Socialized Hawks? How Selection Explains Military Attitudes on the Use of Force*

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Abstract

Do military and civilian attitudes on the use of force differ and, if so, why? Past scholarship linking leaders and bureaucracies to international conflict is divided on whether military actors are more hawkish but is relatively unified in attributing differences to socialization. We contribute to this debate through a unique opportunity to survey incoming officer candidates at the US Military Academy before and after basic training—and pair the results with simultaneous surveys of a nationally representative sample. We show that military individuals are consistently more hawkish than civilians, the gap is evident upon arrival, and neither basic training nor additional socializing experiences explain the gap. An embedded experiment further reveals that while military individuals display elevated sensitivity to war's cost, this is more than offset by preexisting hawkish dispositions. The findings challenge and solidify assumptions undergirding prominent theories linking individual experiences to foreign policy and canonical theories of civil-military relations.

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1 Introduction

In his first two years in office, President Donald Trump appointed more current and former military officers to elite advisory roles than any recent predecessor. These nominations span nearly every senior position in the US national security bureaucracy—national security advisor, secretary of defense, secretary of state, and CIA director—as well as other key posts, such as White House chief of staff. To many, this pattern is deeply troubling, largely because of an assumption that governments run by current or former generals are prone to pursue more hawkish foreign policies.

Contemporary attention on the military's influence on foreign policy is neither new nor specific to the United States. A broad literature scrutinizes whether chief executives (Horowitz and Stam, 2014; Kertzer, 2016) and legislators (Gelpi and Feaver, 2002) with military backgrounds, military-dominated cabinets and politburos (Sechser, 2004; Weeks, 2012), as well as military bureaucracies (Snyder, 1989; Feaver, 2003) might be more or less prone to lead their countries to war. An enduring question of politics motivates these inquiries: do civilian and military attitudes toward the use of force differ?

Existing research offers strikingly contradictory answers to this question. Some find that actors with military experience hold attitudes more permissive of the use of force, particularly in conventional conflicts (Feaver and Gelpi, 2004) and when they lack exposure to combat (Horowitz and Stam, 2014). As such, the propensity for conflict generally increases when actors with military experience gain political influence (Sechser, 2004; Weeks, 2014). Others suggest that military actors, better attuned to war's toll, are instead voices of prudence and restraint (Huntington, 1957; Gelpi and Feaver, 2002). Yet, across competing answers to *how* military and civilian attitudes differ, there is broad consensus on *why* they differ. Existing literature asserts that military attitudes result from socialization, arguing that experience in military organizations changes perceptions of risk, threat, and force efficacy (Huntington, 1957; Snyder, 1989; Legro, 1995; Brecher, 1996; Kier, 1997; Gelpi and Feaver, 2002; Weeks, 2012). Indeed, one contention of the ongoing "behavioral revolution"

in international relations is that individuals' experiences generally—and military experiences specifically—fundamentally change political attitudes (Hafner-Burton et al., 2017).

We argue that this voluminous and influential literature overlooks an important alternative explanation: selection. Drawing on work in organizational theory and sociology, we posit that the civil-military attitudinal gap results in large part from how and why individuals select into institutions. Specifically, individuals are more likely to opt into military organizations when they have preexisting attitudes and dispositions more permissive of known occupational requirements associated with military employment. In short, hawks are more likely to choose military careers than doves. Consequently, military actors should be more hawkish than civilian counterparts before socialization occurs, if it even does.

Seizing a rare opportunity, we test our argument with a panel survey of incoming US military officer candidates (hereafter cadets) at West Point, which is paired with simultaneous survey waves administered to a nationally representative sample of US adults. Respondents completed the surveys on the cadets' first full day of training and again after basic training. The panel design enables us to conduct several analyses that deconstruct the origins of civil-military attitudinal differences. First, comparing civilian and cadet responses at time of military entry directly measures organizational selection effects. Second, a comparison of the civilian-cadet attitudinal gaps between the two survey waves provides an estimate of socialization effects associated with one of the most common cross-national experiences in military service: basic training. Third, we widen the temporal aperture of socialization and compare the attitudes of incoming cadets with and without prior experience in operational military units, as well as across the older three cohorts (i.e., class years) at West Point. Finally, an embedded experiment causally identifies cost sensitivity within the military and civilian samples using a hypothetical conflict scenario.

The research design improves upon existing approaches in several ways. Prior work surveys military officers years into their careers at which point their attitudes reflect an aggregation of selection and socialization effects, making it impossible to decouple the two

factors. Additionally, past work has been unable to estimate the effects of underlying cost exposure considerations, which remained fixed across military survey participants. The embedded experiment allows us to directly investigate how exposure to war's toll affects military attitudes. Finally, our sample population allows for early-career observation of military elites with a disproportionately high probability of promotion to senior decision-making positions in the US government. Since World War II, we estimate that over 50 percent of all three- and four-star generals in the U.S. military have been West Point graduates—with peak levels approaching 100 percent in the late-1960s.

We find that selection effects play a far more prominent role than the existing work in political science assumes. Cadets arrive more hawkish than civilian counterparts. This descriptive finding persists across specifications controlling for, and matching on, a range of potential political, economic, and demographic confounders. While selection helps explain the civil-military attitudinal gap, several forms of socialization do not. Basic training and prior military service have minimal effects on views toward using force. Additional years at West Point, if anything, temper cadets' attitudes on military force. Finally, the embedded experiment shows that while military actors remain responsive to costs, this effect is insufficient to override the hawkish dispositions evident at time of selection into service. Our results thus complement existing findings that individuals with military experience hold attitudes more permissive of the use of force, but suggest that the observed difference is due in large part to selection, not socialization. These results contest core assertions in canonical models of civil-military relations (Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1960) and suggest revisions to the assumptions undergirding theories linking military experience to conflict proclivity. More broadly, the results provide new insight into the behavioral foundations underpinning foreign policy attitudes and circumscribe the extent to which life experiences shape them.

2 Military Attitudes on the Use of Force

Do military and civilian attitudes on the use of force differ? On the one hand, a body of survey research finds that individuals with military experience tend to be more likely to support the use of force. At the non-elite level, analysis of 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) survey data finds that veterans are more likely to support the use of military force across a variety of potential scenarios and active duty military members are as well (Klingler and Chatagnier, 2014).[1] Similar findings emerge in surveys of non-elite service members during the early (Karsten, 1971) and late Cold War eras (Bachman et al., 2000), as well as after the September 11th attacks (Rohall, Ender and Matthews, 2006; Dempsey, 2009).

Military elites also tend to possess more hawkish dispositions, although with more nuance. For instance, US military advisers were more likely than civilians to support conflict escalation during international crises, although no different in their support for conflict initiation (Betts, 1977). A survey study of US civilian and military elites found that military elites are more likely to endorse using force for traditional security goals, such as coping with China, although not for humanitarian interventions (Feaver and Gelpi, 2004). Finally, cross-national analyses find that military representation in elite political bodies, such as cabinets and politburos, is positively associated with more frequent initiation and escalation of conflict (Brecher, 1996; Sechser, 2004; Weeks, 2014). Our first testable hypothesis, which pertains to *how* attitudes differ, follows from this body of work.

> **H1a**: Military individuals are more likely to support the use of force than civilians.

