AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL BARGAINING

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation project proposes a novel theoretical framework for understanding the constraining role that opinionated audiences play in international bargaining. The well-known audience cost paradigm assumes that domestic audiences have a strong general preference for their leader making good on the threats they issue, which has led to a number of serious empirical challenges for that paradigm. I argue on psychological grounds that audiences' reactionary tendencies to policy shifts of all kinds effectively generate a similar but distinct *expectation cost*; these patterns of reaction, when fully understood, can explain a wide range of empirical phenomena in international security, including but not limited to those with which audience cost theory is concerned.

The theory indicates that: the median voter theorem generally does not hold over time; positive reactions to popular shifts are always weaker than they would otherwise be; and, ultimately, acting in an inconsistent manner leads inevitably and unconditionally to a loss of domestic approval which can be used for signaling purposes in international bargaining. Most importantly, this theory can provide a unique and more proper explanation for the democratic peace phenomenon: the generally dovish attitudes that democracies' audiences have toward other democracies interacts with their deviations from classical utility-maximization to produce a virtuous cycle of non-conflict.

Most chapters constitute empirical tests of the theory, focusing on the quantifiable existence of expectation costs as well as their qualitative nuance. Nonlinear regression models on ANES panel data exhibit the fact that voters' reactions to policy shifts as they perceive them are subject to loss aversion, as predicted by prospect theory. Qualitative studies of the four cases in which a U.S. president violated a major campaign promise relating to foreign policy provide more comprehensive evidence of the expectation cost mechanism at work in real and substantively important cases of international bargaining.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

> We know all too well from past experiences that negotiations with the Soviet Union must be carefully prepared. We can't afford to repeat past mistakes – to arrive hastily at an arms control process that sends hopes soaring, only to end in dashed expectations.
>
> Ronald Reagan in press conference
> Quoted in Waterman, Silva & Jenkins-Smith,
> *The Presidential Expectations Gap* (2014)

This study investigates, from a psychological perspective, the role that public expectations play in international bargaining. Expectations have long been central to international relations scholarship – the reigning methodological paradigm is known, after all, as expected utility theory – but that theoretical framework generally excludes psychological dynamics that are generally considered irrational, including those relating to expectations (e.g. Bueno de Mesquita & McDermott 2004). I argue here that including those dynamics in a theory of international bargaining produces important new insights about the role that domestic politics plays in determining international bargaining outcomes.

This study has two main audiences. The first is those interested in the "two-level game" interplay between domestic politics and international relations (Putnam 1988), particularly in the debate over the meaningful role that promise-making, threat-making, and other "cheap talk" may or may not play in that game. The well-known concept of an *audience cost*, suffered by leaders for bluffing unsuccessfully or otherwise acting inconsistent with

past statements and commitments, is at the center of the debates on this topic, and this work is framed accordingly. The theory developed here does not by any means preclude the existence of one or more separate and additional kinds of inconsistency-related costs such as those already posited to exist, under the audience-cost moniker or otherwise; I do argue throughout, however, that the nature of the inconsistency cost that arises within this psychological framework is unique in several consequential ways, i.e. it is not merely a theory of why audience costs, as previously defined, exist. Thus I seek to avoid confusion by dubbing this separate costly dynamic an "expectation cost."

As I discuss in the following chapter, a major tension exists in the current literature between the macro-level statistical evidence of some sort of audience cost and the lack of evidence of robust audience costs at the micro-level of case studies and survey experiments. While different kinds of "inconsistency costs," as they may generically be called, are not necessarily in competition, the empirical failures of existing theories leave unexplained the broader political phenomena that motivated them in the first place, which in turn should motivate further research and, especially, novel theories. Expectation cost theory produces some novel deductions predictions – about, for example, the consequences of the domestic audience's preferences regarding international conflict – that are not yet contemplated by any other theories of inconsistency costs, but many of its predictions are certainly very similar to those other theories', and so this theory can help to resolve the tension created by any empirical failures of those other theories.

This work should also be of interest to those interested in the psychological and social dynamics of expectations more generally. The notion of getting other people's hopes up, and of this having important social consequences, is widely familiar and applicable, yet it does not seem to have been given a clear theoretical basis and formal specification. I argue here that the psychological theory does now exist to support such a specification, though the relevance and logic do not seem to have been fully explicated. The international context is the focus here mainly because it is there where this risky and costly dynamic would be thought to have its most important and far-reaching consequences, especially given leaders' necessary adaptations to the existence and specter of these costs. But one of the original hypothetical examples of this dynamic to be found in the international relations literature

was actually that of a union leader publicly promising union members that she will win them a raise, in order to strengthen their bargaining position against corporate leaders as they press for that raise (Jervis 1970, 75-6). Even outside of any bargaining context, the existence of expectation costs can readily explain patters such as the general downward trajectory of almost all presidential approval ratings over time (Mueller 1970), and the fact that high expectations specifically presage drops in approval (Waterman, Silva & Jenkins-Smith 2014), and increases in anti-incumbent voting (Niven 2000).

1.1 The Psychology of Gain, Loss, and Expectations

Expectations and the effect they have on our evaluations of current events are seen here through the lens of prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky 1979; Tversky & Kahneman 1992), as formally defined and expended upon in more recent research in behavioral economics. Here, I provide a summary introduction of the construct of expectation costs which, as I show in chapter 3, arises deductively from that theory.

We try to avoid getting others' hopes up, when we can help it; we warn others not to get their hopes up, and we even warn them not to get others' hopes up. We speak of rose-colored glasses and counting one's chickens before they're hatched. There are several reasons why – for example, so we are not oblivious to various dangers and fail to take proper precautions,[1], or lead others to be so oblivious – but one reason is purely subjective and psychological, stemming from how we experience outcomes very differently based on the *reference point* we have in mind at the time.

One's reference point can be thought of as an outcome one has in the back of their mind; and one tends to automatically categorize experienced outcomes as *gains* or *losses* depending on whether, given the individual's preferences and overall value system, that outcome is considered better or worse than the reference-point outcome. The key factor, according to prospect theory, is that losses are *overweighted*, at least compared to gains. A gain of $100 does not feel as good as a loss of $100 feels bad, even if you can afford to take

1. Such optimistic obliviousness is in fact already very nicely captured by the concept of *defensive avoidance*, attributable to Janis & Mann (1977).

the loss without any particularly bad consequences in real terms.[2] The most interesting consequence of this fact, giving rise to the term *loss aversion,* is that people tend to go to what can only be called irrational lengths to avoid a given outcome if and when they have a higher reference point. The attempts to get back in the "domain" of gains can often consistently lead to far higher costs being paid in the end, i.e. we "throw good money after bad." Conversely, we tend to act with inadequate ambition and are unwilling to take justified risks when our reference points are, in a sense, too low – the gains to be had are not considered attractive enough to risk even a relatively small chance of a relatively low loss.

The application of this pattern here, in relation to how people value and react to political outcomes, is, in this one sense, much simpler. The topic at hand does not relate to events that domestic audiences can really control – they can work to put people in power who they expect will do things they like, and they can kick them out if they don't do those things, but since they are, after all, audience members, they are forced in the meantime simply to form expectations and then passively observe political outcomes, experiencing these automatic and psychological valuations as if they are payoffs that must be accepted. Here, then, we only really need account for the relatively simple ways in which we tend to weight outcomes differently based on their relation to the reference point.

Another key point, though, stemming from more recent research, is that expectations are a very powerful determinant of the reference point. Obviously, when we receive our paychecks as expected, we do not have the same psychological sense of gain as if we received that money unexpectedly and out of nowhere; even more obviously, we do not "look on the bright side" and experience a $1,000 deposit as a gain if we were expecting $2,000. Conversely, we may be expecting some sort of loss, and feel a relief that is very much a sense of gain if and when that loss does not come – even though, notably, our objective situation did not change at any point in such a scenario. Even a real loss may feel like a gain if we were thoroughly

2. While many of the terms used to explain and describe prospect theory dynamics imply emotion and affect – outcomes "hurt" and losses "feel" worse – it should be understood (and is discussed in chapter 2) that emotion plays neither a necessary nor a sufficient part in prospect theory, nor does conscious awareness of any of these processes as they are at work in one's own mind. All such phrases should be interpreted as "as-ifs" – for example, people consistently behave *as if* losses feel worse than equivalent gains, and they act *as if* they are particularly angry about a worse-than-expected outcome.

convinced that an even greater loss was coming. Gain and loss, in other words, are all in our heads, and unless we are always expecting nothing to change, experienced gain and loss are very much decoupled from what we might consider real gains and losses, relative to one's real and objective condition.

Already, then, it is clear how expectations of great outcomes are bad: they set us up to experience loss if and when they're not met, which wouldn't be so terrible if senses of loss weren't generally amplified so much but they are. Conversely, we make conscious efforts to "count our blessings:" to view what we have from a lower reference point, to put ourselves in the domain of gains, for however long and to whatever extent. Of course, it is also rightfully said that you don't know what you had until you've lost it, and we all tend to take things for granted – that is, reference points tend to incorporate whatever we have and whatever we really gain, and even everything we expected or even hoped to get, and even our best efforts to not get our hopes up, count our blessings, and otherwise keep our reference points low, tend to fail.

These unnecessary, irrational, or just generally unfortunate increases in reference points and expectations tend to make things worse in this straightforward way, casting even objectively good outcomes in a bad psychological light. The term "expectation costs" might certainly fit that – you might say that you inflict expectation costs on yourself by allowing yourself to get your hopes up about something – but this is, if nothing else, not the consequences of this dynamic that is relevant to political or social interactions. When you warn someone else not to get their hopes up, you are attempting to spare them a possible sense of loss, but you may have entirely self-serving motives. You may have very good reason to fear that they will hold you accountable for some disappointing outcome – whether or not you even really are – and make the psychic cost for them a material cost for you. What I call an expectation cost takes this form, of a net political cost that is suffered by a political leader due to a net psychic cost that is suffered by those to whom they are accountable.

This high-hopes-and-disappointment story may usually be how expectation costs are generated – leaders have obvious incentives to over-promise in order to get elected, and there are lots of things they can promise that everyone agrees are good and desirable – but one of my major goals in this study is to make it clear how expectation costs can

and often do take the opposite form, at least in part. Just as one can build temporary popularity by over-promising and then lose far more popularity than they gained when they fail to deliver, they can lose a great deal of popularity with some policy commitment or disappointing admission, and then only recoup a portion of that lost popularity when they reverse themselves or otherwise surprise with some future outcome. Expectation costs exist because when a gain and a loss of the same objective size are experienced over time, the loss "wins out" and leaves the individual psychologically much worse off than if nothing had been experienced at all; whether the loss or the gain happened first is utterly irrelevant to that. We speak of dashing hopes and creating disappointment, but we should also speak of "burning bridges" with potential supporters, whose hopes we might "get down," making it harder to win their support back.

This is especially crucial when accounting for controversial issues, wherein a promised and expected policy or outcome will get some people's hopes up while alienating and incensing others. We might look only toward the supporters as the generators of expectation costs, if and when the promise is broken, but we should also look toward the opponents, who essentially overreacted to the making of the promise and will effectively refuse to fully appreciate it if the leader later converts to their side. If in fact the opponents fully "renormalize" to the promised policy as their reference point, such that they see the leader's later reversal entirely as a gain rather than the aversion or recouping of a possible loss, then the leader will end up with no more support from them than from the former allies she turned away from. This is indeed a significant "if," as I've already suggested and elaborate on in chapter 2 – expectation costs will always come more robustly in practice from those who are excited and then disappointed rather than those who are alienated and then pleasantly surprised – but it would be a definite mistake to ignore this theoretically equal half of expectation costs, or write the costs off entirely when the promised policy is unpopular.

1.2 Expectation Costs and Credible Commitment

Much scholarship centers on the basic fact that, in international politics, the availability of commitment mechanisms cannot be taken for granted. States certainly have some com-

mitments that they could make and elect not to, but like private citizens of a failed state wishing to enter into a legally binding contract, states have no world government's court to go to when they want to clearly and credibly commit to something – anything, really – in the eyes of the world. When a state wishes to coerce another – and especially if they really are willing to go to war over the issue – they may very well want to make it visibly impossible, or overwhelmingly costly, for them to *not* punish the other state in the event that that state does not give in to their threat, but it is hardly obvious how they can so visibly commit themselves. Many states in many situations have nothing at their disposal but "cheap talk" – the same words and signals that any state can use to try and coerce another state, whether or not they're bluffing. Some, however, may have unique national attributes that make it particularly, genuinely, and visibly costly for them to issue threats, and/or to back down from threats they've made, or perhaps simply to say one thing and do another in any context. If so, these states have a paradoxical advantage, because of their domestic vulnerability. Their access to a commitment mechanism is essentially a resource at their disposal (e.g. Schelling 1960; Putnam 1988).

Like many costly political dynamics both real and imagined, expectation costs would fit the bill as something a leader could use this way in international bargaining. The most obvious and intuitive story along these lines is as follows, though, as I explain in chapter 3, there are many other ways in which expectation costs can commit a leader and change the course of bargaining. A leader may be genuinely unable to back down from a threat they've issued because their people are now very excited about the concession that the other side is presumably about to make, and the political fallout from their disappointment would be greater than the cost of war, as the leader figures it. Rival leaders should generally be able to observe the extent of that leader's accountability (if the country is a democracy, for example) as well as the high hopes of her audience, through, for example, its celebratory behavior at the time of the threat's issuance, or the warnings some might issue about how badly people like them would react if the threat comes to nothing. The rival leader, then, is put in the position of knowing that they must either make concessions or let the threatening leader get forced into attacking them in order to win those concessions by force, and this naturally maximizes the chance that the rival leader just concedes peacefully.

This should suggest many other questions which I answer in the course of this work; the answers constitute the more interesting aspects of the theory and lead to the more interesting and compelling implications. What should a leader make of another leader's decision to create domestic expectations – or to avoid doing so – in the first place? What about the other form or component of expectation costs, where audience members disapprove of the promised policy – they may object ideologically to bullying other countries, for example – so the whole process of promising and then reversing is costly for the leader, but the reversal in and of itself recoups some of the initial lost support? This would seem to be the opposite story, where the leader has some additional incentive to back down from the threat. Overall, how consequential is the audience's preferences, and their overall level of opinionated engagement in the bargaining process? Are bargaining outcomes and the effects of accountability just straightforwardly determined by those audience preferences, regardless of the psychological conditioning effects of prospect theory?

There, of course, numerous points for possible "slippage" here, whereby leaders may misperceive the political situation of their rival, or even misperceive their own situation, or fail to appreciate the political situation that their own actions will put them in later. The potential slippage is exponentially greater when it comes to leaders making assumptions about what the other leader will or will not accurately perceive, about both leaders' situations, and other leaders' intentions and perceptions. Such daunting complexity is what game theory is employed to tease out, in a clear and comprehensive manner. Thus, chapter 3 consists of a formalization of bargaining logic when expectation costs are introduced into the process – or, rather, when we introduce the assumption that domestic audiences' reactions are conditioned as per prospect theory, which begets a unique pattern of aggregate reactions and political incentives that includes what I call expectation costs.

It warrants specifying from the outset that the model constructed and relied on here as "the expectation cost model" is meant to be the simplest possible introduction of this basic concept of bargaining in the shadow of audience reactions that accord with prospect theory. Far more complicated models of both bargaining and prospect theory exist, and could and should eventually be synthesized into a far more complex model – or, more likely, an array of models – than the one utilized here. Numerous simplifying assumptions

and familiar conventions relied upon here will no doubt rankle sophisticated and critical readers. Leaders are modeled here as classically rational actors while their audiences are not, all audience members' reference points are modeled as sole and complete functions of leaders' rhetoric and policies, and renormalization downward is assumed to occur fully and completely after a threat is issued, to name a few examples. It is my contention here, though, that this model is sufficient to credibly signal the overall existence of expectation costs, in a clear enough way that will not just avoid confusion but facilitate subsequent investigations into just how robust these costs really are, and, separately, just how robust their effects on international bargaining really are.

To a large degree, the model and theory here are a conceptual jumping-off point, or reference point (no pun intended): they specify an equilibrium of political behavior, processes, and outcomes that is not necessarily meant to hold even very often, but is very much suitable, I find, for comparing any real individual case to it, so that we can informatively characterize it based on how and why it deviated from the theoretical equilibrium specified in chapter 3.

1.3 What Expectation Costs Can Explain

On the other hand, there are robust and quantifiable patterns of international bargaining and its outcomes that are perhaps only explainable given the model constructed in chapter 3, plus the assumption that its equilibrium does in fact tend to hold in reality. I summarize them here, before comprehensively reviewing them in chapter 2 and then relating them to the implications of the model in chapter 3.

Audience costs were theorized to exist in the first place because of two very basic properties of international relations: first, coercive threats are very rare; and second, leaders do, on occasion, decide to terminate bargaining and initiate a war rather than wait to see if the next round of bargaining will bring concessions without the cost of war. Abandoning audience cost theory, as Schultz (2012) points out, respects the findings that suggest that those costs just don't exist, but it disrespects, in a sense, the findings that the theory was meant to explain in the first place – hence Schultz's title, "Why We Needed Audience Costs

and What We Need Now" There are other findings in American politics, as well, that U.S. presidents almost always fulfill or make serious attempts to fulfill their specific campaign promises (Krukones 1984; Fishel 1985), and they generally face a steady decline in approval rating throughout their tenure as they are forced to take unexpected, if not unpopular, actions (Mueller 1970; Waterman, Silva & Jenkins-Smith 2014).

In general, it might be said that the texture of most leaders' behavior becomes strange and senseless if they really can get away with saying and promising anything they want without any adverse consequences from their domestic audiences. If being inconsistent is analogized to a plot of land that is marked off as a minefield, then there is substantial research to indicate that there are actually few to none live mines in there, but even more substantial research to indicate that leaders go well out of their way to avoid that plot of land. Perhaps they're all wrong to do so, or perhaps, as Trachtenberg (2012, 411-2) suggested, there are other costs for being inconsistent, including international reputation and one's own self-esteem, but these explanations would have their own distinct shortcomings – why, for example, would regimes with certain domestic institutions act more consistent than others and be treated accordingly by other states, and why wouldn't leaders who are willing to leverage inconsistency for political gain eventually beat and crowd out those with personal compunctions against it?

Thus the more attractive theoretical resolution would be one that points to some real cost of inconsistency that has always been there, and always been substantial, but has not been properly conceptualized and has, as a result, not been looked for in the right ways. The central argument here is that expectation costs are that cost.

One of the more interesting findings of the audience cost research program has been the discovery of certain autocratic audience costs (Weeks 2008): regimes that fit the stereotype of an autocracy under the thumb of one impregnable leader also fit the stereotype of a country whose threats are considered minimally credible, but most autocratic regimes differ from democracies only in the quality and quantity of citizens who are in the domestic audience to which the leader is accountable, and more accountable autocrats do indeed enjoy greater threat credibility as predicted. A perfect example is the difference Weeks (2008) finds between dynastic and non-dynastic monarchies: what else could explain the

fact that monarchs belonging to a dynasty apparently enjoy greater threat credibility, other than that they have to worry more about familial rivals because they have stronger claims to the throne? Such nuanced and yet empirically robust distinctions strongly suggest that domestic accountability is the key factor, not just in enforcing political consistency but in doing so in a way that is recognized, respected, and accounted for by rival states, and yet, as I review in chapter 2 (and contribute to in chapter 4), audience cost theories which could explain these patterns all tend to fail other, more direct empirical tests.

A second major pattern that expectation costs can explain may be related to this first one. Consolidated electoral democracies may not differ from accountable autocracies in terms of their threat credibility, or their overall belligerence and war-related prudence (Weeks 2012, 2014), but they differ dramatically in their behavior toward each other, namely in that they virtually never fight wars against each other (e.g. Cederman & Rao 2001; Dafoe, Oneal & Russett 2013) or even issue militarily coercive threats to one another (Poznansky & Scroggs 2016). Explaining these phenomena alongside other known facts, like the overall aggressiveness of democracies, is particularly challenging, as Bueno de Mesquita & Smith (2012) pointed out, and audience cost theory is hardly well-suited, nor primarily intended, to explain this apparent interaction effect within democratic pairs of countries (AKA dyads), as Schultz (2012) pointed out.

Expectation cost theory is not ideal for explaining the democratic peace either, as it too is an essentially monadic theory – it posits a mechanism of domestic accountability that conditions a given country's bargaining more or less equally no matter who they're bargaining against – but there is a clear synergy between expectation cost theory and other public opinion research that suggests a novel explanation for the democratic peace just the same. Expectation costs, as modeled here, create a threshold of accountability beyond which leaders cannot rationally ever issue an international threat, much less go to war; this threshold, however, exists only when the opinionated public (i.e. those with a consistent opinion of their own on the matter) is overwhelmingly against that act of aggression, by a roughly 2-to-1 ratio. As the rational leader grows more accountable leading up to this threshold, in fact, the chance that she issues a threat plummets exponentially, while her visible threat credibility grows exponentially, thereby lowering the chance that any crisis

that does occur escalates to war. This alone would not necessarily explain the democratic peace, but it does in light of previous findings that democratic publics consistently tend to object strenuously and ideologically to any hostile action that their state may take against a fellow democracy (Owen 1994; Hayes 2012). While dovish audience preferences alone are certainly a straightforward explanation of peace without anything like prospect theory involved, expectation cost theory can provide a unique explanation, especially, for the ability of democracies to resolve the differences they do have and which lead them to engage in crisis bargaining without escalating to war.

Lastly, there is the finding, generally neglected by other theories of inconsistency costs, that new, non-consolidated, limited democracies are the most common participants in, and initiators of, interstate violence (Gleditsch & Ward 2000). Baliga, Lucca & Sjöström (2011) in particular find that "a dyad of limited democracies is more likely to be involved in a militarized dispute than any other dyad (including 'mixed' dyads, where the two countries have different regime types)" – though the aggression of these countries is not limited to each other (Mansfield & Snyder 2005). Thus there is a U-shaped relationship between a leader's general degree of accountability to some domestic constituency and the general peacefulness of their international relations.

Expectation costs cannot really explain this entire pattern, but at the very least, it is not so much in conflict with it as are other theories of domestic inconsistency costs. The relationship between threat credibility and the overall chance of war is complex in any model and perhaps especially so in this one, but it is generally positive: the ability to credibly signal a high level of resolve cuts down, especially, on wars that occur because a state that was really willing to fight a war from the start was unable to convince the other state of that fact. In the model with expectation costs, however, the relationship between accountability and threat credibility is nonlinear – under most circumstances, increased accountability has diminishing returns for threat credibility – and this results, ultimately, in a nonlinear relationship between accountability and the chance of war, or peace. Indeed, when the revisionist state is very weak militarily relative to the state that it's considering trying to coerce, there is the distinct U-shaped relationship between the revisionist state's level of accountability and the overall chance that peace maintains. An increase in accountability

for such a state, in other words, will decrease the chance of war if that state is already rather highly accountable, but if it's a personalist, strongman regime and we imagine weakening the leader only partially, so that they are now only somewhat more accountable to some group of elites and/or to their general public, we should expect such a change to make the regime more war-prone, not less. This is a very particular and rather small range of cases in the expectation cost model, and the relationship between accountability and peace is usually positive throughout, but it is also generally strongest when accountability is already high, which accords at least somewhat with existing understands about the overall war-proneness of limited democracies.

1.4 Quantitative Empirical Tests

A standard research design first uses a formal model (or informal conceptual framework) to generate predictions about the subject of interest, and then tests those predictions against available or gathered data. The theory and model presented here are already constructed in relation to the known phenomena about the subject of interest, which I have just summarized. I certainly did not construct the model simply to fit the data, and I would be making an entirely different argument about international politics if the model constructed on these bases had produced different implications, but as it stands, the research that would properly test the model has already been conducted, with no apparent data left to leverage in some novel way in order to test this model's unique predictions. Thus, I turn instead to empirical tests of the foundations of the model, which, in this case, means testing for the existence of expectation costs, i.e. looking to verify that they are being suffered by heads of state as and when prospect theory would predict.

My most rigorous tests of this kind constitute chapter 4. The American National Election Studies (ANES) provide adequate data suitable for testing such hypotheses about how people in general – or American voters at the very least – react to their leader's shifts regarding various political issues, as they actually perceive those shifts. For one, this allows for a novel test of audience cost theories, or at least of the hypothesis that people generally object to inconsistency of the kind engendered by a president's changing position on a major

issue. Separately, I use this data to construct regression models that allow us to perform proper tests of prospect theory's predictions and the political costs for leaders that they imply. The model generates predictions about how the average voter's feelings toward the president will change as a result of their believing the president to have shifted their issue position(s), and these predictions, given the voter's own position(s) on the issue(s), can be used to test the hypothesis that a shift that the voter finds undesirable is "overreacted" to, as a loss, while a shift they find desirable is "underreacted" to, as a gain.

The findings of this chapter are unequivocally negative for "simple inconsistency costs": there is simply no indication of any kind that people lower their opinion of their leader if and when they see that leader's issue positions as inconsistent over time. This is particularly striking since these perceptions of inconsistency are measured more or less directly – people were asked where they thought the president stood on a given issue at two different points in time, and so we have straightforward records of people believing that the president changed where they stood. Even when they themselves assert that such a shift occurred, voters show no tendency to react negatively, or at all.

Regarding expectation costs, however, the results are generally positive, though not as strong and far-reaching as they could conceivably be. The central question is whether people's overall reactions to perceived position shifts away from their own position are negative and larger in magnitude than the positive reactions they have to perceived position shifts of the same degree toward their own position. If so, then we can deduce, as the model in ch. 3 does, that two equal and opposite position shifts, such as issuing a threat that one then backs down from, will always leave a leader worse off than if they had never shifted at all. This is the specific definition of expectation costs, and it is supported by the appropriate regression model in ch. 4, at conventional levels of statistical significance.

Caveats are, of course, discussed at length in ch. 4, but the biggest one is perhaps that this costly pattern of reactions does not seem to appear at all if we instead look for net drops in job approval rating rather than "feeling thermometer" ratings of the president. This could be entirely due to data difficulties, as job approval is measured much more coarsely, but it is an apparent theoretical failing, and perhaps indicative of a real distinction in the form that expectation costs take. Similarly, if we isolate the data on perceptions regarding

specific issues rather than averaging out across all issue-position questions, the prospect theory pattern becomes far less consistent. This too could be due to lower statistical power within each issue, but, ironically, the one issue regarding which loss aversion seems largest is the one issue out of the six that concerns foreign policy, namely defense spending.

1.5 Quantitative Empirical Tests and Investigations

There are only four known cases in which a U.S. president broke a major campaign promise that concerned foreign policy. Three of these are identified as such in Michael Krukones' (1984) distinctive work on presidential promises, and to this I add only one, concerning Abraham Lincoln (Krukones' research did not extend to before Woodrow Wilson). These major cases of manifest inconsistency are presumably the ones most likely to truly register with the public and thereby evoke their reactions, whatever they are or aren't; and since they are so few in number, it is worth examining them all in order to verify that they fit expectation cost theory, better than other theories, as predicted. In-depth studies of these four cases constitute chapters 5 through 8.

These cases are not meant to be compelling tests of expectation cost theory. A "least likely" or "hard" case for this theory would be one where the leader reversed their position to only a minor degree, and with regards to a relatively low-salience foreign-policy issue that we wouldn't expect the public to care much about. It would be very strong evidence in favor of the theory if politically significant expectation costs were found to have been paid in any such case (see Eckstein 1975, 118-9 on such research designs). Conversely, these are relatively easy cases for the theory, in that, because these are reversals on *major* campaign issues, the opinionated audience would be relatively large in size, and the leader's policy reversal would be relatively obvious and significant. The case studies conducted here are best understood as plausibility probes, to establish an empirically rich and rigorous proof of existence for expectation costs "in the wild". As illustrative cases, also, they can make it clear what expectation costs "look like" in practical politics and outside of a statistical model, while also proving that they can, in fact, be found at least somewhere (Levy 2008, 6-7). This is particularly relevant to this debate, unfortunately, since audience cost theory,

in its canonical form, apparently fails to apply in even the *most* likely case studies Snyder & Borghard (2011).

It is also relevant that, as shown in chapter 4, the ANES data do not actually seem to capture any responses to real position shifts, as we would prefer them to. Individual respondents very often seem to believe that presidents have changed their position(s), and they generally react to these perceived shifts as prospect theory would predict, but, simply put, they seem to perceive these shifts erroneously. There is absolutely no sign of any consensus amongst the public regarding any supposed presidential shift on any issue within any period under observation, nor are there any subgroups of individuals who seem more likely to perceive real shifts for real reasons, nor are those who most often perceive shifts significantly more likely to agree with each other about what kind of shift has been made. Thus, the case studies conducted here are necessary in order to verify that there is at least some meaningful connection between presidents' real position shifts and the shifts that the public does or does not perceive them as having made.

It must be strenuously emphasized, though, that these four cases tell us only about the *existence* of expectation costs, and would be entirely biased if interpreted as tests of leaders' abilities to account for expectation costs and behave rationally given their existence. If we were specifically looking for the most embarrassing cases of leaders making haphazard promises that they then have to break because other leaders haphazardly disregard the position that that leader put herself in, this is the case selection criterion we would use. Cases in which at least one leader appreciates expectation costs, and either doesn't make major promises or doesn't force a leader into a position where they would have to break their major promises, are not eligible for examination or even identification here. I do examine leader behavior and cognition in each of these cases, and identify to what extent, if any, they demonstrate any sort of understanding of expectation costs, but this is only to demonstrate the qualitative method that may be applied based on this theory, to provide a fuller explanation of the cases in themselves, and to see how, when, and why the theoretical bargaining process went off the equilibrium path in these major cases where it did. Arguably, in fact, I find a surprising degree of cognizance of expectation costs, and of attempts to anticipate and generally avoid them, even in cases where they proved unavoidable.

The first case is that of Lincoln's promise that he "would not enter into any of the States to disturb the institution of slavery" (Lincoln 1953k, 189) – "I have no purpose," he reiterated in his inaugural address, "directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." (Lincoln 1953d, 262) Lincoln would break this promise not just by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation but by later insisting on the abolition of slavery as a peace condition in negotiations with the Confederacy. I find strong evidence of expectation costs having been suffered, not just politically for Lincoln and his party but for the Union government as a whole. Massive numbers of Union soldiers deserted and/or were executed under military law, specifically and explicitly because they felt betrayed by Lincoln's reversal, given his previous positions. The famous New York draft riots, also, are directly attributable to these amplified negative reactions to emancipation. Importantly, abolitionists' reactions to Lincoln's turn toward abolition were, for their part, comparatively weak, to such a degree that historians have expressed puzzlement over it. These asymmetric reactions are much better explained by prospect theory than by exogenous differences of opinion intensities between racists and abolitionists, and thus this case fits expectation cost theory well.

The second case regards Woodrow Wilson's famous reelection campaign slogan, "He Kept Us Out of War," engendering a promise to continue keeping the U.S. out of World War I. He entered WWI just five months into his second term. I find clear evidence that Wilson incurred substantial expectation costs, severely repulsing and demoralizing liberals while attracting only a negligible amount of Republican voters. This translated into a truly resounding defeat for the entire Democratic party in 1920 – even without Wilson on the ticket, the expectation-cost connection between Wilson's reversal and the election results is qualitatively clear. Several confounding factors require consideration – the public's hawk/dove balance, Harding's electability vs. Cox (the Democratic candidate), Wilson's health, the public reaction to his campaigning for the League of Nations, and his unprecedented repression of anti-war sentiment. Other factors, however, require an explanation such as expectation costs can provide, namely why Harding and other Republicans campaigned predominantly against Wilson rather than Cox, and with so much success, despite the rela-

tively efficient victory that Wilson had, after all, secured for the U.S. and its loudly grateful democratic allies.

The third case is that of Dwight Eisenhower's promise, according to Krukones (1984, 73), to liberate the Soviet-occupied countries of eastern Europe. I find this promise was far more limited than previously thought. Krukones also codes a kept promise of a "tough" foreign policy, and it seems that future generations more so than the public at the time inferred from Ike's general criticism of containment that he would aid violent rebels. The 1952 Republican platform did promise that Eisenhower's election would "mark the end of the negative, futile and immoral policy of 'containment' which abandons countless human beings to a despotism and godless terrorism;" (Peters & Woolley 2018d) Eisenhower also spoke of the U.S. using its "influence and power to help" Eastern Europeans throw off the "yoke of Russian tyranny," promising "aid" to "enslaved peoples." (Ambrose 1991, 275) Eisenhower then neglected to support an anticommunist uprising in Hungary which was subsequently crushed. I find little to expectation cost suffered in this case, but I also confirm with the aid of appropriate survey data that the public did not in fact expect Eisenhower to "stop" communism or involve the U.S. in any wars. These expectations were actually very much consistent with Eisenhower's overall rhetoric. Well before election day 1952, he and John Foster Dulles both realized the danger of raising these high expectations – because doing so might push them into war – and began issuing a stream of statements unambiguously qualifying their policies and goals as strictly nonviolent and long-term. Thus, this case ultimately proves to have been miscoded as one in which expectation costs should have been incurred, and supports expectation cost theory overall as a case of at least one state rationally anticipating expectation costs and performing an objective and far-sighted cost-benefit analysis. We can't really know if Eisenhower would have suffered expectation costs had he created those expectations and then governed as he did, but we do know that, if those costs really loomed, then they did in fact condition international bargaining and outcomes.

The fourth case is that of Lyndon Johnson's promise not to deploy significant combat troops to Vietnam; for example, "We are not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves."

(Peters & Woolley 2018c) The assertion in a speech after the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, also, that "we seek no wider war," has gotten particular attention in hindsight. At its peak, the U.S. had over half a million troops in South Vietnam – just about eight soldiers for every square mile. My main finding here is that the exogenously opinionated domestic audience was of far too little size for Johnson to be able to expectation costs. Americans' trust in government was at its highest point ever, and since, in 1964, and the audience was particularly politically disengaged when the initial expectations were set. Thus this case helps to illustrate the relevance and importance of the audience composition as a theoretical variable. Similar to Eisenhower, also, Johnson had clearly and consistently promised not to go to the opposite extreme, and "run out and leave [Vietnam] for the Communists to take over." (Goldman 1969, 236) More importantly for both the case and for expectation cost theory, the opinionated audience members that were to be found did indeed set their expectations right where Johnson's rhetoric would put them. Doves, especially, did not have their hopes up, a fact they clearly communicated with tongue-in-cheek campaign slogans like "part of the way with LBJ" and "Johnson with Open Eyes."

A concluding chapter reviews the key findings, implications, theoretical limitations, and the major outstanding questions warranting further research.

Chapter 2

Theories of Accountability, International Stability, and Cognition

I begin by reviewing and discussing the literatures on both prospect theory and domestic audience costs in international bargaining, with the goal of introducing and clarifying key concepts, and, in some cases, arguing for reconceptualizations which are part of expectation cost theory (hereafter ECT). This section should also establish the general need for ECT as a distinct explanatory framework for a range of political phenomena.

2.1 Predictable Foreign Policy

Predictability is often equated with credibility, and it is often thought of as the very essence of coercion, if not power more generally. As Schelling (1960, 1966) discussed at length, to coerce someone is to convince them that your actions are highly predictable given what they choose to do: they must have sufficient confidence that you will treat them significantly better if they act as you want them to, but not if they don't. Unpredictability of any kind can only add noise to this process and lower the target's confidence that your actions are contingent on theirs. Thus, in a game of chicken, one is obliged to throw their steering wheel out the window once they are on a collision course with the rival: the rival can witness this

and know that the outcome of the game now depends entirely on their actions, in which case they must rationally give up and swerve (if in fact the situation fits the game-theory definition of a game of chicken, which is always the issue) (Kahn 2009, 58). Even in the prisoner's dilemma, where a successful bait-and-switch will secure the coveted cheater's payoff, the most successful long-term strategy is tit-for-tat, which plays whatever move the rival played in the last round, with perfect predictability (Axelrod 2006).

This raises three important points. First, we must be careful to distinguish between predictability in the above literal sense, and predictability, or rather unpredictability, in common political discourse. Very often – perhaps even usually – when we say that someone is unpredictable, we mean that there is a particularly high chance overall that they will take some disastrous course of action that most other, rational people would almost certainly never take. But you need others to believe that you are less likely to take such a course of action if they comply with their demands; convincing them that you are chaotically volatile or simply malevolent gives them no reason to appease you in and of itself, and can only cast doubt on whether you will appreciate any appeasements.

Richard Nixon's famous madman strategy illustrates how easily political actors themselves call it unpredictability when they really just mean highly resolved, and this leads to transparent and unsuccessful attempts to posture one's way to victory. Nixon once told an aide that

> I want the North Vietnamese to believe I've reached the point where I might do anything to stop the war. We'll just slip the word to them that, "for God's sake, you know Nixon is obsessed about communism. We can't restrain him when he's angry – and he has his hand on the nuclear button" and Ho Chi Minh himself will be in Paris in two days begging for peace (Haldeman 1978, 122).

If Nixon is so angry and unrestrainable, then why should the North Vietnamese believe that surrender will prevent him from destroying them, or that he can be trusted not to abuse a ceasefire to his advantage, such as with a subsequent buildup and unprovoked attack? Ho did not, of course, beg for peace, and President Trump's applications of the madman strategy have (so far) fared no better. In bargaining over a trade deal with South Korea,

for example, Trump lectured his negotiator that "You don't tell them they've got 30 days [to make concessions]. You tell them, 'This guy's so crazy he could pull out any minute'." (Swan 2017) South Korea responded with simple indignation, threatening to pull out of the deal themselves (liuxin 2017).

