes than their civilian counterparts.

Bianco (2005) sought to understand the interaction of age and veteran status in regards to HR 2491, legislation to table a resolution that aimed to end draft registration. We can then interpret *yea* votes as being in support of military objectives and *nay* votes as being in opposition. He found that older veterans had a higher probability of voting *yea* than their civilian counterparts. Similarly, young veterans were substantially more likely to vote in support. We can conclude then that younger veterans support at greater rates than do older veterans, and that veterans as a group support at greater rates than do civilians. We will attempt to test this relationship more directly by interacting age and veteran status of members of Congress on their voting behavior, our fourth and final hypothesis.

H₄: Members of Congress who are also veterans experience a diminished age effect, as compared to their civilian counterparts.

CHAPTER 4

DATA AND METHODS

This study will evaluate the roll call votes from the United States House of

Representatives for all final passage or adoption votes relating to War Powers, in the time period

from post-WWII to the present. There are 24 total votes, encompassing the 87th Congress (1961-

1963) through the 112th Congress (2011-2013)[5]. More specifically, we are looking at individual

senators and representatives within each of these Congresses. Since members of Congress may

serve under more than one Congress and may vote multiple times while in office, they may

represent multiple observations in the panel data. Individual votes will be examined in an attempt

to strengthen the causal mechanism between the explanatory variables and support for military

action. Past literature that has examined aggregate measures is useful to guide research in what

factors may be important. However, it is difficult to present a strong causal argument when

examining the average age and percentage of veterans in Congress effects on the pass or failed

vote outcome of the proposed policy. By instead examining the individual member's age and

veteran status and its effects on their actual vote, we are better able to draw meaningful

conclusions about the causal mechanism at play.

The analysis will be done using a binary logit model, in which the unit of analysis is the

individual vote. The member of Congress' *Support,* or $\hat{Y}$, is estimated by β_1, representing the

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[5] The 24 votes used in the analysis were chosen from the PIPC database based on Vote Type and Issue: Final Passage/Adoption votes categorized as War Powers. This gave a total of 37 votes; however, 13 of these were considered neutral, not clearly in support nor opposition, so they were excluded from the analysis. See Appendix for more details.

intercept, and where β_2 is the effect of *Age,* β_3 is the effect *Veteran Status,* β_4 is an interaction

term for effect of *Age* and *Veteran Status,* β_5 is the effect of *Sex,* β_6 is the effect of *Party ID,* and

β7 is the effect of the *President's Position,* according to the model below.

$$\hat{Y} \ (Support)= \beta_1 + \beta_2 \ (Age) + \beta_3 \ (Vet) + \beta_4 \ (Age{\times}Vet) + \beta_5 \ (Sex) + \beta_6 \ (PartyId) + \beta_7 \ (Pres)$$

The data used for this study was gathered from the Political Institutions and Public

Choice Program (PIPC) in order to identify relevant policy votes, and then supplemented with

the Voteview database, in order to identify the individual roll call votes of the members of

Congress in these matters.[6] Finally, the Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and

Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress was used for the

individual characteristics of the members of Congress included in the study.[7]

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable is whether or not a member of Congress supports the US military

use of force, measured by examining the roll call votes of individual members of Congress on

related matters. The language of each piece of legislation is hand-coded to create a dichotomous

variable to determine if the votes of *yea* are in support of the military use of force, or if the votes

of *nay* are in support. For example, if the legislation was to authorize US forces or to call up

reserves, then y*ea* votes were coded as being in support. However, if the legislation read to

withdraw US troops or to prohibit the funding of the deployment of US troops, then *nay* votes

were considered to be in support. The *Support* variable is then created where those in support of

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[6] See References for full citations. Crespin & Rohde (2017); Lewis et al. (2017).
[7] See References for full citation. United States Congress & Kennedy, Lawrence F. (1971).

military use of force are coded as a 1 (one) and those in opposition are coded as a 0 (zero). Note that this was performed for each legislator within the context of each piece of legislation. There were several representatives that voted more than once, some on the upwards of 20 times out of 24 potential pieces of legislation in the analysis. By examining the individual vote for each policy, we are able to create a singular model that captures the preferences across all legislators at the point in time of each piece of legislation in the panel data.