On the other hand, several canonical works in civil-military relations predict prudence, or conservatism, within military institutions. Huntington (1957, p. 69-70) famously argues

[1] Results pertaining to active duty service members require cautious interpretation because they constitute only a small portion of the CCES sample (and US population). Extrapolation of results from small subgroups within surveys is problematic if even minor response error or coding error occurs (Ansolabehere, Luks and Schaffner, 2015).

that military actors are "the strongest voice against immediate involvement in war." Gelpi and Feaver (2002) find the US was less likely to initiate militarized disputes in periods with high veteran representation in the executive and legislative branches.[2] Even Nazi generals recommended against Hitler's plans to annex Austria and Czechoslovakia (Press, 2005). Contemporary policymakers sometimes echo this logic. In his confirmation hearing for appointment as Secretary of State, Michael Pompeo described that "there's no one like someone who's served in uniform who understands the value of diplomacy and the terror and tragedy that is war [...]" (Gordon and Youssef, 2018). The alternative hypothesis is consistent with the military conservatism argument, reflecting the status quo divide within the literature.

> **H1b**: Military individuals are less likely to support the use of force than civilians.

Why Might Military Attitudes Differ?

Why do military and civilian attitudes on the use of force differ? Addressing this question solidifies the foundations of the civil-military gap and speaks to broader debates about the (non)malleability of attitudes in response to individual experiences. We explore three candidate mechanisms: socialization, cost exposure, and selection.

Socialization

In domains outside of the military, the theoretical and empirical evidence in support of socialization—the "process by which people learn to adopt the norms, values, attitudes and behaviors accepted and practiced by the ongoing system" (Sigal, 2006)—is both compelling and pervasive. A variety of life experiences can shape political attitudes—such as

[2]On average, 51 percent of representatives and senators in each US congress since 1945 have possessed military experience. Data collected from the Congressional Quarterly Press Library and Biographical Directory of the United States Congress.

more education (Ichilov, 2003), childhood events (Achen, 2002; Ventura, 2001), and membership in specific generational cohorts (Jennings, Stoker and Bowers, 2009). At the elite level, the recent behavioral wave of scholarship in international relations suggests that prior life experiences alter the political beliefs and behavior of senior policymakers (Renshon, 2008; Saunders, 2011; Kennedy, 2011; Colgan, 2013; Fuhrmann and Horowitz, 2015), as do experiences interacting with international organizations (Checkel, 2005; Johnston, 2014).

Socialization is thus a tempting explanation for systematically different military attitudes. As Rosen (2005, p. 16) succinctly argues, "Military organizations can routinely take groups of young people and change their preferences in relatively short periods of time." Military organizations may have functional incentives to improve performance by altering member attitudes or dispositions, such that they can perform physical and cognitive tasks under the stress of combat. Military organizations may also expose members to common experiences that shape attitudes, such as real or simulated violence, authority-centric organizational structures, or social pressures to adopt new identities (Rosen, 1995; Janowitz, 1960).

An overwhelming consensus in international relations explicitly attributes civil-military attitudinal differences to socialization—regardless of whether the effects are theorized to make individuals more or less hawkish. Arguing that military socialization increases support for the use of force, Weeks (2012, p. 344) states that officers are "socialized to see military force as standard operating procedure, to view powerful countries as inherently hostile, and to fear the costs of compromise." In explaining how European military doctrines contributed to the onset of World War I, Snyder (1989, p.28-9) suggests that military officers are "over-socialized" because "professional training and duties of soldiers force them to focus on threat to the state's security and on the conflictual side of international relations."

Those who argue that military experience makes individuals less hawkish also appeal to socialization mechanisms. For example, in her analysis of why military organizations sometimes prefer defensive doctrines over offensive variants, Kier (1997, p.151) describes that "the British army's culture is different from the sum of the childhood socialization of

its members. [...] the British army erases differences of birth." In explaining why military veterans in Congress might decrease the likelihood of violent conflict in U.S. foreign policy, Gelpi and Feaver (2002, p. 791-2) similarly conclude that:

> [...] service in the US military is an important socialization experience that shapes individuals' attitudes. The military teaches lessons [...] about how military force ought to be used. These lessons do not appear to be forgotten when individuals leave the military and enter civilian life.

Thus, while scholars are divided on the direction of socialization effects, they are generally unified in asserting that socialization is responsible for observed differences between civilian and military attitudes. Our second hypothesis reflects this point of consensus while remaining agnostic on the direction of the attitudinal changes.

H2: Military experience changes individual support for the use of force.

Cost Exposure

Military attitudes might also differ because military individuals are responsible for bearing costs in war. Heterogeneity in cost exposure creates divergent preferences regarding war. Domestic groups who pay more are less likely to support the use of military force (Gartner and Segura, 1998; Koch and Gartner, 2005; Caverley, 2014). This inverse relationship between cost exposure and support for the use of force enjoys broad empirical support. Communities that suffered casualties during the US wars in Vietnam (Gartner, Segura and Wilkening, 1997) and Iraq (Althaus, Bramlett and Gimpel, 2012) were less likely to support those conflicts. Parents of children assigned lower draft numbers during the Vietnam War, especially among those residing in towns that suffered war casualties, were more likely to vote in the 1972 presidential elections (Davenport, 2015). US males randomly assigned lower draft numbers during the Vietnam war were less likely to support the war—and more likely to change party and political identification—than those with higher draft numbers (Erikson and Stoker, 2011). Finally, the possibility of a reinstated draft decreases support for using

force, especially among those most likely to be affected, such as young males or parents with draft-age children (Horowitz and Levendusky, 2011). Vasquez (2005) draws similar conclusions through a cross-national analysis of democratic states that shows an association between conscription systems and lower wartime casualties.

Canonical works in civil-military relations apply this logic to individuals with military experience, suggesting that such individuals should be wary of war (Huntington, 1957; Gelpi and Feaver, 2002). In a landmark study of head of state life experiences across the world, Horowitz, Stam and Ellis (2015) find that while leaders with *military* experience are associated with increased propensity for interstate conflict initiation, there is no observed correlation for leaders with *combat* experience. In Huntington's terms, those "familiar with war" are less likely to pursue more violent foreign policies. Current or past proximity to war costs should render individuals *more* sensitive to marginal increases in expected casualty levels than comparable civilians who do not suffer war's highest consequences.

> **H3**: Increased war costs decreases support for the use of force among those with military experience more than it does for comparable civilians.

Selection

Finally, we offer an alternative explanation for the difference between civilian and military attitudes that emphasizes the durability of political attitudes and the way that those attitudes shape group affiliation. In contrast to socialization explanations that suggest attitude change occurs as the result of individual experiences *after* making career decisions, we instead argue that military organizations attract individuals possessing certain dispositions even *before* they enter.

In political science broadly, some argue that preexisting political attitudes shape how individuals select into groups (Tajfel, 1982).[3] As Hatemi and McDermott (2016, p. 345) summarize, "it is clear that attitudes and ideologies shape life experiences at least as much

[3]We remain agnostic as to whether individual attitudes stem from childhood experience or innate genetic characteristics (Sell, Tooby and Cosmides, 2009).

as life experiences shape attitudes and ideologies." In the field of international relations specifically, a growing body of work similarly suggests that deep-seated dispositions affect individual attitudes on foreign policy (Kertzer et al., 2014) and that these "bottom-up" foundations of individual foreign policy preferences are resistant to interference from institutions (Kertzer and Zeitzoff, 2017). A body of research in organizational theory and sociology complements these arguments, suggesting that individuals possess attitudes and dispositions toward employment tasks (Wanous, 1980). In addition to wages, benefits, and future economic prospects, individuals have preferences about the types of careers that provide satisfaction and select into employment in part based upon these considerations (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 1994).