A second point is that actual predictability is technically second-best for bargaining purposes: one would, in all cases, prefer the appearance of predictability without the reality of being constrained. This, though, seems generally unobtainable. As Rochester (2010, 288) points out:

> As applied to the game of Chicken, a wise bargainer would only pretend to have burned all his bridges – by, say, letting his fellow driver see him throw a steering wheel (a spare) out the window of his car, when in fact the real steering wheel remains fully operable in the vehicle. Throwing beer cans out the window might be another bargaining maneuver worth trying, giving the *appearance* of drunkenness and an inability to swerve even if one wanted to. In the game of international relations, the appearance of recklessness can sometimes work, although a pattern of reckless behavior hardly enhances one's reputation as a reliable partner in diplomacy.

The last point is worth emphasizing. If indeed we trust in game theory and expect most behaviors and outcomes to follow the equilibrium path, then we should expect fake constraints to quickly lose their persuasive power and relevance – rational actors will still fake them, stocking their cars with all the spare steering wheels and beer cans that they can fit in them so they can throw them all out when the game begins, but this will be cheap talk that only shakens particularly hapless opponent. Successful coercion in equilibrium must entail genuine constraint and genuine predictability.

This is the well-known concept of *hand-tying*, first properly conceptualized in Schelling (1960) and which Fearon (1997, 70) authoritatively defined as "taking an action that increases the costs of backing down if the would-be challenger actually challenges but otherwise entails no costs if no challenge materializes." As Slantchev (2011) points out, though, this conventional definition is rather woefully limited: the operative quality of a hand-tying action is that it makes you genuinely and observably more likely in the future to choose one

course of action as opposed to its alternative(s), which can result from an increase in the cost(s) of the alternative(s) as Fearon conceived of it but also from a decrease in the cost of the promised action (here, making good on a threat), or even an increase in the costs of all actions but less so for the promised action, or a decrease for all but less so for the alternative(s).

The best definition of a hand-tying action in coercive bargaining, then, is an action that alters the relative attractiveness of backing down from a threat and going through with it, in favor of the latter. A hand-tying action so defined may close an existing gap between the back-down payoff and the go-through-with-it payoff and make the latter actually preferable to the former – to achieve *lock-in* – or it may be insufficient to do so, or it may only give an already locked-in leader further incentive not to back down. Even if the rival cannot observe the leader's true valuations of these outcomes, they may be able to tell that the relative values have changed in this way, which would require them to increase their estimate of the chance that the leader will in fact make good on the threat in the event that the rival refuses to give in. This in turn should increase the chance that the rival state swerves in the game of chicken, and gives in to a threat that has this broadly-defined hand-tying quality.

Note also that this also implies the possibility of hand-*loosening,* if the act of claiming that one is committed to a given course of action actually makes that action less attractive relative to the alternatives. This might be a unfortunate (for that leader) side effect of certain institutions or particular contexts, and must be included in our conceptual library, as it already is implicitly included in our formal models.

The sister concept to hand-tying is *cost-sinking*, which also requires some definitional revision. Fearon (1997, 70) asserts that "sunk-cost signals are actions that are costly for the state to take in the first place but do not affect the relative value of fighting versus acquiescing in a challenge." This, though, better defines *money-burning* (Avery & Zemsky 1994), while sunk costs are much more often thought of as those resulting from a given course of action that need not necessarily be taken after part or even all of its costs have been paid. Layaway payments, in other words, are what most people are referring to as sunk costs, most of the time. Thus one may sink the costs of literally going to war – spending the money to mobilize troops – which similarly incurs immediate and visible costs which

indeed cannot be recouped, but which do clearly and *perhaps* decisively alter the cost of escalating fully to war from there (Slantchev 2011).

One point of confusion, it seems, is a misunderstanding of *sunk-cost irrationality,* by which people allow previously paid and unrecoupable costs to *directly* influence their decisions in the present (e.g. Garland, Sandefur & Rogers 1990; Frey & Eichenberger 1991; Garland & Newport 1991). When the costs that were previously sunk were for a possible future course of action, however, and that course of action is now cheaper to take because part of its costs have already been paid, then sunk costs do rightly influence present cost-benefit analyses, indirectly. It would certainly be possible to *underweight* sunk costs under this definition, by treating that outcome as if it still carries the same cost it originally did, before some of its costs were paid on layaway. We very much tend to do the opposite, and act as if we've already paid more of the cost than we have, but this sunk-cost irrationality should be thought of as an overweighting of a quantity that does in fact affect the relative attractiveness of options going forward.

The third point to consider regards the general desirability of commitment mechanisms. It may be thought that one would at least prefer to be predictable or unpredictable as they so choose – that they would rather have the means of visible commitment and not need them than need them and not have them. But the choice to not utilize clearly available means to commit oneself at some early stage of bargaining proves that one is not serious, in direct proportion to how serious those available means would prove they were if they made us of them. Bluffers will claim that they would readily utilize any commitment mechanisms available if only there were any, and any that are made available belie that claim.[1] Thus, the desirability of clearly observable commitment mechanisms for a state actor in crisis bargaining is not, in fact, a given for all states at all times, and depends, for one, on whether the state is exogenously resolved to war: highly resolved states will always seek visible (over)commitment to maximize the chance that the adversary gives in without a fight, while less-resolved states who were going to attempt a bluff anyway will prefer there

1. One would certainly always prefer to have a means of commitment available that would become plainly observable if and when it was used but would otherwise not be. As with unreliable commitments, though, this would presumably "equilibrate out": states would eventually establish some base rate of hidden commitment mechanisms and accordingly place less credence in any and all claims that one is not making use of commitment mechanisms because none are available.

be no real and visible commitment mechanisms available to them. The academic focus on maximizing visible commitment may in fact reflect an implicit normative judgment that we should like to minimize successful bluffing along with war in the international system; or it may reflect the strength of the assumption that states generally just don't really prefer war to peace (e.g. Fearon 1995). At any rate, it is incorrect in this way to conclude unconditionally that predictability is power and is always desirable and advantageous for the actor in question, especially if that actor is an individual leader or autocratic state.

The research herein can be understood as part of the endeavor to answer the greater question: which states are the particularly predictable ones, who have more access to internationally visible commitment mechanisms as defined above? To begin with, commitment mechanisms can be systemic, or they can be "unit-level", with states being the units. As Gaubatz (1996) points out, the breadth of the leaders' accountability to their citizens has been taken as the key determinant of an individual state's predictability throughout history, and yet, it has been taken for granted in opposite ways at different times, with the mass public taken as a source of either predictability or unpredictability depending on the theorist and the philosophical fashions of the time. One of the things made clear by Weeks' (2008; 2012; 2014) landmark research is that we would need much more compelling reasons to expect that a small cadre of elites with the power to overthrow a head of state would incentivize that head of state any differently than a voting public when it comes to things like making good on threats (Cf. Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). The composition of the audience is obviously crucial, and small elite groups may indeed tend to have different compositions with different preferences and worldviews – military juntas are indeed more hawkish, as Weeks shows, and perhaps more so than any median voter in a mass public – but the breadth of accountability alone, i.e. the size of the audience in either absolute terms or relative to the size of the country, may make no difference at all, at least in terms of security policy.

While it is not necessary to assume here that the predictability of a state's foreign policy decisions is solely the function of the leader's degree of accountability to some domestic constituency, I will generally speak throughout this book as if such is the case, so that we may focus most clearly on why and how accountability might matter. From this perspective,

the only truly unpredictable states are those relatively rare but still highly significant personalist regimes such as North Korea under the Kims, Iraq under Saddam Hussein, or the Soviet Union under Stalin. The most predictable states overall and over time are no doubt consolidated democracies, though any given autocracy can intermittently become just as predictable, because their leader(s) may, at least for a time, become clearly and visibly vulnerable to overthrow, at the hands of the citizenry and/or other elites. The most vulnerable and domestically fragile autocracies may in fact exceed consolidated democracies in terms of their policy predictability, since, unlike ousted or ostracized democratic leaders, defeated autocratic leaders are very often killed or imprisoned (Chiozza & Goemans 2011, 54-90).

2.2 The Bumpy Road to International Stability

In an anarchic world, the means of clearly observable commitment are lacking whether one wishes they would exist or not. Highly resolved states are at an inherent disadvantage while those of low resolve are relatively free to bluff, and for all actors generally, this creates the twin and reinforcing problems of war due to a failure to credibly signal existing resolve and of undeserved gains due to the ability to bluff effectively (Fearon 1995). It might be thought that even those of chronically low resolve who reap the benefits of bluffing under such conditions would still prefer the establishment of universally available commitment mechanisms – most obviously, international institutions – as they would then themselves be freed from the scourge of unnecessary war, and unnecessary concessions, as a result of rivals whose true resolve cannot be known to them. Thus, it would seem that the availability of commitment mechanisms is simply a public good that generally stabilizes the international system, and such is how they are usually treated, implicitly if not explicitly.

This is more or less the conclusion that I ultimately come to here, but there are some caveats worth noting. We must also account for the fact that there may be more crisis bargaining going on in the first place if there are more commitment mechanisms available for one to use to make more credible threats. As Jack Levy (2012) points out, "In a rational model, observable costs – like observable capabilities, interests, and other observable factors shaping resolve – should affect decisions to initiate threats or counterthreats, not crisis

outcomes." Suppose we define stability as the absence of war or other violent conflict, and, secondary to this, as the absence of crisis bargaining wherein war is threatened and becomes possible. It is then possible for a given change in the world to have an ambiguous effect on international stability, specifically by increasing the chance of a crisis while compensating for this by strongly decreasing the chance of any given crisis escalating to war. It is inherently more likely, though, that anything that changes the rate of crises will change the overall rate of war in the same direction, given rational bargaining assumptions.

The U-shaped relationship between predictability and stability (being the absence of crises) that ECT suggests may be analogized to a similar aspect of Putnam's (1993) theory of social capital. Putnam theorized that society's optimal state is one of "horizontal" social relations typified by voluntary associations between political equals and a democratic form of reputation-tracking for all individuals, but that the second-best form was at the opposite, Hobbesian extreme, where "vertical" social relations brought an unfair and unequal but still stable social order. The only alternative to one of these two forms of social order is social disorder, which is least desirable, from a national economic perspective if nothing else. In the same vein, we must consider the possibility that a world of secure and unaccountable autocrats, for all its other iniquities, would be preferable to a highly stable world of moderately-accountable leaders. Just as an attempted transition from a kleptocracy to a democracy – due to foreign intervention, perhaps – runs the risk that the kleptocrats will be deposed and leave a power vacuum of neither horizontal nor vertical relationships in their wake, an attempted transition from an unaccountable to an accountable regime runs the risk of giving the leader enough accountability with which to engage in high-risk, high-reward international brinksmanship, but not enough accountability to make their threats either highly credible or too costly to attempt.

The point relates to those made for example by Smith (1998, 629) that a leader's basic willingness to go to war is positively related to the leader's accountability (modeled by Smith as the chance that the bargaining outcome will flip the results of the next election). Schultz (1999), also, investigated the overall chance of war as a function of both the costs of war and of inconsistency, in a model with the same basic structure as that of ECT (ch. 3), and Morrow (1999) analyzed with parallel results the relationship between trade and

the outbreak of war, by treating the loss of the former as a cost of the latter.[2] This, then, is the nature of the rationalist explanation for the finding of particular war-proneness as well as general belligerence from "middling" levels of democratic accountability.

It is a rather poor explanation, however – it prevents those findings from directly contradicting the argument that domestic accountability creates international predictability and conditions international bargaining accordingly, but it doesn't in any way explain them. To be clear, ECT fares no better in this sense, as I show formally in ch. 3; like other theories of domestic accountability, though, it can explain why high accountability is so strongly associated with stability and predictability (i.e. the democratic peace plus higher threat credibility) while making room, in a way, for other theories to explain why the effects of accountability might be reversed going from very low to somewhat higher levels.

2.3 The Value(s) of Stability

The much bigger and yet rarely discussed question concerns the value of stability itself. Scholars generally treat war as a disease that must necessarily be cured, while the body count of many forms of peace can be just as high as that of war, to say nothing of peacetime deprivation and oppression that can compete with that of wartime. As Barrington Moore (2015, 505) wrote in his study of civil and revolutionary war:

> For a Western scholar to say a good word on behalf of revolutionary radicalism is not easy because it runs counter to deeply grooved mental reflexes. The assumption that gradual and piecemeal reform has demonstrated its superiority over violent revolution as a way to advance human freedom is so pervasive that even to question such an assumption seems strange. . . . As I have reluctantly come to read this evidence, the costs of moderation have been at least as atrocious as those of revolution, perhaps a great deal more.

We can of course research the determinants of stability without having discerned or agreed upon its consequences and desirability, as I generally proceed to do. At the same time, some relevant aspects of this theory deserve to be highlighted.

2. I thank Kenneth Schultz for pointing out to me the relevance of these works.

As the bargaining model of war thoroughly illustrates, war cannot possibly be Pareto-optimal, at least in material/instrumental terms: there must always be some bargain that both sides of a dispute, seen as unitary rational actors, would prefer to war, so long as war itself can accomplish nothing but the destruction of a part of what could otherwise be bargained for (Fearon 1995). This leads to the widely-shared sentiment that the minimization of uncertainty, and therefore of bargaining failure, is desirable (even as this strongly entails the weak generally giving into the demands of the strong, i.e. might making right). The theory developed here is essentially part of this normative paradigm. Even if we assume that war has human costs outside of those to which leaders are sensitive, and also that the public involved simply does prefer war to the status quo, here we still arrive at (or even begin with) the conclusion that war results from a failure of both sides to find and commit to some peaceful division or allocation of the contested good.

In general, to admit the desirability some forms of instability, even under drastic circumstances, is more problematic than it might seem. From the bargaining-model perspective, Moore's observation of the tremendous peacetime costs paid by the British peasantry problematizes why the peasantry chose not to revolt if war was indeed preferable, and more importantly, why the British elites' fear of peasant revolution was not sufficient for them to implement whatever policies would make the peasants prefer peace to war. Such questions are covered in great theoretical detail in Acemoglu & Robinson (2006); what we should note here is that to actually push for war on behalf of those who are oppressed in peacetime is to give up on the possibility of credibly signaling to the oppressor that it is worth their while to avoid war by making peace preferable to war for the oppressed. We can of course always admit the possibility that the oppressor is irrationally stubborn and war is therefore necessary, but we are then stepping out of the rationalist scope conditions of the bargaining model, not arguing with it on its own terms – and in so doing, we imply that the irrationality of the oppressor is the real problem, as it is the reason why war becomes optimal for the oppressed. Conversely, the conclusion generally still holds that peace and stability among rational actors is generally good and desirable, and that which arrives at peaceful solutions to disputes, such as ample commitment mechanisms to maximize credible signaling, is also generally good and desirable.

This general question of how to stabilize relations is pursued not because all conditions of peace are preferable to war – they are clearly not – but because war is never the ideal, much less the only, road to a condition of peace that is preferable to war among rational (or rather, non-sadistic) actors. The project of stability maximization is indeed about preventing tragic and senseless war between those who would otherwise benevolently coexist, but it is just as much about correcting grave peacetime injustices without having to pay the additional cost of war – a cost that, as history shows, will almost always be shouldered more by the oppressed than by the oppressor anyway.

We must also appreciate how the notions of exploitative peace and just war take on very different meanings in the context of international relations in the nation-state period, as opposed to the domestic class-struggle context of comparative literatures. A just war rests first and foremost on the conviction that one side will usher in a fair and benevolent order for the whole collectivity in question if it wins; as hard a sell as that is in a domestic context where all sorts of social cleavages threaten to divide the victorious rulers from the newly ruled despite their shared nationality (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003), it is harder still between nations, where the benevolence of the victor rests on the notion that they will not in fact act self-preferentially and will treat the conquered more or less as their own empowered citizens, generally based on nothing more than their shared humanity. If foreign aid practices are any indication (to say nothing of the U.S. treatment of Africans and Native Americans), even those advanced democracies with exemplary human-rights records still prefer to use whatever bilateral leverage they have to benefit themselves and advance their own agendas against that of the other state's (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith 2007). Thus, the best that we can realistically hope for as a result of interstate war is that the resulting balance of power leaves neither state with too much leverage it can use to abuse the other, and each nation can then turn to the (perhaps even messier) internal bargaining over the fair distribution of domestic resources.

It will be seen, however, that ECT leaves many questions unanswered which may ultimately be answered in ways that distinctly problematize various normative aspects and implications of the theory. The most conspicuous of these regards the desirability of democratic responsiveness, in the form of leaders adjusting policies as public opinion changes. Foreign

policy predictability, and in turn international stability when democracies are concerned, is clearly incompatible with changes in public opinion unless those changes are themselves thoroughly predictable. Given an unfortunate tension between international stability and democratic responsiveness, it is arguably worth it on occasion to trade the latter for the former, even in terms of the welfare of the country in question.

Happily, though, it should be noted that public opinion is not nearly as volatile or "moody" as it was once thought to be (Page & Shapiro 1992; Holsti 2009, ch. 3). When it does change with regards to foreign policy, there is ample evidence that it does so in response to real factors and according to realist logics that should be very familiar to leaders both foreign and domestic (Herrmann, Tetlock & Visser 1999; Drezner 2008). Thus, foreign policy that moved in lockstep with public opinion would, in fact, likely prove more predictable rather than less. The larger issue is that they most definitely do not move in lockstep, even in democracies – there is instead a major foreign policy disconnect (Page & Bouton 2006) which is itself just a subset of a generally pervasive disconnect between the public's policy preferences and the policies of its government (Achen & Bartels 2016). Absent a better theory of what *does* dictate policy decision and change if not the preferences of the voters that supposedly hold ultimate power over their government, we cannot appraise those non-democratic policy determinants against the hypothetical democratic ones, either normatively or factually. They may be more desirable – perhaps elites do know better than the public in some sense – while also perhaps being more opaque and unpredictable for foreign leaders.

Of course, government responsiveness to public opinion is generally thought to be good, and on this front, ECT raises further alarm bells – or rather, it helps to flesh out an explanation for these observed policy disconnects. Achen & Bartels (2016) are specific in their argument that voting fails to deliver representative policies because voters usually vote on the basis of party, identity, and symbolism rather than policy; according to ECT, those who *do* vote on the basis of policy will not do that good a job of collectively incentivizing politicians to deliver their generally preferred policies either, or at least as not as good a job as the median voter theorem has always insisted that they must. While it is outside the proper scope of this study, it is hard to miss the implication here that leaders are

only incentivized to shift toward the median voter if their current policy positions, set by their previous statements and actions, are severely unaligned with those of the public. In any party system, where leaders must first secure the endorsement of some relatively radical subpopulation, they are very likely to take initial positions that are substantially different from the overall electorate's median voter, but not so different that they will have to moderate if and when they win their party nomination. This accords to a remarkable degree with the "leapfrog effect" that has been observed in American politics, referring to the way in which alternating Democratic and Republican representatives jump from one ideological extreme to another in a manner that is centered on the median voter but never actually represents them (Bafumi & Herron 2010).

Stability through domestic accountability comes, ironically, at the expense of responsive democratic governance: while an unaccountable government certainly has even less reason to implement and change policies in accordance with public preferences, the very thing that makes a policy shift a credible signal for a democratic leader is that the public does not rationally appraise leaders according to the expected values of their current policy positions, and even those shifts that the public desires are often costly and are absolutely never worth it if one ultimately has to shift back to their original position later. What is rational behavior for the audience varies enormously with what political processes one includes in one's model (Guisinger & Smith 2002; Schultz 2005) but there is a clear irrationality, and perhaps even tragedy, in how voters as modeled here, following prominent theories of cognitive psychology, fail to adequately reward leaders for bringing their policies closer to the will of the majority.

2.4 The Current State of Inconsistency Studies

The negative consequences of inconsistent policy statements and actions – "waffling," "flip-flopping," and as of late, "pivoting" – have long been a matter of investigation and debate in politics and political science alike (e.g. Page 1978; Krukones 1984; Fishel 1985; Sigelman & Sigelman 1986; Fearon 1994; McGraw, Lodge & Jones 2002). Of course, with the 2016 U.S. election and Donald Trump's uniquely grandiose set of campaign promises, these questions have taken on new meaning, new interest, new importance, and, eventually, new grounds

for testing and falsification.

There has always been the question of whether or not such negative consequences for being inconsistent exist as such at all, and then there is the panoply of investigable contingencies and qualifications for these hypothetical costs depending on factors like the qualities and behaviors of the leader (McGraw 1991; McGraw, Timpone & Bruck 1993; Levendusky & Horowitz 2012; Croco & Gartner 2014), the type of regime (Gelpi & Griesdorf 2001; Weeks 2008) the issue at hand (Chaudoin 2014) and, of course (and yet only as of late), the qualities of the audience (Tomz & Van Houweling 2012b; Kertzer & Brutger 2016). U.S. presidents clearly act as if inconsistency is to be avoided and positions are not to be taken in the first place unless they will be maintained (Pomper 1967; Krukones 1984; Fishel 1985), but this really only deepens the mystery: if inconsistency was a plot of land and we wanted to know if it was mined, and we observe that people steadfastly avoid it, then all we really have is evidence that people believe it to be mined,[3] and so long as they continue to avoid it so assiduously, then we will observe no mine detonations whether or not the mines exist (This point is made at length by Schultz 2001). The question of inconsistency's costs interests scholars of domestic politics, as it relates for one to the basic functioning of democratic representation given shifting public opinion, but it has interested scholars of international relations at least as much, primarily as it relates to hand-tying and international bargaining.

At the same time, this literature, and perhaps even the empirical puzzles it was designed to solve, seem to be declining in popularity and interest among scholars of international relations. Several scholars' recent arguments clearly amount to the charge that audience cost theory (ACT) is a "degenerative research programme," in Lakatosian terms (Lakatos 1970). John Mercer's "Audience Costs Are Toys" (2012, 398) exemplifies this:

> We find ourselves in a paradox. Audience cost arguments have spread rapidly and broadly, influencing models addressing everything from alliances to monetary commitments. Yet there is little evidence that audience cost mechanisms exist ... Powerful theories have significant empirical implications. Evidence of audience costs should be

3. Of course, if you believe that political elites are subject to a strong selection effect that weeds out those with a baseless fear of inconsistency, or if you just generally have faith in elites as skillful operators who amass and exhibit wisdom about political processes, then you would take their avoiding inconsistency as evidence that inconsistency has costs.

> abundant, not elusive. Analysts should be debating when leaders use audience costs to make their commitments credible, not parsing the historical record for trace evidence or creating an internet based experiment to demonstrate the theory's plausibility. . . . It is astonishing that the supporting evidence is so thin twenty years after audience costs became popular with theorists (and forty years since Robert Jervis introduced the argument). Although one might use audience costs to solve a variety of puzzles, if audience cost mechanisms are imaginary, then so are the solutions that rely on them.

But Schultz (2012, 371), as mentioned in the previous chapter, reminds us that if ACT is to be rejected as such, then we may still end up with more empirical anomalies rather than less:

> . . . audience costs provided an answer to the fundamental questions of why threats are rare and why bargaining gives way to fighting. That the claim also suggested democratic bargaining advantages – and thereby a possible explanation for the democratic peace – was a side benefit, which, given the discipline's interests at the time, ended up being elevated to the central takeaway. This means that, if we are to discard audience costs, we need to revisit the puzzles they were conjectured to explain – puzzles that, while raised most sharply in the rationalist literature on war, should be of interest to all IR scholars.

We are thus presented with a tangled, and essentially subjective, Lakatosian problem, which "naive falsificationism" cannot resolve: would we rather anomalize the research that consistent fails to detect the audience cost mechanism, or the research that consistent indentifies patterns of international interaction (This includes Gelpi & Griesdorf 2001; Kurizaki & Whang 2015, on the democratic bargaining advantage) that can apparently be explained only by the existence of an audience cost mechanism? Expectation cost theory has the potential to free us from this dilemma.

Fearon (1994) clearly, albeit briefly, argued that audiences would punish leaders for unsuccessful bluffing because the former would resent the latter having violated the "honor" of the state; this could of course be interpreted normatively, but Fearon seemed to prefer the rationalist story in which the audience wishes to punish the leader for making the

state look irresolute and thereby lowering the chance that it will successfully coerce in the future. Smith (1998) constructed an important model in which backing down signaled to the audience that the leader was incompetent in terms of actually fighting wars, thereby giving them reason to oust her. As Mercer implied, a huge number of theoretical models have simply assumed that people will choose to punish inconsistency if and when they have the means to do so; indeed, Slantchev (2006) argued that many critiques of audience cost theory are overblown, in a sense, because they assume specific motivations, reasons, and mechanisms that the theory doesn't and shouldn't specify.

This may be the case, but, of course, any *direct* test of the theory needs to look directly for the mechanism, and the explanations of bargaining dynamics that the theory has to offer are then vague and limited at any rate. Following Schultz (2012, 369), these substanceless audience costs, which can by definition only be observed indirectly via their logical bargaining consequences, may be referred to as "dark matter" audience costs. Costs stemming from the audience's concerns about the country's honor, in the rationalist sense relating to future bargaining and trustworthiness, may be dubbed *credibility costs* (though the term, as I will use it, refers specifically to costs that an audience, concerned about credibility, inflicts on their leader, which does not include, namely, the real future costs of lacking credibility).

Another logical microfoundation for audience costs is referred to as *competency costs*. This stems from Smith's (1998) insight that the audience can rationally infer that a leader who is caught bluffing[4] is simply not as good at fighting wars, if and when they occur, as is a leader who never threatens at all, much less threatens successfully. Audience costs of this kind then take the form of the audience replacing the leader for one whom they rationally believe to be a better wartime leader.

Lastly, there is what I will refer to here as "simple inconsistency costs," which, almost by definition, are not a product of deductive theory. These apparent costs stem from perhaps non-rational and even visceral objections to inconsistency generally, i.e to "saying one thing and doing another." Many of the respondents in Tomz' (2007) seminal experiment alluded

4. To be clear, a leader is caught bluffing when they issue a threat that fails to coerce and they then refrain from taking the threatened action. Audiences are universally assumed in this literature to have no objections to bluffing *successfully*; Gottfried & Trager (c.f. 2016), and, indeed, this study, in which ideological doves do hold such objections, and hawks conversely reward such behavior.

to international credibility alongside their objections to inconsistency, but many did not, stating more simply and generally, for example, that "if the president said he would do something he should have done so." To the extent that the domestic costs of bluffing stem from such reflexive objections to inconsistency, they are in fact just a special case of a much broader phenomenon, and several scholars have followed that logic to investigate "audience costs" in other realms such as trade policy, where the inconsistency is the breaking of trade agreements (Tomz & Van Houweling 2012a; Chaudoin 2014).

Most important on this topic, though, is Levy et al. (2015), which stayed within the realm of international security but empirically compared the lab-generated cost of getting caught bluffing to the separate cost a leader might pay for getting involved in a conflict after saying they wouldn't. They too note the unsettled theoretical nature (and lexicon) of audience costs and inconsistency costs, and conclude from their findings that the "audience costs" one pays for inconsistent behavior appear to be no larger when one is bluffing, specifically (7). This indeed implies that any audience members' voiced concerns about credibility or the like are just ad hoc justifications for what are really just "simple" inconsistency costs.

It is important to distinguish between inconsistency costs of this specific substanceless kind, inconsistency costs as a catch-all term that would include all of the above, and dark-matter audience costs which leave the microfoundation deliberately unspecified. First, "inconsistency costs" inevitably refers sometimes to all possible negative reactions that audiences may have to inconsistency of one or more kinds, for whatever reason or no reason, while at other times, the term may be used in the more specific sense that applies to all inconsistency and with none of the logics of credibility or competence that must pertain solely, or at least especially, to backing up coercive threats. Dark-matter audience costs are, themselves, clearly particular to threats and bluffs; thus, simple inconsistency costs would only technically qualify as dark-matter audience costs, and audience cost theories of this kind would inevitably be weakened or sidelined insofar as it continues to be found that there is nothing special about the inconsistency exhibited by getting caught bluffing.

One important point of theoretical tension that has perhaps gone unrecognized so far is that the "Nixon-to-China" models, as they're often called, run directly counter to all theories, models, and notions of inconsistency costs of any kind. Their moniker is derived

from the famous example, as it is interpreted, of Nixon leveraging his hawkish reputation in order to cozy up to communist China without being seen as weak, na ive, appeasing, or otherwise overly dovish. That logic specifically predicts that accountable leaders will act against type in order to reap the political benefits; they may not even be able to continue to act true to type, including fulfilling relevant promises, lest they get labeled an extremist, far afield from the median voter.

The median voter is, indeed, the main driver of these models and their conclusions: position shifts that in any way distinguish the leader must result in them being further from the median voter (or at least perceived as such), so an opposite and perhaps equally large shift at some point will be desirable, if not politically necessary, to (re)secure the median voter's vote (Cukierman & Tommasi 1998; Schultz 2005, provide perhaps the most exemplary models). Both this logic and some sort of inconsistency cost logic might certainly operate simultaneously, such that there are both costs and benefits to acting against type, but this certainly makes testing the two theories quite a challenge. Broad patterns of leader accountability and consistency are especially difficult to reconcile, though, again, when it comes to crisis bargaining, those patterns would have to favor inconsistency costs over moderation-gain incentives – namely, it would need to be the case that a leader who issues a threat, and thereby positions themselves, presumably, at a more hawkish position than the median voter, does not create a significant and visible incentive to back down in order to realign themselves with the median voter.

As I show in ch. 3, there is a distinct incompatibility between the median voter theorem and prospect theory as applied to mass publics. Simply put, there needs to be well above 50% of the opinionated public favoring a given shift before that shift becomes politically advantageous when those who don't like the shift are going to "overreact" due to loss aversion. This subject no doubt deserves comprehensive study by scholars of electoral and domestic politics, but it is also clearly relevant to our questions here, in relation to the Nixon-to-China models and why acting against type would not, on balance, bring one political gains. These median-voter models ultimately prove very useful, though, as one of the interpretive lenses I apply to the case studies in this work.

2.4.1 Experiments and the Audience-Cost-Dealing Unopinionated Public

Empirical examinations very often – perhaps most often – seek to identify negative reactions to inconsistency in the highly artificial setting of one-shot survey experiments (Allgeier, Byrne & Brooks 1979; Tomz 2007; Trager & Vavreck 2011; Chaudoin 2014; Levy et al. 2015). There are often what appear to be successes for ACT on the experimental front (Trager & Vavreck 2011; Tomz & Van Houweling 2012b; Chaudoin 2014; Kertzer & Zeitzoff 2016); the external validity of these findings, however, are highly questionable. Respondents will not even claim that they would punish a leader for backing down from a threat as long as the leader's party and military advisors support their decision to do so, even though the generic opposition party rails against it (Levendusky & Horowitz 2012). Even more importantly, it seems clear that what appears, in the lab, to be the negative effects of the leader reversing themselves is likely just due to the fact that the verbiage indicating the inconsistency is negative in tone: one study included a placebo condition in which some presidential advisors are said to oppose the policy reversal because they fear it would have vague and substantively empty "adverse consequences," and this condition received responses that were no more disapproving than in the treatment condition wherein dissenters are said to oppose the policy specifically because it is a reversal (Chaudoin 2014).

More recent experimental findings suggest that, if any members of the public are going to react negatively to policy inconsistency, then it will be those who have no opinions on the issue in question, as the inconsistency will remain salient to them whereas their more opinionated counterparts will tend to react to any given position-taking based just on whether or not they like that new position (McGraw, Lodge & Jones 2002; Tomz & Van Houweling 2012a; Chaudoin 2014). This, however, raises new questions regarding the significance of the effect: these audience-cost-generating individuals would need to be "principled non-opinion-holders," refusing to be influenced either way by elite cues, and also motivated to stay informed of policy decisions and outcomes regarding issues they continue to have no actual opinion on. Such individuals are undoubtedly rare, or at any rate rarer than those expectation-cost-generating individuals who are stubbornly opinionated and independently attentive to – i.e., who simply care about – the issue in question.

The key methodological point to be made in light of ECT is that, to date, none of these survey experiments occur over time – they do not simulate the experience of perceiving a politician as having a given position and then, after some time has passed, perceiving them as changing their position or otherwise taking a different one. Prospect theory gives us compelling reasons to believe that this time dynamic is key to understanding how people actually react to policy shifts – even if the experiment involves the notoriously speedy raising of a reference point, it is still necessary to establish some reference point before the outcome is realized if an experience of gain is to be induced (Kahneman, Knetsch & Thaler 1990).

There is also the challenge of using a survey experiment to instill the relevant and real-world senses of gain, loss, disappointment, relief, frustration, wary hopefulness, exhausted cynicism, etc. All of these reactions and emotions are obviously part and parcel of political processes, especially those of major importance like crisis bargaining, and they are integral parts of ECT, namely as individual-level variations on the theme of the public reacting in mostly negative and dangerous ways when one issues a threat, rattles sabers, recommits to diplomatic efforts, or otherwise alters expectations about future outcomes. A survey experiment would be ideal to test for and measure expectation costs if it successfully drew respondents in and got them so invested in the outcome, over time; naturally, this is a challenge (though certainly not an insurmountable one), and it is not one that any relevant experimental research has shown cognizance of so far.[5]

We would not expect expectation costs to emerge in "one-shot" experiments with no incentive structure. In the same vein, we would not expect case studies to collect or correctly interpret evidence of this dynamic when the theory in question directs attention to a predicted drop in support from every citizen at the moment following the policy reversal – indeed, a (relatively small) increase in support among those who approve of the second of two opposite policy shifts, of the kind that Snyder & Borghard (2011) emphasized and found on occasion in their case studies, is predicted by ECT and yet directly contrary to other such theories.[6]

5. Trager & Vavreck (2011), the largest and most comprehensive survey experiment of this kind, may appear to have allowed for such a time dynamic, but private correspondence with the authors revealed this not to have been the case.

6. Snyder & Borghard 2011 specify thrice-over that they tested for the presence of audience costs according to the "narrow" definition provided by Fearon 1994 and Tomz 2007. See also Trachtenberg 2012.

2.5 Realistic Complexity in Bargaining Models

Another serious concern about ACT, which is much less of a concern for ECT, pertains to the complexity of the bargaining process that our rational actors have supposedly mastered most of the time. The total causal story told by any variant of ACT is a very long one, involving several rounds of anticipation between at least three actors, at least some of whom are aggregates of numerous individuals. As Mercer (2012) put it:

> Why would American leaders in a diplomatic confrontation with Chinese leaders rely on an audience cost strategy? American leaders must believe Chinese leaders believe that American leaders believe that American citizens believe that Chinese leaders believe that failure to keep a commitment results in a reputation for irresolution, so Americans must boot their leaders from office, and that is why Chinese leaders will view audience costs as decisive evidence that a commitment is credible. An argument that depends on a belief about a belief about a belief about a belief about a belief is unbelievable. Perhaps no one uses audience cost strategies because everyone knows that everyone knows that no one can keep the argument straight.

ECT requires two fewer orders of belief, which would put it in the general realm of believability that Mercer (2012, 401) outlines, following a real-world example from Jervis (1970, 58-9). In order for American leaders to attempt an expectation cost strategy, they must believe that Chinese leaders believe that they believe that their domestic audience reacts to policy shifts as prospect theory predicts, which means that issuing a threat exposes oneself to a net loss of domestic support in the event that you have to back down from it, and that is why Chinese leaders will view expectation costs as decisive evidence that a commitment is credible.

Even the criterion that American leaders believe that their audience's cognition follows PT is not the strict requirement it may seem. When it comes to policy reversals and broken promises, as Fishel (1985, 92-96) argued, interest group leaders in the U.S. – who are "anticipating" the consequences of disappointing their own constituents, because their constituents heard rumors and are writing them angry letters – will ensure that the pres-

ident "anticipates" the consequences of disappointing them and their constituents. Carter may have the distinction of making and breaking more campaign promises than any other president,[7] and as Fishel recounts: "AFL-CIO president George Meany had been fuming in private about Carter for months and publicly condemned the administration in a speech at the 1977 AFL-CIO's annual meeting, saying that the working person was no better under Carter than Ford." (Fishel 1985, 93) A senior Carter staffer bemoaned his interactions with interest group leaders: "you know those guys – they've been around here a long time, they're tough, I look like a youngster compared to them, and they sit there, and pound the table and demand 'when are you going to make good on the platform?' and I try to tell them what we've done, but what else can I say? They just don't believe me." (96)

A behavioral economist can trace political processes such as these with a keen eye for the tried-and-true phenomenon of reference dependence and loss aversion, but such academic knowledge is no more necessary for a head of state than is a knowledge of physics for an experienced truck driver navigating a wet road at high speed. Statements like Meany's, especially, are notable for their visibility to foreign powers, who need not understand prospect theory so long as they can hear the particularly loud warnings being issued by soon-to-be-disappointed interest groups – and one of the main reasons states have intelligence agencies, of course, is to gauge domestic dissent brewing in foreign nations with closed societies (see also Chiozza & Goemans 2011).