All instances of "Not Voting" are coded as missing observations and are thus dropped from the analysis. While the act of abstention may be meaningful and tell us something about the preferences of the legislator, without delving further into the circumstances, we cannot determine what that something is. Therefore, we cannot make any assumptions about whether the legislator is in support of the policy, in opposition, or legitimately neutral. There was a total of 2,544 observations of actual votes across the 24 pieces of legislation that went up for vote in the US House of Representatives.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The explanatory variables are the age and veteran status of an individual member of Congress at the time of the vote. *Age* is a continuous variable measured by number of years only that the member has been alive- no month or day counters- created by subtracting the year of birth by the year of the vote.

Veteran status is a dichotomous variable where members of Congress with any military service on their record, whether a veteran or current military member, are coded as a one (1) and nonveterans are coded as a zero (0). There is a limitation on the available roster data for the members of Congress, as the dataset only runs through 1996. As a result, all members of

Congress who served their first term in office after 1996 are coded as missing data. However, we are still left with more than sufficient observations that include the veteran status of the MC to conduct an analysis.

CONTROL VARIABLES

There is a short series of control variables that will be included based on previous literature. They include sex, party ID, and the president's position. *Gender* is a dichotomous variable that measures the gender of the member of Congress, where male is coded as one (1) and female as two (2). This is to capture any gender-related differences in voting behavior. This should not be significant when examining veteran effects, as only three female legislators in the analysis were veterans, so we would not expect it to affect the interactive effects. *Political Party* denotes the political party for which the member of Congress belongs, where Democrat/Independent are coded as a one (1) and Republican is a two (2).[8] The general consensus is that Republicans are more likely to support the military and military action, so we may expect this to be affecting how the members of Congress vote.

Finally, *Presidential Position* is representative of the policy position held by the President of the United States on the particular vote. If the president is in favor of the legislation, it is coded as a one (1) and if he is in opposition to the legislation then it is coded as a two (2). This will attempt to control for deference and defiance of Congress to the President (Lindsay, 2003) and presidential factors have been found to be relevant to congressional approval for use

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[8] There were only 14 observations for Independents for 2 members of Congress. Thomas Michael Foglietta accounted for one observation; though he ran for his seat as an Independent, he became a Democrat after he took office, coinciding with the 1981 vote in the analysis. Bernie Sanders accounted for the other 13 observations; he caucuses with the Democratic Party and was a Democratic primary presidential candidate. After combining the Independents with the Democrats, the statistical analysis was replicated, and the results remained the same.

of military force (Howell & Pevehouse, 2005). We would expect that the presidential position on the policy would be important, in that if the President supports the legislation then members of Congress may be more likely to vote in support, and if the President is in opposition that Congress may be more likely to vote in opposition, exhibiting deference to the executive policy position.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Table 1 depicts the results for three models: a model that tests for all the controls plus *age*, one with the addition of *veteran status*, and a third that includes the interaction of the two (*age* x *veteran status*). In comparing these models against one another, we are attempting to show, first, if the effect of *age* on members of Congress resembles that of age on either state leaders or the public. Then, we seek to find if *veteran status* modifies this effect; specifically, we want to see if it decreases the effect of *age*. Age was found to be significant across all models, though the directionality changed.

Model 1, shown in the first column, reports the base model that gives us the starting point for how age affects the MIDS voting of Congress. We see that as members of Congress increase in age, they are slightly less likely to support military action. Republicans are also less likely to be in support. There are signs of deference to the presidential position as well, with members of Congress voting in opposition more often when the President is also opposed to the legislation. Sex showed no significant results in this model.

Similar results were found in Model 2 when veteran status was included. In fact, the effect of age increased; older members of Congress were less likely to vote in support of MIDS than younger members of Congress at an even higher rate when accounting for veteran status. Republicans are still less likely to support and the deference to the presidential position continues as well. Sex has no significant results. What is most interesting, however, is that veteran status

Table 1: Logistical Regression Model Comparison

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Support			
Age	-0.0142**	-0.0153**	0.0201*
	(-3.00)	(-3.12)	(2.51)
Veteran Status		0.0886	3.413***
		(0.84)	(5.84)
Age x *Veteran Status*			-0.0603***
			(-5.78)
Political Party	-1.059***	-1.076***	-1.074***
	(-10.72)	(-10.73)	(-10.64)
President's Position	-1.592***	-1.608***	-1.548***
	(-14.21)	(-14.22)	(-13.58)
Gender	-.0331	-0.300	-0.418*
	(-1.65)	(-1.44)	(-1.98)
Constant	5.613***	5.654***	3.833***
	(13.66)	(13.54)	(7.40)
AIC	2586.0	2542.4	2509.8
BIC	2615.1	2577.2	2550.4
N	2,544	2,544	2,544

also has no significance, so we cannot confirm our third hypothesis. However, its presence in the model seemed to strengthen the findings from the previous model.