Consider an individual choosing between military and non-military employment in an unconstrained environment. That is, there are no political (e.g., military conscription) or economic (e.g., both employment options will result in similar wages and benefits) considerations. We assume that the individual possesses some prior disposition regarding the use of military force (i.e., the individual is already a hawk or dove) and has some information about the types of tasks associated with the military and non-military career. Specifically, the individual knows that accepting military employment means an increased probability of having to directly or indirectly support the use of violence. We argue that, based on these simple considerations and all else equal, individuals who hold preexisting attitudes more permissive of the use of force are more likely to opt into military organizations. Our argument is not that economic calculations play no role in an individual's choice to accept military employment. They likely do. Rather, we argue that both material and dispositional considerations factor into military employment decisions.

> **H4**: Individuals selecting into military organizations are more likely to support the use of force.

Noting the importance of selection does not inherently imply a rejection of socialization effects. Selection and socialization could exert reinforcing or countervailing effects. Moreover,

the idea that military officers have distinct social origins and career motivations is not wholly new. As Janowitz (1960, p. 105) describes, "The selection of a military career, like the selection of any career, represents the interplay of opportunity plus a complex of social and personality factors." Our argument is that existing work asserting a military socialization mechanism—particularly work on the effects of life experience—overlooks a body of work in sociology that explores how selection underpins individual political attitudes in military organizations (Jenning and Markus, 1977; Bachman et al., 2000; Franke, 2001). Our review of the existing political science literature finds surprisingly few references to selection.[4] On the contrary, the field seems to agree that it is "not simply the case that those with riskier personalities select into the military," but rather that military experience "socializes participants to think about the use of force as a potentially effective solution to political problems" (Horowitz and Stam, 2014, p. 532).

3 Design: Two Waves across Two Populations

Table 1 summarizes the candidate explanations regarding socialization, cost exposure, and selection. The hypotheses stipulate countervailing effects associated with military experience, all of which might be valid independently. This presents empirical challenges for adjudicating between the candidate explanations for divergent military attitudes using observational data. A one-shot survey of individuals with military experience cannot determine the extent to which selection and socialization are driving an observed difference, especially because their effects may point in the same direction. Similarly, it is possible that the cost exposure hypothesis is correct, but that effects are masked by strong selection or socialization effects.

To address these challenges, we fielded a paired panel survey with an embedded experiment on two populations. Specifically, we surveyed incoming officer candidates at the US

[4]Various scholars discuss selection in the context of promotion and senior-level appointment—but not in the context of organizational entry (Posen, 1986; Rosen, 1994; Feaver, 2003; McMahon and Slantchev, 2015).

Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Effect on Support for Use of Force
Socialization	+/–
Cost Exposure	–
Selection	+
Military Status	+/–

Military Academy at West Point immediately before and after their initial military training—and compared these data to a nationally representative survey of US adults administered through Survey Sampling International (SSI) at the same times.

The design offers at least three improvements over past surveys. First, the first wave surveys offer a direct snapshot of selection effects—a descriptive inference unobservable in existing surveys of military officers. Second, the second survey wave contextualizes observed changes in cadet attitudes over time. Specifically, cadet dispositions on using force could change due to either socialization *or* contextual factors. A new real-world military strike, for example, might alter attitudes and complicate inferences. A simultaneous follow-up survey on the nationally representative survey helps to partial out contextual differences. Third, the embedded experiment allows us to identify the effect of cost exposure, which remained fixed across military respondents in past surveys. By holding other factors constant and randomizing expected war casualties, we can causally identify whether cadets respond to costs and whether that sensitivity differs from the civilian sample.[5]

If the research design achieved the ideal difference-in-differences design, we could attribute the initial gap in attitudes to selection and then attribute any change in that gap to socialization. Crucially, the ideal design assumes parallel trends in attitudes between the two groups (Angrist and Pischke, 2009). We admittedly lack the evidence to invoke the parallel trends assumption because there is no data tracking the various respondents attitudes before our surveys. Moreover, there might be reasons to suspect the trends differ in

[5]The comparison of causal effects between the cadet sample and non-cadet sample is not itself causal.

the two samples. One largely consists of young individuals who skew male while the other is more diverse and representative. We could imagine attitude change occurs in different ways across these samples. While an acknowledged limitation, we still see benefits to using a difference-in-differences style design to at least partially account for salient developments in world politics.

The research design is closest in spirit to that in Bachman et al. (2000), which similarly analyzes a panel survey that includes individuals entering the military. We expand on and diverge from that study in three ways: (1) our sample includes far more military respondents (1,243 versus 85); (2) military respondents in our design are drawn from a sample with an elevated probability of future elite status (cadets versus enlisted personnel); and (3) our embedded experiment allows us to more carefully explore questions of cost sensitivity.

Survey Instrument and Implementation

The survey instrument, provided in the Supporting Information (SI), consists of three parts. In the first, we collect a battery of demographic characteristics, including gender, age, race, party ID, income, prior military or combat experience, and news consumption.

The second section measures the core dependent variable: attitudes toward the use of military force. Our measurement approach follows from the nationally-administered Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) questions. CCES asks "Would you approve of use of US military troops in order to . . . ?" and provides six types of conflict scenarios: to ensure the supply of oil; to destroy a terrorist camp; to intervene in a region where there is a genocide or civil war; to assist the spread of democracy; to protect American allies under attack by foreign nations; and to help the United Nations uphold international law. Whereas CCES forces binary—yes/no—responses, we use a seven-outcome Likert scale. This measurement approach offers additional granularity and helps diminish the risk of ceiling or floor effects.

The third section, which was only included in the second survey wave, is an embedded ex-

periment. The experiment consists of: (1) a hypothetical vignette that provides background information and context; (2) a randomized treatment varying the magnitude of projected war fatalities; and (3) outcome questions measuring respondent attitudes. The vignette describes a hypothetical conflict, which varies between two possible scenarios: the use of force to help an ally repel an invader or to intervene in a humanitarian catastrophe (Herrmann, Tetlock and Visser, 1999). The vignette scenarios were selected to address an important finding in Feaver and Gelpi (2004) that military actors are more likely to support the use of military force in conventional, but not humanitarian missions. For our purposes, the scenarios are not treatment conditions of substantive interest but a means of assessing generalizability.

The common substantive treatment across survey samples varies the expected costs of the conflict between low ("approximately 150 fatalities") and high ("approximately 2,000 fatalities"). Fatality levels were selected based on US combat deaths in the Persian Gulf War and Afghanistan conflict.[6] To hold other salient factors constant, we fix the stakes, define the probability of success as 50/50, and assume bipartisan consensus.[7] We assign modest levels to these factors—as opposed to 100/0 success probability—in order to avoid ceiling effects where all respondents support using military force.[8]

The first wave of the survey was administered to new cadets at West Point (n=1,242) on their first full day of basic training in early July 2017.[9] We fielded the same survey on a nationally representative sample of US adults (n=1,811) through SSI within one week before and after the West Point implementation. We implemented the second survey wave on the

[6]Official sources report 149 fatalities during the Persian Gulf War and 1,845 during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (as of July 2018). See US Defense Manpower Data Center.

[7]Past work demonstrates that issue, bargaining issue, likelihood of victory, and elite partisan cues can all affect support for conflict (Jentleson, 1992; Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler, 2006; Berinsky, 2007).

[8]For cadets, the experiment included another fully crossed treatment varying which soldiers would be deployed in the conflict. Participants were either assigned a direct ("troops from your own battalion") or indirect ("troops from your sister battalion") cost exposure treatment. For parsimony, we pool over these conditions in the manuscript and provide results in the SI. Respondents in the nationally representative civilian survey did not receive this treatment.