If, at any rate, the process proves too complex for leaders to understand – or trust their rivals to understand – then, we will see this most clearly at the first decision mode in the game, where the leader decides whether or not to generate expectations amongst the domestic audience, and if so, how much, and of what kind. One of the sharpest critiques against audience cost theory has been that qualitative evidence of leaders discussing such costs, even in private strategy meetings, has been so scant – as Gartzke & Lupu (2012, 394-5) remarked, "the first rule of audience costs is that you do not talk about audience costs." Presidents, their aides, and presidential scholars alike have all expressed consternation at the seemingly unrealistic expectations that the public inevitably seems to place upon the

7. Fishel (1985, 2) recounts that Carter was accused of "promising more and doing less than any president in modern history."

president; Waterman, Silva & Jenkins-Smith (2014) dub this the "presidential expectations gap," and much of their findings can be taken as indirectly supportive of ECT, though ch. 4 here provides a more direct statistical test. The general ambiguity of most policy statements, especially during elections, is infamous and persistent, and is almost certainly as advantageous (when it can't be used for bargaining purposes) as political candidates seem to think it is (Page 1978; Alesina & Cukierman 1990; Aragones & Neeman 2000; Tomz & Van Houweling 2009). Presumably, political candidates only ever make promises that they can actually be held to because of a prisoner's-dilemma dynamic with their electoral rivals where losers take desperate gambles with ever-more-specific and/or unrealistic promises that their rivals are then obliged to match.[8]

The following case studies, as well, provide more direct evidence. It will be seen, for example, that, even though he ultimately embraced it, Woodrow Wilson definitely fretted about the danger of allowing the expectation to solidify that he would keep the country out of war – his post-election decision to raise a militia, in fact, was explicitly motivated to "back in" to the war partway in order to send a hawkish signal to Germany, or, rather, to undo the dovish signal that he feared had been sent by his campaign slogan.

However, I find that Wilson was indeed waltzing before a blind audience (To borrow a phrase from Aldrich, Sullivan & Borgida 1989) in that the Germans were irrationally certain that the U.S. would enter the war against them no matter what. The most tendentious assumption of ECT is likely to be that one leader will in fact draw the proper inferences from another leader's exposure to expectation costs. I argue both that this assumption is worth making – i.e., it does hold in at least some cases – and that it is useful to make at any rate, so that we have a baseline model with which to understand individual cases which can deviate from the equilibrium path in a number of ways.

Here I intervene in the long argument between political psychology and rationalist models of deterrence and international bargaining. One flashpoint in this argument has been the case of the Falklands war, which proves very informative in light of ECT. Oakes (2006, 445) succinctly echoes Lebow's (1985) original argument: "After promising the Argentine

8. Bernstein (2012) argues, for example, that the real cause of George W. Bush's huge tax cut was a promise he was obliged to make in order to one-up Steve Forbes in the Republican primaries, after Forbes stole the conservative spotlight by promoting a flat tax.

public that it was going to recover the islands, the *junta* was faced with a choice: it could back down and lose power or invade and risk war with Britain. In the end, the *junta* feared the public's wrath more [than] the wrath of London." Indeed, Galtieri's inaugural speech contained the line: "I know that the time for words and promises is gone. I also know that words have lost their force and power to persuade. This is a time for firmness and action." (cited in Oakes 2006, 450) Thus, this was an instance of a challenger who had locked themselves into war, via a public statement, against an adversary who, as Lebow (1985) argues, was simply not paying attention.[9] Notably, Galtieri did strive to do his adversary's thinking for them: "Well before the spring of 1982, the junta's vulnerability on the Falkland question was obvious. During the summer 1981 round of talks, Carlos Cavandoli, the Argentine negotiator, had pleaded for some concessions that would demonstrate progress on sovereignty. Time and again he is reported to have told Nicholas Ridley: 'Just give me something to take back home.'" Thus, ECT technically fails in this case, but does so in all the right ways: it illustrates that the many steps in this otherwise implausibly complicated and conjectural chain of deductive bargaining can indeed be "felt out" by even basically attentive actors – even though England was not one, in this case, and even though Galtieri apparently did not make his promises in order to gain a bargaining advantage, which does not contradict ECT but rather makes this case partly outside the theory's scope.

"Models are to be used, not believed," as economist Henri Theil (1971) said. Usually this entails a focus on the model's predictive and explanatory success rather than its (un)sound assumptions, as Waltz (1979, ch. 1) emphasized (c.f. Waltz 1997); this, though, has naturally led to the critique that rational choice theories and formal models leave us with nothing when they fail, while theories that are based on sound assumptions and literal explanations clearly imply researchable reasons for any given unexpected event (Green & Shapiro 1996, 2007). One way to answer this critique, as I essentially do in this study, is to actually take the rationalist assumptions more or less literally (albeit within the aforementioned cybernetic bounds), so that when someone acts irrationally, we know it, and we can specify in what

9. There was certainly a distinct diversionary element as well due to the failing economy; the immediate threat to Galtieri, also, was his fellow junta leaders rather than a civil war or popular uprising, though this can easily be considered an intervening variable, as the junta no doubt feared another civil war. See Levy & Vakili 1992.

way and in what sense they were irrational. By extension, this allows us to appraise how often people, and states, are and aren't irrational, and, far more importantly, what *kind* of irrationality they most often exhibit, which allows us to know, eventually, how our model's predictions are biased. Arguably, models are more useful in this capacity, when they are not believed, than when they are constructed as an earnest attempt to get everything literally "right" and unbiased.

I would argue, in the spirit of Kuhn (1977), that such off-the-equilibrium-path analysis constitutes proper scientific use of the model. Of course, we must not "move the goalposts" or forget our epistemic priorities – a model that gets it literally right in more ways is always preferable on any grounds to an otherwise comparable model that does not, and a model that *can* be safely believed is indeed far more than a model and is indeed a set of scientific laws – but there is no way toward those lofty goals other than by constructing and learning from wrong models.

With that said, there are a number of reasons why complications of, and deviations from, the model presented here should not be taken lightly, even as they appear attractive; and even as we do seriously consider them, we are often ironically led back to the same substantive conclusions as rationalist ECT.

To *use* an audience cost strategy, as Mercer correctly has it, is to make some public statement that exposes you to audience costs specifically out of some confidence that the rival state will make the proper inferences about the preferences that led you to do so – hence the first few links in the causal chain, that "American leaders must believe Chinese leaders believe that American leaders believe" that audience/expectation costs exist. The strategy can't work if the other state is not paying particular attention to you in this way, or, more likely, is paying attention but is processing all such information through a lens of stubborn preconceptions and motivated biases; but moreover, it would be irrational to attempt an audience cost strategy without good reason to believe that the other state will in fact be rational along with you, and make the inferences that they're "supposed to" make. For one, leaders must assume that other leaders are usually as careful with how they are perceived as Wilson was; those who haphazardly generate expectations create noise that

obscures the signal being sent by those who appreciate the danger and choose accordingly.[10] Even if leaders are generally so conscientious, a leader who has observed another exposing themselves to expectation costs must, under this theory, be willing and able to determine the extent to which the decision stemmed from that leader's conviction that the expectations could, would, and should be met, versus a need for immediate approval as in an election.

All this is to harken back to Rousseau's (2010, 91) classic insight that "to be sane in a world of madman is in itself madness." The central cause for concern here are those leaders who are not resolved to war, and would continue the status quo if they were certain that their rival could not be coerced, but who would bluff, or even visibly commit themselves to war, if it stood a high enough chance of coercing the rival. Such leaders, we fear, will make threats that they ultimately regret making and which do in fact force them into war, especially if their advisers are rational-choice fanatics with signaling games in hand. Such was the case, for all we know, with Galtieri. But note that, to the degree that irrationality does tend to take the form of a challenger's baseless faith in the target's willingness and ability to know when they're beaten, the result is a higher rate of war due to accountability, which is broadly, if not exactly, compatible with the pure rationalist model anyway.

Consider also the other type of leader, who is simply willing to go to war for the contested good, if necessary, from the start. They know they will never need to pay inconsistency costs anyway, so they should, and almost certainly will, generate them on even the off-chance that the adversary will notice; a clear example of this would be George W. Bush's ultimatum to Saddam Hussein 48 hours before the invasion of Iraq. This, indeed, is one of the primary sources of this sort of signaling potential, in theory as well as in practice: there is a set of threateners who will in fact always make good on their threats, and it is uncontroversial to assume that pretty much all of them will in fact generate whatever inconsistency costs they can, no matter how irrational or otherwise incoercible their adversary may be, and whether or not they have any rat-choice advisers to tell them to do so.

It also bears noting that we would not much expect such a leader, who has thoroughly backed themselves into a corner against an inattentive adversary, to admit this even to

10. Technically, whether or not one exposes oneself to expectation costs is very much an index rather than a signal (Jervis 1970). The distinction is important, yet the word "signal" has also become a general term for anything that can rationally be taken by one actor as informative about another.

themselves; they will likely engage in bolstering and defensive avoidance, as Lebow argues Galtieri did, both to protect themselves from cognitive dissonance and to be a more effective wartime leader (see Janis & Mann 1977, for the original argument of defensive avoidance among political elites).

Let us instead consider unresolved potential challengers. If most of them deem audience-cost-type strategies unrealistic and choose play it safe – and military threats of even a vague sort are indeed exceedingly rare, as Schultz reminds us – then even the most basically attentive state would quickly identify the situation that results, in which very nearly all threats are extremely credible and should not be rebuffed unless war really is desired. A rationalist model, naturally, assumes that everyone will note this unequilibrated state of things, bluffs will then increase, and the credibility of threats will decrease, but even if none of this happens and states remain irrationally incoercible, the result is essentially just a different equilibrium, with the rate of hapless bluffers dependent on how irrationally rationalist, or simply cocky, revisionist states tend to be. The proportion of rebuffed threats that actually result in war would depend, presumably, on just how high inconsistency costs are relative to the costs of war – i.e., on how strong available commitment mechanisms are. Thus, the substantive conclusion is unchanged.

In conclusion on this point, the argument that target states may not pay adequate attention to tied hands ends up not being much of an argument against either the signaling power or the dangers of tying hands. It is, however, an additional reason as to why threats would be generally very rare – predicated, ironically, on the assumption that challengers will rationally respond to the irrational inattentiveness of their rivals, in just the way Mercer describes.[11].

The second point to be made, finally, in response to Mercer's critique, is that the model to follow *is* useful in predicting several phenomena of primary interest in international relations, including those that were the subject of the original audience cost model; thus, the broad patterns are not inconsistent with an underlying process as complicated and seem-

11. This whole process is not properly modeled in the following chapter – the possibility that the threatened state is incoercible captures the potential for inattentiveness only incidentally and in a way that is improperly linked to other parameters. A model involving a trembling hand equilibrium (Selten 1975) may be fruitful for future work on this

ingly far-fetched as Mercer describes, so we are under no particular obligation to conclude that it is not playing out as such. The biggest issue in this regard is that these patterns may not actually be evidence that such a complicated process is playing out because the patterns may be overdetermined – that is, there may be multiple distinct processes all contributing, for example, to the fact that democracies coerce more effectively, and/or that limited democracies are the most aggressive and war-prone states. Some or all of these processes may in fact have to do with the intrinsic properties of democracy; others may only seem to because of omitted variables. Thus, the empirical patterns being consistent with ECT is merely a necessary condition for its validity; it is hardly smoking-gun proof (Mahoney 2012).

If we consider, though, a very popular and generally well-supported parallel explanation like Schultz's theory of domestic opposition signaling (1998), we find more bargaining complexity rather than less – the domestic audience there, after all, is a fully strategic actor, unlike the "mechanical" actors in the audience of both audience cost theory and this one's (Smith 1998, though, does provide an even more complicated audience cost model, involving four strategic actors, including the domestic audience). Schultz's more complicated model also seeks to explain less, overall, than ECT does. Occam's razor, therefore, seems to do us little good here; indeed, I would not tout ECT over Schultz's theory on the basis of this somewhat higher leverage (see King, Keohane & Verba 1994, 29-31 on the very important distinction betwee parsimony and leverage). I would instead once again echo Schultz (2012) and Lakatos (1970) in emphasizing that the explanation of these political phenomena is paramount and the choice in circumstances such as these is not between accepting or rejecting an implausible theory but between anomalizing one set of findings (on how nations interact) or another (on people's capacities to deal with complex processes and interactions).

A wide range of remarks, assertions, assumptions, and reported sentiments in various studies outside of the inconsistency-cost debate are also consistent with, and can at least be informed by, ECT, which helps reassure us that real political processes do often look like ECT says they should. Studies of Carter, again, provide a number of examples, which clearly stem from the particularly specific expectations he set and not, namely, from any particular fear of inconsistency that he happened to have. Fishel (1985, 16) concludes that "Every

president... has deferred, avoided, or abandoned important promises, and some (Jimmy Carter, Lyndon Johnson) have paid a substantial price because those reversals resulted in damaging primary challenges to their renominations." Ford, while running against Carter, opined that "He will say anything, anywhere, in the United States to be President," which is consistent with the notion that Carter was willing to expose himself to potential expectation costs as president that Ford was not (Fishel 1985, 74) Fishel (1985, 47) also found that:

> Because the Reagan White House was extremely sensitive to the political costs of appearing to abandon their 1980 promises ("Look what happened to Carter!" said one staffer) they opted to gamble on emphasizing an upbeat interpretation of some, such as low inflation and the fourth year recovery, while ignoring or finessing others, such as the recession and the deficit.

Pastor (1993, 324) remarks that, "Having made Panama a priority, Carter could not afford to let the treaty be defeated." Stein (1993, 93), in her study of his negotiations over the new Panama Canal treaty, remarked that "Carter had invested heavily, both in time and in political capital, with little visible return, and was willing to risk a great deal to avoid the estimated high costs of a failure to agree. Agreement of any kind was a political necessity."

An expectation-cost reading of Wohlforth's (1994) study of the end of the Cold War is thought-provoking as well. One of Gorbachev's advisors pushed for military withdrawal because, otherwise, "we can forget about any increase in the standard of living." (Wohlforth 1994, 114) The Soviet Union had certainly changed since the days of Stalin, but was still, after all, the Soviet Union – dissident leaders, much less the average citizen, saw no letting-up of day-to-day authoritarian oppression until the moment the collapse happened around them (Kuran 1991). The average standard of living, also, had not dropped - it had merely failed to grow as much as it had in previous decades, and it was, at any rate, far higher than it had generally been before, as was the general health of the population (Brainerd 2010). Why couldn't Gorbachev simply sacrifice his promised economic reforms in order to match Reagan's military buildup, especially with Reagan to serve as such a classic scapegoat for the costs? This is not, of course, a proper case study of my own, but ECT allows us to speculate that the key difference was that Gorbachev, the first Soviet ruler born after the revolution,

had come to power under the greatest expectations for prosperity and liberalization, and even if he had reversed course and pointed the finger at Reagan, he would have borne (though still quite possibly survived) the brunt of public disappointment. Gorbachev had indirectly backed out of conflict with the U.S. and would suffer (expectation) costs for backing in, since doing so would entail falling short on standard-of-living expectations. If true, then this made the U.S. initiation of an arms race a powerful move, wittingly or not.

I have endeavored here to anticipate the major questions and concerns that would and should arise around the theory I construct in the next chapter, given the current state of both political science and psychology literatures. My main goal is to justify the modeling exercise I have undertaken and the specific conclusions I proceed to draw from the following model for those who might be inherently skeptical on either methodological or substantive grounds. If nothing else, I hope that I have made it clear how the elements of my theory correspond to particular assumptions and to particular interpretations and appraisals of previous research, so that alternative assumptions, interpretations, and appraisals can clearly lead to alternative models, or to research in other modes.

2.6 Prospect Theory and Audiences to Bargaining

As Mercer (2005) flatly states, "[p]rospect theory is the most influential behavioral theory of choice in the social sciences." Prospect theory (PT) has generated falsifiable predictions that have been borne out in an impressively wide range of contexts, including that which we are concerned with here, i.e. public behavior toward political issues and accountability (Nincic 1997; Niven 2000; see also Camerer 2000; Kahneman & Tversky 2000; McDermott 2004; Mercer 2005; Berejikian & Early 2013; Markle et al. 2015; Eren & Mocan 2016). Numerous case studies have relied on PT in order to make sense of leaders' substantial deviations from what rationalist theories would predict (Levy 1992b, 2003; Mercer 2005). Some international bargaining models have explored how interactions between rational, expected-value-maximizing leaders would differ from interactions between leaders whose valuations and behavior accord with PT (Berejikian 2002; Butler 2007), but there is a clear and present need for theory to account for the impact that PT-driven audiences can and

almost certainly do have on leaders' incentives and constraints, whether or not those leaders are themselves PT actors.

The three-way link between prospect theory, audience reactions, and bargaining outcomes which essentially constitutes expectation cost theory has already been indicated by two prominent scholars. Levy (2012, 387, fn. 16) remarked most recently with regards to the audience cost debate that

> Prospect theory provides a nice explanation for the "historical norm" [against bluffing] described by Fearon... The initiation of a threat leads publics to define their reference point around the new threat (rather than around the pre-threat status quo) and to regard any retreat from that threat as a loss. Incurring a loss is more psychologically costly than failing to make a gain (from the status quo ex ante).

At least as compelling is a paragraph from Jervis (1970, 75-6), writing, notably, before the advent of prospect theory. After describing what amounts to "sticky" elite cues (Guisinger & Saunders 2013) as a commitment mechanism, he points out that

> [a] related mechanism can be brought into play by decision-maker's [sic] signals that lead the public to believe a certain settlement will probably be attained. If these expectations are not met the public may turn the leaders out of office. If both the decision-makers and the other side know this the former are more apt to live up to their signals and the latter more apt to believe them. By promising the union members a certain settlement, labor negotiators strengthen their bargaining position by invoking this process.

In this section, I introduce prospect theory properly (though by no means comprehensively), in order to lay the proper conceptual groundwork for the methodologically novel development of this logic in ch. 3.

PT includes two robust behavioral phenomena of primary political importance: loss aversion, and diminishing sensitivity to gains and losses of increasing size (Kahneman & Tversky 1979; Tversky & Kahneman 1991; Jervis 1992; Levy 1996). While ch. 3 is generally reserved for the formal theoretical content of expectation cost theory, the concepts of

prospect theory are much more clearly discussed in relation to the basic PT value function from Kahneman & Tversky (1979) and Tversky & Kahneman (1992). This function maps objective payoff x onto reference-dependent subjective utility $v(x)$ as follows:

$$v(x|r) = \begin{cases} (x-r)^a & \text{if } x \geq r \\ -\lambda(r-x)^a & \text{if } x < r \end{cases} \tag{2.1}$$

where r is the objective payoff corresponding to the reference-point outcome (often simply referred to as the reference point), λ is the negative ratio of perceived losses to perceived gains and is greater than 1 (hence, loss aversion), and α reflects diminishing sensitivity to losses/gains and may range between 0 and 1. It is standard to assume $\alpha = 0.88$ and $\lambda = 2$, following Tversky & Kahneman (1992, 311); these values almost certainly vary, by context as well as individual, but I assume these values here and throughout, if only for ease of presentation (Abdellaoui et al. (2016, 1662) lists several different studies' estimates for λ, and while they vary greatly, they are always greater than 1 and do seem roughly centered around 2). It is hopefully more or less clear what difference that higher or lower values for these paramters would make for any theories that are themselves based on prospect theory.

2.6.1 Reference Dependence and Politicized Expectations

The key parameter in the value function, even more so than λ, is r: a very high reference point (RP) can turn a positive objective payoff into a hugely negative subjective payoff, and vice versa. Decision theorists speak of reference dependence, where the main question is which of several options the individual will choose, and different RPs lead to different choices. How an individual will react to a given outcome is reference-dependent to a whole other degree. If observers' subjective appraisals of political events translate directly into changes in leader approval, then a leader can gain support even from objectively terrible outcomes if she can keep RPs sufficiently low, and sky-high RPs will result in public outcry even with optimal outcomes. If and when the public's reference points are easier to control than political events, then an accountable leader's time and political capital are clearly better spent influencing what events are compared to rather than influencing events

themselves.

But is such reference-point manipulation practical? While RPs can be easily and reliably set in the lab (or in the days prior to an experiment) and produce the predicted behavior (Kühberger 1998; Song 2016), there is good reason to believe that the reference-point-setting dynamic is very different and less easily controlled regarding political issues over time. RPs, it seems, move upward as soon as some impulse encourages them to, or at least as soon as some real gain is made relative to the status quo; this is the *instant endowment effect* (Thaler 1980). Renormalization downward almost certainly happens far slower, and may never fully happen at all (though this is essentially a folk theorem, unsupported by any systematic research; see Jervis 1992; Levy 1996; Jervis 2004, 173-4).

This implies a strong "ratchet effect" of renormalization, which implies in turn that control of RPs can take no real form other than a vigilant struggle to repress influences that would cause them, or even just allow them, to ever rise. Clearly one can *establish* practically any RP they wish when there isn't one, i.e. when the particular issue or decision point is a novel one for the individual – there is no other explanation for the robust success of laboratory treatments – but then anyone or anything else, including one's political rivals, can raise it from there, and it will stay raised.

On the other hand, there is mounting evidence suggesting that expectations have predominant influence on RPs (first suggested in Tversky & Kahneman 1991, 1040) – and expectations can certainly change, and be strategically and selectively manipulated (Levy 2000). This idea was first developed in theory by Kőszegi & Rabin (2006, 2007), to explain known decision patterns related to economic questions regarding consumer purchases, hours worked, insurance plans, and the like. Song (2016) provides direct experimental evidence, in that telling people that they will receive a certain level of compensation prior to an experiment causes them to treat that compensation level, for the most part, as their RP in the experiment's risky choices (notably, their real status quo wealth did influence their operating RP, to a lesser degree). This all clearly and explicitly resonates with Jervis' scenario of high expectations not being met and the result being powerfully negative reactions.

Presumably, the endowment effect is a function of people expecting to keep what they have (Kőszegi & Rabin 2006, 1141-2 explicitly argue this) – but, then, one also must expect

to regain whatever has been lost. Is the persistence of a high RP following some devastating and irreversible loss really reconcilable with actually held expectations, much less rationally held ones? It is easy to see how rationally-held expectations may set an RP anywhere – as Kőszegi & Rabin (2006, 1135) point out, "a salary of $50,000 to an employee who expected $60,000 will not be assessed as a large gain relative to status-quo wealth, but rather as a loss relative to expectations of wealth" – but it is far harder to accept, for example, that the ongoing sense of loss for a retired football player who expected to win the Super Bowl and never did reflects some expectation, rational or otherwise, that they will one day come out of retirement and get their win. This substantive question remains generally unanswered, though the Kőszegi & Rabin model, with reference distributions rather than points, can accommodate nuanced answers to it, at least in a technical sense.

Levy (1997, 100) once remarked that "Prospect theory is a reference-dependent theory without a theory of the reference point." With the advent of this research on expectations, prospect theory is at least far closer to a proper theoretical determination of the reference point: the theory is no longer reference-dependent so much as expectations-dependent. It now more so lacks a theory of expectations, at least in the political realm.

Given the findings of strong relationships between promises and performance (as Fishel (1985) put it), even a trivially attentive public would learn to build reasonably confident expectations around promises and other such policy statements. Yet these findings were framed as counterintuitive from the start – Krukones (1984, 125) concluded that, "because of the high percentage of presidential campaign promises kept, the public can obtain a surprisingly accurate picture of the probable future performance of the winning candidates." In a 2014 Rasmussen poll of likely U.S. voters (conducted Nov. 2-3), *4 percent* said most politicians keep their campaign promises, with 83% saying that most don't. Thus, politicians' fear of breaking their promises may be one mystery, but an even deeper mystery is people's (alleged) reluctance to believe those promises.

Of course, the entire thrust of a PT application to these matters is that getting one's hopes up risks costs: it raises your RP and at least risks putting you in the domain of losses when you otherwise wouldn't be. Thus, people may instinctively reject promises as a psychological defense mechanism. This, though, assumes the promise is of a desired policy.

The exact same logic would lead a voter to strive to believe a candidate's promise to enact a policy the voter detests; disbelieving such promises keeps one's RP relatively high. Perhaps, then, the reported disbelief of promises simply tells us that that word tends to bring to mind only promises of desirable outcomes.

Regardless, should we believe the public's claim that it is so dismissive of promises? Polls consistently show far larger numbers believing specific promises, *especially* among supporters, who presumably stand to be disappointed the most. For example, over a third of all Americans in May 2017 believed Trump would build his promised wall along the U.S.-Mexico border; among just his voters, a supermajority believe the promise and expect it to be fulfilled (Bump 2017). Thus, our vaunted cynicism about political promises in general may reflect our persistent but largely futile attempts to keep promises from automatically altering our expectations and shifting our RPs – efforts that may be especially futile when we like the promised policy. Simply put, we tend to get our hopes up, no matter how hard we try not to; and insofar as a leader is promising policies we don't like, there is no mystery in how we would strive to take them seriously and brace for the worst – i.e., to lower our expectations.

This would create distinct possibilities for political elites to manipulate RPs, though also some dangers that they may be manipulated preemptively by others. This seemed to happen with Woodrow Wilson, as I discuss in ch. 6. Other party elites framed him as the devout peace candidate before he took the stage at the Democratic convention, and the dovish crowd responded enthusiastically. Privately (and well before the *Lusitania* sinking), he lamented, "I can't keep the country out of war. They talk of me as though I were a god. Any little German lieutenant can put us into war at any time by some calculated outrage." (Cooper 2009, 352) He did not say as much openly, however, apparently because voters were dovish, their RPs had already shifted upward, and a shift in his apparent position would already be perceived as a loss rather than a return to the status quo ex ante (importantly, though, Wilson was also just very much a dove himself). In this way, other elites – especially members of one's party, with their own policy preferences – may establish the leader's position for her, as a *fait accompli*, given that expectations-based RPs are in fact moved so easily. They got Wilson's voters' hopes up "for him," perhaps, indeed, in

order to lock him in to that policy.

This also raises the important question of when a public reaction to a given policy outcome is supposed to impact the leader's approval. Presumably, if one really does come to believe that a given policy is forthcoming, then their reported approval of the leader will shift accordingly (given their own policy preference) as soon as this expectation is created. This would make expected policies "priced in" to approval ratings, leading at the limit to no change at all if and when an expected policy is actually enacted. On the other hand, it would also mean that a declared (and believed) policy reversal would shift expectations elsewhere and have its own immediate effect on approval.

Such a process may not play out so neatly over time; on the other hand, we have at least one good study observing this exact pattern "in the wild." Elinder, Jordahl & Poutvaara (2015) found that, in the course of an election cycle wherein the Swedish Social Democrats first campaigned on one specific tax policy, implemented it, and then campaigned the next time on the exact opposite policy and then implemented that one, the coming-out in favor of either policy had such a quick and complete effect on their public support that there was no identifiable effect to result from the actual policy enactments. This is convincing evidence, also, that at least in this case, those who were disappointed by the first shift did in fact renormalize downward, and they saw the subsequent shift as a gain rather than as the aversion or recouping of a loss.

What, though, of the differences between campaign promises and foreign policy pronouncements? On the one hand, publics may see threats and other such declarations of intention as what they are: bargaining maneuvers intended to deliver favorable international outcomes, honestly or otherwise. On the other hand, the decision to go public rather than private with one's threats is certainly meaningful, and audiences may freely read into that decision, or involuntarily adjust to it, just as they may with the decision to issue a promise directly at them. It is also worth noting that many threats *are* campaign promises – to "get tough on" some rival, to "renegotiate" some supposedly disadvantageous treaty, or to "liberate" some territory held by a rival.

2.6.2 Assumed Political Relevance of Prospect Theory

Still, many questions remain regarding the shifting of public expectations and/or RPs due to threats or other foreign policy pronouncements. For example, it may make all the difference if the threat is worded as an address to the leader's people as well as to the rival state, or if it's accompanied by an address directed at the domestic audience that affirms the seriousness of the crisis and perhaps warns them to brace for the possible consequences of the rival's noncompliance. Of course, if something like that does determine whether or not the audience renormalizes to the post-threat policy position, then presumably, leaders will come to realize this, and pay close attention to whether a threat is made in the one way or the other. The theory developed here, accompanied by the evidence presented here, implies answers to these questions, but only in passing, much more as assumptions that need to be made than as research questions with conclusive answers.

It is also assumed here that the public considers the leader solely responsible for the nation's policies and channels their full (dis)satisfaction with those policies into their approval of the leader. This is a combination of the "blind retrospection" theory of Achen & Bartels (2016), and various theories of "personalization" regarding the leader's political role (Tyler 1982; Sigelman & Knight 1985; Healy, Malhotra & Mo 2010) – as Brody & Page (1975, 146) pointed out, "people seem to cast a broad net of responsibility, blaming the President (or giving him credit) for bad or good news even in matters we might consider beyond his control.". Thus, a head of state may be unable to make good on a threat because, say, the legislature restrains her, but it is assumed here that the opinionated public will generally not realize or appreciate this. Importantly, they may simply not care, as they may nonetheless hold the leader responsible for having led them to expect the unachievable policy in the first place.

It is also no doubt the case that many people, especially amongst the general public, lack exogenous issue preferences (i.e., preferences that are not themselves determined by the leader or the political processes modeled here) on most issues, so many or even most of the audience members in many cases of international bargaining will experience neither gains nor losses of any kind. Many others may experience gains or losses only if and when the leader,

and/or other high-profile political elites, choose to cue them to have the preference of their choosing (Berinsky 2009; Saunders 2015). Similar research on political persuasion indicates that constituents are generally receptive to the distractions, reframings, and "home-style" justifications that a leader will invariably proffer when she executes a reversal (McGraw 1991; McGraw, Timpone & Bruck 1993; McGraw, Best & Timpone 1995; McGraw, Lodge & Jones 2002; see also Levendusky & Horowitz 2012).

Again, ECT does not assume that all or even many of the audience members are exogenously opinionated; rather, it indicates that whoever is so opinionated will generate expectation costs for the leader, with all the bargaining implications that entails. The more opinionated the audience, the larger the costs, to be sure, but the same can be said about how accountable the leader is to the audience – a leader who is weakly accountable to a highly opinionated audience would suffer the same expectation costs as one who is strongly accountable to an audience made up largely of manipulable or unengaged individuals. I assume, as mentioned earlier, that this opinionatedness characteristic of audiences is generally invariant, if only to isolate the independent effect of accountability on international bargaining and conflict; one could, however, reinterpret or even empirically measure accountability to include this de facto level of public influence and engagement.

One last question here concerns the value structures of the leaders themselves, and what they consider to be losses and gains. Modeling leaders as prospect-theory-driven actors has proven very interesting and fruitful (Berejikian 2002; Schaub 2004) especially in Butler (2007) which found very different bargaining dynamics associated with different possible placements of the two bargaining leaders' reference points. At the same time, this is a separate research question from that of the present study and should generally be treated as such, for two reasons.

First, whatever the findings of that strain of research and this one, the two will be at least broadly compatible – the reference points of audience members will have the impact identified in this study, while the reference points of leaders will have their separate and independent impact. In any given case, the effect of the leader's and audience's reference points may move in the same direction or different directions in terms of the chance of war, crisis, etc., but it seems clear that their logics will not interact or depend on one

another in any particular way. Namely, this is because public reactions ultimately factor into leaders' outcome payoffs alongside the value of the contested good, the costs of war, etc., so the gain/loss weighting that the leader might apply to any of those other incentives would also apply in any given case to their valuation of public support, and the substantive interpretation would be the same as in the aforementioned models. This is of course a conjecture and not actually proven here, but it should be sufficient to justify this initial specification of an expectation cost model.

A second point is that it is unclear to begin with whether or not leaders would perceive changes in their public approval as losses or gains. The uncertainty stems from the "think like a trader" variable: we know that loss aversion usually does not apply, and people follow expected-value calculations, when they "think like a trader" and choose to lose resources as part of a trade-off involving some gain that they deem worthwhile (Novemsky & Kahneman 2005; Sokol-Hessner et al. 2009; Kahneman 2011). Leaders no doubt view public approval as a consumable resource, i.e. as an end in itself, to the extent that they are concerned about their legacy and normative legitimacy, but they also no doubt often see it as an expendable resource – Lyndon Johnson once said that "I think [my grandchildren] will be proud of two things. What I did for the Negro and seeing it through in Vietnam for all of Asia. The Negro cost me 15 points in the polls and Vietnam cost me 20." (cited in Mueller 1970, 18) Indeed, the cost of Johnson's reversal on Vietnam is one of the case studies of this book.

It is plausible that leaders generally think of public approval as a currency in this way, while thinking of the spoils of international bargaining and the costs of war as gains and losses. It would then certainly be the case that the following model and previous models of reference-dependent leaders are orthogonal. This model does not explicitly factor in things like the leader discounting the value of the contested good while overweighting the costs of war, but it is compatible with such interpretations, namely because the audience is not modeled as caring themselves about the actual spoils or costs of war – their reactions are purely products of their exogenous beliefs and convictions about international belligerence. Even if both leaders saw the contested good as part of their status quo, factoring this into the following model would be equivalent to adjusting the costs of war for either leader, both of whom would, presumably, see the costs comparably as losses; such a change in the

leader's costs of war relative to the contested good would just be a special case of the model.

At any rate, the complexity of such a model, including both reference-dependent leaders and audiences, would be impractical, as it would require the examination of an exponentially larger number of model states. Butler (2007) considered four possible placements of the leaders' reference points; to begin with, these would need to be cross-sectioned against the four equilibria in the expectation cost model, with special attention to the three special cases of the one equilibrium of primary interest. Ideally, we would have better theory and background research that would inform us of which of these model configurations, if any, we can ignore on substantive grounds, so that we don't have to engage in such "barefoot theorizing."

2.7 Expectation Costs vis-á-vis Audience (and other Inconsistency) Costs

Would expectation costs *be* audience costs? The question is as unavoidable as its answer is uninformative. They are, of course, a cost from an audience, and they may carry many of the same testable implications as any costs from any audience, but, so far as I can tell, it would be a misunderstanding of any and all current theories that posit different costs to pit them against each other or to conceptually subsume any of them within each other.

Schultz (2012, 369) pointed out, as I've alluded to, that "[a]udience costs are not unlike the 'dark matter' of international relations: they are hard to observe directly – we occasionally get indirect glimpses – but postulating their existence turns out to be very useful." Unsurprisingly, then, "audience costs" have often been defined in practice as whatever can successfully explain what audience cost theory aimed to explain – in other words, as whatever will retroactively validate the theory. Kurizaki & Whang (2015), for example, acknowledge this "dark matter" quality while also providing extensive evidence of bargaining patterns that audience costs could explain and then defining that very evidence as evidence of audience costs. The greatest danger with this dark-matter approach is that the first adequate and apparently robust microfoundation of an audience cost that comes along will be exalted as *the* audience cost, even though it may not be at all theoretically exclusive

with other audience costs both theorized and currently untheorized.

One arguable advantage of expectation costs is also a very good reason to consider them separately and independently from audience costs as theorized: they do not necessarily posit any conscious reasoning process. Any theory of substantial expectation costs must rely, almost by necessity, on the on-line model of political cognition and opinion formation. Even if one does not remember where a leader once stood or what shifts they've taken in the past, the reactions one had to those position-takings and shifts generally remain priced in to the "judgment counter" that one maintains and updates about their leader, which allows for the expectation-cost story to realistically play out as it is outlined above, despite the cognitive challenges and simple noisiness of the political process (Lodge, McGraw & Stroh 1989; Kim, Taber & Lodge 2010). On the other hand, the two main microfoundations for audience costs, based on judgments and deductive about either the leader's competence (Smith 1998) or her future bargaining credibility (Guisinger & Smith 2002), clearly posit different and likely memory-reliant processes. Both kinds of processes have substantial empirical support and are certainly in effect simultaneously (Zaller 1992; Redlawsk 2001); the same would go, then, for expectation costs and inconsistency/competence costs, insofar as any or all of these exist.

On the other hand, we should expect these two kinds of costs to stem from two different subsections of the domestic audience: expectation costs are proportional this exogenous opinionatedness of the audience on the issue in question, while audience costs of all other kinds, it seems, are expected to exist in proportion to the unopinionated, disinterested audience that will notice and react to the inconsistency per se. It might be said though that this makes the expectation cost mechanism substantially more robust: audiences may not need to remember political events and position-takings in order to react to them, but they must become basically aware of them at some point, and, of course, those with their own issue opinions will be more likely to maintain that minimal awareness.

At the same time, individuals with strong and consistent issue preferences are famously rare. We should not overstate, though, just how strong and consistent one's preferences need to be in order for the expectation-cost pattern to arise and have at least some significant effect on one's net opinions of the head of state. Random variation in one's preferences, for

one, can increase one's sense of loss just as it may decrease or reverse it; more importantly, elite cues are partisan, and a leader's persuasive efforts in and of themselves will shift her party members' preferences in the desired direction only at the cost of moving the other party members' preferences in the exact opposite direction (Berinsky 2009).