Model 3 is where the age effect takes an interesting change. As expected, the interaction of age and veteran status was significant. Although the first two models showed that members of Congress see a decrease in support of military action as age increases, the marginal effects test revealed a significant discrepancy between civilian and veteran members. Figure 1 depicts the marginal effects test that showed civilian members follow a steady increase in support as age increases, with a positive correlation between age and support. This confirms the first hypothesis and suggests that Congress behaves more similar to state leaders. Conversely, veterans in Congress exhibit a steady decrease in support of military action as age increases, with a negative

Figure 1: Marginal Effects of Age on Support by Veteran Status
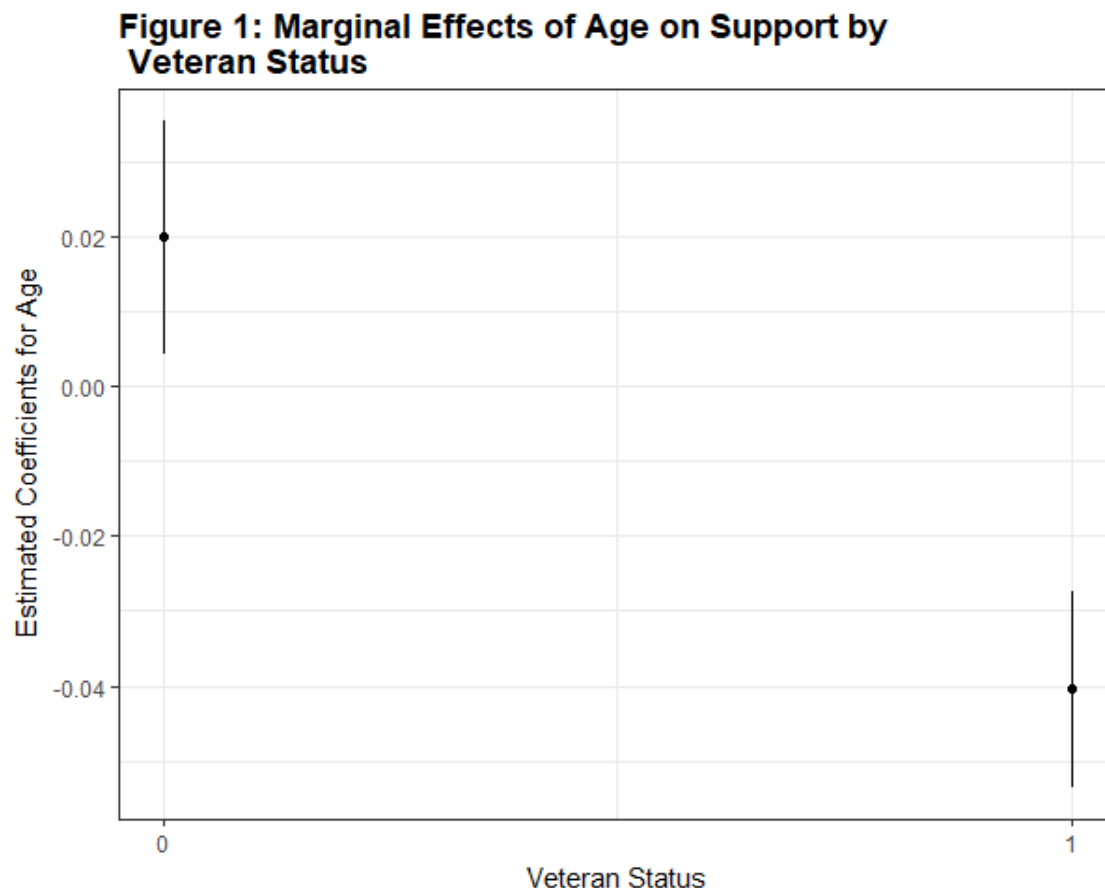
correlation between age and support. This follows the second hypothesis, which suggests that members of Congress behave more like the public.