[9]Cadets report to West Point at various times on "Reception Day." The survey was administered the following day.

same West Point and SSI respondents approximately seven weeks later, beginning the day after West Point Acceptance Day in late August 2017—the event during which new cadets are ceremonially accepted into the student body. Of those re-contacted, a total of 1,115 completed the second survey wave (West Point n=250; SSI n=865). We address attrition at length below and in the SI. In addition, we expand the survey in the second wave to all four West Point classes (n=918).[10]

Design Strengths and Limitations

Choosing West Point as the sample population provides a number of research advantages. First, West Point cadets are high probability candidates for future membership in the US military elite, as promotion rates to general officer are historically much higher than other officer promotion pathways, such as the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program. As shown in Figure 1, West Point graduates have on average between 1990 and 2016 constituted only 19 percent of the overall US military officer corps. However, over the same time period, West Point graduates have historically constituted as many as 85 percent and currently constitute 75 percent of four-star generals.[11] Across a longer time period, we estimate that over 50 percent of all three- and four-star generals since World War II were West Point graduates—with peak levels approaching 100 percent in the late-1960s.[12] Thus, surveying West Point cadets provides an opportunity to observe the attitudes of the individuals likely to fill senior military advisory positions in the future—such as the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Staff of the Army, or combatant commanders (e.g., US Central Command)—but *prior* to their socialization experiences.

Second, cadets graduate from West Point as junior officers, which have suffered casualty

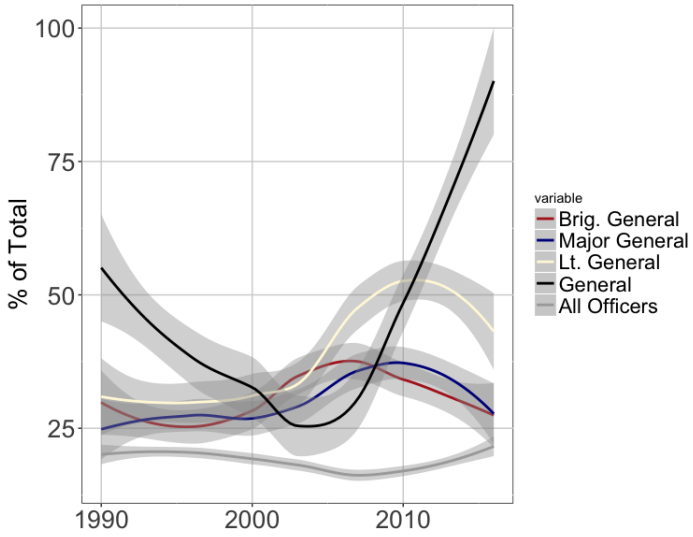
[10]The sample sizes across first, second, third, and fourth-year cadets were, respectively, 273, 211, 163, and 271.

[11]Data obtained from the US Department of the Army.

[12]Authors calculations based on Moore and Trout (1978, p. 465) and data obtained from the US Department of the Army. Calculations omit years 1975 to 1989, for which we were unable to obtain data.

rates comparable to enlisted personnel in recent US conflicts. Between September 2001 and July 2015, there were 2,180 combat-related Army casualties with the rank of lieutenant or captain.[13] Of these, 267 were killed in action, died of wounds, died while captured, or are missing.[14] Across ranks, we estimate that West Point graduates comprised approximately 22 percent of these deaths.[15] Clearly, and sadly, the sample population is highly exposed to war's deadly cost. As such, if cost exposure does affect military attitudes, we would expect to more accurately observe these effects in a sample of West Point cadets than a sample of military officers unexposed to the physical and psychological toll of combat.

Figure 1: Elite Ranks Filled by
US Military Academy Graduates, 1990-2016



Note: lines are loess curves and shaded areas indicate 95 percent confidence intervals.

Third, our selection hypothesis assumes that individuals opting in to military service have access to information on the types of tasks military organizations perform. Using West

[13]This constituted 5.4 percent of all combat-related Army casualties sustained during Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, and Freedom's Sentinel. Over the same time period, junior Army officers constituted 8.7 percent of active duty personnel. Authors calculations based on data available from US Department of Defense annual personnel reports.

[14]Data obtained through FOIA 14-F-1512 from the US Defense Manpower Data Center.

[15]96 West Point graduates died in military operations between September 2001 and July 2015, of which 60 were active duty junior officers. Data obtained from the US Military Academy Association of Graduates and FOIA 15-F-0012 from the US Defense Manpower Data Center.

Point as our sample allows us to partially validate this assumption. General knowledge that military organizations fight wars aside, official materials from the West Point Admissions Office, for example, clearly describe that they will train to acquire "the skills necessary to fight and win our nation's wars."[16] Described military training includes "combat-focused physical training," "rifle marksmanship," "hand-to-hand combat," and "small unit tactics" that "introduce cadets to the essence of our Army—winning the close ground fight."[17] Recruitment materials from the US Naval Academy and US Air Force Academy contain similar language.[18]

However, we acknowledge several limitations of the sample that may limit the generalizability of the findings. First, while we control for family income level, the selection effects we observe could be associated with elite status and therefore not applicable to non-elite military members. Second, attitudes associated with selection into the US ground forces might differ for other countries or potentially other military services within the US, such as the navy or air force. Given that we argue that individuals select into military employment based in part on estimates regarding the types of tasks they will be expected to perform, alternative considerations may apply for selecting into institutions with different mission sets, organizational cultures, or propensities to wage war. This may be especially true during an era with ongoing land wars fought by an all-volunteer force. While recognizing these limitations, we argue that the selection effects we observe remain theoretically interesting. It is precisely the proximity to violent conflict that makes military selection different from selecting into other civilian firms. Furthermore, even if service in a particular military organization typically entails less proximity to violence, the organization's fundamental mission remains inextricably linked to violence, perhaps in a supporting role. Such a core element of the organization's task likely factors into an individual's choice to opt in.

[16] *US Military Academy Admissions Catalog*, p. 37.

[17] *US Military Academy Admissions Catalog*, p. 39.

[18] See, in particular *US Naval Academy Admissions Viewbook*, p. 4 and *US Air Force Academy Admissions Viewbook*, p. 16.

Third, the period of socialization we observe with panel data is short. Socialization effects may require more time to truly affect individual attitudes. At the same time, we see a trade-off between widening the temporal scope and external validity. Basic training is perhaps the most common experience associated with military experience across time and space. A measurement specific to this common experience promises one of the most externally valid quantities of interest. Moreover, we glean insights into extended socialization experiences by comparing attitudes between West Point cohorts and between those with and without prior military service preceding their arrival at West Point. Fourth, we cannot exclude the possibility of institutional selection effects, as opposed to those driven by individual choice. While a review of the West Point admissions process finds no evidence of screening by the dispositions we examine, it is possible that admissions officers informally favor applicants who signal certain attitudes. Formal admissions criteria also include age restrictions (under the age of 23), as well as "academic performance, demonstrated leadership potential, and physical aptitude," that may be associated with attitudes on the use of force. For example, across West Point classes admitted between 2011 and 2017, approximately 92 percent of cadets were varsity athletes, 63 percent were team captains, and 12 percent were valedictorians or salutatorians.[19] Despite this, we note that cadets both choose to submit applications and accept their offers (14 percent of accepted applicants do not). Moreover, even if institutional screening mechanisms have an effect, this finding would still shift the causal mechanism away from socialization and experience.