Expectation costs also vary, of course, with the degree to which prospect theory conditions the relevant cognitions of the domestic audience; and just as the primary decision-makers may avoid prospect-theoretic irrationalities, so may elite domestic audiences, especially. This has been argued with limited evidence both ways (Lau & Levy 1998; Hafner-Burton, Hughes & Victor 2013; see also Levy 1996, 186). Elites and non-elites alike must certainly struggle with these human tendencies and flaws, even if the former do struggle somewhat more successfully than the latter. The only real indispensable contention of ECT is that there will *usually* be some significant quantity of opinionated citizens who will perceive an unexpected policy shift/outcome as either a gain or a loss and who will desire to punish or reward the leader accordingly. It is assumed here that the relative quantity of such citizens is generally constant across countries and domestic institutions, and so the leader's overall degree of vulnerability to dissent within any given body of domestic influentials is the sole source of variation in a leader's potential exposure to expectation costs, but this is ultimately nothing more than an auxiliary hypothesis and it should be relatively clear how alternative assumptions would lead to interesting variations of the model and overall theory. At the same time, this would necessitate a reappraisal of the relevant empirical patterns, such as the high rates of coercive success for highly accountable autocrats (Weeks 2008); the assumptions I make here have the alluring quality of constructing the theory to fit these patterns, though this is essentially an inductive exercise given my prior knowledge of and theoretical focus on these very patterns.

One last distinction worth considering along these same lines regards the open question of why, in an audience-cost framework, leaders would need to engage in crisis bargaining in the first place, when audience costs are so clearly visible and need not actually be incurred in order to demonstrate credibility (Levy 2012, 384). While audience costs are supposed to stem from generally universal and predictable objections to bluffs, expectation costs vary greatly with audience preferences, which are presumably harder for foreign leaders to

observe. One collection of thorough studies, in fact, found that leaders are usually just as bad at appraising their own domestic political situations as they are at appraising those of their foreign rivals (Evans 1993, 400). Thus, it makes more sense in an expectation cost framework that leaders would need to actually engage in crisis bargaining and observe the initial reactions of each others' audiences in order to gauge each others abilities, as well as each others' willingness, to commit themselves to war.

Chapter 3

Formal Expectation Cost Theory

The simplest conception of PT-driven, audience-enforced commitment follows Levy's and Jervis' phrasing above: the audience desires the good that is contested between the two states, and the leader sets RPs high, in that the audience's RPs include possession of the contested good when they didn't before. Again, reactions can be arbitrarily rendered positive or negative, and larger or smaller, if one has arbitrary control of RPs; raising them here creates a strictly worse audience reaction at the back-down outcome, making it clear to attentive rivals that the leader has made that outcome unacceptable for themselves (note from eq. 2.1 that a higher RP makes any outcome subjectively worse, i.e. $v(x|r) < v(x|\bar{r})$ when $r > \bar{r}$ for all $x \in \mathbb{R}$.

We must consider, though, the effect that this manipulation inevitably has on future outcomes. For one, the strategy may be inherently costly. What will the reaction now be to the winning of a concession? By the logic above, it will in fact be nothing at the time the concession is made, because the positive reaction will have become priced into leader approval at the time upward renormalization, i.e. an increasing of the reference point, occurred. Audiences will simply note at the time of concession that their expectations were, thankfully, met. The ultimate political gains for the leader should be the same as if the concession had come unexpectedly. This alone is enough to establish RP-raising as a valid and perhaps particularly attractive commitment strategy, at least insofar as a threat simply raises RPs.

What, though, of the domestic reaction to the threat failing and the leader making good

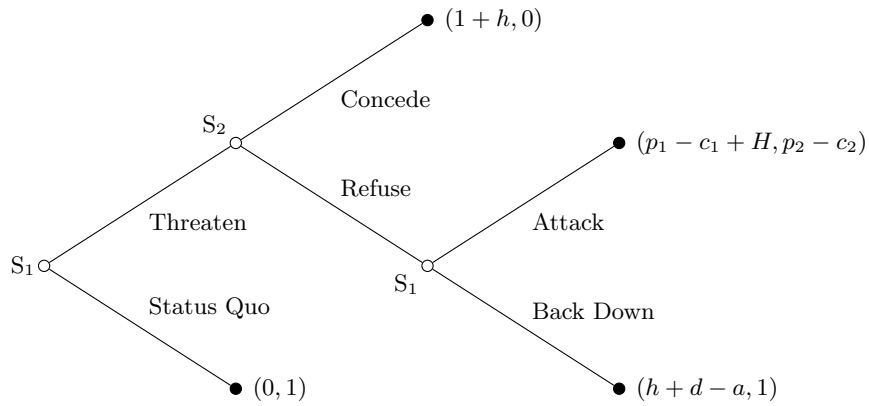

Figure 3.1: The Standard Coercion Game with Audience Preferences and Separate Audience Costs for Bluffing

on the threat by going to war? Threat failure is always possible, if only because some rivals will prove themselves exogenously resolved to war. If the audience perceives the threat as a guarantee that the rival will concede peacefully, then the costs of war, for one, become (larger) subjective losses.

3.1 Defining Audience Preferences

The following discussion of audience preferences refers to the coercing state's payoffs as defined in the standard bargaining game. Fig. 3.1 displays this basic game, with State 2 assumed, for simplicity, to be a personalist regime with no domestic incentives. The value of the good is standardized at 1; p is the known probability of State 1 winning a war, and therefore the contested good, if one occurs; c is the challenger's valuation of the cost of war relative to the contested good (so $c = 1$ means that one is indifferent about going to war if they are certain to win); and $-a$ is the standard audience cost, assumed to stem from some particular, generally conscious objection to unsuccessful bluffs. h, H, and d here are novel terms that correspond to ideologically-driven appraisals of belligerence and of de-escalation, respectively.

Any coercive bargaining model already assumes that leaders value the contested good and also have at least some sensitivity to the costs of war (e.g. Slantchev 2011). If audiences have these preferences and no others (i.e., $0 = h = H = d = a$), then they become

functionally equivalent in the model to the leader herself, and making them PT rather than expected-value (EV) actors and/or varying the cost-of-war/contested good value ratio would have all the same effects as making the same change(s) to the leader (see Acharya & Grillo 2017, for an example of such a model, in development). Having these dynamics stem from public pressures rather than the leader's psyche and private evaluations may certainly make them easier for rivals to observe, but the basic implications would be same.

It may be hard in practice to even distinguish between domestic and leader-driven effects. Jervis (1992, 188) makes this point elsewhere:

> If loss aversion occurs in political life, the explanation may not be entirely psychological. Both domestic and international politics could explain the pattern. A leader who accepts even a limited defeat is likely to be punished at the polls. Gambling by accepting a chance of a greater loss in return for a chance of no loss (or even a victory) might be irrational from the standpoint of the national interest, but rational from the standpoint of the power-seeking politician.

Berejikian (2002) and Butler (2007) provide the requisite models of the implications of leaders as PT actors, with various exogenous reference points; thus, the conclusions of these established models also largely pertain to the analogous situations in which the audiences have those RPs and the leader is EV-maximizing. (If *both* are PT actors with their own reference points, then things become far more mathematically complicated, but probably with little theoretical value added compared to two simpler models focusing on one actor as a PT actor at a time, especially since separate theories of RP establishment and/or manipulation are needed for each.) The outstanding questions, then, pertain to the possibility of audience members' preferences beyond just c, and so it is these preferences that I focus on here.

First consider State 1's payoffs in this game as if they are instead the payoffs for an individual member of State 1's domestic audience. Various combinations of values for all these parameters are possible for each individual, reflecting their personal preferences. The difference between p and c can be taken as one measure of hawkishness, which we may dub pragmatic or case-specific hawkishness, and which mirrors the leader's own type in

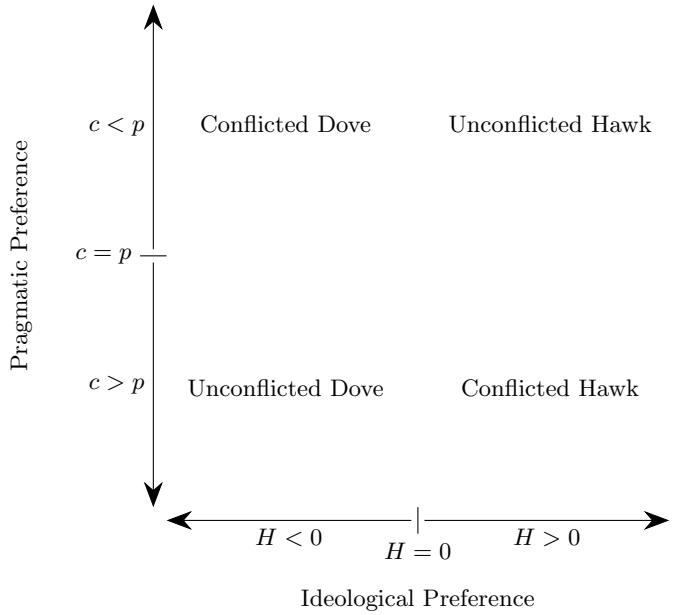

Figure 3.2: Generalized vs. case-specific hawk/dove definitions

form and range; but people will also likely have some ideological, or generalized, hawkishness/dovishness in the form of additional (dis)utility at the war outcome, hence the H term here. This creates a two-dimensional preference space, visualized in fig. 3.2. Failure to distinguish between these two kinds of hawkishness/dovishness sows the seeds of much confusion, especially since they can coexist even at the individual level.

d poses a particular problem that is undeniable but has not yet been acknowledged in the bargaining literature. Kertzer & Brutger (2016), who investigated these h/H values and dubbed them belligerence costs (since they found them to be negative on average), implicitly assumed that $d = 0$, as they measure $-a$ by taking the difference between the war and back-down approval levels. Substantively, this assumes that audiences consider a bluff to be no less belligerent than actually starting a war. Realistically, audiences will place at least some weight on the leader's decision to back down – indeed, Levendusky & Horowitz (2012) and Levy et al. (2015) suggest that, when the leader is reacting to a changing situation, non-PT audiences weight the back-down just as heavily as the decision to threaten in the first place. While d will be negative for hawks – and hugely so, if they renormalized post-threat and see the back-down as a loss – it will be at least somewhat positive for doves, reflecting at least some degree of appreciation for the last-minute aversion of war.

A similar blind spot regards the ideological, preference-driven payoff at the coercion outcome. We would want to avoid the similarly unrealistic assumption that the audience considers a leader who successfully coerced a rival state to be just as belligerent as one who went to war with them. This is why I place different belligerence-effect terms at both the concession and back-down outcomes: H represents the full belligerence effect of the leader proving herself maximally belligerent by actually attacking, while h represents the effects of the same sign but likely smaller (but unresearched) magnitude for merely issuing a threat.

Where h lies in magnitude between 0 and H hinges on how credible the *audience* took the threat to be (Kertzer & Brutger do not include a concession condition at all in their experimental design). For the reasons outlined earlier, we should assume that audiences are more likely than not to have their expectations/RPs shifted almost involuntarily by threats and other apparently cheap talk, but at least some people will resist this, maintain some skepticism, and perhaps insist after the fact that their leader bluffed successfully. This implies that h, whether positive or negative, will actually be smaller in magnitude at the concession outcome than at the back-down outcome, though I ignore this here and in the rest of the theory construction for the sake of both simplicity and of making bold yet falsifiable predictions.

3.2 Implications of Different Assumptions Regarding Audience Preferences

For most theoretical purposes, it is no doubt sufficient to define the audience's pragmatic and ideological preferences in the aggregate. Presumably, the leader's accountability level would be linked to both of these aggregate preferences equally, such that a leader who became twice as accountable to the audience as a whole, due to some institutional change, would have both pragmatic and ideological audience preferences weigh twice as heavily in all their utility functions. Here I consider the separate influences that ideological hawks and doves have on the leader's incentives, to the extent that either one predominates within the politically influential audience.

3.2.1 Ideological Doves

Clearly, and even tautologically, greater accountability to an ideologically dovish audience will disincentivize the leader from threatening, as negative h and H terms of increasing size lower all payoffs save the status-quo one, and we must assume that lower payoffs for the audience means lower payoffs for the accountable leader. What, though, of d, and of the difference between the war and back-down payoffs? Presumably, doves will never be so thankful about the decision to back down that their positive d overwhelms their negative h (though cf. Levy et al. 2015, 996), so even if audience costs are nonexistent ($a = 0$), ideological dovishness will not generate some "saber-rattling" incentive where one threatens just because they prefer the back-down outcome to the status quo.

It will, however, likely generate some incentive to attack rather than back down once a threat has been made, thereby making threats more credible if and when they are made. Consider the formal condition for attack being preferable to backing down:

$$p_1 - c_1 + H > h + d - a \tag{3.1}$$

$$d < a + p_1 - c_1 - h + H \tag{3.2}$$

Thus, it matters greatly how appreciative doves will be of their leader's eleventh-hour move to escape the specter of war that they themselves created.

One reason they may be relatively unappreciative is mundane and obvious: they may value the backing down equally and oppositely as they valued the raising of the specter of war, but simply refuse to fully translate the former into higher leader approval, since the leader was responsible for it all in the first place. Another reason is prospect-theoretic. If we disregard the above commonsense reaction and assume a standard utility function, then we conclude that h and d will indeed be equal and opposite, and $h+d = 0$. If instead we assume the PT value function with at least some degree of renormalization, then we assume that the positive *rapprochement effect* of d will be at least a little weaker than the belligerence cost h, because it will be seen to at least some degree as a gain rather than the aversion of a loss. On top of that, audiences may become increasingly more convinced that the threat

is genuine as crisis-bargaining drags on, meaning the threat-related belligerence cost h will approach the larger war-belligerence cost H, and the eventual RP for d will lower even as real RPs slowly approach it. Overall, the longer crisis-bargaining goes on, the lower both d and h go, and the more tied the challenger's hands become. This is remarkably similar, then, to Fearon's (1994) original audience cost model, just as Levy (2012) suggested, even though Levy was clearly positing a relatively hawkish audience, who was hoping to see the rival bullied.

3.2.2 Ideological Hawks

Assuming accountability to ideological hawks leads to one tautological conclusion just as it did with doves: a threat is more likely overall. It should also be unsurprising, though, that they serve to tie hands, and more decisively than doves do since their post-threat renormalization is in an upward direction.

For hawks, of course, d is negative, and it is almost certainly seen as a loss rather than the foregoing of a gain. This is to say that the threat presumably triggers an endowment effect among hawks: they get their hopes up, count their chickens before they're hatched, and otherwise put themselves in a psychological position to overweight it if the leader then returns to their starting acceptance of the status quo. The back-down outcome does contain a positive h, but it is by definition no larger than H, so, as we would expect, there can only be, if anything, a belligerence-benefit incentive to attack rather than back down. Thus, accountability to hawks also unambiguously widens the gulf between the attack and back-down payoffs in favor of the former, and certainly more quickly and reliably than it does with doves.

It is unclear, though, how quickly h might really approach H for hawks, or if that generation of threat credibility differs for hawks and doves. The endowment effect will cause hawks to quickly renormalize to any expectation they have that their state will maintain the aggressive posture it has now taken, but it will not *create* that expectation; that would constitute wishful thinking (for hawks), which is certainly an important factor in political psychology (McDermott 2004, 170-2) but is unresearched in this context.

3.3 A "Psychospatial" Model

3.3.1 Starting with the Spatial Voting Model

The spatial voting model (see Downs 1957, for the seminal application of this model type to politics; see Hotelling 1990, for the original, economic conceptualization of the model; see Rabinowitz & Macdonald 1989; Westholm 1997, on the debate between proximity and directional models, and see Lewis & King 1999, on why that debate cannot prove productive) despite the name, can be used to model a wide range of collective decision-making contexts including leader selection in autocracies; I use it in this general sense here, with "voters" being any and all persons with domestic political influence. Possible policies and issue positions are modeled as points on a number line running between two political extremes, usually liberal vs. conservative as one would think; the enactment of the leader's chosen policy delivers a payoff to each voter corresponding directly to how far away that policy is from the voter's position and most-preferred policy. This payoff is:

$$EU_V(p_i) = -\phi|p_i - x| \tag{3.3}$$

where p_i and x are the leader's and voter's positions, respectively, and ϕ measures the issue's overall importance to the voter in question.

Importantly, voters without real and at least somewhat consistent issue positions receive no payoffs from anything here and are essentially absent from the model – all the effects and dynamics of position-taking and position-changing are contingent on the existence of such opinionated voters, and at the extreme, there are no such voters to generate any effect. The accountability level of the leader would then entirely cease to matter, as would their issue positions insofar as domestic politics is concerned. This is a substantive property of the scope and purpose of the model.

The standard model is ahistorical: voters must decide which of a number of leaders to vote for, and they vote for the one associated with the highest payoff for them, which, in a single-issue model, is the one whose position is currently closest to theirs (Downs 1957). This ahistoricity is one of the main drivers of the median voter theorem, in that it

leads to the prediction that leaders will converge on the median voter, and adjust to meet the median voter, no matter where the leader is or has been before. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, there are a number of arguments about whether this should be thought of as prospective or retrospective voting and the extent to which it is truly rational behavior for the voter either way, but the important thing is what the standard model implies when applied to changes in, rather than levels of, approval: namely, that policy reversals and inconsistency have no adverse consequences as such.

A leader who changes her position on a given issue will either increase or decrease the distance between her position and a given voter's position (assuming she does not move to the one specific point that leaves her as far to one side of his position as she originally was to the other side), and if we have a continuous measure of the voter's opinion of the leader such as the American National Election Studies' (ANES's) 0-to-100 feeling thermometer, then we would expect a change in this measure corresponding in magnitude and sign (but of opposite sign) to this change in distance, depending as always on how important the issue in question is to this particular voter. We can define a value function that returns the change in a voter's opinion[1] of the leader (following directly from him his change in utility ΔEU_V) given her former position (p_1) and her new one (p_2) along the numerical issue-position spectrum, with x and ϕ, as before, measuring the voter's position on the issue and how important the issue is to him:

$$\Delta EU_V = \phi(|p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x|) \tag{3.4}$$

If we posit a rightward shift from -2 to 0, then we can plot the resulting change in a given voter's reaction depending on his issue position. Fig. 3.3 provides such a plot. Any and all voters to the right of the leader's new and more rightward position all have the same positive reaction, increasing their approval of the leader by 2ϕ, while those to the left of the

1. The word "opinion" in this context can be ambiguous, as a voter has both an opinion of the leader – a degree to which he approves of the leader overall – and an opinion on the issue in question – a position on it that he takes and which represents his ideal point in terms of the metaphorical policy space and where he would most like the leader to place herself. For this reason, I usually refer to the former as approval and the latter as position, though it often makes sense to speak of opinions, for example when referring to the public's opinionatedness in terms of how many voters have some issue position rather than having no position, and no opinion on the issue, at all.

leader's original position have the equal and opposite reaction; the reactions of those in the middle range between these extremes and correlate linearly with the voter's issue position, with a slope of ϕ.

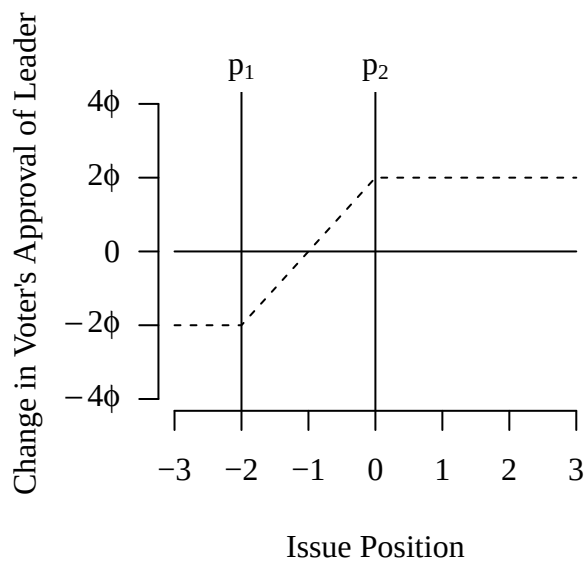

Figure 3.3: Standard Spatial Model's Voter Reaction Function for Shift from $p_1 = -2$ to $p_2 = 0$

Note the symmetry of these reactions: the positive reaction from a shift x units toward the voter is always equal and opposite in magnitude to a shift x units away. If you have the value function for a shift from point A to point B and you want the value function for a shift from point B back to point A, you just multiply it by -1, flipping it along the horizontal axis $y = 0$. The result is the prediction of no inconsistency costs: a leader can shift from any position to any other and then back again, and the net effect on her approval rating with every voter will be zero. The standard model can certainly be used for predicting and explaining public reactions to individual shifts, but it cannot explain any lasting effects that a leader's past position-taking may have on her approval.

This symmetry clearly contrasts with prospect theory, in which, as it is often summarized, the bad outweighs the good. For purposes such as these, in fact, it can be said that this simpler value function is simply obsolete – the locating of a given voter's reference point

at a given point in time is always crucial and determines what and where the asymmetry is, but we are, after all, modeling voters who have real opinions on the issue in question and are thus psychologically invested in the relevant political process, so we are unquestionably in this realm of perceived gains and losses. The standard spatial model simply does not apply what we now know about the asymmetries as well as the nonlinearities present in these subjective valuations and resulting behaviors.

3.3.2 Augmenting the Model with Prospect Theory

Formal prospect theory (PT) consists of a large, mathematically rigorous, and growing literature in psychology, economics, and business and marketing studies as well as political science; here, though, I apply the simple and familiar value function of classical prospect theory, first defined by Tversky & Kahneman (1991)[2]:

$$v(x|r) = \begin{cases} (x-r)^a & \text{if } x > r \\ -\lambda(r-x)^a & \text{if } x \leq r \end{cases} \tag{3.5}$$

where r is the reference-point payoff, λ is the ratio of the magnitude of losses to that of gains and is greater than 1, and α quantifies diminishing sensitivity to losses/gains and may range from 0 to 1, non-inclusive (My formulation actually follows more directly from the value function as rephrased in Post et al. 2008). This function translates any objective payoff, of some objective size, into subjective utility for an actor with a specific reference point, which corresponds here to the payoff they expected to receive.

In this way, a citizen's objective payoff from some event – here, a policy position shift on the part of the leader – results in either positive or negative subjective utility depending on whether it is better or worse than the citizen's reference point; either way, the objective difference between the two is exponentiated such that changes in the outcome would have an increasingly smaller effect on subjective utility as its objective value grew further away from the reference point in either direction; and besides all this, the absolute value of a perceived loss will be larger than the value of a perceived gain of the same size.

2. This formulation followed directly from the assertions of the seminal prospect theory article, Kahneman & Tversky 1979.

Classical vs. Modern Formal Prospect Theory

My use of the classical PT value function reflects two things: this is, I believe, the first application of PT within a spatial context, so I wish to provide a relatively simple foundation for future extensions; and, my primary purpose here is to clearly elucidate a novel explanation for international bargaining phenomena, not voters' or consumers' behavior per se, which is usually the focus of complex PT models. At least some discussion of those models, however, is required.

As Bowman, Minehart & Rabin (1999) show, prospect theory (PT) amounts in formal terms to five attributes of the value function; the classical PT value function is just one of any number of different functions that would meet these criteria. Most notably, Kőszegi & Rabin (2006, 2007) have established a generalized model of reference-dependent preferences based on these criteria, which has three principal advantages over the original one (though each advantage seems to stem from a separate modeling decision/addition rather than from some novelty in the model's fundamental structure):

- it includes some classically rational, reference-independent consumption utility, which can be weighted against the gain-loss utility as appropriate;
- it allows for the nonlinear valuation of gains and losses – the "diminishing sensitivity" aspect of PT – to take a wide range of separate values that may rightfully amplify, dampen, or even reverse loss aversion within some ranges of the curve[3]; and
- it makes it clear and easy to model the reference point as expected outcomes, with rational uncertainty about expected outcomes beyond one's control, but also with endogenously updating expectations based on one's previously-established intentions to take utility-maximizing action.

Given the last point, especially, this model may seem ideal for expectation cost theory. Indeed, Koszegi & Rabin (K&R) identify a critically important lose/lose scenario in which a consumer who expected to buy a product and then finds out that its price is on the high end will now end up, no matter what they do, with less subjective utility than if they had

3. Abdellaoui, Bleichrodt & Paraschiv 2007; Abdellaoui, Bleichrodt & L'Haridon 2008.

never thought to buy the shoes in the first place. And indeed, this is most definitely in the spirit of what I define here as expectation costs (Kőszegi & Rabin 2006, 1149-50). The term could easily be used for both sorts of costs – K&R's unfortunate shopper, namely, suffers a cost equal to the payoff for not buying and never having expected to buy, minus the payoff for whichever choice is her better option now that she's already gotten her hopes up, and this is directly analogous to the psychic cost that a leader inflicts on her constituents, and the political cost they presumably inflict on her, as a result of her getting their hopes up when she could have just done and said nothing.

However, voters do not get to choose their reference points when it comes to policies and policy outcomes – their preferences regarding various policies and outcomes are exogenous, and their beliefs about which policies and outcomes will be realized must be formed from available information that has virtually nothing to do with anything they control. They do not get to form an expectation about future events the way a shopper does with their autonomous decision to buy or not buy – policymakers must set those expectations for them, one way or another, just as policymakers decide (if anyone does) whether or not the expected political outcome is forthcoming. Thus, the contexts of the two models are different, and so are the sources, and consequences, of the costs associated with the adverse effects of a premature shift in the reference point, to put it in general terms. To be sure, the model constructed here achieves a rational-choice endogenization of the reference point as K&R's model does, but the utility-maximizing actor setting the reference point here is not the same as the actor whose reference point it is.

Overall, K&R's analytical focus is the individual economic actor making economic decisions, and so their model is naturally complicated in ways that are less relevant to a voter or other member of the mass public. Their reference point is usually not a point at all, and is instead a density distribution of expectations regarding future outcomes, based on both available information and the actor's options for influencing those outcomes (Kőszegi & Rabin 2006, 2007). Perhaps the most worthwhile extension of the current work, in terms of pure theory, would indeed be to explore the implications of such a reference distribution, especially in connection with previous work exploring a leader's decision to take clear or

ambiguous positions;[4] on the other hand, a reference point makes for a far more simple and accesible model, in which domestic politics are ultimately to be factored into a separate model of international bargaining involving more than one set of endogenous reference points, so that is what I restrict myself to here.[5]

It is also the case for similar reasons that there is no consumption utility here – the entire quantity of utility received by the voter as a result of a given policy shift (a shift in the leader's policy position, that is) follows PT's S-shaped curvature. Basically, voters' political preferences here are purely ideological and sociotropic: if for example the model were to incorporate the personal financial gain that a voter may receive from a given policy that that voter may nevertheless see as unethical or bad for the country, then consumption utility would need to be separated out (in the next chapter where we look for empirical evidence of loss aversion actually manifested in presidential approval ratings, this question of consumption utility arises as a possible confounder; luckily, statistical tools exist to rule it out empirically).

The assumption that the reference point is a point and that leaders can freely convince people to expect that exact policy outcome with full confidence may seem intolerably unrealistic on both counts – despite the aforementioned evidence that leaders (or at least U.S. presidents) almost always do or at least try to do what they say they will,[6] it seems perpetually fashionable to profess one's complete discounting of anything a politician says or otherwise signals. If voters were so skeptical, they would have either extremely uncertain expectations about political outcomes – highly diffuse reference distributions – or their expectations would only ever be cemented by things outside leaders' and candidates' direct control, such as leaders' personal histories or credible signals sent by other actors.

4. Alesina & Cukierman 1990.

5. Reference distributions in a spatial-voting model, for all their theoretical attractiveness, introduce even more complexity than they might first appear to. A position shift would entail the placement of a new probability distribution representing people's uncertain beliefs about the forthcoming policy, and the leader would have to choose not just what point to center this distribution on but also how wide to make the distribution (how much uncertainty to generate), and perhaps even what shape the distribution took – normal, uniform, skewed, bimodal, etc. There would likely be no one strongly dominant strategy, as there is here. Speaking of a return to a previously-held position would be ambiguous with that position having been a distribution, and thus inconsistency would itself be harder to define. Finally, there would be the issue of the actual and eventually realized policy, since that must inevitably be a point, and if the leader controls that policy in whole or in part, then they must make the distribution placement decision based on their rational beliefs about the realized policy.

6. Pomper 1967; Krukones 1984; Fishel 1985; Shaw 1998.

I basically assume here that these professions of skepticism are ultimately just posturing and/or wishful thinking on the part of the voter, who would naturally like to think of themselves as attuned to the dangers of disappointment, while leading others to think of them as politically savvy and difficult to impress; as mentioned in Ch. 2, this assumption that voters do in fact adjust their reference points following a leader's mere position-taking is not without some empirical support (Elinder, Jordahl & Poutvaara 2015) though proper research into this would involve actual measurement and accounting-for of people's professed levels of confidence in their leader's words and predictability. I also assume that leaders can ultimately alter even the most fully-formed expectations if and when they really so desire, and that we often see them not doing so precisely because the public reaction would be so negative. The case of Woodrow Wilson (ch. 6) illustrates this nicely in that he privately lamented the fact that he was so strongly expected to maintain peace, and yet he did not even attempt to walk those expectations back after the fact, until after the election when he began to suffer costs for doing just that via the raising of a militia.

It is possible and perhaps likely that the real issue is not the individual voter's uncertain expectations but the different expectations that different voters have as a result of varying levels of exposure to different political statements and gestures. This gets into particularly complicated, albeit particularly interesting, theoretical territory if we assume that politicians can strategically send different signals to different groups of voters who are susceptible to them – this corresponds to talking out of both sides of your mouth, as the saying goes. Again, this is interesting and important future work in this context and others, especially for electoral studies, but it is a complexity that is best left unexplored in this model of domestic incentives in international bargaining.

From Scalar to Spatial PT Valuation

Even so, the operationalization of this simple reference point requires some clarification. First consider what sort of model we would use if the issue in question was entirely uncontroversial, there was no left-right spectrum of possible issue positions, and different policy outcomes ranged from best to worst in a way that everyone appraised equally. A good example is unemployment (despite the fact that there are technically levels of unemployment

that are too low). The leader's "position" on unemployment would be the number they pledged to get unemployment down to, which is worth a certain amount of utility to voters – likely some more than others, but with this pledge and its associated payoff as the reference point, any higher number is a loss while a lower one is a gain. In formal terms, position shifts are scalar here, as opposed to vectors in the spatial model. The prospect theory value function can then be applied directly, with the real achieved level of unemployment as x and the pledged level as r.

In a spatial model, a certain x coordinate denotes the point on the issue-position number line corresponding to a given voter's position on the issue; this is his ideal point, often called his bliss point, and the realization of the policy/outcome that this point represents would always maximize his utility, subjectively as well as objectively. For any given voter, the utility associated with a given policy is a function of how far away that policy is from his bliss-point policy. In prospect theory, the reference point is more literally described as a reference payoff; it is only a point in the sense that it is the situation one will find themselves in as a result of a given payoff, and payoffs that are lesser or greater than that reference payoff leave one worse or better off than that reference point, i.e. either below or above it. Alternatively, it is a point along the continuum of possible payoffs, which corresponds to the continuum of possible policies, but the two scales are not at all synonymous in a spatial model.

The reference point in a spatial model corresponds not to a policy per se but to a payoff associated with the policy that one expects to eventually see enacted, and/or the outcome that one expects will result from the enacted policy. The reference-point payoff is a direct function of the expected policy in relation to the voter's bliss point, but it would be misleading to say that either point *is* the voter's reference point – for one thing, every voter across the issue space has a different reference point even though they all share the same expectation regarding what the leader will do, because this policy action is associated with a higher reference payoff for those who like it and a lower one for those that don't.

What we ultimately want to do in this first modeling step is to transform eq. 3.5 so that it directly reflects the voter's subjective gain or loss due to a leader's shift. Both r and x are objective payoffs, so both need to be substituted with distances between the voter's

and leader's positions. The assumption is that the reference point is set based on where the leader starts, or currently stands at the start of the shift, while the perceived payoff from the leader's shift (which may just be the newly-expected policy rather than an actually implemented one) depends instead on where the leader is shifting to. The appropriate substitution, plus ϕ as the generic weight representing the importance of the issue as before, gives us:

$$\phi v(x, p_2|p_1) = \begin{cases} (|p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x|)^\alpha & \text{if } |p_1 - x| \geq |p_2 - x| \\ -\lambda(|p_2 - x| - |p_1 - x|)^\alpha & \text{if } |p_1 - x| < |p_2 - x| \end{cases} \tag{3.6}$$

Note that the direction of the distance between the voter's and leader's positions is assumed not to matter, either before or after the shift – it is possible for example for the shift to take the leader from one side of the voter to the other, and the voter is assumed to care in any event only about whether the distance between the leader's position and their own ends up smaller or larger than it was before, in whichever direction.

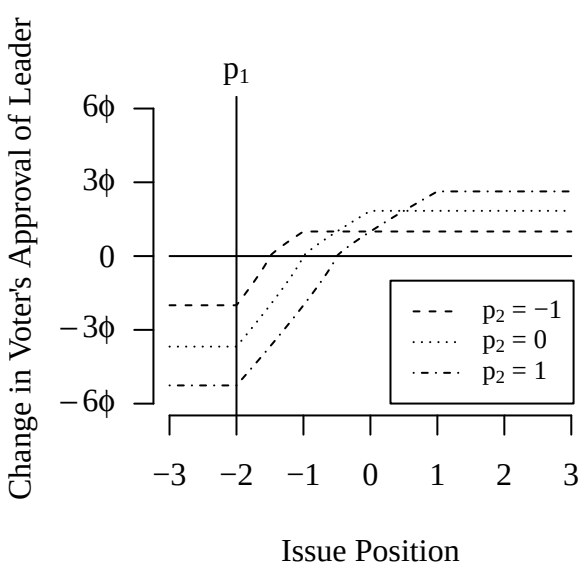

Figure 3.4: The Psychospatial Model's Voter Reaction Functions for Three Possible Shifts Away from $p_1 = -2$, assuming Standard Parameters

Take for example a leader who is at $p_1 = -2$ and is contemplating a rightward shift of either 1, 2, or 3 units. Fig. 3.4 plots the value function for each of these three shifts,

assuming empirically supported values for the value function parameters ($\lambda = 2; \alpha = 0.88$; these values will generally be assumed throughout this chapter for illustrative purposes) (Tversky & Kahneman 1992). The p_2 of each shift is unlabeled but is evidenced by the point at which the value function abruptly stops rising in value.

The characteristic S-shape is evident, albeit with little curvature since empirical estimates of α are rather high. We can clearly see the range of losses exceeding the range of gains in terms of magnitude for each of the curves.

To be clear, what this value function does, with x left to vary, is tell us the reaction that a citizen at position x will have to the shift in question. The voters at $x = 0$ will experience a gain of ϕ from a shift to either -1 or 1 here, and a gain of about 1.84ϕ from a shift right onto their own position at 0.

It should be clear why any shift produces the same reaction from all those who are to the left of the leftmost position point, and a different but similarly uniform reaction from those who are to the right of the rightmost position: the shift changes the leader's distance from all those voters by the same amount. Those in the range between the two positions all have varying reactions since the shift has a different net change on the distance between them and the leader for each one of them, and anyone who is exactly between the two positions has no reaction at all – all that's changed for them is which extreme the leader is too far toward for their tastes.

Lastly here, it should be understood that, if the shifts were reversed, and were instead movements to $p_2 = -2$ from a starting position at one of these three more rightward points, then these value distributions would *not* be flipped vertically, around $y = 0$ – those who saw the first shift as a gain would see the opposite shift as a loss and vice versa, so the signs of all the reactions would be reversed, but their magnitudes would be very different due to the significant overweighting of losses, represented by λ.

3.3.3 Aggregating Voters' Politically Consequential Reactions

What we and the leader care about, however, is the overall public reaction, not the reactions of particular voters. How should we aggregate up from individuals to the mass public? The simplest way is to assume both that everyone cares about the issue equally and that the

leader cares about everyone's reactions equally; we can then simply sum up everyone's reactions to a given shift. Luckily, relaxing these assumptions will turn out to be quite doable, given case-specific data at least.

First consider again the simpler scalar model, where there is a reference point and a PT value function but no distribution of public opinions – everyone has the same preference about unemployment, money, air quality, etc., and their "bliss point" would be defined as something like infinite money and unimaginably clean air. Everyone cares about such issues to different degrees, but since everyone's reactions to a given policy outcome on such an issue are the same outside of this weighting factor, we could summarize the public reaction by simply multiplying this individual reaction by the average weight that everyone gives to that issue. If we then multiply this reaction by a factor η that captures the leader's degree of accountability – i.e., the weight they place on changes to their overall public approval – then we have a value that can be included directly in the leader's utility function as their domestic-politics-related payoff (η will become the parameter of primary interest once this model is used to inform a model of international bargaining).