Figure 2 then represents the marginal effects of veteran status on age when evaluating support for MIDS. It clearly shows a steady negative effect, that support decreases as age increases. The interesting point of this interaction occurs in the mid-late 50s of a member of Congress. Specifically, we see that up to the age of 56, veteran members of Congress are more likely to support military action than their civilian counterparts. However, at the age of 57, that switches and civilian members are more likely to support military action than their veteran

Figure 2: Marginal Effects of Veteran Status on Support by Age
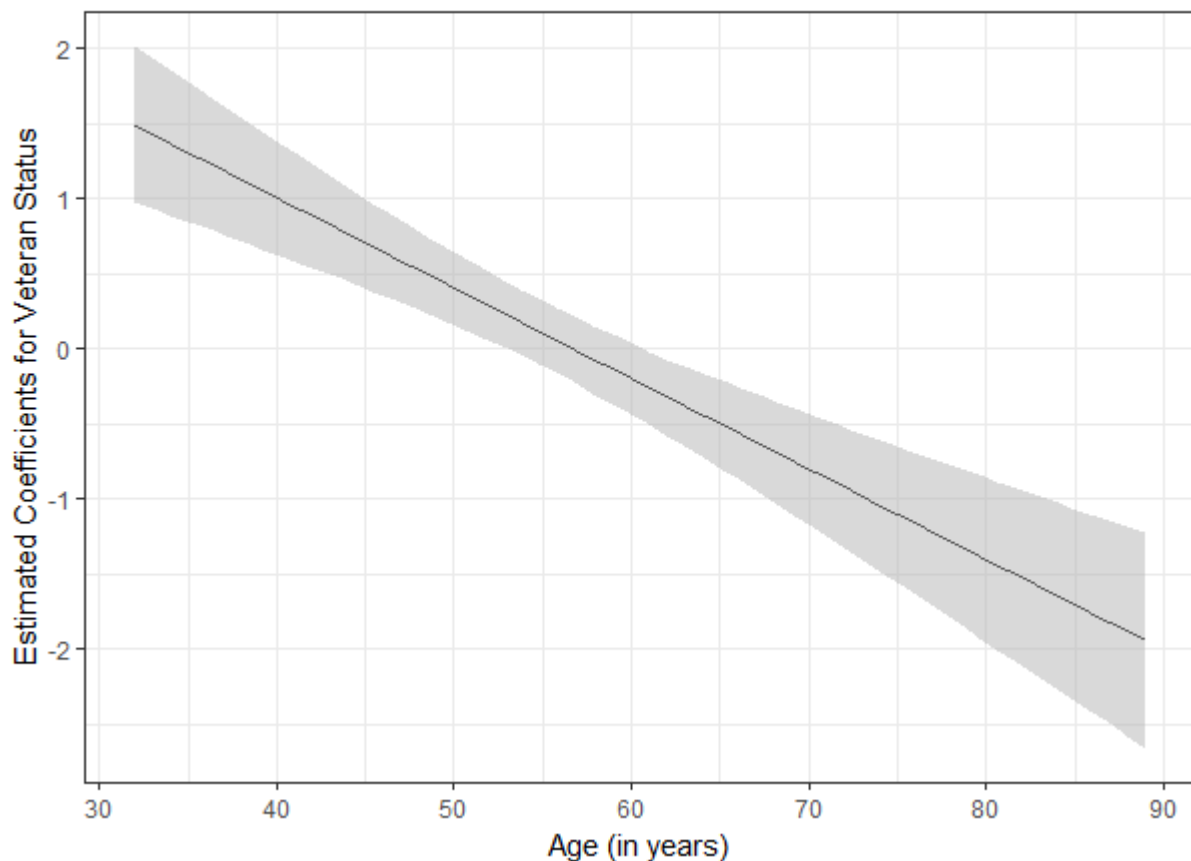
counterparts.[9] Our fourth hypothesis then was partially confirmed, in that the effects of age were conditionally diminished on veterans.

Our control variables have remained consistent in the third model. Republicans were less likely to be in support than Democrats and Independents. Presidential position also continued to play an important role, as members of Congress tend to vote in deference to this. This model differs from the others for only for gender, as it becomes significant for the first time; it was found that males are slightly more likely than their female counterparts in Congress to vote in support of MIDS.

When comparing the three models, Model 3 presents with the best model fit, with the lowest AIC and BIC of 2509.8 and 2550.4 respectively. It gives us the greatest explanatory power, as it includes all of our independent variables. While it does not represent model fit, it is fortunate that we do see significance across all of these, as well as our control variables.