Finally, it is worth noting that that military "socialization" is a broad term, which aggregates numerous experiences associated with organizational membership that might nudge attitudes in different ways at different times. For example, we suspect that the experience of military training and indoctrination at professional military education institutions, such as West Point, might have different effects than the experience of garrison life or unsimulated combat (Horowitz and Stam, 2014; Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik, 2015).[20] The inno-

[19]Data collected from the US Military Academy Office of Institutional Research.

[20]Only seven incoming cadets and 39 SSI respondents possessed combat experience.

vation of our study is a research design that isolates the effects of the first and most common of these experiences. Future research, including with the same panel of respondents, can extend our design to measure attitudinal change after each such follow-on experience.

4 Results

Cadets express greater support for the use of force than civilians across all of the survey instruments. The results presentation consists of three sections that disentangle the hypothesized factors driving this result: selection, socialization, and cost exposure. The cadets' greater willingness to endorse the use of force is apparent on the day they arrive for basic training. The size of this initial gap between civilian and military attitudes is unchanged in the second wave, suggesting that the socialization experience of basic training has virtually no effect on cadets' attitudes on force. Other socialization experiences—years attending West Point and prior military service—similarly cannot explain the civil-military preference gap. In fact, we find evidence that socialization over four years at West Point *reduces* support for the use of force—but this change does not override selection effects. Finally, the experiment reveals that cadets are slightly more sensitive than civilians to the projected costs of war. However, cadets' underlying hawkishness, evident at time of selection, more than offsets their elevated cost sensitivity.

Selection: Hawkish Upon Arrival

Individuals who select into military service in an era without conscription hold different attitudes on using force than those who do not. *Force Support*, the main outcome variable, measures respondent approval for using US troops in each of the specified six scenarios. Higher values (max.=7, min.=1) indicate greater support. To ease follow-up analyses, we employ principal component analysis (PCA) to construct a single metric to capture overall willingness to use force. Higher values of the the PCA measure indicate greater support for

using force (mean=0.1, std. dev.=2.3).

Before conducting parametric analysis, we examine descriptive plots of mean support levels across the six hypothetical uses of force. The left panel of Figure 2 shows that cadets (grey diamonds) arrive at basic training expressing greater support for using force in all conflict scenarios except for securing the flow of oil as compared to the civilian sample (black circles). The plot only includes those respondents who also completed the second wave survey, though results are substantively and statistically similar when including all first wave respondents.

Regressions with control variables ensure the result is not wholly attributable to demographic differences between the two samples. All models employ ordinary least squares (OLS) given the linear outcome measures. *Cadet* is a binary indicator for whether the respondent was in the West Point sample or in the SSI national sample. Control variables capture factors that may affect attitudes on the use force as well as selection into USMA. Controls account for party ID (*Democrat* and *Republican* with unaffiliated as the base category), *News Consumption* with higher values indicating more news consumption, income (*Below $30,000* and *Above $100,000* with everything between as the base category), *Female*, *Age*, *Minority* (indicating everyone except non-Hispanic whites), and *Veteran* for those in either sample who have already experienced military socialization.

Results in Table 2 corroborate the initial descriptive finding: cadets convey greater support for using force across a wide variety of contexts. These attitudinal differences are present in five of the six conflict scenarios and are also evident when using the aggregated PCA measure. For all outcomes except securing oil access the results are statistically significant at the 99 percent level despite using the reduced sample of only those completing both survey waves. This remains true even after adjusting p-values for multiple testing.

The right panel of Figure 2 graphically depicts the regression results. Shifting the respondent from a civilian to an incoming cadet consistently increases support for using force. For all except the oil scenario, the associated increase is between 0.6 and 1.2 on a 7-point

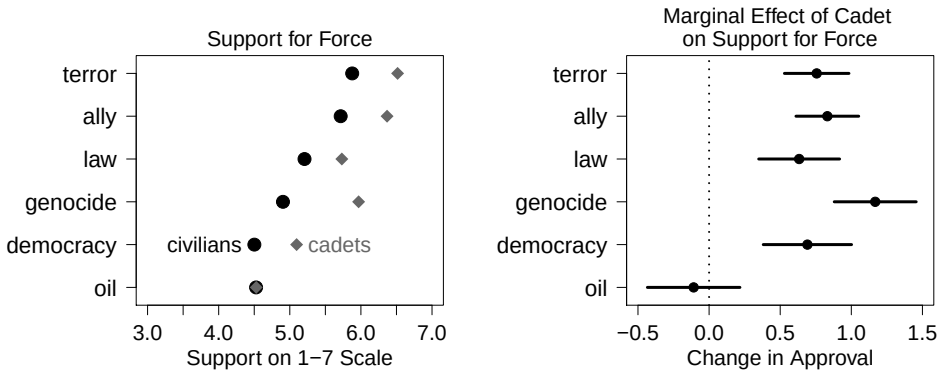


Figure 2: *Left panel*: Mean support for use of force among those who completed both survey waves. *Right panel*: Marginal effect of switching from nationally representative survey respondent to incoming cadet respondent on support for using force (based on Models in Table 2). Bars show 95 percent confidence intervals.

scale. Framed differently, the effects represent a 13 percent to 28 percent relative increase in support for using force over the civilian support levels for all scenarios except for oil. The aggregated PCA score tells a similar story. Shifting from a civilian to cadet respondent increases the expected score 1.6 ($\pm$ 0.5 at the 95 percent confidence level), which is approximately two-thirds of a standard deviation on the variable.

The results strongly support Hypothesis 1a which contends that individuals in the military are more likely to support the use of force. As importantly, the results support Hypothesis 4 which stipulates that individuals selecting into the military are more likely to support the use of force. This latter result provides the most systematic evidence to date on the importance of selection considerations and suggests that previous contentions about the origins of civil-military attitudinal differences merit revision. At a minimum, the general neglect and dismissal of selection considerations is inappropriate.

A series of robustness tests reported in the SI attest to the stability of the results. Sparse models that drop all control variables except for *Veteran* status produce similar statistical and substantive results. Findings remain steady when including all first wave survey respondents rather than only those who completed both waves. We guard against the possibility that incoming cadets are already socialized through earlier life experiences

Table 2: Selection: Attitudes on the Use of Force

	Terror (1)	Ally (2)	Law (3)	Genocide (4)	Democracy (5)	Oil (6)	PCA (7)
Cadet	0.76*	0.83*	0.63*	1.17*	0.69*	−0.11	1.55*
	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.23)
Veteran	0.25*	0.22	0.16	−0.10	0.04	−0.04	0.16
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.26)
Female	−0.24*	−0.11	−0.08	−0.21*	−0.14	−0.11	−0.35*
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.15)
Minority	−0.19*	−0.08	−0.05	−0.005	0.01	0.14	−0.04
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.16)
Democrat	−0.16	−0.12	0.41*	0.28*	0.44*	−0.06	0.40*
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.16)
Republican	0.31*	0.07	−0.17	0.13	0.42*	0.70*	0.64*
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.17)
Media	0.19*	0.16*	0.12*	0.19*	0.13*	0.08*	0.34*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.06)
Income $< \$30k$	−0.11	−0.16	−0.04	−0.02	0.22	0.15	0.07
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.19)
Income $> \$100k$	0.01	−0.07	−0.03	−0.09	−0.12	−0.11	−0.18
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.16)
Constant	4.95*	4.94*	4.75*	4.12*	3.80*	4.13*	−2.13*
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.23)	(0.32)
N	1,115	1,115	1,115	1,114	1,115	1,115	1,114

*p $< .05$

Notes: OLS with standard errors in parentheses. Outcome variables in Models 1-6 span from 1 to 7 with higher values indicating greater support for using force. Outcome in Model 7 is an aggregated score based on principal component analysis with higher values indicating greater support for using force. Results not shown for Age control variable which yields small coefficients.

in several ways. *Veteran* status accounts for those with military experience prior to West Point. An more expansive indicator for prior experience includes veterans as well as cadets who attended one year at the US Military Academy Preparatory School (USMAPS). Finally, *Military Family* status accounts for those whose immediate family members were also in the military.