When the issue is controversial and we are in a spatial model, however, everyone's reference point depends on their opinion of the expected policy given their preferred policy point, and their reaction to some unexpected policy depends on both this reference point and their preferred policy point as well. Aggregation requires that we account for where exactly all the members of the public stand on the issue. Define the distribution of issue opinions within the domestic audience as $o(x)$. For theoretical purposes, this *opinion distribution* is defined as a density function, while in any real-world application with a finite number of people with observed issue positions, it would be a mass function. With x corresponding to the range of possible issue positions, a definite integral of $o(x)$ can be interpreted as the quantity of the leader's constituency whose positions lie within that range; by extension, we can define the sum total of the public reaction to any given shift as:

$$EU_L(p_2) = \phi \int o(x)v(x, p_2|p_1)\, dx \tag{3.7}$$

If, for example, we assume a standard normal opinion distribution and a p_1 of -2 – in

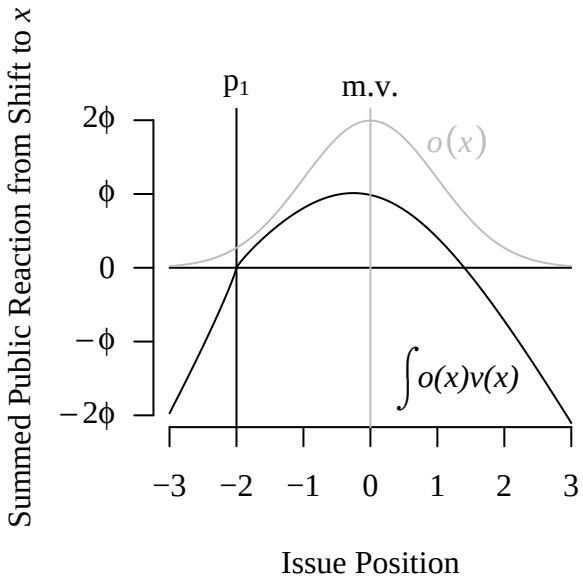

Figure 3.5: Overall public reactions to possible shifts from -2 to x given a standard normal opinion distribution, which is displayed for reference

which case, the leader is 2 standard deviations to the political left of the median voter – then we can calculate the sum total of the public reaction to any given policy point. Fig. 3.5 plots this total for $-3 < p_2 < 3$. A shift toward the median voter in and of itself is certainly worthwhile for this leader, which is unsurprising given her extreme starting position; note, however, that the utility-maximizing p_2 is short of the median voter's position ($x^* \approx -0.31$, about 84% of the way from p_1 to the median voter). While I do not prove it here as it is not directly relevant to my particular research question, it can clearly be conjectured that the median voter theorem is fundamentally incompatible with prospect theory, which would require the reappraisal of a vast literature relying on that theorem, including some on international bargaining (e.g. Schultz 2005).

According to the median voter theorem, whomever the median voter votes for wins in a majoritarian election (or whatever majoritarian selection process is being modeled). Here, however, if two candidates both start at -2, $o(x)$ is standard-normal, and candidate A moves to 0 while candidate B moves to -0.31, then the median voter may very well end up with a higher opinion of candidate A and vote for that candidate while a majority of the

other voters prefer and vote for candidate B.

All of this depends on the relative levels of approval that each voter had for the two candidates and on which voters actually flip their vote as a result of the shift, which is unmodeled here; in general, though, the candidate who does not shift all the way to the median voter would be more likely to gain votes, as well as general popularity, against a candidate who did. Informally, moving all the way to the median voter as opposed to just short of him garners a small extra boost in approval from a slim majority of voters (everyone to the right of -0.31 in this example), but it disappoints everyone else by a much larger magnitude, so it's only worth it in terms of vote maximization in the specific circumstance where the voters on the other side of the aisle who will change their votes due to this extra incentive outnumber those who change their votes due to the extra disappointment, even though this negative inducement is roughly twice as strong as the positive inducement for the other voters.

From Public Reaction to Leader Incentive: The Simple Way

The median voter often greatly simplifies game-theory models because he can be a rational actor who proxies for the public writ large: given a majoritarian system, whomever he supports, and supports the most, wins. The above should illustrate how and why this does not apply here, and hence why we need some other modeling strategy for factoring domestic politics into the leader's overall utility function which we will eventually construct.

First consider the case for simply including the above sum total of voters' reactions in the leader's utility function, as if the leader simply cares equally about all changes in each voter's approval level, regardless of any of the voter's qualities or even their current level of approval. For one, leaders cannot generally know for sure which voters will be the swing voters in the next election (or whatever contest for power there is), because they can't know for sure what kind of rival they will face, or which of many rivals may turn out to be the real threat, especially well before the election. A U.S. president for example may have some idea of what kind of candidate the rival party will field and which voters will and will not be undecided between the two of them, but there's always the possibility of a primary challenger, who would likely come from the opposite side of the political spectrum and upend

that electoral strategic map – and then the leader must worry about appealing enough to the primary's swing-voters without totally alienating the general-election swing-voters, and all this without knowing for sure who will win the other party's primaries and therefore who they will and won't appeal to. Clearly, all this uncertainty suggests that leaders should treat voters more or less equally, and value more or less equally any changes in approval among any voting blocs, especially if we assume that leaders have a hard time gauging voters' approval levels and/or predicting significant future rivals. (It is relevant that alandmark volume of research on domestic politics in international bargaining did indeed find that "cross-national informational asymmetries are less prevalent than we at first supposed, and mis-estimations within domestic politics are more prevalent." (Evans 1993, 400))

Second, it is no doubt the case that rational leaders care about voters' approval for additional reasons beyond securing their vote. A given decrease in a voter's opinion of the leader may cause him not to vote for her, but further decreases cause him to persuade others not to vote for her, to donate to her opponent, to attend her opponent's rallies, and even to engage in civil disobedience, threatening her legitimacy and/or forcing her to engage in costly repression. Conversely, increases in any voter's opinion can persuade them not to take such actions, or to take the equally significant range of actions desirable to the leader: persuading others to vote for her, attending her rallies, donating to her, etc. Not all of these actions have an equal impact on the leader's fortunes at any rate, and so it is certainly a shortcoming of the model that it cannot adjust the leader's payoff for each voter's approval change based on the importance of the actions that that change causes them to take or not take, but at least the model does not assume that the leader cares only about votes and not at all about theses other actions.

Ultimately, however, one of the advantages of this model structure is that it can easily accommodate a situation where the leader does value some voters' approval more than others, provided that these different weights are specified. Namely, we must be able to define a distribution function that maps voters' issue position x to the weight that voter has in the leader's calculus y. To take a U.S. example, it is known that a voter in Wyoming has about 3.6 times the influence on the electoral college that a New York voter has (the latter being the most underrepresented voter in the nation). If we possess a dataset of U.S.

voters' issue positions and their state of residence, then we can build a PMF that reflects this fact by counting each Wyoming voter, at each of their issue positions, as 3.6 New York voters, and so on for voters in other states. This can then be our $o(x)$, reflecting the amount of voting power, or alternatively the *effective* number of voters, with each issue position. Multiplying this by the value function for a given shift then gives us a total that we can factor into the leader's utility function that better reflects the leader's true incentives, at least from a strictly electoral standpoint.

More generally/importantly, we can begin with the simple $o(x)$ that directly reflects the issue positions of the (s)electorate and then, given the necessary data (or theoretical assumptions), transform $o(x)$ by multiplying it with any distribution that mathematically accounts in this way for some reason why the leader should be expected to value some voters at some issue positions more than others. If there are multiple and perhaps countervailing reasons for such asymmetries – electoral-college imbalances but also differences in possible political donation dollars, for example – then several different distributions can be included as sequential transformations, again by multiplying them and $o(x)$ all together (and eventually multiplying them by $v(x)$ and finally integrating over x to arrive at something like the leader's domestic-politics payoff). After such rounds of transformation, of course, $o(x)$ becomes rather abstract and becomes a distribution of voters' general political influence or value along the issue-position spectrum, which is more useful for data-driven predictioneering than theoretical inference, but it should be clear from this that the assumption of equal importance of each voters' approval is by no means ingrained in the model as presented above.

The real insurmountable difficulty with this modeling strategy relates to this fact that the importance of a given voter's reaction cannot be made here to depend on the voter's current level of support for the leader. Even if we possessed the required data and theory to calculate this, we would need to make $o(x)$ itself depend on the shift size, or otherwise complicate the model so that each voter's reaction was calculated in a more individualized way. Without trivializing the problem, it should be clear why I do not go down that road here, and instead assume that, while some voters' reactions might matter more than others, neither voters' reactions nor their importance to the leader depend on the voter's current

level of approval of the leader.

To be clear, though, this is not the assumption that each voter reacts the same to each given shift in the sense that they all see the issue as equally important and react to perceived gains and losses on it with equal intensity – this would certainly be one of the most problematic assumptions to rely on. We can assume, however, that the gain/loss continuum for shifts of different size, defined by $v(x)$, keeps the same shape for each voter and simply scales up in magnitude as the issue grows more important to a given voter, in which case we can account for different voters' issue weights the same way we account for the voters' different political weights: by multiplying $o(x)$ by a distribution mapping these preference intensities onto the voters' issue positions. ϕ in eq. 3.7 and in fig. 3.5 would then be standardized at 1.

Here I do treat this sum total of public reactions in eq. 3.7 as the entire domestic component of the leader's payoff due to some policy shift, assuming thereby that $o(x)$ has been transformed as appropriate to measure the effective rather than actual distribution of voters across the issue spectrum. Integrating over $o(x)v(x)$ then properly captures whatever substantive link there is between the reaction to a shift and the domestic consequences for the leader, given the leader's overall degree of accountability $\eta \in [0, \infty]$. Below, I often simply refer to there being "more hawks than doves" or the like; this, however, should be taken as shorthand for "the opinions of hawks mattering more than that of doves given their political influence as well as their numbers." This is especially useful terminology here since only consider a bargaining context in which two equal and opposite shifts can occur: one to a more hawkish position and another from that point back to the starting position.

3.4 Expectation Costs

The primary parameter of interest, expectation costs, can now be defined as such: an unavoidable loss of overall popularity due to any shift from one policy position to another and then back to the original position after the public has renormalized to the new position.

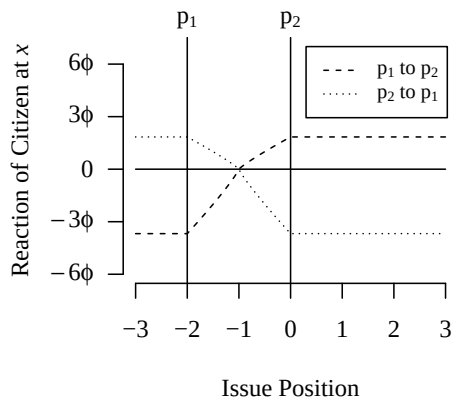

Figure 3.6: Value Functions $v(\cdot)$ for Two Countervailing Shifts

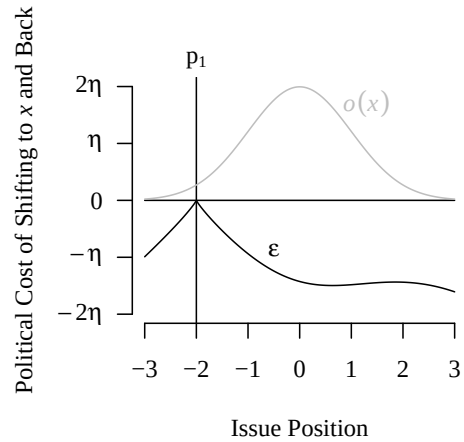

Figure 3.7: Leader's Net Cost from Lost Approval Due to Shift Away from and Back to Position -2

Define the net effect of two such shifts, unweighted by leader accountability η, as:

$$\varepsilon = \int o(x)v(x, p_1, p_2)\, dx + \int o(x)v(x, p_2, p_1)\, dx \tag{3.8}$$

(ϕ is no longer needed with $o(x)$ assumed to reflect the voters' issue weightings as well.) Fig. 3.6 plots these two value functions separately, one for a shift from -2 to 0 and the other from 0 to -2 (this can be readily compared to fig. 3.3); fig. 3.7 plots the integral of these summed value functions, ε, for all possible p_2, given that $o(x)$ (after all necessary transformations) is standard normal, $p_1 = -2$, and the leader shifts to x and then back to -2. The y-axis there is defined by η to indicate how this integral ultimately becomes a given leader's payoff for both shifts put together.

Note the crucial assumption here that the second shift, back to p_1, occurs after the entire public has renormalized to p_2 being the expected policy; enough time must pass between the two shifts for even those who saw the first shift as a loss to renormalize to the lower reference point (indeed, far less time need pass if the first shift was favored by all, thanks to the endowment effect).

Leave $o(x)$ undefined beyond the fact that it is non-negative and globally integrable; whatever conclusions we draw, then, hold no matter what public opinion is on the issue in

question. Factor out the integral in eq. 3.8:

$$\varepsilon = \int o(x)[v(x, p_1, p_2) + v(x, p_2, p_1)]\, dx \tag{3.9}$$

Given the value function from eq. 3.6, we can further specify the sum of the two value functions, in the brackets. The algebra is bulky and so I relegate it to the appendix, but the following holds true:

$$v(x,p_1, p_2) + v(x, p_2, p_1) = (1 - \lambda)(||p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x||)^{\alpha} \tag{3.10}$$

Substituting into eq. 3.9 gives us:

$$\varepsilon = \int o(x)(1 - \lambda)(||p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x||)^{\alpha}\, dx \tag{3.11}$$

$$= (1 - \lambda) \int o(x)(||p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x||)^{\alpha}\, dx \tag{3.12}$$

It is the case that $\lambda > 1$, the opinion distribution is of positive density, and the base of α is positive; thus, eq. 3.10 is strictly negative (ignoring the very particular case in which the effect is zero because the citizen's position is exactly equidistant from p_1 and p_2). This proves the existence of expectation costs as such: no one with any opinion on the issue can observe their leader shift from one position to another and then back again later without experiencing a net loss, which presumably translates into a loss for the leader in terms of their popularity. We need not ask if those who are pleased by the two countervailing shifts outweigh those who are displeased, because the former is an empty set.

3.4.1 The Scope and Robustness of Expectation Costs

The nested absolute-value terms, i.e. the base of α, can be thought of as the increase in distance between leader and voter that resulted from whichever shift it was that increased the distance (this, namely, is not the change in distance as a result of both shifts together – the shifts are perfectly countervailing and so the net change is zero). This indicates that those whose issue positions lie somewhere between p_1 and p_2 – probably political moderates

– suffer less of a net loss, and have less of an adverse reaction to the leader's inconsistency. This does *not* mean, however, that larger shifts always lead to greater disappointment for the electorate at large, although this is more often than not the case. Complication arises due to the fact that larger shifts will naturally catch more people in that midrange between the shifts where the sense of loss is smaller; the diminishing-sensitivity property makes those moderate voters more significant, as well. This is why, in fig. 3.7, ε is slightly increasing with x, and expectation costs as such are slightly decreasing as the shift size increases, in the area of $x = 1$.

The idea of expectation benefits may remain intuitively plausible. To be clear, the counterfactual (of sorts) is that the leader who makes these two countervailing shifts could have stayed at p_1 from the start and received a public-reaction payoff of zero; expectation benefits as defined here would be a net positive reaction to this unnecessary manipulating of expectations (it is likely most intuitive to think of the first shift as a declaration to enact some policy that is out-of-character for the leader, and of the second shift as the leader ultimately doing what everyone expected her to do in the first place). I have not done the proof, but I believe this construction of the leader's options is indeed key to avoid the possibility of expectation benefits more broadly defined. I conjecture, for example, if the current expected policy is p_1, the leader must eventually implement policy p_3, and p_3 is far less desirable than p_1 for all voters, then she maximizes her utility not by shifting directly to p_3 but by first shifting to some p_2 that overshoots p_3 and is even worse in the public eye, before eventually shifting to p_3. This is driven entirely by the diminishing-sensitivity property: if one is to deliver a large loss to everyone, then, despite loss aversion, delivering a greater loss than necessary adds a relatively small amount to the already-large negative reaction, while putting you in the position to deliver what will be seen as a gain later. Conversely, since people are relatively insensitive to a large and sudden gain, it is better to dole out good news and outcomes piecemeal, and not to shift directly to some p_3 that everyone prefers to p_1. The leader's additional gains from such manipulations may certainly be dubbed expectation gains, but as shown above, such manipulations are impossible when the leader must eventually return to her original issue position.

There is also the matter of the leader's time horizon and discount factor: promising

people every dream they've ever dreamed for their country (to paraphrase Trump) may be worth it despite the eventual expectation costs if the initial boost brings victory in an election or otherwise serves the leader's pressing interests.

In reality, of course, leaders do not choose their policy positions with a free hand: circumstances beyond both their control and their foresight suddenly present them with overwhelming incentives to take unpopular positions. Leaders often do not even get to choose what people initially expect of them, and so what they planned on being their initial position-taking often turns out to be their first positional shift in the eyes of the voters, as it was when Woodrow Wilson found himself appointed by his party to be 1916's peace candidate (see ch. 6). In the model to follow, the leader must shift to a more hawkish position, if they so desire, without knowing whether the rival state will capitulate and leave her there, or rebuff the threat and force her to decide between maintaining her hawkish posture and going to war or shifting back to her original position by backing down; thus, this sort of unpredictability is a feature of the model, and it should be clear what is meant when we speak of exposing oneself to expectation costs in the same way that one exposes oneself to audience costs or otherwise takes some risk in an observable way.

It bears repeating the point from ch. 2 that these public-opinion and political-psychology dynamics punish leaders for being inconsistent, but they differ in more ways than one from the usual assumed dynamic of people identifying or sensing inconsistency, objecting to it, and punishing it. Aside from the different microfoundations to look for, the timing of the punishment, or what amounts to a punishment, is different, namely in that it is divided evenly between the two shifts. The second of the countervailing shifts does not carry with it any additional punishment despite the fact that it reveals a far more inconsistent character than the first shift did.

Even if the issue is an uncontroversial one and the "shift" in question is simply the leader breaking the good news to everyone that she has secured an even better outcome than she initially promised, she will be effectively punished, in that the praise will be muted, exactly as if the public was discounting the good news due to some principled objection to some sort of inconsistency. Likewise, if a leader is at a given position and public opinion shifts wholesale to one side of the position spectrum, then the leader's pandering shift in

that same direction will improve their prospects only modestly, which more closely mimics inconsistency costs as we usually expect to see them. But people do not choose to be so "unappreciative" of good news and to overreact to bad news – on the contrary, it is perhaps a vain struggle to prevent oneself from doing so, and from getting one's hopes up in the first place. This automaticity is important to account for both qualitatively and quantitatively.

3.4.2 Decomposing Expectation Costs

One of my purposes here is to establish this psychospatial model as a widely-applicable tool for modeling mass behavior in a way that accords with prospect theory. From here on, though, I apply the model in a specific and rather stylized context: that of issuing, or deciding not to issue, a coercive ultimatum to a rival state, and then deciding whether or not to make good on the threat if it fails to coerce. The issuance of the threat is modeled as a rightward shift away from some status-quo starting position, and backing down if the threat fails is modeled as an equal leftward shift back to that position after renormalization to the new hawkish posture as occurred; thus, expectation costs apply just as specified above. Both successful coercion and escalation to war following failed coercion are modeled as the persistence of the leader at their new rightward position, where expectation costs, as defined, are avoided.

As Kertzer & Brutger (2016) aptly demonstrated and emphasized, it is crucial to appreciate not just the effect of backing down from a threat but also the prior effect of issuing a threat in the first place. They dub the latter *belligerence costs*, generally assuming that the prevailing public reaction to belligerence will be negative – and indeed it should be, for all but the most hawkish publics, given prospect theory. However, these belligerence effects must also be understood and defined in relation to the effect of backing down. Rather than define this relationship in all of its algebraic complexity, with $o(x)$ left entirely to vary, I define and discuss the leader's payoffs in stylized scenarios where the public is either entirely hawkish, entirely dovish, or polarized with half at one extreme and half at the other.

To begin with, define these three ranges of x in relation to p_1 and p_2 as follows:

1. **Dovish positions:** $x \leq \min\{p_1, p_2\}$

2. **Hawkish positions:** $x \geq \max\{p_1, p_2\}$

3. **Moderate positions:** $\min\{p_1, p_2\} \leq x \leq \max\{p_1, p_2\}$

This also defines hawks, doves, and moderates themselves.

For doves and hawks, the shift is either good or bad, entirely and unequivocally, and can thus be appraised just as in a scalar model, though doves strictly prefer lower x values while hawks strictly prefer higher x values. The simplified value function for hawks follows directly from the standard PT value function, with p_1 as reference point r and p_2 as the objective payoff:

$$v(p_1, p_2 | x \geq \max\{p_1, p_2\}) = \begin{cases} (p_2 - p_1)^a, & \text{if } p_2 \geq p_1 \\ -\lambda(p_1 - p_2)^a, & \text{if } p_2 < p_1 \end{cases} \tag{3.13}$$

The value function for doves can be derived from this by reversing the sign of p_1 and p_2 throughout:

$$v(p_1, p_2 | x \leq \min\{p_1, p_2\}) = \begin{cases} (p_1 - p_2)^a, & \text{if } p_2 \leq p_1 \\ -\lambda(p_2 - p_1)^a, & \text{if } p_2 > p_1 \end{cases} \tag{3.14}$$

x has no effect on these function values and only factors into when they apply; thus, all hawks have the same reaction to the shift in question, and the same goes for doves, both groups defined as they are in relation to the shift itself.

Note also that these are merely conditional simplifications of the spatial PT value function – the latter returns the same function values given the same parameters. Specifically, this results from the fact that $|p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x|$ and $|p_2 - x| - |p_1 - x|$ do not change in value as x changes within the ranges of hawkish and dovish positions: changes of x within those extreme ranges moves x uniformly either toward or away from both p_1 and p_2 at once, having no effect on the difference in the distances between those two points.

The leader's (unweighted) payoff for a given shift can be expressed far more simply if

there are no moderate voters. Recall the general specification:

$$U_L(p_2) = \int o(x)v(x, p_1, p_2)\, dx \tag{3.15}$$

In the absence of moderate voters, $o(x)$ simplifies to a quantity of hawks and a quantity of doves, and $v(\cdot)$ simplifies to the two separate but uniform reactions of each of the groups. Define σ as the proportion of hawks in this population; the leader's payoff from a hawkish shift ($p_2 > p_1$) is then:

$$h = \sigma(p_2 - p_1)^a + (1 - \sigma)(-\lambda)(p_2 - p_1)^a \tag{3.16}$$

while the payoff for a subsequent dovish shift back to p_1 is:

$$d = \sigma(-\lambda)(p_2 - p_1)^a + (1 - \sigma)(p_2 - p_1)^a \tag{3.17}$$

If the public is entirely hawkish, then $\sigma = 1$, both payoffs simplify, and the ratio between them becomes:

$$\frac{d}{h} = \frac{-\lambda(p_2 - p_1)^a}{(p_2 - p_1)^a} \tag{3.18}$$

$$= -\lambda \tag{3.19}$$

The implication is that in such a scenario where the public's preferences are aligned so as to maximize the political benefit of issuing the threat, then they are also aligned so that the political cost of subsequently backing down will be about twice the magnitude of these belligerence benefits.

If on the other hand the public is entirely dovish, then $\sigma = 0$ and this ratio is:

$$\frac{d}{h} = \frac{(p_2 - p_1)^a}{-\lambda(p_2 - p_1)^a} \tag{3.20}$$

$$= -\frac{1}{\lambda} \tag{3.21}$$

or in other words, when the opinion distribution instead maximizes belligerence costs, then

the rapprochement benefits will be only half the magnitude of these costs. It should be clear from this that the positive effect is the same whether it comes from the hawkish or dovish shift, and the same goes for the negative effect; thus, the expectation costs suffered are the same either way:

$$\varepsilon = (p_2 - p_1)^a - \lambda(p_2 - p_1)^a \tag{3.22}$$

$$= (1 - \lambda)(p_2 - p_1)^a \tag{3.23}$$

Lastly, when the public is split evenly between hawks and doves (again, with no moderates among those who have some position on the issue), then $sigma = \frac{1}{2}$. Eqs. 3.16 and 3.17 then both simplify to:

$$\frac{1}{2}(p_2 - p_1)^a + \frac{1}{2}(-\lambda)(p_2 - p_1)^a = \frac{1}{2}(1 - \lambda)(p_2 - p_1)^a \tag{3.24}$$

Thus, the same expectation costs are paid in the end here too, but half when the threat is issued and half when it is retracted.

Fig. 3.8 graphs the three different paths to the same expectation costs from these three different distributions of public opinion; the paths should be read like timelines as the leader shifts to p_2 and back. A formal proof would be needed to conclude that the all-hawk and all-dove paths are boundaries within which all other shifts would range between, namely such that both $h \leq -\frac{1}{2}d$ and $d \leq -\frac{1}{2}h$ always hold even with moderate voters, but, inductively, this seems to be the case.

One important point illustrated here is that inconsistency costs as usually defined result only from the second of these two shifts, at least insofar as these shifts are mapped as such onto the decisions to issue and back down from threats. An audience-cost story has the leader end up at a lower approval level following these two shifts regardless of public issue positions as it is here, but it usually has her at a higher level of approval following the first shift than is the case here – a split public would have no net reaction to the first shift at all, while the negative reaction of an all-dove public would only be $-\eta$ rather than -2η.

Kertzer & Brutger (2016), who discuss this directly, still imply that belligerence costs

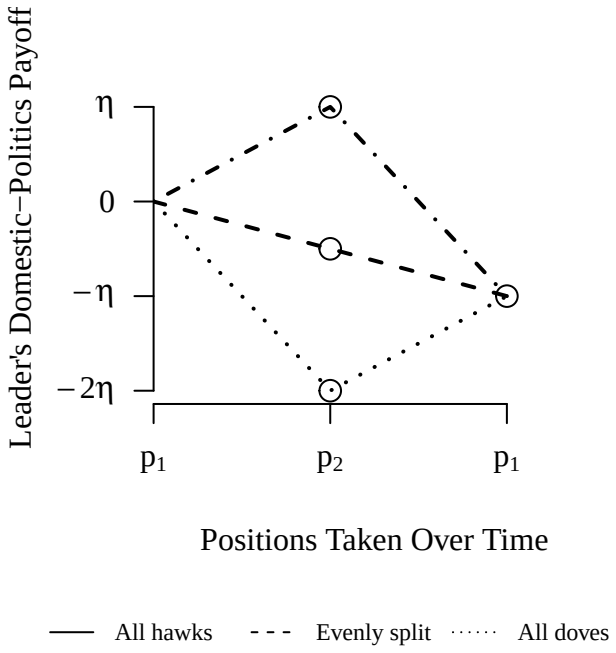

Figure 3.8: Three Paths to the Same Expectation Costs, Depending on Public Preferences

are a direct and opinionated reaction from the public a la the classic spatial voting model, and they seem to assume accordingly that there would be equal and opposite rapprochement benefits if not for the inconsistency costs that result from the rapprochement specifically (and even in a one-shot survey experiment, they find that these costs are minimal and have been previously overestimated due to the conceptual neglect of belligerence costs so defined). The implication is that the issuance of a threat is not seen as a significant inconsistency on the leader's part, even though it is at any rate a major political departure from the status quo which the leader was previously allowing to persist, belligerently or not (As Schultz 2012, points out, international threats are indeed exceedingly rare, especially clear and bold ones.). This is its own separate question pertaining to the psychology of consciously identifying and deciding what is and is not political inconsistency; here, however, the psychological process is actually somewhat simpler.

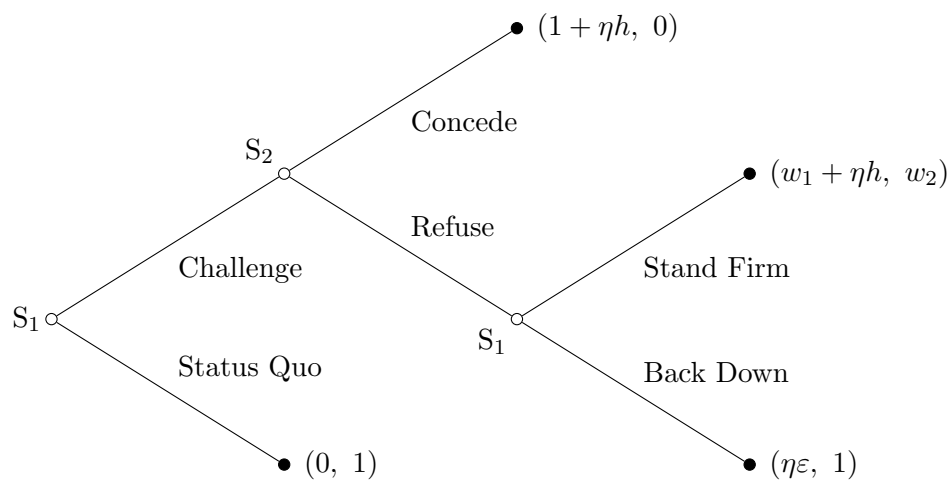

Figure 3.9: The Ultimatum Game with Domestic Payoffs from the Psychospatial Model

3.5 Coercive Bargaining with Expectation Costs

3.5.1 The Ultimatum Game Given the Psychospatial Model

We can now properly factor the effects of altering public expectations into a model of coercive bargaining. The model employed here is the ultimatum game. Fig. 3.9 displays the game tree.

This is a two-player game where State 1, denoted S_1, is the challenger/revisionist state who desires some good possessed by State 2 (S_2), who is thus an eligible target for coercion. The value of the contested good is standardized at 1; thus, all other payoffs and utilities are ultimately denominated relative to the value of the contested good.

One of the two states always ends this game in possession of the whole good. S_1 acquires the good if he issues a threat and either S_2 concedes, or she does not and S_1 wages war on her and wins. Conversely, S_2 retains the good if S_1 never issues a threat in the first place or if he issues a threat, S_2 refuses to concede, and S_1 either backs down or wages a war that it then loses.

The most complex element of the game stems from the war payoffs, w_i, where w_i is the value of war, not including domestic incentives, for S_i.

$$w_i = p_i - c_i \tag{3.25}$$

where p_i and c_i are $\mathrm{S_i}$'s probability of winning a war and the costliness of war for them, respectively. The latter is private information for S_i, and is the only quantity in the game that is not common knowledge.

p_i here represents the expected value of the contested good in the event of war; the value of the good is in fact a coefficient of p_i, which is implicit here since the good is worth 1. c_i, for its part, is relative to the value of the good for $\mathrm{S_i}$, which is of great conceptual importance. A state with objectively and generally low costs of war may be one who is particularly capable or otherwise in a particularly advantageous position, or perhaps one that simply does not care about the lives and resources the war would cost. These are all presumably observable properties to foreign powers; what is not observable, however, is how much S_i really cares about what might be won in the war – a state with high objective costs of war may nevertheless be very much willing to pay them if it truly values the contested good as highly as it might claim to, while another with low objective costs may care so little about the good that it is not willing to pay even those costs and would only threaten as a bluff. For this reason, c_i is defined as the objective cost of war (of positive sign, so higher values mean larger costs) divided by this true and privately-known valuation of the good.

A c_i of 0.5, for example, indicates that $\mathrm{S_i}$ considers the contested good to be worth twice the value of avoiding the costs of war, and it would therefore be willing to go to war rather than accept a payoff of 0 (meaning $w_i > 0$) provided that the chances of winning the war where greater than 50%. Such a state is said to be resolved to war, and its overall valuation of war, w_i, is often referred to as its resolve.

The game hinges in almost any state on the players' inferences about each other's resolve, so defined. With c_i being the only actual quantity of private information, the uncertainty of the game is defined by the range of c_i and its probability distribution. These relative costs of war are drawn from some distribution ranging from 0 to some maximum C_i, so w_i, in turn, is distributed between a low of $p_i - C_i$ and a high of p_i. If we define this probability density function of w_i as $f_i(\dot{c})$, then we can denote its integral and cumulative density function as $F_i(\cdot)$, which equals the probability that any given S_i has a valuation of war that is less than x. C_i is common knowledge, which makes $F_i(\cdot)$ common knowledge as well and allows rational actors to strategize against the uncertainty of the other player's resolve.

The other terms are derived directly from the psychospatial model, generally left to vary along with the distribution of public opinion. S_1, the challenger, is defined as the state with a domestic constituency to which it is at least somewhat accountable – S_2 has none here – and it is therefore the only one for whom these psychospatial terms apply.

To be clear, $o(x)$ is *not* assumed here to be made only of hawks and/or doves – the two equilibria presented here hold with $o(x)$ left entirely variable, as proven in the appendix. ε is used here in lieu of $h+d$ in the spirit of audience-cost models which denote that payoff as $-a$; it is significant that (as proven above and in the appendix) it is always negative as are audience costs, but nothing else is assumed here beyond what has been proven with $o(x)$ left to vary.

Another pivotal modeling decision made here is to separate out the domestic and international incentives of the revisionist leader and state. Acquiring the contested good is worth something to the leader for reasons that, here, are independent of both the public and the leader's accountability to it; similarly, any appreciation for acquiring the good is not modeled in the public's reactions (though one could argue that an individual's placement along the hawk-dove spectrum tracks this). At the opposite extreme, one would weight the utility of acquiring the good by η along with the opinion-driven domestic payoff; and as a mixture between that model and this one, one could additionally weight the value of the good by some term capturing the degree to which the leader cares about the good because the public wants it.

One reason I do not venture into that territory here is because it is essentially the territory already covered, thoroughly and insightfully, by the selectorate model, and my intention is to cover the more novel ground of public reactions that stem from the public's exogenous ideological positions, such as they are. As mentioned earlier, the assumption is merely that such ideology-driven incentives are significant enough (by whatever scale we might use to make such a call) to make a model such as this one worth constructing and heeding. Insofar as we have such ideological public reactions in mind, the model is appropriate – indeed, if we were to complicate it further in this same vein, we would have to wrestle with the fact that ideological doves will object more to hawkishness that nets larger ransoms rather than less. Conversely, if we were to venture into selectorate-model territory

where the leader seeks to maintain their winning coalition while maximizing their surplus funds and other gains, then we would not use a spatial model at all, as goods are goods for all selectorate members, and we would also need to model in much greater detail the competitive political process in which selectorate members convert their prospect-theoretic judgment counter of the leader into decisions of whether or not to remain loyal to them. Such a general model is beyond the scope of this work, focused as it is on explaining coercive success and the relationship between domestic accountability and international conflict.

Now, if S_1 rejects the status quo (SQ) and chooses to challenge (CH), i.e. to issue a public coercive threat to S_2, then it makes a rightward shift and its opinionated public reacts accordingly, doling out either belligerence costs or benefits, depending on the balance of issue positions, before psychologically renormalizing to this new hawkish policy. S_2's one move is not made until this renormalization occurs. If S_2 concedes (CD), then S_1 receives the good and its leader is left with their new hawkish reputation. If, however, S_2 refuses to concede (RF), then S_1 must choose between standing firm (SF) and adding the costs of actual war to its belligerence effects, or backing down (BD) and therefore shifting back to the policy position at which it began, incurring *rapprochement effects*, so defined.

Some clarification is necessary regarding coercion and bargaining as analytical concept. Models that we may term bargaining models such as Fearon's 1995 rationalist model of war are generally defined by the fact that the contested good is divisible, or at least that the model can readily accommodate such divisions. An agreed-upon division can then readily be referred to as a bargain that both sides prefer to war, and in individual cases, we can make inferences about the unmodeled bargaining power that one state must have had vis-à-vis the other based on where within the bargaining range the agreed-upon deal ended up. In this sense, the game employed here is not a bargaining game and is instead a deterrence/compellence game, with the focus on how states may successfully compel others to comply with their demands while deterring threats and rebuffing the demands of others, all while avoiding the mutually costly war outcome.

A consequence of this modeling strategy is the persistent property that highly-resolved states will strictly prefer war to peace, absent other incentives. Indeed, the two states may both prefer war, in which case war is certain. Specifically, given any nonzero p_i and a C_i of

any size short of infinity, there is a nonzero probability that $c_i < p_i$, w_i is positive and the state prefers war to going without the contested good (note that this assertion as phrased would be denoted $1 - F_i(0) > 0$).

It is important, as others have pointed out (e.g. Schultz 1998), not to read too much into findings that are driven by this aspect of the model, as to do so is to assume a generalized and extremely unrealistic indivisibility of contested goods. It has in fact been argued that indivisibilities, taken literally, are entirely nonexistent, and all instances of apparent indivisibility are instead instances of the commitment problem, where the parties are unable to credibly commit to some division that is both possible and mutually preferable to war (Powell 2006)

Ironically, however, this suggests a reason why we *should* be concerned by model outcomes that predict war with certainty in the absence of divisibilities: compromises that can be sufficiently committed to are certainly not impossible, but they are also certainly not guaranteed to exist, or to be located and then made sufficiently salient during the bargaining process if they do. A situation where there is at least the possibility of one side peacefully going without the entire contested good must be significantly less war-prone than one where compromises absolutely must be made and credibly committed to in other to avoid war. Thus, an equilibrium of this game that involves a higher rate of inherently resolved states, and a greater possibility of there being two states that simply prefer war to peace in the absence of divisibilities, should not be taken as literally suggesting that war may be certain and mutually preferable to all forms of peace, but it should not be dismissed as a mere modeling artifact either. This model state correctly indicates instead that the chance of war is maximized under the specified conditions, and does indeed approach 100% as the commitment problem worsens and divisibilities thus become harder to find and maintain.

3.5.2 Solving the Game

The appendix contains a formal proof of the equilibrium of this model; here I provide a readable walkthrough of the method by which the conclusions are drawn, providing introductions and descriptions for the more technical concepts and hopefully rendering the findings clear and intuitive for those who have at least a passing familiarity with game theory. Conversely,

experienced game theorists will likely find the following wordy and elementary.