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[9] The delta method was used to measure the marginal effects of the interaction term, as well as to pin-point the ages where these marginal effects of veteran status change.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Most of the extant literature regarding the military use of force have focused on either the executive branch or on the composition of the legislature when studying the predictors for decision making and voting behavior, without paying regard to the individual characteristics of the members of said legislature. It is now clear to see that this is a mistake if we want to paint the full picture of why the United States engages in military action or does not. With the aging of Congress, which will likely continue, we may expect to see a change in the way that the US legislators vote in regards to the use of force, with the potential to have a substantial impact on foreign policy in the future. The same can be expected for the decline of veterans in Congress, that as less veterans take office, there will be a significant chance in votes and policy outcomes for military use of force.

When voting on legislation for militarized interstate disputes, we found that members of Congress behave differently depending on their veteran status: civilians behave more like state leaders, in that they are more likely to support the use of military force as their age increases, whereas veterans behave more like the public and are less likely to support the use of military force as age increases. Further research should seek to discover the causal mechanism. This could be due to the similarities in accountability as state agents and the real outcomes of preferences and decision-making that they face. It could also be a result of group diffusion of responsibility, or a combination of these mechanisms.

The findings also tell us that the president's position matters, that members of Congress are less likely to support a piece of legislation that the President does not support. However, even with this accounted for, we still find significance for age and veteran status. We can conclude from this that presidential deference does not explain the totality of why Congress votes the way they do on military force. It is important then that we determine what other factors affect this decision-making process, so that we can be better equipped to predict outcomes in the future. Further research could address why we still see significant results when accounting for presidential deference.

Other potential extensions of this study could include replication using updated data in the future, to help establish the salience of the age effects; direct testing of some of the causal mechanisms set forth by this study; or an attempt to extend the research beyond the United States by applying it to legislative chambers of other states, in an effort to determine if it is generalizable beyond US Congress alone.

At any rate, we can determine that the aging of Congress matters in its military voting. As we continue to see the increase in age of members of Congress, we can expect to see an increase in Congressional support for military action. This is further supported by the decline of veterans in Congress. Since we know that veterans are less likely than civilians to support military action as they age, a decline of veterans in the Congressional makeup would lead to greater support of military action in Congressional votes, as older veterans will be the ones more likely to oppose military action.

This will have great implications for US foreign policy moving forward. Having determined that Congress matters when deciding the initiation and escalation of military involvement, it was necessary to delve into how we may expect them to behave. Finding that the age and veteran

status of members of Congress affects the way in which they vote, and knowing that the age of members is on the rise and the number of veterans is on the decline, tells us that we can expect systemic alterations to the legislation outcomes of the United States Congress in militarized interstate disputes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: List of Votes Used in Analysis

Bill Number	Voteview Number	Congress	Year
SJRE120	63	87th	1961
SJRE2245	215	87th	1962
HR17195	345	89th	1966
HJR1355	376	91st	1970
HJR349	309	97th	1981
HJRES658	742	101st	1990
HCONRES33	7	102nd	1991
HJRES77	8	102nd	1991
SJRES45	176	103rd	1993
HJRES416	1087	103rd	1994
HR2606	796	104th	1995
HR2770	838	104th	1995
HRES302	839	104th	1995
HRES306	840	104th	1995
HCONRES227	688	105th	1998
HCONRES42	48	106th	1999
HCONRES82	100	106th	1999
HJRES44	101	106th	1999
SCONRES2	102	106th	1999
HCONRES248	1084	111th	2010
HCONRES248	1456	111th	2010
HCONRES28	191	112th	2011
HRES292	409	112th	2011
HCONRES51	410	112th	2011

APPENDIX B: Detailed List of PIPC Vote Type and Issue Categories Used

Vote Type

1. Final Passage/Adoption of a *Bill*

2. Final Passage/Adoption of *Resolution*

3. Final Passage/Adoption of *Joint Resolution*

4. Passage/Adoption of a *Bill* under <u>Suspension</u> of the Rules

5. Passage/Adoption of a *Joint Resolution* under <u>Suspension</u> of the Rules

6. Final Passage/Adoption of *Concurrent Resolution*

Issue

1. Committing U.S. Troops to Specific Locations

2. General Issue of Committing Troops

3. War Powers Act

4. Persian Gulf War

5. Troop Levels

6. Reserve Call-Up

7. Miscellaneous