To *descriptively* understand civil-military attitudinal gaps, we believe it is optimal to

examine attitudes among a broad cross-section of civilians. That said, members of the military, especially those not yet socialized, differ demographically from a broad civilian sample with *Age* being the most salient difference. *Age* takes on values in the SSI sample for which there is no covariate overlap among the incoming cadets (maximum age equals 22). This introduces a risk of relying on extreme counterfactuals (King and Zeng, 2006). We address the issue in several ways and find that results remain stable despite reductions in sample size. One check prunes the sample to include only respondents younger than 23. Another check employs genetic matching to improve covariate balance (Diamond and Sekhon, 2013).[21] The central descriptive finding persists across all specifications.

The results indicate that existing attitudes shape the life experiences that individuals pursue. Individuals joining the military have foreknowledge of the military's assigned tasks, including an elevated chance of indirectly or directly supporting the implementation of violence. On average, those already more supportive of employing force are more likely to opt into an organization and career that specializes in it.

Socialization I: Minimal Change after Basic Training

Cadets arrive to military organizations more hawkish than civilians. Do the socialization experiences bundled into basic training alter their attitudes? The analysis begins with basic descriptive plots of overall attitudes on the use of force, split between the cadet and civilian samples. Figure 3 plots the mean PCA scores for each sample for each survey wave including only respondents who completed both waves of the survey and excluding any with prior military service which would muddy the socialization analysis. Positive numbers indicate greater hawkishness. First, cadets express greater support for using force than civilians in the second wave survey, thus offering further evidence of a civil-military attitudinal gap consistent with Hypothesis 1a. Second, and as importantly, the primary driver of that

[21] While producing balance improvements, we are skeptical that any amount of matching on observables would plausibly make entry into West Point as-if random.

second wave gap is selection and not socialization. As is immediately evident given the parallel lines, there is an attitudinal gap when cadets arrive for basic training and a nearly identical attitudinal gap after basic training. In fact, the initial gap on the PCA measure is 1.4 and the final gap is also 1.4. The cadets' essentially constant relative hawkishness across survey waves suggests the socializing experiences embedded in basic training do not alter attitudes on using force.

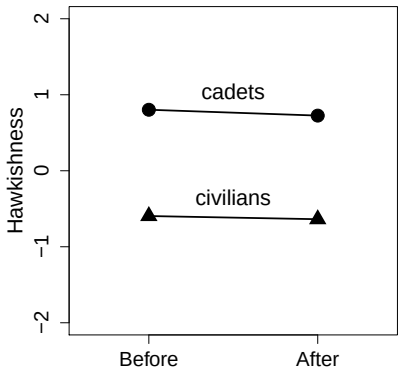


Figure 3: Mean PCA hawkishness score for each sample for each wave.

Regressions confirm what the descriptive measures convey: basic training has little effect on attitudes toward the use of force. *Change in Force Support*, which reflects the difference between an individual's wave two and wave one responses ($y_{i2} - y_{i1}$, where i indexes individuals and the second subscript indicates survey wave), serves as the outcome variable. *Cadet* is the main explanatory variable which represents the socializing experiences of basic training. Models drop respondents who have already been socialized through prior military experience. We exclude covariates because those that are time-invariant would be differenced out while those do vary may vary as a consequence of basic training and thus introduce post-treatment bias (King and Zeng, 2006).

Table 3 and Figure 4 show that cadet attitudes did not substantively change over the course of basic training as compared to civilian attitudes. Beyond falling short of statistical significance at conventional levels, the substantive effects are miniscule. The Model 7

Table 3: Socialization (Basic Training): Change in Attitudes on the Use of Force

	Terror (1)	Ally (2)	Law (3)	Genocide (4)	Democracy (5)	Oil (6)	PCA (7)
Cadet	−0.05	−0.10	−0.01	−0.04	0.07	−0.005	−0.03
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.15)
Constant	0.01	0.05	0.01	−0.02	−0.09	−0.02	−0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.07)
N	1,025	1,025	1,025	1,024	1,025	1,025	1,024

$^{*}p < .05$

Notes: OLS with standard errors in parentheses. Higher values of the outcome variables indicate positive change in support for using force. Excludes veterans.

outcome variable has a standard deviation of 2.45. An estimated socialization effect of only -0.03 ($\pm$ 0.29 at the 95 percent confidence level) represents roughly 1 percent of a standard deviation. This trivial substantive difference indicates that selection into the military is the more important factor for explaining attitudinal differences.

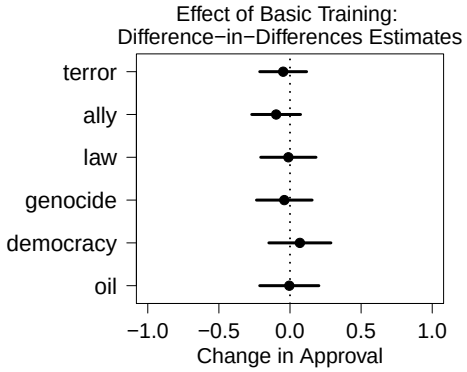


Figure 4: Difference-in-differences estimates for effect of socialization experiences of basic training on attitudes toward the use of force (based on Models in Table 3). Bars show 95 percent confidence intervals.

The general dearth of attitudinal change over the course of basic training casts doubt on Hypothesis 2, which represents the prevailing wisdom on the source of civil-military gaps on using force. Contrary to the many theoretically, rather than empirically, grounded claims in the literature, we do not find that socialization within military organizations is the source

of heightened hawkishness among those in the military. In this domain, an intense life experience exerts little influence on attitudes. Instead, views held at time of selection into service explain the lion's share of service members' greater willingness to endorse the use of force.

The limited impact of basic training on cadet attitudes persists across a variety of alternative specifications. Attrition between the survey waves presents a concern. Nearly all incoming cadets completed the first wave survey which was embedded in a broader survey instrument administered at the start of basic training. Only 20 percent of the cadet class completed the second wave survey after receiving email solicitations. Among SSI respondents, 48 percent completed the second wave. Results could be skewed due to attitudinal or demographic differences between those completing both waves and those who attrited. Results would understate the degree to which socialization breeds further hawkishness if attrition was especially high among either cadets who adopted more permissive views on the use of force over the course of basic training or civilians whose support for using force declined over the summer of 2017. Inverse probability weighting based on the observed correlates of completing both survey waves helps alleviate this concern (Fitzgerald, Gottschalk and Moffitt, 1998; Blattman, 2009). We extract individual-level probabilities for completing both survey waves from a model that uses all aforementioned control variables, whether the respondent is a cadet, and the respondent's wave one PCA score as potential correlates of survey completion.[22] We rerun the models from Table 3, weighting respondents by the inverse of their probability of second wave survey completion. Effectively, the weights increase the importance of respondents who completed both waves and are similar on a host of traits to those most likely to have attrited. Likewise, the model down-weights responses from those resembling others most likely to complete both waves. Results remain steady after applying these weights. While this approach cannot address unobserved characteristics that jointly

[22] As response rates indicate, cadets attrited at higher rates than SSI respondents. Female respondents, low-income individuals, and those who were slightly more hawkish in the first wave survey were also more likely to attrit.

affect attrition and susceptibility to socialization, it does preclude several possibilities. Notably, there is no evidence that differential attrition related to initial hawkishness accounts for the dearth of socialization effects.