The real purpose of setting up a game is to figure out how the players play it, given their assumed decision rules and the information available to them, which, usually, must include knowledge of the other players' decision rules. Once we have found a strategy for each player that, given each other player's strategy, maximizes their expected payoff for playing the game as a whole, then we have found the equilibrium state of play, which should correspond at least roughly to how real actors behave in real situations that correspond to the game as it is constructed (Harsanyi & Selten 1988)

Much is inevitably made of the word "rationality" here, and many, or even most, inevitably worry that decision rules that qualify as rational are so far removed from the behavior of real people that a model such as this one is useless or misleading (Mercer's (2012) argument that "audience costs are toys" returns to the fore here). Without turning this section into yet another exegesis on the concept of rationality, I would point out first and foremost that the line between actors' decision rules on the one hand, and their preferences, available information, and knowledge capacity on the other hand, is arbitrary and to a large degree observationally equivalent: we can make any actor act any way within our model by changing either their incentives and available information, how they identify/process/react to those incentives and information, or both. Individual situations may or may not fit the model due to a mismatch between the model and reality in terms of decision rules, the preferences/information to which they are applied, or an essentially continuous range of both; and if we only look at, or only care about, the number of cases that fit vs. those that don't, then we have no way of further diagnosing either the successes or the failures.

No matter how you look at it, it is an empirical question as to which situations fit the model, how numerous these situations are, and, in turn, how useful, sound, good, realistic, etc. the model is; and it is also an empirical question as to which particular form of the model better fits the overall process embodied in any given situation, completely separate from the question of whether the model's central predictions happen to prove accurate. David Lake once noted with regards to the debate over absolute vs. relative gains that "once the argument was reframed as an empirical question rather than a debate over first principles,

scholars simply lost interest."[7] Such empirical research is most certainly time-consuming, halting, and by its very nature incomplete, so whether or not it is worth it ultimately depends on the question you are determined to answer, but it must be appreciated that debates over first principles – which, I would say, include the utility-maximization question – are little more than ill-fated attempts to compensate for a lack of general knowledge that is simply beyond us.

At any rate, I certainly do not construct any of these models because the logical validity, complexity, or perhaps the elegance of the mathematics must translate into a high degree of predictive accuracy and descriptive verisimilitude; rather, I trust that the work put into constructing the models will make their accuracy and verisimilitude more easily testable. That, unlike professions of whatever first principles I happen to have, might have some worth for others; and for what it's worth, I would actively warn the reader about the seductions of such "imitative scientism," as Cohen (2008) insightfully called it.

The usual method, of instrumental rationality, is to standardize the decision rule as that of expected utility maximization, and to manipulate the payoffs and game structure accordingly. This is, in fact, what formal prospect theory does and what I did above: objective payoffs are transformed into subjective payoffs (which as an actual psychological process is called the editing phase)[8] which can then be treated (in the evaluation phase) as utility to be maximized just like any other. This is by no means the only way to do it, and there is a long history of instead leaving the payoffs objective and assuming that actors do something other than maximize expected utility; at the same time, these are likely modeling distinctions without any substantive difference (Bueno de Mesquita & McDermott 2004)

The central concept for substantively evaluating any game is that of an equilibrium, which implies a point of balance that will tend to maintain itself to a large degree but that might be disrupted so drastically that correction becomes impossible and a new equilibrium begins to maintain instead; the concept can be applied just the same here. If the game is repeated over and over – or if the actors simply imagine playing the game over and over with

7. Lake 2002, 140: "revealingly, scholars then immediately dropped this line of inquiry. No research of which I am aware has tried to test the empirical predictions that come out of the Powell and Snidal models. No one has taken up the challenge of identifying *empirically* the conditions under which one or the other perspective is more appropriate".

8. Levy 1992a, 1997.

different assumptions about how the opponent will act – then imperfectly rational actors will occasionally deviate from their equilibrium strategy (we will be "off the equilibrium path"), but this will incense other actors to capitalize on this by deviating from theirs, and the equilibrium strategies are defined by the fact that they are the ones that the players will eventually return to once they realize that they are being "taken advantage of" or are otherwise not playing as well as they could be. Thus, if the model is constructed right, the equilibrium is accurately proven, and the real-world conditions that the model represents are successfully identified, then the central tendency of real actors' behavior should match the equilibrium strategies.

One of the more abstract concepts of this method is that of a mixed-strategy equilibrium. When at least one player prefers a certain move to all others no matter what the other player(s) do, then the other players can simply react to that based on what they prefer; if, however, two or more players' preferred moves depend on the move of the other player, and they must both make their moves without observing the other player's move, then the steady, equilibrium state of the game is one where both players randomize the move they chose, with weighted probabilities assigned to each move that render the other player indifferent between all their available moves. Then, neither players are playing the particular strategies they're playing because that particular strategy gives them a higher utility than the alternatives, but on the other hand, they wouldn't get any higher utility from any other strategy, either, so they are assumed to stick with the one strategy that puts the other player in the same position, and doesn't incentivize them to play any particular move.

Perhaps the most familiar example is rock-paper-scissor: if (and only if) your opponent is playing each of their three options with 33% probability, then you have the same chance to win no matter what you play. It would not be irrational within the scope of one game for you to play one specific strategy – say, rock. If, however, you stick to this strategy in repeated play, then the opponent will eventually induce your strategy and switch to always playing paper, in which case you will switch to scissors, and so on, with infinite changing of pure strategies. If, on the other hand, you "go out of your way" at the start to randomize equally over your three moves as well, then the opponent has no reason to change, and we have a set of strategies that is stable – or, more accurately, is not unstable. In the

equilibrium of this ultimatum game, there is a mixed-strategy element in the decision that unresolved S_1s make to issue a threat and that unresolved S_2s make to not give in: in at least some game states, the only steady set of strategies is one where both of these types of states make their respective decisions randomly, albeit with specific probabilities that they will make either move.

The Players' Strategies and Utility Maximization

No matter what, it must be the case (in equilibrium, as always) that if and when S_1 gets to the final decision point where she either goes to war or backs down, she chooses whichever one has the higher payoff, which, to her, is a known and constant quantity in any given run of the game. She makes good on the threat and goes to war as opposed to backing down if and when:

$$w_1 + \eta h > \eta \varepsilon \tag{3.26}$$

$$w_1 > \eta d \tag{3.27}$$

The intuition is that a challenger whose threat has failed has the option of shifting back to his starting position from his new hawkish posture, which is a dovish shift and will be reacted to as such by his public; the alternative is war, which, relative to the starting status quo, incurs both the war payoff and the domestic reaction to the hawkish shift that the threat engendered and the war maintained. Any given challenger who prefers to back down may change their mind either because they become more accountable to a public who will punish them for the dovish shift or because they become less accountable to a public who would reward them for it. In either case, very high levels of accountability will make it observably very likely, or even certain, that S_1 will do what their domestic incentives imply.

Remember that this value of making a dovish shift can be positive or negative, depending on the predominance of doves vs. hawks in whatever domestic population to which the leader is accountable. It is inherently more likely to be negative, however, since a supermajority and not just a majority of doves is required to make this rapprochement effect a net positive; at the same time, whatever it is is commonly observable to both parties in any game state.

I will consistently refer to an increase in accountability as an increase in η, which effectively and uniformly increases the magnitude of the domestic incentive terms h, d, and, by extension ε. Any negative payoffs will grow more strongly negative and decline in numerical value as accountability increases, while positive reactions will increase with accountability, and vice versa. Namely, it is important not to interpret an increase in accountability as a numerical increase in the value of, and therefore a weakening of, a public reaction that is negative. At the last decision node, a more accountable S_1 with some randomly-drawn w_1 is usually more likely to go to war because d is usually negative, accountability further decreases its value, and this makes it easier in a sense for w_1 to exceed it and for the above inequality to hold. If the public is extremely dovish, however, then increased accountability increases d, raising this floor value of w_1, making sufficiently resolved S_1s less common and decreasing the chances of war.

This begins to suggest what S_2 will do in the prior decision node where he makes his one decision of whether or not to concede. He knows the probabilities with which w_1 falls within any given range, and he can observe everything else directly. To begin with, define q as the known probability that S_1 will stand firm and escalate to war after having made a threat. This allows us to define S_2's expected value for refusing to concede, and in turn the condition under which this exceeds the value of conceding:

$$qw_2 + (1-q)(1) > 0 \tag{3.28}$$

$$w_2 > \frac{q-1}{q} \tag{3.29}$$

It is simple for a player to calculate the general starting probability of S_1 being the kind that prefers war to backing down: $1-F(\eta d)$. This, however, is not necessarily q, since not all S_1s necessarily threaten; this is what allows threats to communicate credible information to S_2 that it must then rationally use to update its beliefs and expected values, as per Bayes' rule. Simple backwards induction, then, can only take us so far, once S_2's correct decision rule depends so much on S_1's correct decision rule at the node prior, and we must consider the two more or less together.

First note, however, the two extreme conditions under which S_2's decision rule does not

in fact depend on S_1. When $w_2 > 0$, even a certainty of S_1 standing firm ($q = 1$) would not be enough to coerce S_2 into conceding; thus there is always a nonzero maximum probability of $1 - F_2(0)$ with which S_2 rationally concedes even in the face of a perfectly credible threat. At the opposite extreme, there is the minimum possible credibility that a threat from S_1 can have given his domestic incentives and possible war costs, and even at this minimum, there might be some targets that prefer to risk war and not concede; there might not be, however, depending on both states' maximum war costs as well as S_1's domestic incentives. This point is of little substantive importance but may be worth noting.

As complicated as S_1's initial decision to threaten can be, it is always based on the familiar condition that the value for threatening, certain or expected, exceeds the status quo payoff of 0. Note that whether S_1 would prefer war to successful coercion is never an issue since w_1 cannot exceed 1 and the domestic reactions to each of those two outcomes are the same. With that said, three possibilities present themselves:

1. S_1 prefers the status quo even to concession ($1 + \eta h < 0$), so she will never threaten.

2. S_1 prefers even war to the status quo ($w_1 + \eta h > 0$) and will therefore always threaten, just as S_2 will always refuse to concede when he prefers war to conceding.

3. S_1 prefers concession but not war to the status quo, and will therefore threaten if and only if there is a high enough chance that S_2 will concede.

The first condition is even simpler than it may appear, in that it has nothing to do with w_1, so it observably holds either for all S_1s or for none of them. If belligerence costs exist and are greater in magnitude than the value of the contested good ($h < -1$), then w_1 is irrelevant, as is S_2, and no threats, crises, or wars occur. Thus we have identified one clear-cut equilibrium condition that clearly associates high accountability with peace, especially since belligerence costs as opposed to belligerence benefits are more the rule than the exception.

The last condition, also, can be simplified some. Challengers of this type can be split into two subtypes. There are those for whom war is preferable to backing down, though not

to the status quo, i.e.:

$$0 > w_1 + \eta h > \eta\varepsilon \tag{3.30}$$

These states are said to be resolved *ex post*, as it is the act of threatening itself that commits them to war. Others are true bluffers, knowing privately that they will eat the expectation costs rather than go to war if their threat fails:

$$\eta\varepsilon > w_1 + \eta h \tag{3.31}$$

(which simplifies to $w_1 < \eta d$.)

The thing is that none of these unresolved challengers will ever actually incur the war payoff, so their type ceases to matter beyond the fact that it is below the commitment-to-war threshold – they will all share the same preference about threatening vs. not threatening, depending entirely on the chance that S_2 concedes (and on their domestic incentives) and not at all on just how much they prefer backing down to standing firm. They may all bluff or not bluff, but if some are bluffing and some are not, then this must be part of a mixed-strategy equilibrium, where S_2's overall rate of concession makes unresolved S_1s indifferent about threatening while S_1's rate of threatening makes it rational for S_2 to concede at that rate.

If we define s as the chance that S_2 is highly-resolved enough to risk war and refuse to concede – making $1 - s$ the crucial chance that they do concede – then an unresolved S_1 is indifferent about threatening when:

$$s\varepsilon + (1 - s)(1 + \eta h) = 0 \tag{3.32}$$

$$s = \frac{1 + \eta h}{1 - \eta d} \tag{3.33}$$

But S_2 will never concede if he has a positive payoff for war, and this occurs with probability $1 - F_2(0)$, so there is a floor value for s, which S_1 knows. Even if all coercible targets, with negative war payoffs, are known to be conceding, the chance of refusal in the face of a threat will be known to equal this rate of incoercible targets, and even this might be too high for

eq. 3.33 to possibly be satisfied. Such is the case if:

$$1 - F_2(0) < \frac{1 + \eta h}{1 - \eta d} \tag{3.34}$$

$$F_2(0) < \frac{\eta \varepsilon}{\eta d - 1} \tag{3.35}$$

This game state where S_1 never bluffs is usually defined as a separate equilibrium of the game, and is generally treated as somewhat trivial for the reason discussed earlier: it is largely a product of the fact that the contested good here is modeled as indivisible. A country can be so resolved to war, despite its costs, only because the alternative is losing the entirety of the good. Either way, this game can be in either of two very different states depending on whether or not inequality 3.35 holds, and which kind of game they're playing is always known to both players from the start since everything in inequality 3.35 is common knowledge.

First consider the no-bluffing equilibrium. With there being no S_1s that can rationally bluff and this being clear to S_2, any threat that S_1 makes is fully credible, in that S_2 can believe without question that a refusal to concede will result in war, and so he knows never to try and call the challenger's nonexistent bluffs: he will always concede unless he is himself resolved to war ($w_2 > 0$). S_1, in turn, knows that S_2 knows all this about him and will behave accordingly, namely in that all S_1s who were not *ex ante* resolved to war but who could have credibly committed themselves to war via a threat can stop contemplating such a gamble – the absence of bluffing challengers has already made all threats maximally credible anyway, and scared off all those targets that such a threat would hope to scare.

All states that threaten under these conditions come from those who would be *ex post* resolved ($w_1 > \eta d$), but (almost certainly) it will not be the case that all those who would be so resolved choose to threaten. Specifically, a threat here will only be issued if it is also the case that:

$$w_1 > \frac{F_2(0) + \eta h}{F_2(0) - 1} \tag{3.36}$$

This stems from two things. First, S_1 threatens not because it prefers war to backing down

but because it prefers threatening to the status quo; in this game state, a decision to threaten will end in either concession or war, and unless both of these are preferable to the status quo, then the one that is preferred to the status quo must be sufficiently likely for threatening to be rational. Second, as far as S_1 is concerned, S_2 backs down from any threat here at a fixed rate regardless of the former's decision, so any S_1 with a given w_1 either does or doesn't prefer to threaten depending on this chance of concession, as well as on her domestic incentives, but specifically on belligerence effects. Indeed, this is where h comes to bear on S_1's decision, with d factoring into whether she would be *ex post* resolved and therefore eligible to threaten, when bluffing is irrational.

Ineq. 3.36 defines a cutpoint along the range of possible w_1 values and is defined in the formal proof in the appendix as t; in the bluffing equilibrium, a different cutpoint, b, is used, which is always below ηd rather than above it, reflecting the fact that not all who threaten are willing to go to war. In this case, S_2 does not simply refuse to concede if and when he prefers war to concession; rather, he is sometimes willing to run the calculated risk that S_1 will escalate to war, depending on how far below the concession payoff his war payoff is, and also on the likelihood that S_1 is bluffing. At the same time, how often S_1 bluffs naturally depends on how likely S_2 is to concede. Thus, this equilibrium is more complicated, and more interesting.

The solution is an application of the mixed-strategy equilibrium logic, with the counterintuitive wrinkle that S_2 is never really indifferent about conceding. He always strictly prefers either conceding or refusing, in expectation, with only the trivial exception, and yet S_1, whose expected payoff for bluffing has nothing to do with her war resolve, can be made indifferent about bluffing, if the overall chance that S_2 concedes is exactly as specified in eq. 3.33. If she is bluffing at the rate that results in that proportion of S_2s rationally preferring and choosing to refuse, then that rate of bluffing, like any other rate, is rational for her.

This one, though, would make for a steady state of the game, as any different one would lead to a different rate of concessions, which would make it irrational for S_1 to sometimes bluff and sometimes not bluff. This can be thought of in substantive terms along the rock-paper-scissor lines mentioned earlier: in repeated play, challengers and targets alike may wonder if there have been too few or too many bluffs, and too few or too many concessions,

and they will often adjust their strategies in attempts to maximize their overall fortunes, but this equilibrium, proven as it is here, should be the center around which they wobble. The equilibrium will shift, also, as domestic incentives, war costs, and other parameters change, and so should this central tendency of behavior.

Recall ineq. 3.29, which begins to define the cutpoint for w_2 above which S_2 prefers not to concede in the face of a threat. Given that $b > \eta d$ because we are in the bluffing equilibrium, those challengers who stand firm are a subset of those who threaten, and the chance that a threat is genuine is relatively simple to calculate using Bayes' rule (and leaving b otherwise unspecified for now):

$$q|CH = \frac{1 - F_1(\eta d)}{1 - F_1(b)} \tag{3.37}$$

Substituting into 3.29 and simplifying gives us:

$$w_2 > \frac{F_1(b) - F_1(\eta d)}{1 - F_1(\eta d)} \tag{3.38}$$

which is a condition that will hold with the common-knowledge probability:

$$1 - F_2\left(\frac{F_1(b) - F_1(\eta d)}{1 - F_1(\eta d)}\right) \tag{3.39}$$

This, then, must be our s in equilibrium, in order for that rate of refusal to be the product of S_2's rational decisionmaking. Of course, it must also be the case that s equals what it does in eq. 3.33 in order for it to be rational for unresolved S_1s to sometimes bluff and sometimes not. By implication, it is b that must take on the required value to satisfy both these conditions; more substantively, S_1 must choose to bluff at such a rate as to keep S_2 conceding at such a rate as to keep S_1 indifferent about bluffing.

Setting these two necessary values of s equal to each other results in:

$$\frac{1 + \eta h}{1 - \eta d} = 1 - F_2\left(\frac{F_1(b) - F_1(\eta d)}{1 - F_1(\eta d)}\right) \tag{3.40}$$

$$\frac{\eta \varepsilon}{\eta d - 1} = F_2\left(\frac{F_1(b) - F_1(\eta d)}{1 - F_1(\eta d)}\right) \tag{3.41}$$

Proceeding beyond this point towards isolating b requires that we define, at least in the abstract, the inverse of the $F_i(\cdot)$ functions. Whereas $F_i(\cdot)$ takes a given value and returns the probability with which w_i is below that value, F_i^{-1} takes a probability and returns the value that w_i will be below with that probability. Eventually we arrive at:

$$b = F_1^{-1}\left[F_2^{-1}\left(\frac{\eta\varepsilon}{\eta d - 1}\right)[1 - F_1(\eta d)] + F_1(\eta d)\right] \tag{3.42}$$

As inelegant as this expression is, it does indeed give us the value of w_1 below which S_1 should not threaten in equilibrium, and it does have some important interpretable qualities. First, though, it might be asked: what if this calls for a rate of bluffers that is higher than possible, namely if everything inside the large brackets, which is the input of $F_1^{-1}(\cdot)$, evaluates to a negative? I address this as needed in the formal proof, but the result in such cases is that all S_1s threaten, only those for whom $w_1 > \eta d$ stand firm as always, and S_2 simply concedes at a higher rate than he otherwise would, in equilibrium. It should also (again) be appreciated that threats of even the highly ambiguous kind are extremely rare between nations (Schultz 2012), so this theoretical space where every potential challenger issues a threat is undoubtedly far outside the realm of possibility.

This informally explains the solution to this game, whereby we arrive at the conclusions of what the two actors do in a stable equilibrium, given rationality assumptions. Technically, as I said before, there is only one equilibrium – both players know whether or not bluffing is rational in any state of the game simply by looking at the available information, so there are not separate equilibria as there are in the stag hunt, battle of the sexes, etc. – but it is standard to refer to the bluffing state of the game as a separate equilibrium for narrative purposes, so this is what I do in the next section, where I establish the substantive conclusions we can draw from the above.

3.5.3 Interpreting the Findings: Comparative Statics

Accountability and the Challenger's Behavior

Fig. 3.10 provides some illustrative cases of the b and ηd cutpoints along the range of w_1, and how they shift as accountability increases. These are not impressionistic representations;

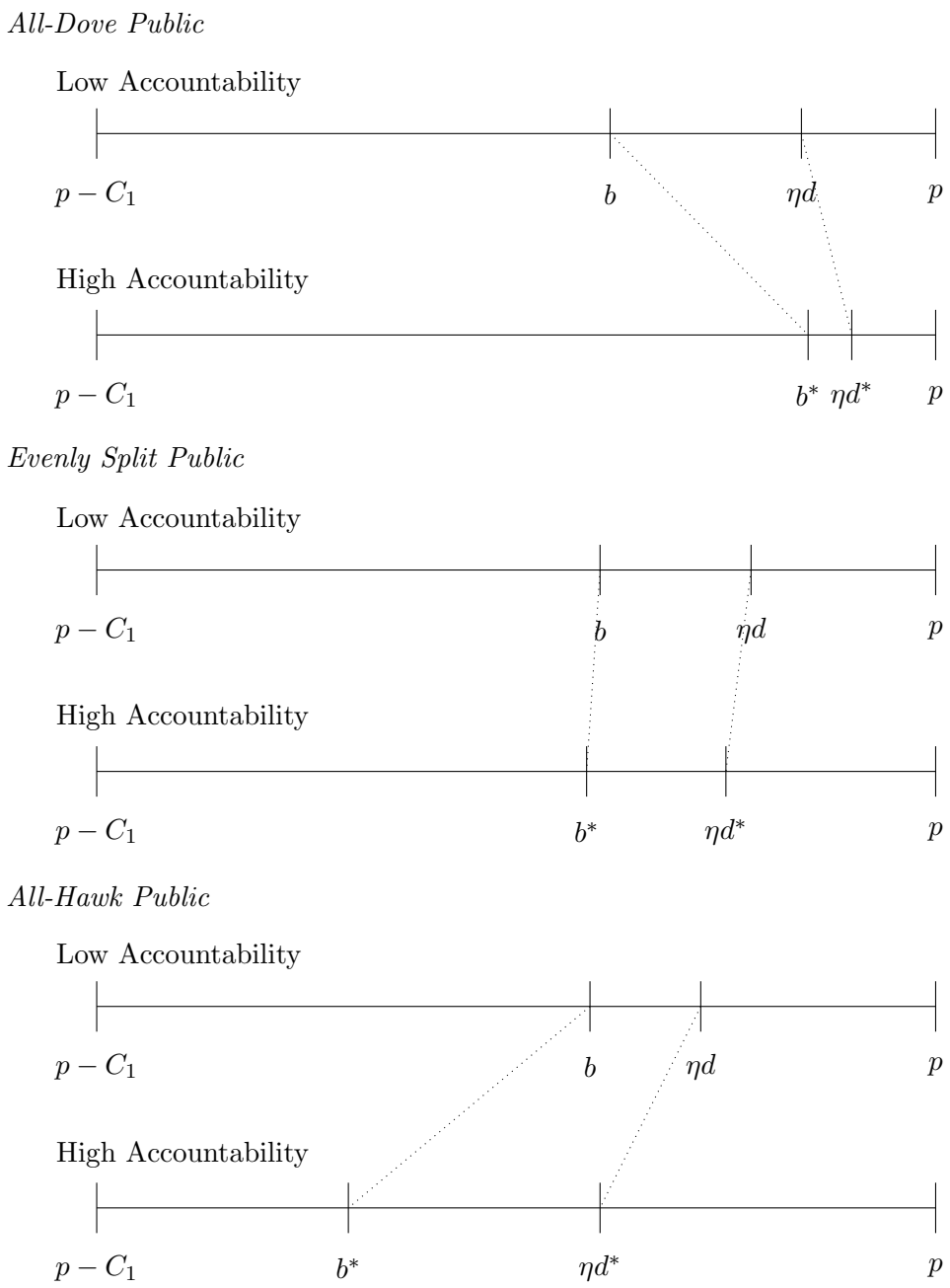

Figure 3.10: Effects of Accountability Given Different Opinion Distributions: Changes in Cutpoints Along Range of State 1 Resolve (w_1)

rather, they correspond exactly to real states of the game, with parameters provided to the equations in the previous section. Specifically here: $p = 0.5$, $C_1 = 2.5$, $C_2 = 1.5$, $\varepsilon = -1$. $\eta = 0.01$ in the low-accountability state, and $\eta = 0.25$ in the high-accountability state. It is also assumed here, for the first time, that $f_i(\cdot)$ is uniform, so that $F_i(\cdot)$ is increasing at a constant rate and the probabilities of drawing a w_i within given ranges map directly onto this figure; that is to say, if the space betweeen b and ηd is twice the size as the space between ηd and p, then S_1s who bluff are twice as numerous as those who issue genuine threats.

It must be understood, though, that the relationship between η and b is only monotonic when there are rapprochement benefits ($d > 0$), in which case the relationship is positive; fully understanding the non-monotonicity requires some deep interpretation of eq. 3.42 which I will not detail here, but the intuitive conclusion one does draw is that when the public is more hawkish, then accountability is more likely to drive b downward, increasing the rate of threats. While the evenly-split-public example happens to exhibit a barely-perceptible decrease in b as accountability increases here, this can be seen purely as a product of the values of C_i that I happen to assume here. At the same time, it will consistently be the case that b^* with an all-hawk public will be more to the left, or at least less far to the right, following an increase in accountability than it will when the public is less hawkish.

These caveats are largely necessary to clear the way for two other conclusions. First, ηd is monotonically related to accountability under any given opinion distribution in the manner that is apparent: accountability lowers this cutpoint, and increases the overall rate of states that are resolved to war, unless the public is rather overwhelmingly dovish, as is required to generate net benefits for a dovish shift. This is the finding that can be thought of as "playing politics" with one's observable domestic incentives: even if the public is somewhat more dovish than hawkish, the gain-loss asymmetry in their reactions effectively creates inconsistency costs that makes it more costly to bluff, which, in turn, incentivizes the state not just to go through with threats it otherwise wouldn't, but possibly to make threats it otherwise wouldn't. This is especially the case when the net effect of accountability on b is negative to some degree, as it is here.

Accountability and the Target's Behavior

Second, and more importantly in terms of empirically validating the model, is the relationship between the challenger's accountability and the rate of concession in the event of a threat, which is monotonically positive. Fig. 3.11 plots this relationship for each of the three stylized opinion distributions; the plot accurately represents this relationship in a highly general way, as s can be represented in the relatively simple form defined by eq. 3.33 so long as we are in the bluffing equilibrium (and $F_1(b) > 0$, i.e. there are some S_1s not issuing threats). Accountability is explicitly denominated here in units of ε in order to keep the findings general in the sense that they do not depend on any specific magnitudes of h and d, or of $o(x)$ more generally.

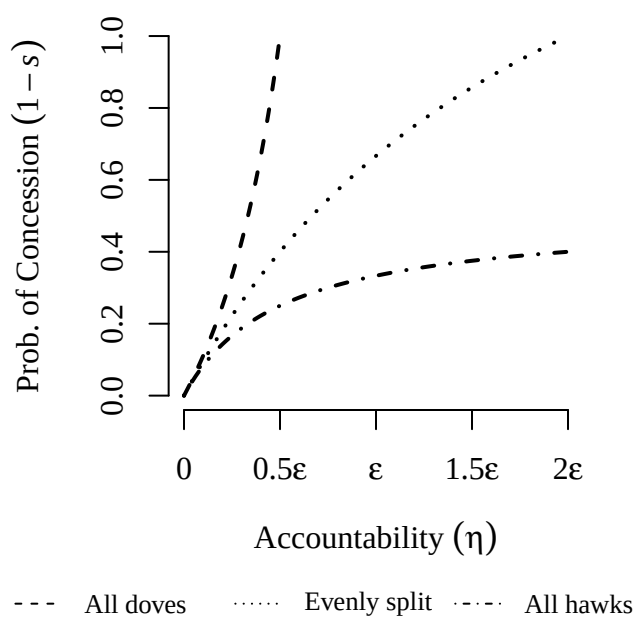

Figure 3.11: Increases in Rates of Concession by Accountability and Public Opinion

It is certainly the case that, in equilibrium, S_2's concession rate is a function of the ratio of S_1s that bluff to those that threaten genuinely, and these values map, respectively, onto the range between b and ηd and the range between b and p. What this always-increasing rate of concession testifies to, then, is the fact that, whatever the effect of accountability is on the absolute frequency of bluffers in any case, its effect on the frequency of genuine threateners in that case is such that the latter grows relative to the former, and threats

become more credible.

The distribution of public opinion clearly matters, however, in three separate ways.

First, the rate of concession is strictly lower the more hawkish the public is, which should be considered a counterintuitive, or at least an informative, finding. The general and very well-founded rule is that uncertainty fosters war (Fearon 1995) and vice versa, which is certainly the case in at least the specific sense looked at here – the challenger's domestic incentives drive the target to concede principally because they are observable whereas inherent resolve is not – but we would be very wrong to extrapolate from this that a more hawkish public enhances this effect by visibly pushing the challenger toward war, or that a dovish public might undercut it by pulling them away from it. Such a conclusion would not account for the challenger's known propensity to bluff, which is at any rate much higher when the public is more hawkish.

A second finding is the nonlinearities present in the relationship, which potentially speak to the political advisability of prioritizing increases (or decreases) in another state's accountability depending on both that state's current level of accountability and the general hawkishness of their public. (The inferences one can draw from this alone, however, must be heavily moderated by an appreciation for the overall chance of a crisis occurring, which I address below.) Say we are a hegemon who wishes to spread democracy in two countries, one of which is in the grip of an entrenched personalist strongman/strongwoman and another of which possesses a nascent and possibly unstable democracy. Insofar as we wish to minimize the risk of war as a result of the challenger's failure to demonstrate their resolve, we would seek to increase η where it will have the largest positive effect on $1 - s$, and unless we assume that the publics of both countries will be overwhelmingly dovish in the future, then we would prioritize efforts to loosen the personalist leader's hold on power. If, though, we did have reason to assume very dovish publics, then we would prioritize efforts to consolidate the nascent democracy, especially because this may push them past the point where $s = 0$, which leads me to the third finding.

There are points at which concession supposedly either becomes certain, as in the all-dove and evenly-split scenarios, or impossible, when there is zero accountability. First we must remember the floor value of s; whatever this limit is, coercible targets all concede once

we reach it, bluffing ceases, and we shift over to the no-bluff equilibrium, which is entirely outside the scope of fig. 3.11. Similarly, the s of 1 when $\eta = 0$ does accurately reflect the fact that a refusal to concede needs to be certain for an unresolved challenger who faces no possible cost for bluffing to be indifferent about it, as opposed to strictly preferring it; this could only hold in equilibrium, however, if $F_1(0) = 0$, which is highly unrealistic.

At the same time, there is the game state briefly noted earlier in which S_1 simply never threatens, which is whenever $\eta h < -1$. In the plotted cases where $\varepsilon = -1$, this is observable to the right of where the curves reach $1-s = 1$, in the two cases where it does so. This can be interpreted as (yet) another explanation for the democratic peace. As such, though, it would imply some caution, as an expectation-cost-driven democratic peace would not absolutely hold if the challenger's public was overwhelmingly hawkish and h was positive. This is why, in fig. 3.11, the all-hawk curve relating accountability to concession rate approaches 0.5 as accountability approaches infinity.

Accountability and the Chance of War

Finally, we must consider the unconditional chance of war – the chance that any given starting state of the game will result in war as opposed to any of the other three outcomes. Define this as m.

Whenever a model of conflict such as this one is employed, the focus is usually on either the chance of successful coercion (s) or the chance of a crisis occurring ($1 - F_1(b)$); some allusions are often made to the chance of a crisis escalating to war once it's begun. What we likely care the most about, however, is the effect that some given alteration to the game state has on the overall chance that a war occurs, especially if we assume, as we certainly should, that war involves substantial unmodeled negative externalities.

As discussed in ch. 3, previous formal work has found that the chance of war is generally non-monotonically related to the parameters of interest, which, as they do here, alter the chance of a resolved challenger and a recalcitrant target in opposite directions. The consistent result is an inverted-U-shaped relationship between the parameter and war, whether or not it is related to domestic incentives; thus, my ultimate conclusions here are more optimistic, in that they find this relationship to be more negative than positive in the vast

majority of conceivable circumstances.

Regardless of whether or not one or even both states prefer war to the status quo, war occurs if S_1 threatens and prefers war to backing down while S_2 has a positive expected value for refusing to concede. We are thus interested in the joint probability of these events.

In the no-bluffing equilibrium, all threats are credible, so S_2 refuses to concede when his resolve is simply positive. S_1 issues a threat in the first place if and only if her resolve is greater than the t cutpoint mentioned earlier, and if it is, then she is already resolved to war as a matter of course, so war will result if S_2 does not concede. Thus:

$$m| \left(F_2(0) < \frac{\varepsilon}{\eta d - 1} \right) = \left[1 - F_1 \left(\frac{F_2(0) + \eta h}{F_2(0) - 1} \right) \right] [1 - F_2(0)] \tag{3.43}$$

$$= F_1 \left(\frac{F_2(0) + \eta h}{F_2(0) - 1} \right) (F_2(0) - 1) - F_2(0) + 1 \tag{3.44}$$

This can be interpreted after we specify how t, being the argument to $F_1(\cdot)$ here, changes as η changes:

$$t' = \frac{d}{d\eta} \left(\frac{F_2(0) + \eta h}{F_2(0) - 1} \right) = \frac{h}{F_2(0) - 1} \tag{3.45}$$

Since $F_2(0) - 1$ is negative, the sign of t' is the opposite of the sign of h; the cutpoint is increasing and accountability means less threats if there are belligerence costs, but more threats if there are belligerence benefits. In the overall m equation, $F_1(\cdot)$ (which equals the rate of non-threatening S_1s) is multiplied by $F_2(0) - 1$, which again is negative, so the higher t in the presence of belligerence costs means a lower chance of war, and vice versa. In either case, the effect of accountability is monotonic.

While any case of observable domestic constraints leading clearly to more war rather than less within a rationalist model is worth noting, it should be written off when appropriate here as a product of the tautological nature of defining a model where the public is so ideologically hawkish. The real take-away in the no-bluffing equilibrium, arguably, is that even if the public is mostly hawkish but only by a moderate amount, accountability will still drive down the chance of war. This entire scenario is also less significant due to the great likelihood that such game states where bluffing is irrational are by any account the

exception rather than the rule in the international system.

The relationship between accountability and war is far more complicated overall in the bluffing game state. To begin with, the relevant cutpoint for S_1 here is the one that resolves them to war, ηd, rather than the one where they choose to threaten. S_2's cutpoint for conceding is a function of S_1's domestic incentives and also technically of b, but in equilibrium, we can simply use s as the overall probability that they do not concede, which is after all how their behavior can lead to war. The joint probability is then:

$$m|\left(F_2(0) > \frac{\varepsilon}{\eta d - 1}\right) = [1 - F_1(\eta d)]\left(\frac{1 + \eta h}{1 - \eta d}\right) \tag{3.46}$$

From this alone, we can conclude that when $d > 0$, η decreases m: we already know that s is strictly decreasing as η increases, so if $1 - F_1(\eta d)$ is also decreasing, as it is when there are rapprochement benefits, then the effect is unambiguous. When there are rapprochement costs, however, as there will be for most opinion distributions, then the effect is ambiguous.

m can be fully derived here w.r.t. η by applying the product rule for derivatives, though the result is largely uninterpretable. One thing worth noting is that the value of $f_1(\eta d)$ appears in the derivative along with $F_1(\eta d)$; thus, the net effect of accountability on the chance of war depends in at least some sense on how exactly the levels of resolve are distributed along the range of possibilities, which is almost never explicitly considered or assumed, because it generally need not be.

It is helpful to note that in geometric terms, the chance of war is the area of a rectangle, with s being the length of one side and the probability of a resolved S_2 being the length of the other. There are two relevant properties drawn from this analogy. First, the area can almost freely decrease, increase, or stay the same if we lengthen one side while shortening the other; whatever effect a given change in the length of one side has on the area, there is a corresponding change that can be made to the length of the other side to make the net effect on the area anything at all. Second, given any fixed pair of changes to the lengths of the two sides, the area is more likely to increase, or at least decrease at a lower rate, if the side we are lengthening is already short relative to the other side, and vice versa.

This means that an increase in accountability, which in the case we're considering de-

creases the chance of a refusal but increases the chance of a resolved challenger, is most likely to be positive – that is, to increase the chance of war – when resolved challengers were already rare and the rate of refusal was already high. Accountability is good and useful in that it more effectively communicates resolve and cuts down on wars that were principally due to a failure to communicate, but it also creates resolve and the incentive to tie one's hands for a bargaining advantage where one otherwise would not. Depending on the nature of the preexisting problems that are leading to war, an increase in accountability may exacerbate more problems than it resolves, even assuming complete domestic transparency and unboundedly rational behavior on the part of all parties. Thus, the question is not what the relationship is but whether, and when, it is more often positive than negative.

We know already that s is strictly decreasing with accountability, but if $d < 0$ and the corresponding drop in $F_1(\eta d)$ is large enough, then m will increase, and with $F_1(\cdot)$ left completely to vary, then any drop or even no drop at all is theoretically possible so long as the chance of a resolved challenger ranges between zero and one. Thus it is possible within such bounds for m to either increase or decrease from almost any given change in accountability. In order to begin to pin down what effect is more likely to manifest in a given situation, or for a given county, we need to make judicious assumptions about the underlying distribution $f_i(\cdot)$.

This distribution deserves its own research program, or at least a larger one than it currently has: along the range of possible levels of resolve that a challenger (or target) state may have, what reasons might we have to think that there will be a disproportionate number of highly-resolved states, or weakly-resolved states, or perhaps moderately-resolved states with only a few at either extreme? A substantial literature exists on the escalating costs of war ensuring peace, which would perhaps imply that the distribution should be skewed toward the low-resolve extreme, yet this argument is limited in any case to great-power relationships. A solid theory of resolve distributions would at any rate have to account for the economic and technological development of the category of states to which the random state observably belongs.

As a baseline, we may consider the computationally simplest assumption, as I did earlier for illustrative purposes, that the distribution is uniform. This is also useful in that it sets

the stage for us to conjecture without too much difficulty what the effects of arbitrary transformations to this distribution would be on the parameters of interest.

If $f_i(x)$ is a uniform distribution ranging from $p - C_i$ to p, then:

$$f_i(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{C_i+p}, & \text{if } p - C_i < x < p \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \tag{3.47}$$

and the CDF is:

$$F_i(x) = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } x < p - C_i \\ \frac{x+C_i-p}{C_i+p}, & \text{if } p - C_i < x < p \\ 1, & \text{if } x > p \end{cases} \tag{3.48}$$

Eq. 3.46 then becomes:

$$m = \left[1 - \left(\frac{\eta d + C_1 - p}{C_1 + p}\right)\right]\left(\frac{1+\eta h}{1-\eta d}\right) \tag{3.49}$$

$$= \frac{2p - \eta d}{C_1 + p}\left(\frac{1+\eta h}{1-\eta d}\right) \tag{3.50}$$

This equation can provide some insights, especially bearing in mind the rectangle-area analogy. As we know, $s = 1$ with no accountability and decreases from there at a rate that depends on the domestic-incentive values, but not at all on the probability of S_1 winning the war or on the maximum costs of the war. If m is to decrease with accountability, then, it is principally these two values that must lead, if not to a decrease, then to a slow-enough increase in the rate of resolved challengers. As in the more general case with $f_1(\cdot)$ undefined, both sides of the metaphorical rectangle shrink with accountability here when $d > 0$, so we need only consider when this does not hold (which is presumably the majority of cases).

We can see algebraically that, as we would expect, C_1 alone drives down the rate of resolved challengers, while p drives it upward; if we are considering when an increase in the rate of resolved challengers will have the largest upward effect on m and possibly outweigh the decrease in s, then we would look to when C_i is high, p is low, and the starting rate

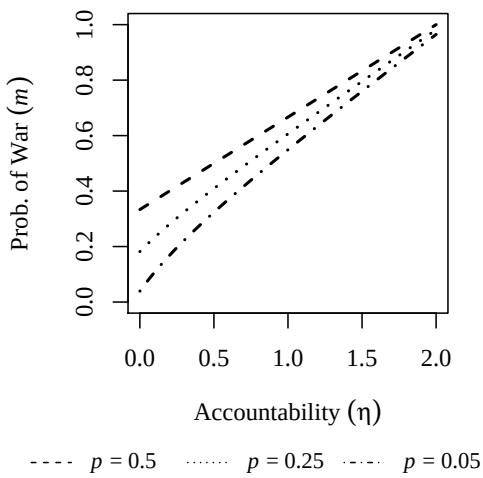

Figure 3.12: With All-Hawk Public

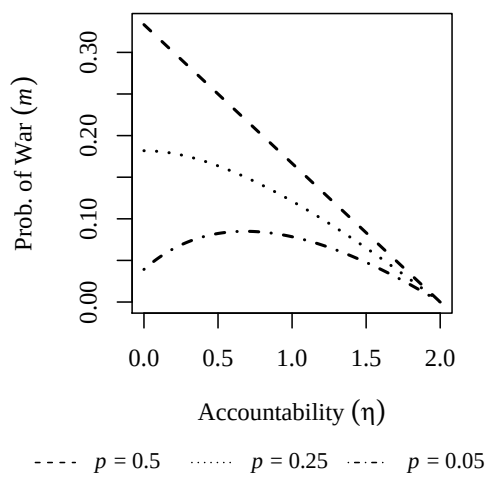

Figure 3.13: With Evenly Split Public

of resolved challengers is therefore minimal. $\Delta\eta d$ will have the greatest effect in absolute terms, however, when the denominator is minimized, which is when both C_i and p are low; this makes the overall effect of C_i ambiguous, while reinforcing the fact that a low p is most likely to mean a strong positive effect of $\Delta\eta d$ on m.

The math is likely difficult to interpret and still somewhat inconclusive, so illustrative examples are certainly called for. Figs. 3.12 and 3.13 plot the overall chance of war as a function of accountability for when, respectively, the public is all hawks or is evenly split between hawks and doves; in each case, the relationship is plotted separately for when S_1's common-knowledge chance of winning, p, is $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, and $\frac{1}{20}$. C_1 is fixed at 2.5 here throughout, as it was in fig. 3.10; while I do not show it here, the effect of C_1 is almost entirely to shift these curves up or down, and so it proves to be of little interest. Namely, C_1 has essentially no relationship in any case to the shape of the curve and the direction of its slope at any point.

Fig. 3.12 illustrates a monotonic positive relationship between accountability and war; this relationship is generally less strong as p increases, but remains substantially positive (even at $p = 0.99$ here [not shown], the curve starts at $m \approx 0.6$ and steadily approaches 1 as η approaches 2). On the one hand, it is unsurprising that we can link accountability to war if we again assume a public that is hawkish to the maximum degree; on the other hand, it is uniquely significant here that this relationship is uniformly positive despite the

higher rate of concessions from S_2. If the public is so hawkish, then at no point does the vaunted uncertainty-dispelling property of domestic accountability overpower the resolve-generating property to drive peace more so than war. In a certain and greater sense, then, the easily-observable fact that accountability makes threats somewhat more credible even in these cases is beside the point.

Fig. 3.13 displays the lone element of this theory that is compatible with the observable belligerence and war-proneness of new and partial democracies, and with the inverted-U relationship between democracy and peace more generally. At already high levels of accountability, more accountability unambiguously drives down the chance of any war, but at low levels, it only drives down the chance of a war that the challenger was likely to win; at very low levels, it can drive steeply upward the chance of a war that the challenger will lose. Hypothetically, the latter may outnumber and otherwise outweigh the former, leading to a net increase in the chance of war.

If we assume that the wars a challenger can threaten to start are in some sense evenly (or unbiasedly) distributed along the continuum of the challenger's chance of victory, and we look specifically at wars that the challenger starts, then we would expect to see a substantially lower rate of victories for challengers in the middle of the autocracy-democracy scale. This, however, is a much clearer prediction than the one this theory can make about any increase in the overall rate of war. We would only expect to see a higher overall rate of war initiation for such states if there was in the first place, and for some reason, a greater number of potential wars that the challenger is *very* likely to lose. Importantly, the wars that become more likely within even a small range of very low accountability are only those where the probability of victory is generally below 25%. Under almost any set of assumptions, we would expect the overall relationship between accountability and war to be almost consistently positive, albeit consistently weaker at low starting levels of accountability.

A clear and identifiable exception to this, however, would be generally weak states. A state that is so weak that they will almost certainly lose any war they can start over any given grievance that they have is in this position where their threats are highly incredible and very likely to fail; if the state is fully autocratic, then it is likely both bluffing and backing down at very high rates (think North Korea once again). Some increase in accountability

(to a not-extremely-dovish public) that does not constitute full and sudden democratization will make the state's threats marginally more credible, but much more important will be the incentive the state now has to follow through on some of the threats from which it would previously just back down. Paradoxically, if the state were stronger, then its resolve would not be so open to question in the first place, the increased rate of concessions would compensate for the increased rate of lock-in to war, and the newly-accountable state would end up in war less often rather than more.

3.6 Conclusion

The above model (or models) begins principally with prospect theory, based as it is on strong empirical findings, and, with several necessary and/or defensible assumptions, arrives at a range of conclusions for international bargaining. These conclusions are discussed in both earlier and later chapters as well, and the specific assumptions and scope conditions are addressed throughout this chapter, so I close here with some general remarks about how this model should be interpreted, tested, used, and, eventually, extended and modified.

It is always helpful to envision the true and complete "model," such as it would have to be in order to generate our reality exactly. In the true model, we have the exact parameters of every citizen's value functions on every political issue, rather than estimated averages for things like the ratio of subjective losses to subjective gains. We also have known quantities of how much the leader cares about each person's reactions, both overall and in different contexts, and we can also account for the distortions or eccentricities in how the leader learns about, processes, and anticipates these reactions. Similarly, we have true and particular mechanisms by which leaders appraise each other and each other's incentives, and anticipate and react to each other's behavior. We are also able in the true model to situate all these things within the infinitely complex context of other relevant and usually coincidental political issues and events, to say nothing of other actors who are incidentally involved.

King, Keohane & Verba (1994) argued that the true model would arguably not be a model at all, and for almost any purpose would be the least efficient tool for discussing

and making decisions about whatever it is we actually care about. I am somewhat more agnostic, and would simply suggest three criteria by which we can practically judge a given model in relation to this unattainable and yet conceivable true model.

First, it should be an unbiased simplification of the true model in as many respects as possible. Prospect theory literature provides empirically supported parameters for loss aversion and diminishing sensitivity because those parameters are, as far as we can tell, unbiased measures of the average values across any given population. It is well-known that individuals vary wildly in these respects, with some exhibiting levels of risk-seeking and loss-insensitivity that qualify as mental illness, but one must have unbiased averages before they can even begin to identify, much less account for, the variance. And of course, for many purposes, an unbiased average is all one needs, especially if the variance is small relative to the number of people one is generalizing about. Even with great psychological variance, we are dealing here, after all, with entire countries' worth of politically opinionated citizens.

Second, the model should incorporate whatever information we do have about the real relevant circumstances, situations, and actors whenever assumptions are to be made. This especially is a minority opinion, since the widespread tenet is that models are to be judged on their predictions, and especially not on the truth-value of their assumptions (Waltz 1979, ch. 1; For a related dissenting opinion, see Green & Shapiro 2007). One drastically underappreciated point on this topic was made indirectly by Carnap (2012, ch. 1): math and logic alone can only determine if a given imagined world is consistent with itself and can therefore possibly be a world in which we live. Testing predictions is certainly one aspect of weeding the possible-but-unreal worlds out of the population of possible worlds, but even that population of possible worlds remains functionally infinite, and so therefore does our ability to concoct models with predictions that fit all available data if we are persistent or irrational enough (Lakatos (1970), for all his exultation of prediction generation, clearly appreciated this).

If nothing else, giving some worth to the truth-value of a model's assumptions complements prediction-testing by breaking ties: by allowing us to choose between models that do not clearly differ in terms of their predictive value. This is what we intuitively do after all whenever we reject out-of-hand spurious correlations generated by big-data regressions –

in those sorts of cases, in fact, we side with the null model even though it would seem to predict far worse. And, of course, if a model's assumptions are explicitly tied to research, or otherwise to the evidence-based reasons why those assumptions are specified as they are, then it allows us to meaningfully investigate its predictive failures (as Green & Shapiro 2007, argued), and it also allows us to routinely update and improve the model as the other relevant research proceeds.

Third, the model's simplifications of, and perhaps deliberate deviations from, the true model should always be judged in the last with regards to some limited usage of the model. Here, I hope it is clear that my overall purpose has been to derive the implications that prospect theory inevitably entails if and when we apply it to domestic publics as relevant actors in international bargaining; within this, I have focused on crisis bargaining between two states where the one who does not initiate the crisis is an autocracy, and within this even further, I have focused on the rate of coercive success and the overall probability of war breaking out. Any generalizations of this model that prove valid or possible, whether technical or conceptual, are of course useful in their own right, but must be considered and appraised separately from each other or from the originally defined scope of the model.

Lastly, there should be clear potential for this model to be directly data-driven rather than theoretically motivated, both in this form and in extended forms that factor in things like asymmetric influences of different actors and the importance of keeping certain actors' approval of the leader above exogenous cutpoints like thresholds for vote-flipping. The opinion distribution here is a theoretical probability density function; with sufficient data on a given influential constituency, it can be defined as a probability mass function and the calculations can be made in almost the exact same way to produce very specific predictions. The model is also highly agnostic as to who the constituency is or how their preferences, expectations, and other qualities are measured; there is in fact no technical reason why international audiences cannot be included in the opinion distribution, given their influence in whatever form. In general, though, there is clearly much more need for data on what people expect in the political realm, in addition to what they prefer.

Chapter 4

Statistical Tests of Expectation Costs

This chapter makes use of data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) in order to test for the existence of expectation costs as defined in the previous chapter. These tests are imperfect for a number of reasons, even beyond the standard limitations and caveats that bear repeating with regard to any quantitative modeling for causal inference; with that said, the findings are generally in favor of the existence of expectation costs and the applicability of prospect theory to the observable patterns of Americans' reactions to the president's policy shifts, as the voter perceives them. Notably, the more straightforward statistical test of simple audience/inconsistency costs – looking for a drop in presidential approval associated with general changes in the president's issue position – reveals a striking lack of evidence for the existence of such costs. If nothing else, this illustrates how expectation costs may exist and be fully present in a given set of data and yet we won't find any evidence of inconsistency costs of any kind if we don't look for them in the specific way suggested by prospect theory.

The research strategy embodied in this chapter should be contrasted first and foremost to one that would have people reacting to positional shifts of some kind on the part of the president, whether simulated or real. This, after all, would most readily fit the previous chapter's formal model, and substantiate the necessary connection between the leader's

behavior and her audience's opinions of her. On the other hand, whether or not audiences react as PT predicts to whatever shifts they do perceive is a separate and unanswered question, and data such as this, which measure directly what the respondent perceives (or believes they perceived), are exactly what we need to get a clear and particular answer it.

This leads, though, to the question of just how real these perceived shifts really are – are the respondents in this data reacting to perceived shifts in a way that corresponds to how they will reliably react to real shifts in the president's stated positions and policies? We can begin to investigate this here by leveraging the "wisdom of crowds:" the random mistakes that individuals make in trying to track the president's positions should cancel out in the aggregate (e.g. Page & Shapiro 1992), and so the mean perceived change in the president's position on a given issue over a given period of time should proxy well for a direct measure of the president's actual position change. It bears revealing here at the outset that these mean perceived changes are, across the board, completely indistinguishable from zero, so while the individuals in this data are usually perceiving position shifts on the president's part to at least some degree on most issues most of the time, they seem not to be reacting to anything real in terms of the president's correctly-identified behavior. Again, though, the tests of expectation costs which I conduct and focus on here are still valid in that they examine the reactions of individuals to position shifts that they do perceive as such and presumably believe to be real and associated with the actual president, as opposed to a hypothetical president in a survey vignette.

This is very much a novel use of this observational data, which is sorely needed in the audience-cost debate after exhaustive applications of the methods of game theory, survey experiments, and case studies. To my knowledge, this is the first study testing for the existence of inconsistency costs using large-scale data on people's reported reactions to real and naturally-occurring policy inconsistency, at least insofar as they perceive it. A number of novel issues and concerns thus arise, which I resolve here as best I can, but the main function of this chapter may ultimately be to motivate the following case studies of actual presidential policy reversals.

4.1 Availability, Appropriateness, and Recoding of the Data

American National Election Studies (ANES) respondents are asked during each U.S. federal election cycle to place themselves on a 7-point liberal-to-conservative spectrum with regards to several issues, including defense spending; they were asked to "place" prominent politicians, including the president and presidential candidates, on those scales with regards to those issues as well; and they were asked to report their opinion of those same politicians on a hundred-point "feeling thermometer" (FT) scale. Many respondents were asked these same questions again during the next election cycle two years later; thus, we have what we need in order to examine whether or not these indirectly-reported perceptions of changes in the president's issue positions seem to have produced the changes in the respondents' opinions of the president that PT would lead us to expect. Several other survey questions amount to alternative measures of presidential approval, which I also utilize as explained below.

4.1.1 Independent Variables

The usable data pertain to five issues; other issues present in the ANES cumulative data file were not asked during any of the panel-survey periods in which the same respondents were re-surveyed across election cycles.[1] The issues include: government healthcare; welfare spending; aid to blacks/minorities; government services in general, including education; and defense spending. Exact wordings of all questions used to construct the dependent variables and independent variables of interest are provided in the supporting material. There are also questions placing the respondent and president on the general liberal-conservative scale, which I examine in the same way as other individual issues but do not include in the pooled data on which I base my primary theory-testing model.

The units of observation are two-year periods of observation in which a given individual is asked questions about both themselves and the president at both the start and end points of that period. The key independent variables when testing for direct inconsistency

1. There are a small number of cases of respondents resurveyed with a four-year gap, which I exclude from my analyses here.

costs are the amounts by which the respondent perceives the president to have shifted their issue positions over the time period in question; this is the absolute value of the difference between the president's perceived position at times 1 and 2. The key independent variables for expectation cost theory are the *negative distance changes* (NDCs), computed separately for each issue as follows:

1. Take the respondent's issue position at time 1 and subtract the position they perceive the president as having, in order to calculate the *difference* between those two positions at that time.

2. Take the absolute value of this difference to get the *issue distance* between respondent and president at that time.

3. Repeat both steps for time 2.

4. Subtract the time 1 issue distance from the time 2 issue distance to get the *change in issue distance* over the observation period.

5. Take the *negative of the distance change* so that higher values represent the respondent's more desirable outcomes – a lessening distance – and vice versa.

These NDCs then correspond to the perceived gains or losses as modeled in ch. 3, i.e. $||p_v - p_2| - |p_v - p_1||$, before diminishing sensitivity and loss aversion are factored in. If in fact the issue distances at time 1 and 2 constitute the respondent's reference point and objective payoff, respectively; the contemporaneous change in the respondent's opinion of the president directly reflects the respondent's subjective utility from the position; and, prospect theory does apply to this process in the first place, then we should see PT's S-shaped relationship between the NDC and presidential approval change. That curve is such that: shifts of increasingly large sizes, either toward or away from the voter's position, should provoke larger reactions but at a decreasing rate; and, shifts away from the voter's position should provoke negative reactions that are larger than their positive counterparts on the gains side of the curve, as described above.

While we are ultimately interested in individual-level reactions to two equal and opposite position shifts over time, the data do not constitute such observations; rather, we must model

reactions to shifts of given sizes either away from or toward the voter's own policy position, and then simulate the net effect that two equal and opposite shifts would have, assuming that their average effects as estimated here would hold one after another. Most importantly, this prevents us from being able to investigate downward renormalization, after a leader's shift away from the voter's position. On the other hand, many of the observations we have here are of voters who consider the leader's time-1 position to extremely objectionable, so finding that voters' reactions generally accord with PT, with the time-1 position treated as the reference point, would suggest that these voters either never expected favorable policies from their government in the first place, or they did in fact renormalize downward.

It is important, as always, to define the flaws of the research design in light of the theoretical predictions being tested. People reporting perceived position shifts in order to justify a reported change in their opinion of the president would clearly manufacture a positive relationship between change in issue distance and change in FT, but there would be no reason why it would manifest the PT value function, and especially the asymmetric relationship that we care about here. People would have to be specifically motivated to report smaller shifts away from their own position when they report drops in presidential approval – smaller than the shift toward their position that they would report alongside an equally large increase in presidential approval. Ironically, if such a motivation exists, then what else could be driving it besides prospect theory itself, working through the respondent's intuitive understanding that it makes more sense for shifts in the president's position to provoke stronger negative reactions than positive ones?

4.1.2 Dependent Variables

Several usable variables besides feeling thermometer (FT) capture the respondent's opinion of the president, including presidential job approval (4-point scale), respondent's vote choice both real and desired, four yes-or-no questions about the respondent's emotions toward the president, and eight yes-or-no questions about the respondent's appraisal of some of the president's personal attributes. In all cases, the actual dependent variable is the change in approval from time 1 to time 2.

The limited scale of the non-FT dependent variables (DVs) makes these changes more

difficult even to interpret directly. Job approval must be treated as continuous as we subtract the time 2 values from the time 1 values, resulting in a 3-point scale of changes along what is really an ordinal scale. Changes in binary responses beget variables with 2-point scales. Truncation becomes much more of an issue, with numerous respondents starting and/or ending at extremes of the scale. None of this strictly invalidates their use, however.

	Def. Spend	Min. Aid	Gov't Ins.	Gov't Svcs.	Welfare	Lib-Con
1974–76	—	436	—	—	467	462
1990–92	841	—	—	751	—	723
1992–94	—	—	—	533	539	490
1994–96	—	960	1,032	982	1,005	886
Total	841	1,396	1,032	2,266	2,011	2,561

Table 4.1: Counts of usable observations

The usable data come from three different overall time periods, in two-year intervals. Table 4.1 provides the data availability details, which allows for qualitative interpretations of what might be driving these perceived position changes (which I do not attempt to provide).

4.2 Accounting for Asymmetries in People's Basic Policy Evaluations

PT assumes an underlying scale of objective outcome valuations that is itself linear: how someone values and reacts to a payoff of x dollars is predicted by the S-shaped value function given a reference payoff of r dollars, but the basic continuum of possible dollar values must be consistent and linear in order for the nonlinearities of the value function to be definable in the first place. This relates to the formal PT concept of consumption utility (e.g. Kőszegi & Rabin 2006, 1141). If we fail to account for the nonlinearities likely to be present in one's consumption utility, then we will generally miss the loss aversion that is being generated to at least some extent by PT dynamics.

One may react particularly badly to a president's shift of 1 unit away from their ideal policy position because it is unexpected and experienced as a loss, and/or because they simply see the policy they are now espousing as being exponentially worse than the one

they originally espoused, even though they consider it just 1 unit further away from their preferred policy along the scale of possible policies. This particular nonlinearity would make the most sense, where policies are seen as exponentially worse the farther they deviate from one's ideal point. With defense spending, for example, there may be a certain level of excessive spending that goes beyond wastefulness and is expected to kick off a runaway arms race, and, conversely, a particular level of spending feared insufficient to deter a rival's surprise attack. These consumption-utility effects would create significant confusion in our models, though the particular bias would be unclear at any rate.

The ALSOS algorithm (alternating least-squares optimal scaling; Jacoby 1999) allows us to investigate this directly and in detail. ALSOS appraises the relationship between an ordinal and a continuous variable and provides the recoding, or rescaling, of the ordinal variable that would render its relationship to the continuous variable perfectly smooth, with equally large predicted changes in the latter from a unit change anywhere along the scale of the former. The point is not so much to do this rescaling as to examine which values of the ordinal variable would increase and decrease relative to each other if we did this rescaling, because this tells us which of those values are empirically associated with relatively large or small changes in the continuous variable that we are relating the ordinal one to.

If we plot the original scale against the optimally rescaled values (with the rescaled values on the vertical), then we can readily identify the exact pattern of the relationship that exists in the sample between the ordinal and continuous variables: a straight 45°line indicates no rescaling and an ordinal variable that already relates continuously with the other variable in question, while an exponential curve indicates that there are larger differences, in terms of the predicted values of the continuous variable, between the larger values of the ordinal variable than between the smaller ones. This exponential (concave-upward) curve should appear, then, when we examine the optimal rescaling of the issue-distance variable in relation to FT score, if voters do appraise policies as growing worse at an increasing rate the farther they are from the voter's preferred policy.

It is important to use appropriate data for this analysis, though, as leader approval may reflect the enduring effects of past positions and shifts as well as appraisals of current positions – indeed, I argue that it tends to. FT scores of candidates that are new to the

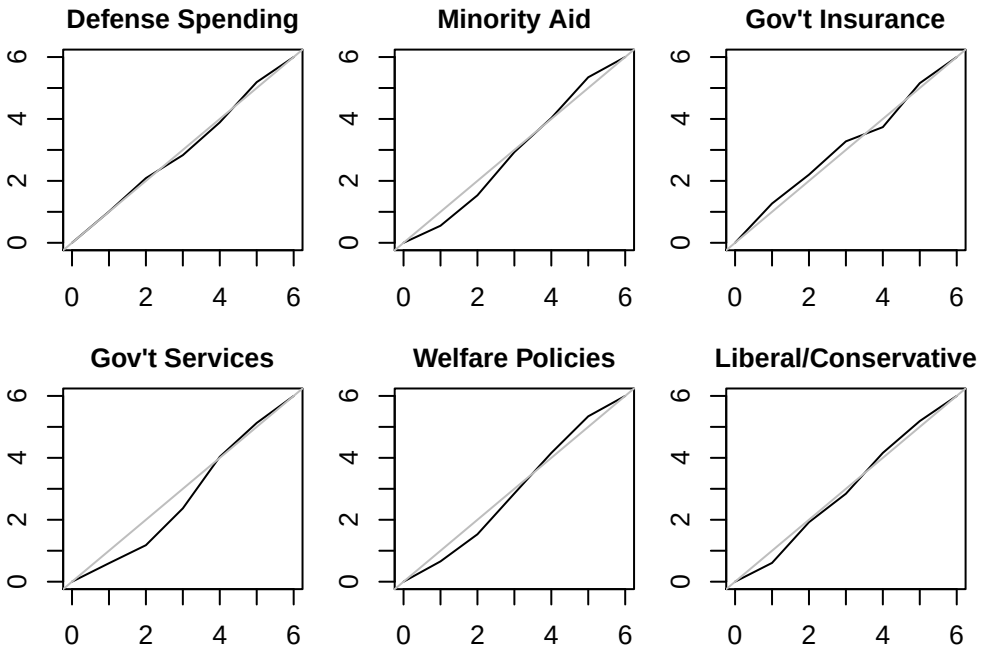

Figure 4.1: Original issue-distance values (x) vs. values optimally scaled w.r.t. feeling thermometer (y); shaded 1-to-1 line for reference

national political stage, then, should reflect minimal "baggage" of this kind, and be based most directly on the voter's consumption utility from the policies that the voter perceives this candidate to have initially taken as they arrived on the political scene. Thus, I use issue-distances and FT scores regarding only these candidates, and at particular points in time (so this analysis does not utilize the over-time changes computed above).[2]

As fig. 4.1 shows, there are no meaningful indications of nonlinearity. There are minor indications within certain ranges on some issues – government services especially – but no consistent concavity or convexity. While the ALSOS algorithm includes no statistical tests of nonlinearity, the results are clear enough for us to comfortably assume that the average person's valuation of increasingly undesirable policies will not substantially interfere with our appraisal of the nonlinearities and asymmetries in reactions to policy shifts that PT leads us to expect. Incidentally, this all suggests that respondents tend to conceptualize the 7-point issue scale that we present to them in such a way that the units map directly onto

2. This corresponds to data from one major-party presidential candidate in the years 1972, 1976, 1992, 1996, and 2000 – data which are quite plentiful overall, across all five issues plus lib-con (n=334,044).

how the respondent appraises the range of possible policies in terms of their consequences and (un)desirability.

Several model selection questions naturally present themselves from here on out and are discussed in turn. The supplementary files contain all code and output necessary to support all assertions regarding robustness and data availability, etc.; I mark each such assertion and its supporting material in the supplementary files with an R#.

4.3 Looking for Audience Costs

Audience costs *qua* inconsistency costs would take the form of a negative correlation between the size of the president's perceived position change and the change in the respondent's reported approval of the president – differences between the president's apparent positions at time 1 and time 2 should tend to register as inconsistency and thereby provoke a negative reaction. It would be ideal to test for the audience-cost reaction from just those who reported no opinion on the issue in question as per Tomz & Van Houweling (2012a) and Chaudoin (2014), but so few people reported having no opinion at both time periods that there are no usable data of this type (R1). This, though, may itself imply that such impartial audience-cost-generators are too few to matter anyway.

I test this via robust linear regression, controlling for: levels of media exposure; the individual's starting level of presidential approval; issue distance between respondent and president at time 1; change in distance between respondent and president (which should correlate negatively with FT change); and a possible interaction between the perception of a shift and media exposure, as the media may communicate cues designed to justify the shift (Levendusky & Horowitz 2012).

It warrants special emphasis that this model should very effectively get around the persistent issue of selection bias in audience cost tests (Schultz 2001), since we can control for the effect of the shift bringing the president closer to or farther away from the respondent's ideal position. We would expect savvy leaders to shift in popular directions and to only shift when it is popular to do so, insofar as they can help it, which would create a systematically positive overall effect of position shifts on presidential approval, even if inconsistency costs

exist and are muting these gains. This strategic behavior, though, should be captured in its entirety by the change-in-distance variable, leaving any direct effect of position change to be due to the particular effect of the president having changed their position and being inconsistent.

This model was run on the data pertaining to each issue and to the lib-con scale, and also on a dataset pooling the data on all five issues, with weights to ensure that all issues are equally influential in the relevant findings. This pooled-data model, both here and in the following expectation-cost tests, should provide the most conclusive results for our theories of how people generally react to presidents' position shifts.

The regression coefficients in table 4.2 constitute a complete absence of evidence of audience costs; if anything, they would suggest positive reactions to inconsistency. A shift on defense spending does have a negative independent effect, but that shift also interacts positively and strongly with media exposure, as Levendusky & Horowitz (2012) suggests; at high levels of media exposure, the overall effect of inconsistency is positive there as well. This, at any rate, is a clear outlier among the issues.

Models with no control variables also fail to detect audience costs (tab. 4.3), which is particularly noteworthy as it suggests that presidents are in fact generally failing to make position shifts in a selective, popularity-maximizing way. Even the selection effect that is supposedly biasing other tests of audience costs against the theory, then, is called into question here.

Those respondents whose own issue positions were particularly unstable (changing by more than a point) may be similar to those with no real issue opinions, who are particularly likely to inflict audience costs; utilizing just their cases, however, produces no audience costs either (R2), nor does dropping those cases (R3). Non-robust OLS regression results only differ in that they indicate "audience benefits" from inconsistency on gov't insurance instead of minority aid (R4). Lastly, no audience costs are in evidence when change in job approval is used as the dependent variable instead of change in feeling thermometer (R5).

Table 4.2: Direct effects of position shifts

	Change in Feeling Thermometer toward President						
	Pooled	Def. Spend	Min. Aid	Gov't Ins.	Gov't Svcs.	Welfare	Lib-Con
|Pres. Pos. Ch.|	0.37	-4.20^{**}	1.80^{*}	1.50	0.47	0.17	1.30
	(0.51)	(1.80)	(1.00)	(1.00)	(1.10)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Media Exp.	-0.51^{*}	-1.90^{**}	-0.66	-0.22	-0.33	-0.65	0.22
	(0.27)	(0.96)	(0.51)	(0.58)	(0.55)	(0.51)	(0.44)
Pres. FT at Time 1	-0.37^{***}	-0.46^{***}	-0.35^{***}	-0.28^{***}	-0.40^{***}	-0.36^{***}	-0.50^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Dist. at T1	-4.90^{***}	-5.40^{***}	-4.70^{***}	-3.80^{***}	-6.00^{***}	-4.80^{***}	-7.60^{***}
	(0.18)	(0.56)	(0.37)	(0.39)	(0.40)	(0.37)	(0.37)
Change in Dist.	-4.40^{***}	-5.00^{***}	-3.90^{***}	-2.90^{***}	-6.00^{***}	-4.50^{***}	-7.70^{***}
	(0.17)	(0.51)	(0.33)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.32)	(0.35)
|Pos. Ch.| * M.E.	0.01	1.10^{*}	-0.24	-0.04	-0.32	0.02	-0.13
	(0.16)	(0.56)	(0.30)	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.30)	(0.31)
Constant	32.00^{***}	35.00^{***}	33.00^{***}	28.00^{***}	33.00^{***}	34.00^{***}	41.00^{***}
	(1.20)	(4.20)	(2.40)	(2.70)	(2.40)	(2.40)	(2.30)
N	6,340	841	1,354	1,010	1,714	1,421	2,018

$^{*}p < .1$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$

Table 4.3: Bivariate correlations of position shifts and FT changes

	Change in Feeling Thermometer toward President						
	Pooled	Def. Spend	Min. Aid	Gov't Ins.	Gov't Svcs.	Welfare	Lib-Con
|Pres. Pos. Ch.|	0.15	-0.09	-0.09	1.40^{***}	-0.16	-0.24	0.17
	(0.18)	(0.56)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.37)	(0.35)	(0.37)
Constant	-0.68^{**}	-11.00^{***}	2.50^{***}	2.30^{***}	-1.70^{***}	1.90^{***}	-1.50^{***}
	(0.31)	(1.00)	(0.66)	(0.72)	(0.61)	(0.60)	(0.53)
N	7,546	841	1,396	1,032	2,266	2,011	2,561

$^{*}p < .1$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$

4.4 Looking for Expectation Costs

4.4.1 Model Selection and Dependencies

I rely on spline regression in order to test expectation cost theory, and prospect theory more generally, following Taran & Betts (2011). This allows almost any nonlinear and/or asymmetric relationship between the IV and DV to present itself, including but not limited to the S-shaped PT value function. The bounds on the variables' scales, and the political polarization that occasionally pushes the observed values against those bounds, may suggest the use of logistic or beta regression, but such models impose a specific nonlinear form on the estimated relationship which would defeat the purpose here.

More specifically, a spline model with at least 5 knots, when trained on data representing a prospect-theory relationship between objective outcomes and subjective appraisals or reactions, will place the knots as well as the curve such that the S-shaped curve arises along the continuum of predicted reactions to objective outcomes. One theoretical prediction (which we need not test for directly) is that the middle knot will be placed at zero here, where there is no change in the distance between the voter's and leader's issue positions and the points to the left and right are perceived as losses and gains, respectively, with distinctly different overall magnitudes to them. The curve will then bend around the knots in order to map out the asymmetric curve.

Importantly, of course, the model is not *constrained* to do so – data representing a strict linear relationship will produce a virtually flat spline regression "curve", and the spline model will fail to achieve a fit that is significantly greater than that of an ordinary least squares model. Other curvatures, also, are just as easy for the model to represent if the data say to do so – an exact inversion of the PT value function would arise just as easily if the theory does in fact have the dynamic exactly wrong.

Restricted Splines vs. Cubic B-Splines

Two different cubic spline model types are arguably appropriate: B-splines and restricted, a.k.a. natural, splines. Neither is ideal here – they both stand to bias findings regarding

diminishing sensitivity. Restricted splines impose a linear relationship between the x and y at each extreme point of the observed range of x; the second derivative of the PT S-curve does approach zero in both directions, but never reaches it. An unrestricted spline, on the other hand, is susceptible to "curling": if there are fewer observations at extreme values of x, then small nonlinearities in the center of the data cloud will extrapolate out to have an exaggerated effect on predictions at the extremes (Harrell 2015).

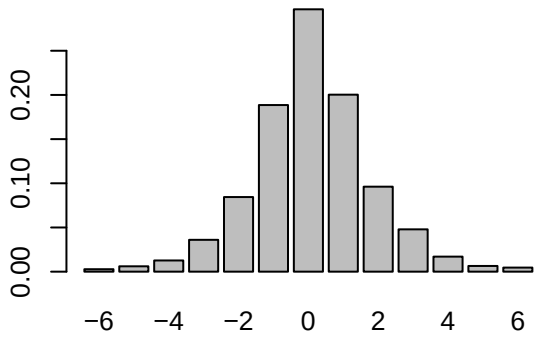

Figure 4.2: Observed negative distance changes in pooled data

As fig. 4.2 shows, our x here (negative distance change) generally has far less support at both extremes relative to the center; curling, therefore, should be our primary concern, and the use of restricted splines should be favored. Unrestricted B-splines often produce prediction curves here that would suggest great increasing sensitivity, which may indeed represent evidence against prospect theory, but only if curling could somehow be ruled out as an explanation. More important, though, is that the results using B-splines are almost as favorable for expectation cost theory as those using restricted splines which I report here (R6).

Accounting for Respondents' Own Position Shifts

A second concern is the twin questions of how to identify those opinionated individuals who are supposed to generate expectation costs, and how to account for issue distance changes that are due at least in part to the respondent moving relative to the president. After all, a simple change in distance, computed as such, is equally the product of both the president's and respondent's position shifts; regressing FT change on negative distance change (NDC)

in ignorance of this will not produce results that are validly interpretable as reactions to the president's position shifts.

One approach would be to use all data but simply subtract out any distance change due to the respondent's (R's) shift. If for example R starts 3 points to the left of the president and R moves 1 point to the right while the president (in R's eyes) moves 2 points to the left, then we only count the 2 points due to the president's shift and the effective NDC is 2. The real problem, though, is that we have no real theory for how one should react to any payoff – here, the president's policies – that coincides with a change in one's reference point, especially in a spatial utility context. There is also no way to know here whether a respondent's position shift came before or after their perception of the president's shift during the time period under observation. Lastly, any shift on R's part could be due to elite cues driving them to move either with or against the president, which would naturally correlate with their opinion of the president and any change in it.

The most conservative approach would sidestep these issues entirely by just dropping all observations where R's position changed at all. Data do not seem sufficiently plentiful, however, as this drops about 65% of otherwise-usable observations and makes any nonlinearity in the overall NDC-FT relationship statistically undetectable (R7). Here I limit the data to those whose own positions changed one point at most, and I also remove those whose 1-point shift accounts for the entirety of their NDC because they perceived no shift on the president's part. This leaves only trivial room for the observed reactions to be due in part to respondents' own shifts.

Control Variables and Potential Bias

In my main models here, I use only one control variable: feeling thermometer at time 1, i.e. the respondent's starting level of approval toward the president. Omitting the control still results in some evidence of expectation costs (R7).