Additional checks repeat the pruning and matching approaches used in the selection analysis. We observe no evidence of socialization increasing hawkishness. A final check excludes both veterans and cadets who attended USMAPS who may already be socialized.

Basic training has no substantively meaningful effect on the attitudes of those in the sample. Given the ubiquity of basic training for those entering the US military, and comparable experiences for those entering many other professionalized militaries, the lack of socialization effects is plausibly quite generalizable.

Socialization II: Dovish Changes at West Point

Is basic training too short to produce socialization effects? Socialization may require additional time to alter prior beliefs. To provide empirical purchase on the matter, we compare the incoming cadets to those across all years at West Point. As shown in Table 4, we find differences across the four classes. Model 1 reports estimated attitudinal changes associated with additional years at West Point, with incoming cadets as the base category. The results show that cadets with more time at West Point are less permissive of the use of force than incoming cadets. The decline in overall hawkishness continues each year, as indicated by the increasingly negative coefficients.

This finding suggests that socialization experiences at West Point are associated with some attitudinal shifts—but in the *opposite* direction of what much of the existing literature suggests. This may be a feature of unique characteristics of a West Point education, such as professional training on morality and ethics in war required by its curriculum—or simply the effects of a liberal arts education. It could also result from increased awareness of cost exposure or temporal proximity to bearing costs after graduation. We also cannot rule out

cohort effects because we lack baseline attitudinal data on the upperclassmen.[23] Importantly, Model 2 makes clear that, consistent with Hypothesis 1a, cadets remain more hawkish than civilians, even after multiple years at West Point. Civilians serve as the baseline and all four West Point classes hold attitudes that are significantly different from those in the civilian sample. This highlights that even four years of apparently dovish socialization is insufficient to override organizational selection effects.

Socialization III: Minimal Change after Military Service

Are socialization effects associated with West Point sufficiently different from other military organizations? Experiences at West Point are, at least in some ways, different from those at an infantry unit or on a combat deployment. To address this concern, we capitalize upon heterogeneity of prior military experience within the samples. First, the SSI sample includes 144 individuals with up to 29 years of military experience. Second, while most new West Point cadets have no prior military experience, 65 have spent up to 4 years serving in active or reserve units in operational military units. If military socialization only has an effect outside any institutional anomalies characteristic of West Point—or if military socialization simply takes longer to change political attitudes—we should observe systematic differences between cadets with and without prior service. We should also observe differences between cadets without military experience and SSI participants with military experience. In addition, another 166 participants attended USMAPS, increasing the sample of those who have received some form of prior socialization.

We compare the attitudes of incoming cadets with prior military socialization experiences to those without. As shown in the black bars in Figure 5 (full results in the SI), neither prior service nor USMAPS attendance is associated with a statistically or substantively

[23]There are plausibly minimal cohort effects as the observed cohorts entered military service during a period—2014 to 2017—in which US force levels deployed to combat missions remained relatively stable according to data from US Department of Defense Personnel Office. Accordingly, incoming cadets across all years in the study likely had similar expectations about what their service might entail.

Table 4: Socialization (Attending USMA): Change in Attitudes on the Use of Force

	PCA (1)	PCA (2)
First Year Cadet		1.46*
		(0.21)
Second Year Cadet	−0.20	1.24*
	(0.18)	(0.22)
Third Year Cadet	−0.36	1.01*
	(0.19)	(0.23)
Fourth Year Cadet	−0.53*	0.81*
	(0.17)	(0.20)
Constant	0.81*	−1.98*
	(0.38)	(0.29)
N	918	1,710
Sample	Cadets	Cadets and Civilians
Base Category	First Year Cadets	Civilians
Controls	✓	✓

*p < .05

Notes: OLS with standard errors in parentheses. Higher values of the outcome variables indicate more support for using force. Results not shown for all control variables. Excludes non-cadets with military experience.

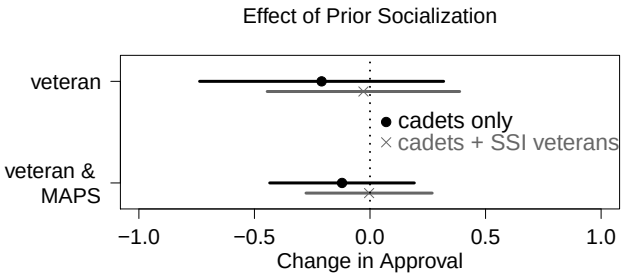


Figure 5: Estimated effects of prior military socialization experiences among incoming cadets (and SSI respondents) on attitudes toward use of force at time of arrival for basic training. Bars show 95 percent confidence intervals.

significant attitudinal difference in the first-wave survey. Regardless of whether incoming cadets had previous military experience, they held similarly hawkish attitudes upon arrival, attesting to selection, as opposed to socialization, differences. Expanding the comparison

set to include those SSI respondents with military service, which ranged up to 29 years, produces similar findings (grey bars). Again, attitudes toward the use of force are very similar for incoming cadets with no prior experience and for survey respondents with extended socialization experiences. The analysis thus provides evidence that the lack of socialization effects is not attributable to basic training's short duration and casts further doubt on Hypothesis 2.

Cost Exposure: The Effect of Bearing War's Toll

Our analysis thus far shows that those in the military hold relatively hawkish attitudes despite being part of an organization with increased exposure to war costs in a general way. Contrary to canonical accounts (e.g., Huntington, 1957), cost exposure does not override enthusiasm for the use of force. However, this does not imply that members of the military are insensitive to costs either absolutely or relative to the cost sensitivity of civilians. The experiment embedded in the second wave survey allows us to causally identify the effects of higher projected costs on support for conflict.

Table 5 presents the experiment results and includes previously mentioned controls (not shown). The outcome variable indicates degree of support for the use of force on a one to five scale with higher numbers indicating greater support. Figure 6 eases interpretation by plotting the marginal effect of shifting from low to high cost treatment conditions. Model 1 reports results for all second wave respondents across the civilian SSI sample and all years of cadets.[24] Consistent with expectations, the intuitive relationship between costs and war support holds. Increasing the expected fatalities from a low level (150) to a high level (2,000) decreases respondent support for using force. We also find that cadets express greater support for using force ($p = 0.08$). Strikingly, mean cadet approval under the high-cost condition slightly exceeds mean civilian approval under the low-cost condition. These

[24] Results exclude SSI respondents who are either active duty members of the military or veterans because they have also selected into and been socialized once in the military.

Table 5: Cost Sensitivity and Attitudes Toward Use of Force

	Support Using Force (1)	Support Using Force (2)
High Costs	−0.19*	−0.15
	(0.06)	(0.10)
Cadet	0.13	0.16
	(0.07)	(0.10)
High Costs*Cadet		−0.07
		(0.13)
Ally Vignette	0.30*	0.30*
	(0.06)	(0.06)
Constant	2.67*	2.65*
	(0.14)	(0.14)
N	1,710	1,710
Controls	✓	✓

*p < .05

Notes: OLS with standard errors in parentheses. Higher values of the outcome variable indicates more support for using force. Results not shown for control variables. Excludes non-cadets with military experience.

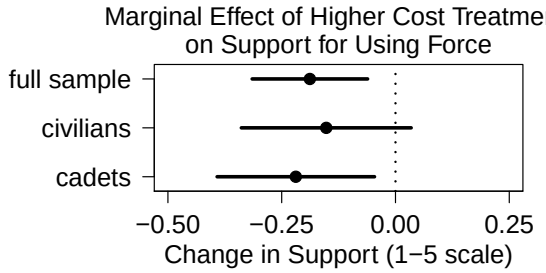


Figure 6: Marginal effects of moving from low to high cost treatment across different subsets of the sample.

results are again consistent with a civil-military attitudinal gap in line with Hypothesis 1a.

Model 2 examines treatment effect heterogeneity between civilians and cadets. The effect of increasing costs is larger within the cadet sample than in the civilian sample and statistically significant in the former but not the latter. Directionally, cadets display greater sensitivity to projected costs than civilians. However, the difference between the sub-sample

marginal effects is not itself statistically significant, as indicated by the interaction term. That is, the difference between a statistically significant result (within the cadet subsample) and a statistically insignificant result (within the civilian subsample) is not itself statistically significant in this case. Overall, cadets display greater cost sensitivity but not sufficiently large so as to preclude the null hypothesis of no treatment effect heterogeneity as theorized in Hypothesis 3.[25]

In sum, the cost exposure findings partly accord with Hypothesis 3. Those most exposed to war's physical toll exhibit greater sensitivity to that toll increasing, with two qualifying caveats. First, the results cannot rule out the possibility of no difference in cost sensitivity between civilians and cadets. A larger sample size might allow subsequent studies to draw firmer conclusions. Second, despite potentially elevated sensitivity to costs, cadets remain more hawkish overall. To the degree that cost exposure limits cadet enthusiasm for using force, this is more than offset by their underlying dispositions about using force from early in their careers.

5 Discussion & Conclusion

This paper explores whether and why military individuals hold unique attitudes on questions of war and peace. Four key findings emerge from the inquiry. First, those in the military consistently offer greater support for the use of force across multiple survey measurements. The finding is consistent with prior results demonstrating hawkish attitudes among the military and clashes with accounts of military prudence and restraint. Second, incoming military officer candidates express more hawkish views than comparable civilians upon arrival. This finding is consistent with our argument that individual career selection drives much of the gap between civilian and military attitudes. Third, there is no evidence consistent with the prevailing consensus that military experience makes individuals more

[25]Models in the SI provide additional information on how war cost proximity affects cadet attitudes. Analyses in Table 5 pool across these conditions.

hawkish. Basic training, a nearly universal aspect of military socialization, did not alter the relative hawkishness of cadets versus civilians. Moreover, incoming cadets expressed similar views regardless of whether they had prior military experience which in some cases spanned multiple years of service. Fourth, cadets do display somewhat greater sensitivity to elevated war costs, but this is insufficient to override the hawkish dispositions associated with selection into the military. In sum, we find that individuals in the military are consistently more hawkish and this hawkishness derives from individual selection into the military rather than due to socialization once in.

These findings speak to one of the core empirical findings of recent behavioral studies in international relations: military experience is associated with attitudes more permissive of the use of force (Weeks, 2012; Horowitz and Stam, 2014; Kertzer, 2016). Consistent with this body of work, we find clear differences in civilian and military attitudes. Yet, the hypothesized mechanism behind this observed difference requires scrutiny and revision. Experience may be important—but we find limited evidence that it is driving the attitudinal gap. More broadly, the results point to bounds on the malleability of political attitudes in response to life experiences (Yarhi-Milo, Kertzer and Renshon, forthcoming). At least in the context of voluntary military service, attitudes come at least in part *before* experiences in the causal chain.

While solidifying the direction of and microfoundations for the civil-military attitudinal gap, several limitations of this study merit caveats and point to avenues for future research. First, the selection considerations that we stress may differ, or even be inoperative, in other contexts such as for conscript armies, more peaceful democracies, military institutions used primarily for domestic policing or international peacekeeping, authoritarian regimes, or other bureaucracies within the national security apparatus. Future research might study selection effects in contexts with different dynamics, such as Israel, the United Kingdom, and western Europe. These studies might reveal that military socialization is more likely in conscript militaries, in which recruits are not notably hawkish from the start and potentially have

more room for attitudinal change. Another area for inquiry is whether these selection and socialization dynamics hold in other areas of the national security bureaucracy, such as foreign ministries and intelligence organizations. Perhaps the conclusion that "where you stand is where you sit" simply reflects the dispositions that attracted bureaucrats to the organization in which they sit (Allison, 1971).

Second, there are salient socialization experiences and selection choices that we cannot convincingly address. Chief among the omitted socialization experiences is the effect of exposure to actual violence in combat (Horowitz and Stam, 2014; Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik, 2015). We also cannot observe institutional selection effects over military careers. Perhaps individuals with certain attitudes on using force are more likely to select to remain in the military. Alternatively, civilian leaders may promote military elites whose attitudes and preferences more closely mirror their own—thereby overriding the hawkish tendency of the group.[26] Tracing the evolution of attitudes over military careers, perhaps by resurveying our panel at later dates akin to previous generational analyses (Jennings, Stoker and Bowers, 2009), could address this empirical lacuna. This study's measurement of military attitudes at the beginning of professional careers is a critical starting point for such future work.

We conclude with some implications for contemporary US decision-making on the use of force. Following post-World War II demobilization and the transition to an all-volunteer force in 1973, the percentage of the US public in the military has dropped from approximately 10 percent in 1945 to less than 0.5 percent in 2001. Only 0.75 percent of the public deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq at any time over the 16 years of ongoing conflict. Consistent with the theory of "democratic militarism" (Caverley, 2014), as war costs concentrate among a narrow subset of society, the electoral incentives motivating political elites to use force prudently may decrease. Absent broadly borne costs, the cautious use of force may rely on

[26]Yet, existing data on military attitudes (Feaver and Gelpi, 2004) instead suggests that, at least in the United States, the hawkish biases we observe in military officer candidates are mirrored at elite level, at least for missions with non-humanitarian objectives. In fact, a basic comparison of results from Feaver and Gelpi (2004) and our own study reveals a comparable difference in means between military and civilian attitudes.

restraining impulses and input from military elites and institutions which carry increasing sway with the US public (Golby, Feaver and Dropp, 2017). Yet, our results highlight the challenges inherent in looking to elites that have chosen military careers. Undercutting theories of military restraint (Huntington, 1957), we find that military respondents' elevated sensitivity to costs is more than offset by a greater baseline willingness to use force. When militaries depend on individuals to opt into service, they are likely to attract those with hawkish attitudes. Consequently, the military officials that contemporary US society trusts for guidance on whether to use force may be disproportionately willing to use it.

The results also carry implications for debates concerning the prevalence of individuals with military experience appointed to the senior ranks of the Trump administration or cabinets more generally. In their analyses, supporters and opponents alike emphasize the role military experience plays in shaping these individuals' current attitudes on the use of force. For one commentator concerned about excessive hawkishness within the president's inner circle, military advisers "are products of their background and environment [...] They naturally see the world from a military perspective and conceive military solutions to its problems" (Kinzer, 2017). In contrast, the aforementioned Michael Pompeo statement—"there's no one like someone who's served in uniform who understands the value of diplomacy and the terror and tragedy that is war [...]" (Gordon and Youssef, 2018)—typifies arguments of military prudence. Our results suggest that both sides emphasize the wrong explanatory factor. It is not the "background and environment" that comes with having "served in uniform" that offers the strongest signal of individuals' attitudes on using force, but rather that they opted to put on the uniform at all.

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