Including distance at time 1 as a control variable (as I did re: audience costs) would be desirable for much the same reasons – the hypothesized reactions should appear regardless of either the starting levels of approval or the starting distance between R and president, and omitted variable bias is conceivable – but this is problematic when the IV of interest is

distance change and the scale is bounded. Starting distance alone explains almost a third of the variance of distance change, but it predicts a regression toward the mean distance – those who start closer to the president are much more likely to perceive a shift away, which might suggest high hopes followed by disappointment, but those who start farther away are much more likely to perceive a shift toward, as well (R8). Thus there is good reason to believe that the strong relationship is mostly due to data censoring issues, i.e. time 1 distance predicts distance change simply because the observed distance change cannot vary unboundedly with starting distance, given our scale. (Starting FT, which I do control for, explains only a tenth of FT change and virtually none of distance change; R9.) Including starting distance, though, does render expectation costs insignificant: the overall effects of presidents' position shifts to more than double in size, yet the confidence interval around the gain-loss balance grows far larger as well, making a difference of either kind undetectable (R10).

Again, any omitted variable bias concerns are only of a particular and very specific kind here. Many things certainly correlate with both the change in distance between an individual and the president on a given issue and the change in the individual's overall opinion of the president, to say nothing (yet) of endogeneity between the two. This will inflate their overall relationship, but if it inflates both halves of it equally – both the shrinking-distance/higher-FT relationship and the increasing-distance/lower-FT relationship – then it will have no effect on the ratio of losses to gains at any point along the range of distance changes. Thus, the double relationship we must watch for is one between both FT change and the *magnitude* of the change in distance: if for example a given variable was such that higher values predicted a drop in feeling thermometer and also that the respondent would perceive a shift of some kind (it doesn't matter which) rather than no shift at all, then failing to control for it would generate spurious findings of loss aversion and expectation costs.

Media exposure and/or political interest (both self-reported) could conceivably introduce bias of the relevant kind, either for or against the theory. Data on these variables are rather scarce, however (due, as always here, to essentially random survey choices), and virtually all of the effects that may appear to stem from controlling for them are in fact due to the inefficiency created by dropping the cases on which that data are missing (R11; again,

there is still some evidence of expectation costs in any case). Thus, I rely here on a model controlling just for presidential feeling thermometer at time 1.

4.4.2 Pooled-Data Model Results

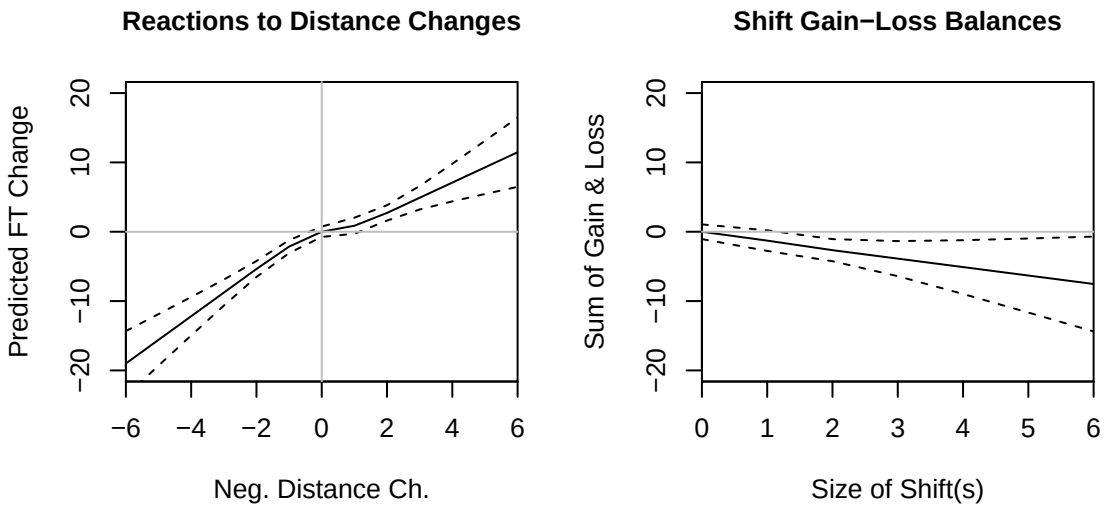

Figure 4.3: Reactions to position shifts, estimated across issues

Fig. 4.3 provides plots of the estimated changes in feeling thermometer resulting from shifts of different sizes, using restricted cubic spline regression on the pooled available data regarding all five issues. (I rely on predicted changes in presenting these results since tables of spline model coefficients are generally uninterpretable.)

The plot on the left can be interpreted as showing the changes in the average voter's approval of the president, on a 100-point scale, that are predicted to result from a president's shift x points toward the voter's issue position (positive values) or x points away from it (negative values). Here we should see the PT S-curve, and while the diminishing-sensitivity curvature is not visually evident, the asymmetry that gives rise to loss aversion may be. The plot on the right tests for this by taking the right half of the curve in the left plot – the reactions to gains, or favorable shifts, of increasing size – and subtracting from it the vertically-flipped left half.

This gives us the *gain-loss balance*, quantified with significance tests in tab. 4.4. It has two key substantive interpretations. First, we can imagine the president making a shift of

a given size that half the public will approve of while the other half disapproves of it. We would want to know if the overall intensity of the negative reactions among the latter half is larger than the positive reactions from the other half, or vice versa. This may itself depend on just how large the shift was, hence the range of the x-axis in the right plot of fig. 4.3. For all but perhaps the smallest discernible shift (and very likely there as well), loss aversion evidently applies: those individuals who react negatively will do so more strongly than those who react positively by a statistically significant amount. The estimated loss/gain ratios for each shift size average out to -1.88, very close to the expected -2.

A second interpretation corresponds more directly to expectation costs: the net effect that two countervailing shifts will have on any given voter's level of presidential approval, assuming the voter has any consistent policy preference. If for example a threat toward a rival nation is perceived as a 3-point shift on a hawk-dove scale, the president is caught bluffing, and voters had time to psychologically renormalize between the issuance of the threat and the decision to back down, then each voter with any personal opinion on the matter is expected to end up with a feeling-thermometer rating of the president that is 3.88 points lower than the level it started at, and would have stayed at if the leader had done nothing.

4.4.3 Per-Issue Expectation Costs and Statistical Tests

Are expectation costs evident with regards to each of the individual issues on which we have data? If not, then which issues are driving the overall finding? There is little reason, given current theory, why PT should apply more or less so to issues of certain types, so this is largely an inductive exercise. At the same time, it is foreign policy and especially international security with which we are principally concerned here – and there are persistent concerns about citizens' ignorance and/or inconsistency regarding foreign policy in particular – so it is particularly important that reactions to shifts on defense spending exhibit expectation costs.

Figs. 4.4 and 4.5 display the shift reactions and gain-loss balances, respectively, for each of the five issues, plus the general liberal-conservative "issue": as with the pooled data, tab. 4.4 specifies the gain-loss balances (GLBs) and the results of significance tests that they

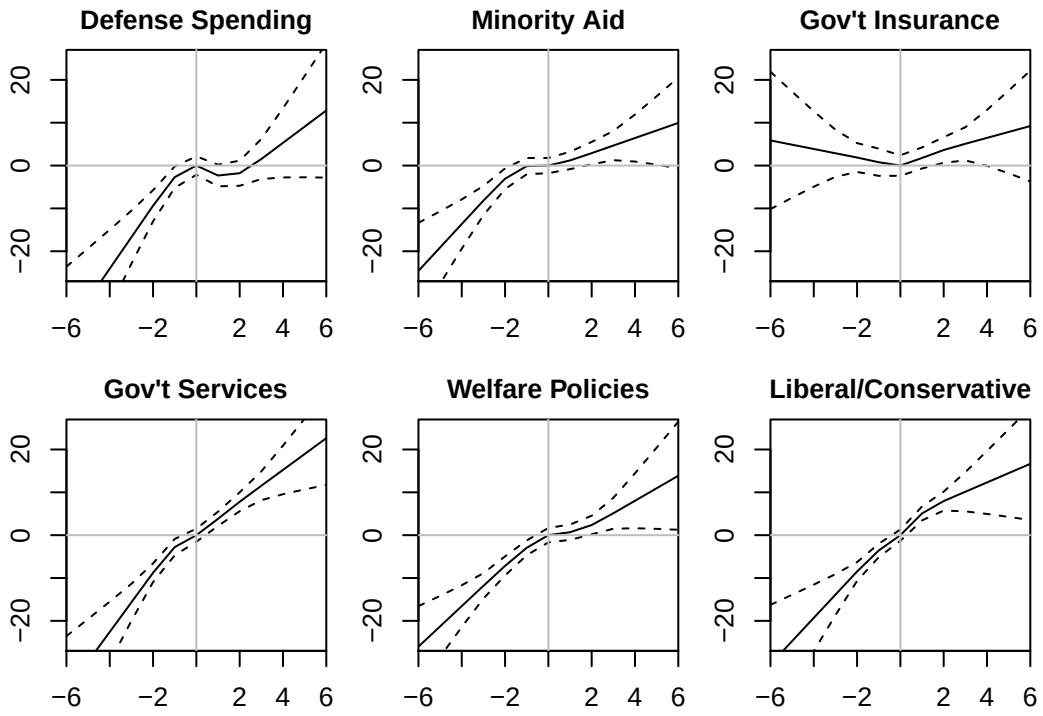

Figure 4.4: FT changes (y) from changes in issue distance (x) per issue

differ from zero. It is worth noting the lower statistical power we can bring to bear with regards to any one of these issues.

Defense spending is, if anything, actually driving the pooled results. Its curve does not readily exhibit diminishing sensitivity – none do, except perhaps lib-con in the domain of gains – but the gains for moving toward a voter's ideal point are remarkably muted on the whole, never reaching statistical significance in themselves. The losses significantly outweigh the gains at all observed points, and by an amount roughly 3 times larger than in the aggregate.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	n
Pooled	-1.3†	-2.7***	-3.9**	-5.1**	-6.3*	-7.5*	4428
Def. Spend	-5**	-11.2***	-15.2***	-18.8**	-22.3**	-25.9*	619
Min. Aid	1.1	-0.2	-3.5	-7.2†	-10.9†	-14.6†	1025
Gov't Ins.	2.6	5.5*	8*	10.3†	12.7	15.1	678
Gov't Svcs.	1	-1	-4.1	-7.3	-10.6	-13.8	1640
Welfare	-2.3†	-4.8**	-6.7**	-8.5*	-10.3†	-12.1	1360
Lib-Con	1.5	-0.5	-3.8	-7	-10.2	-13.5	2171

Table 4.4: Gain-loss balances by issue and shift size

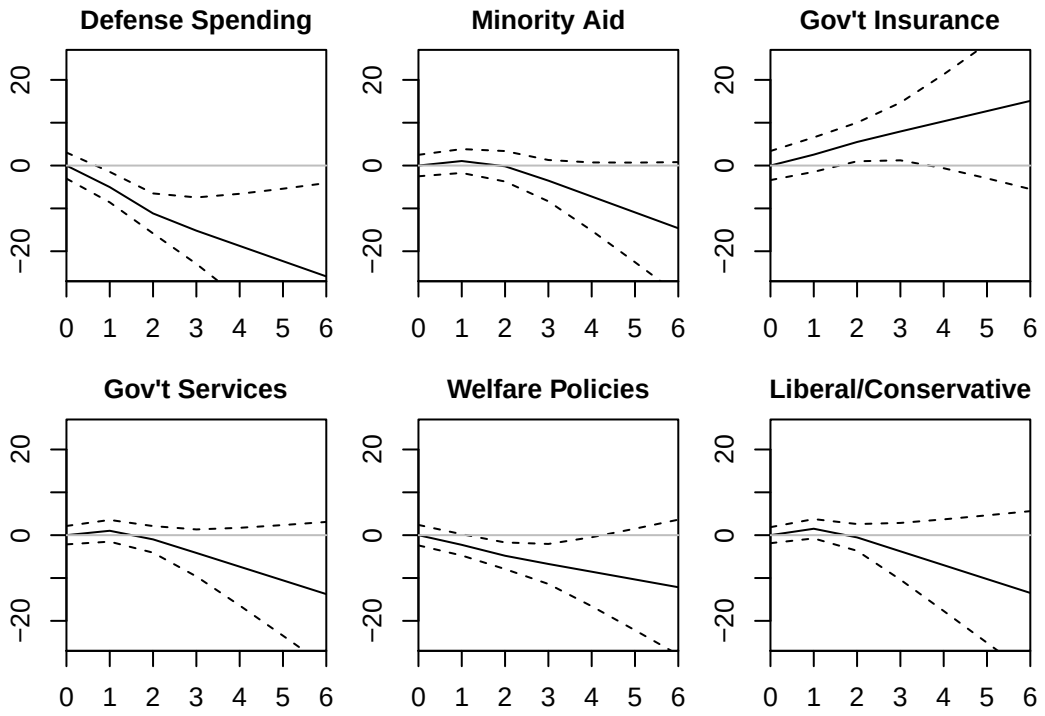

Figure 4.5: Gain-loss balances per issue

	Linear AIC	Spline AIC	Spline AIC Lower?
Pooled	39284.80	39280.79	Yes
Def. Spend	5474.15	5464.37	Yes
Min. Aid	8837.51	8836.54	Yes
Gov't Ins.	5926.88	5929.37	No
Gov't Svcs.	14394.01	14396.13	No
Welfare	11820.94	11818.91	Yes
Lib-Con	19036.27	19039.90	No

Table 4.5: Tests of expectation cost model validity using AICs

To help sort through as well as validate the various results here, we may rely upon the Akaike Information Criteria (AICs) of these models. We may ask first and foremost whether the spline model fits significantly better than an otherwise identical one that constrains the relationship of interest to be linear. If the spline model's AIC is the lower of the two, then the answer is yes, i.e. we can reject the hypothesis that the true relationship is linear.[3] Tab. 4.5 performs these comparisons.

3. I do not utilize the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) as it penalizes model complexity to an excessive degree, for reasons related to generally arbitrary assumptions incorporated into its standard formula, as Weakliem (1999) shows. It is the case, though, that BICs lead us to reject every one of these spline models

The pooled-data spline model is indeed validated here, as is the one on defense spending. The two other models exhibiting significant expectation costs, regarding aid to minorities and welfare policy, are also validated. Government services and lib-con both display a curious pattern of net positive effects from a 1-point shift but net costs for all others, with none proving significant; we need not agonize over that, however, as we cannot reject the hypothesis that the net shift effects are zero across the board. Lastly, government insurance jumps out as the one issue exhibiting "expectation benefits" at any points; it also jumps out in fig. 4.5 for the weak implication of approval gains for a shift away from, as well as toward, the respondent's position. We can assume, however, that those findings are due to statistical noise, given the AIC difference.

4.4.4 Expectation Costs Using Alternative Approval Measures

Several other valid measures of presidential approval are available. Here I repeat the pooled-data analysis but using each of these measures in turn as the dependent variable. This too is a largely inductive exercise, as we lack theory on how leader inconsistency should affect most of these particular appraisals and emotions. Expectation costs in the form of greater anger toward the president or a lower assessment of their leadership skills may seem commonsense, but it may be said that prospect theory has remained stubbornly agnostic about the role of affect in its dynamics.

The main alternative to feeling thermometer is the job approval question. The rest of the DVs fall into two categories: perceptions of the president's traits, and respondent's affects toward the president. Traits were asked about by soliciting appraisals of how well certain words described the president, namely: knowledgeable; moral; leadership and cares. Affect was measured by asking if the president had ever made the respondent feel angry, afraid, hopeful, and proud, all in turn. Notably, this framing in relation to the open-ended past also makes the questions a little less appropriate for this purpose here.

Tab. 4.6 shows that there is in fact no overall evidence of nonlinearity, and therefore no evidence of expectation costs, with regards to job approval, or the experience of feeling afraid or hopeful. The net negative reactions to policy inconsistency that PT leads us to expect clearly manifest in people's overall opinion of and/or feelings toward the president,

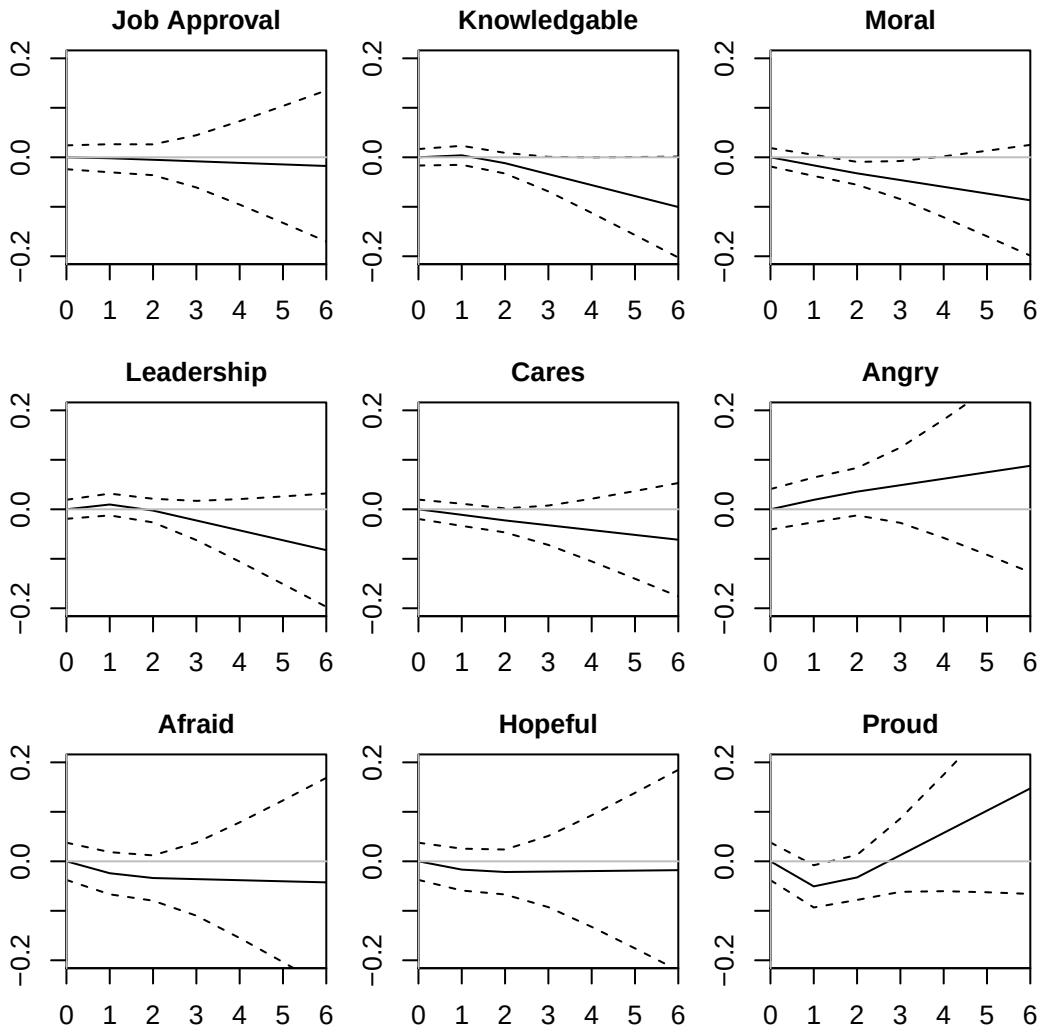

Figure 4.6: Gain-loss balances using alternative DVs

but this seems entirely divorced from their approval of the *job* the president is doing. This appears, then, to be a notable limitation of the theory, and in turn for prospect theory in this context.

Expectation costs do seem to manifest rather consistently as lower appraisals of the leader's intelligence and the leader's morality, which, curiously, implies two very distinct lines of reasoning. Disappointed voters, and voters who have been permanently alienated by the president and "burnt their bridges" with them on the issues, seem to process these as moral failings on the part of the president, *and/or* as banal failures of the president's intellectual and reasoning faculties. Thus, these specific models do not much specify the nature of the cost-generating mechanism (there is also some indication of losses in the form

	Linear AIC	Spline AIC	Spline AIC Lower?
AppJobx	1960.40	1960.78	No
Knowl	-876.32	-889.61	Yes
Moral	-245.96	-258.33	Yes
Ldrship	-116.09	-121.05	Yes
Cares	-126.93	-135.80	Yes
Angry	4417.81	4413.77	Yes
Afraid	4304.60	4305.55	No
Hopeful	4000.53	4005.82	No
Proud	4384.70	4384.39	Yes

Table 4.6: AIC tests with alternative DVs & pooled data

of being less proud of the president).

	1	2	3	4	5	6
AppJobx	0	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02
Knowl	0	-0.01	-0.03†	-0.06*	-0.08*	-0.1†
Moral	-0.02†	-0.03*	-0.05*	-0.06†	-0.07	-0.09
Ldrship	0.01	0	-0.02	-0.04	-0.06	-0.08
Cares	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	-0.04	-0.05	-0.06
Angry	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.09
Afraid	-0.02	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
Hopeful	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
Proud	-0.05*	-0.03	0.01	0.06	0.1	0.15

Table 4.7: Gain-loss balances with alt. DVs on 2-pt. scales

As stated earlier, data on presidents' positions as each individual voter sees them are ideal for testing theories on how voters react to position shifts, but they leave two important questions open: how often will voters perceive shifts when they actually occur; and, how much of these "perceived" position shifts in our data are due to various psychological mechanisms divorced from the respondent's reception of actual information about where the president stands? Luckily, there are a few ways to approach these questions within this data as well.

4.4.5 Looking for Voters Who are Perceiving Real Shifts

There is much research to support the "wisdom of crowds": in almost any context, the average belief, or rather the average guess, of a large group of people will be very close to

the truth, because no matter how uneducated and prone to error any one person is, their presumably unbiased errors will cancel out in the aggregate, leaving only whatever true insight there is in everyone's thought processes to show through (e.g. Page & Shapiro 1992; Surowiecki 2004; cf. Bartels 1996). For this reason, we should expect that where the average respondent places the president on a given issue at a given time should correspond closely to the president's actual position, along whatever spectrum we're using. More importantly, we should expect in turn that the average perceived change in a president's position on a given issue over a given time period would be a very good measure of the president's real position shift, if any. These mean perceived shifts, per issue and per time period, would give us baselines that would allow us to identify which individual-level perceptions of the president's shifts were more "real" than others, and we could then investigate how the reactions to those perceived shifts differ from those to the perceived shifts that seem more erroneous and possibly irrational.

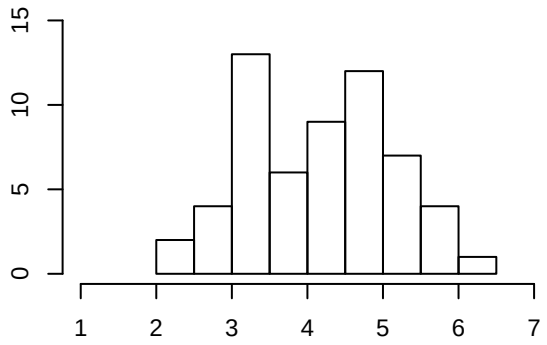

Figure 4.7: Distribution of Pres.'s Est. Issue Positions, All Years & Issues

Fig. 4.7 is a histogram of the public's mean placements of the president's positions across all issue-years (not including lib-con as an issue); this gives us a sense of how much that that average and supposedly wise citizen varies in terms of where they perceive the presidents on different issues at different static time points. The clear bimodality is encouraging in that it indicates a clear tendency for the public as a whole to place a president as either moderately liberal or moderately conservative on any issue at any one point in time, likely following the Republican-Democrat divide. Furthermore, the average standard deviation of the public's placements within each issue-year is 1.54, with a maximum s.d. of 1.84; this

suggests that the great majority of people place the president within the same 3-point range on a given issue at a given time, meaning that even the individual voter seems relatively good at identifying the president's true issue positions.

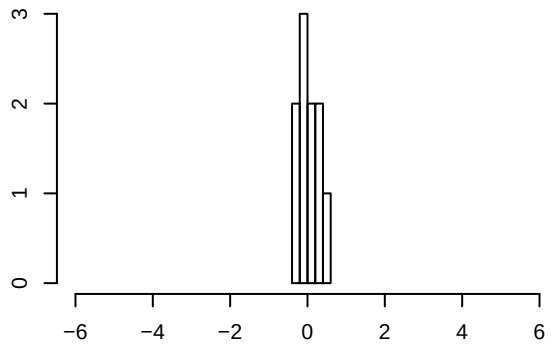

Figure 4.8: Distribution of Mean Pres. Position Changes, All Years & Issues

Fig. 4.8 provides the starkly different histogram of the means of the perceived changes in the president's position on an issue over a given time period, which, again, should correspond to real shifts from various presidents on various issues over various two-year periods. The observed mean shifts range from -0.37, the most liberal apparent shift on any given issue, to 0.58, the most conservative shift. The ten estimable shifts here have, on average, a standard deviation of 1.72, which illustrates two jointly perplexing things: individuals usually do perceive the president to be shifting his or her issue positions substantially; and yet, these perceptions across the public disagree with each other so much, and cancel each other out so neatly, that it is hard to believe that any of it is due to real position shifts in any form.

We cannot follow up with an analysis of those individuals who are most likely to be perceiving and reacting to real shifts here because there doesn't seem here to be any real shifts on the part of the president to react to. It is possible, of course, that this reflects reality, and presidents actually don't shift on these issues (or at least on issues defined as broadly as these ones are), in which case we will generally have, in survey data such as this, what is known in experimental methods as a failure to manipulate: the independent variable of interest simply doesn't happen to vary here. Incidentally, this is very similar to the perennial problem in looking for classical audience costs, that they may so thoroughly deter backing down and even the issuance of threats that they will rarely, if ever, be suffered

(Schultz 2001; Levy 2012).

At the same time, if our respondents have received any sort of information that led them to genuinely believe that a shift occurred, then the fact that they are all apparently being misled or jumping to conclusions would not concern us at all – their observed reactions would still accurately represent how they would and do react to real position shifts, which they might perceive just as readily as they perceive ephemeral ones. The only troubling possibility, then, is that a significant portion of these reported perceptions of presidents' position shifts may not even be genuinely perceived as such, and the reporting of them may instead be driven by the respondent's overall desire to appear consistent and intelligent within the survey, coupled with the fact that they are already reporting an overall higher or lower opinion of the president than they did before. Even then, these projected shift perceptions (to borrow the term from Markus & Converse 1979) might produce valid findings because respondents might project them in a way that accurately reflects how their reported opinions of the president would relate to really perceived shifts of those sizes. In case they do not, however, the following analysis is warranted.

4.4.6 Presidential Approval as Cause Rather Than Effect of Perceived Shifts

Here I estimate the degree to which one's perception of the president's issue position is a function of one's opinion of the president, which is itself presumably a function of the president's other, actually perceived issue positions along with more abstract or superficial factors. In the context of the above expectation cost models, this would be endogeneity: the relationship between the dependent and independent variable may be due at least in part to the former causing the latter, and this relationship may be of a different kind, following a different pattern, perhaps with a larger and more robust effect size. Markus & Converse (1979) first addressed the question of this projection effect using 1970s ANES data, and found that up to 25% of the variance in where respondents placed the president on the issues seemed to be due to where the respondent expected and perhaps desired the president to be, given the respondent's own position coupled with their opinion of the president (p. 1061); here I replicate their analysis and then extend it to the "dynamic"

context here, where we analyze changes in the panel cases in a similar manner.

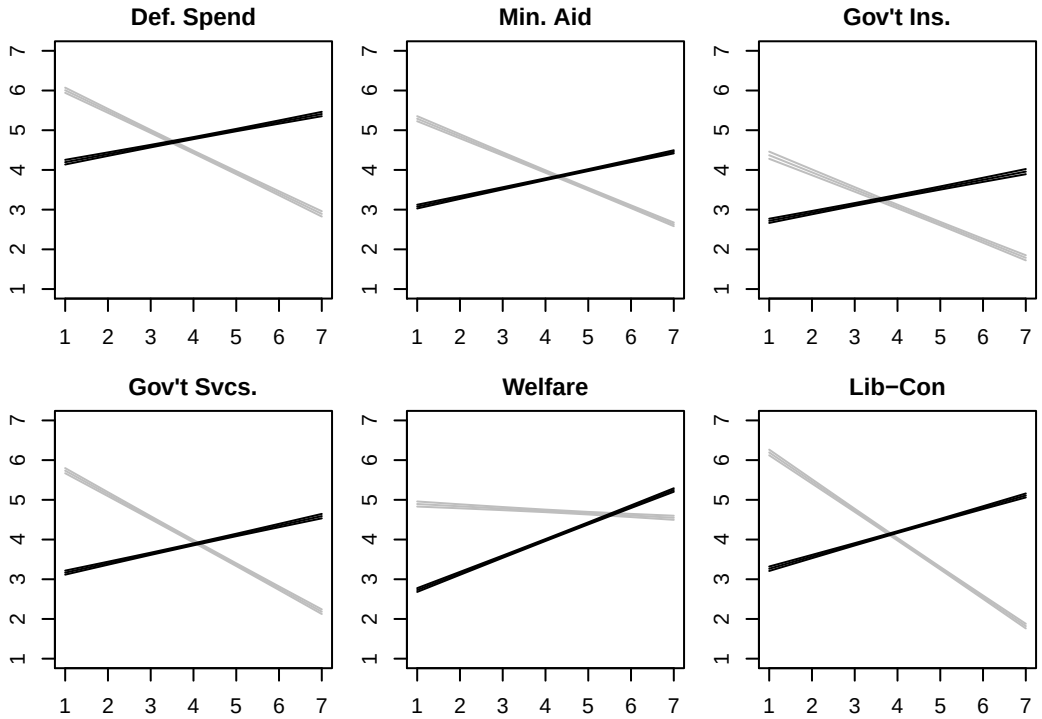

Figure 4.9: Projection of Pres. Pos. (y) based on R's Pos. (x) and FT of Pres. (Black=High, Grey=Low)

The Markus & Converse (1979) finding replicates very well across the entire 64-year span of ANES data. Fig. 4.9 displays the relevant results, from an OLS regression of the perceived position of the president as a function of the respondent's own position, the respondent's opinion of the president, and the interaction of the two; the black lines plot the predictions for respondents with presidential feeling-thermometer values over 75 while the gray lines pertain to respondents with FT values under 25.

	Def. Spend	Min. Aid	Gov't Ins.	Gov't Svcs.	Welfare	Lib-Con
Position	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.26	0.21	0.30
Pos. Change	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.05	0.04	0.02

Table 4.8: Unadjusted R^2s Representing Percentage of Position and Change Perception Possibly Due to Personal Projection

The two lines would be parallel if no projection were occurring – seeing the president as farther away from you would cause you to select into the low-opinion group and vice versa, but this wouldn't change your perception of where they are and where you are. The

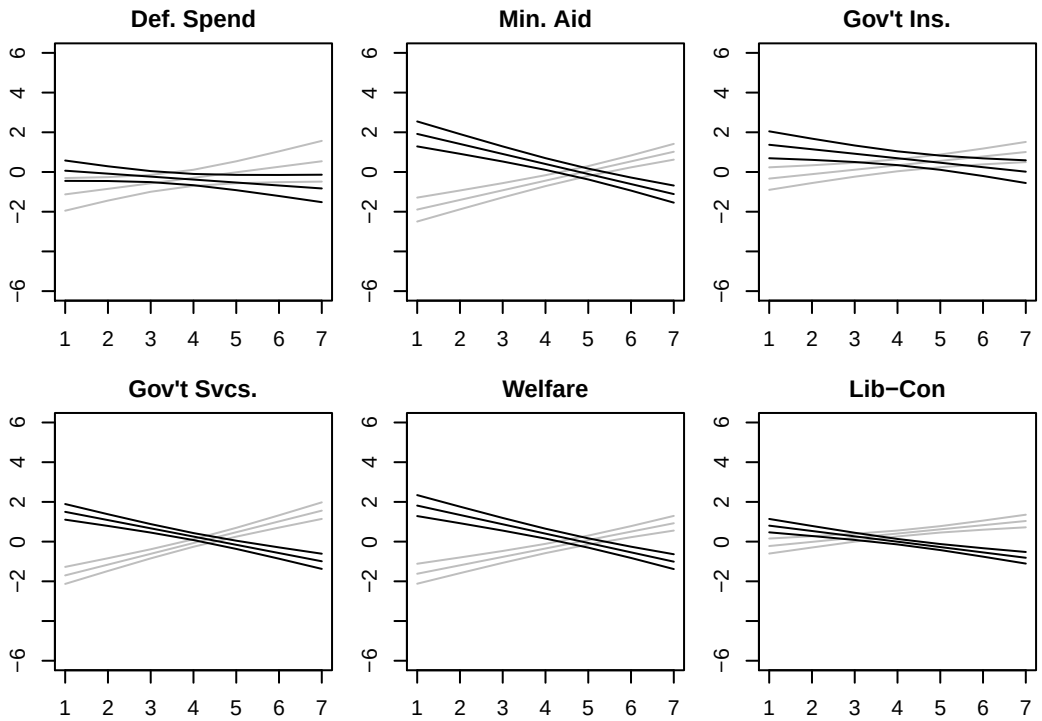

Figure 4.10: Projection of Pres. Pos. Ch. (y) based on R's Pos. (x) and Pres. FT Change (Black=Increase, Gray=Decrease)

consistently prominent X patterns correspond almost perfectly with Markus & Converse's (1979, 1062-3) findings of a possible and likely projection effect,[4] as do the unadjusted R-squared values of these models (first row of tab. 4.8), which suggest a consistent projection effect of about 25%; that is, up to about 25% of the perception of the president's position on a given issue at a given point in time could be due to the psychological balancing forces that cause one to adjust their beliefs about where the president stands so that they seem either closer to or farther away from your own position depending on how you already happen to feel about them.

The analogous model in a dynamic context attempts to predict the respondent's perception of a presidential position change using the contemporaneous change in the respondent's opinion of the president, in interaction with the respondent's own, consistent position.[5] It

4. These models and correlations cannot conclusively prove that this projection effect is occurring or that it is quite so large, as this pattern would be, and is likely to some degree, the product of people happening to receive different information about where the president stands and then forming a high or low opinion of the president accordingly given their own issue position.

5. This limits the analysis, as before, to just those with mostly consistent positions (changing no more than 1 point), which makes interpretation easier; alternative models either use all respondent positions at

seems quite plausible, after all, that much or even most of these perceived presidential shifts may be due to respondents who for unrelated reasons came to like the president more (or less) and therefore assumed or imagined presidential position shifts that they would like (or disklike).

At most, however, this dynamic projection effect is only 5% (first row of tab. 4.8) – the vast majority of these perceived presidential shifts do not follow this pattern of respondents perceiving what they would expect or like to perceive given their changing opinion of the president. This projection effect almost certainly exists dynamically as well as statically – fig. 4.10 exhibits the telltale X patterns – but it is a trivially small part of the puzzle of why ANES respondents report the changes in the president's position that they (indirectly) do, and that they seem to be reacting to as prospect theory predicts.

4.4.7 Looking for Those Most Likely to Perceive a Shift

The last remaining investigation into these perceived shifts ask the question of what types of people are most likely to perceive shifts, and also particularly large shifts, in presidents' positions. If a subset of voters can be identified who are significantly more likely to perceive shifts, and this is in fact due to them being genuinely more attentive to real shifts, then we can rerun the above analyses on just them, extract from them reliable measurements of any real presidential shifts here, and ultimately test expectation cost theory more conclusively.

Table 4.9 provides the results of these models using the available variables that we might expect to correlate for various reasons with the perception of a shift (the DV is the absolute value of the perceived shift as we are not interested here in who perceives rightward vs. leftward shifts; absolute value of FT change is included mainly as a control). First we may note the very low R^2 of all six models: all included variables together can explain only between 2 and 6% of individuals' perceptions of presidential position shifts. Gender, political interest levels, and party identification relative to the president's have little to no independent explanatory power. Strikingly, the two variables that should best measure one's attentiveness to elites' positions and shifts – education and (self-professed) media

time 2 regardless of how they differ from time 1, or they use the change in respondent's position along with their change in FT and change in president's perceived position. In either case, there is substantially less evidence of a projection effect.

Table 4.9: Explaining Perceptions of Shifts

	|Change in President's Position on Issue in Question|						
	Pooled	Def. Sp.	Min. Aid	Gov't Ins.	Gov't Svcs.	Welfare	Lib./Con.
|FT Chng.|	0.01^{***}	0.00	0.01^{***}	0.00	0.01^{***}	-0.00	0.01^{***}
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Age	0.00^{**}	0.00	0.01^{**}	0.01^{***}	0.00	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Female	0.03	0.12	-0.03	-0.00	0.03	0.05	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.05)
Educ. Level	-0.07^{***}	-0.04	-0.09^{***}	-0.04	-0.04^{*}	-0.09^{***}	-0.09^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Party ID	-0.04^{***}	-0.06	$-0.03^{\dagger}$	-0.22^{**}	-0.02	-0.07^{***}	-0.03^{**}
	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Pol. Interest	0.01	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.04	-0.03
	(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Media Exposure	-0.03^{*}	-0.15^{**}	-0.01	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01	-0.03
	(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Polarization	-0.10^{***}	-0.06	0.01	$-0.11^{\dagger}$	-0.10^{*}	-0.14^{**}	-0.15^{***}
	(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Pres. Same Pty.	0.02	0.13	-0.07	-0.42^{*}	-0.01	0.03	0.06
	(0.03)	(0.22)	(0.08)	(0.20)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Pres. Diff. Pty.	-0.01	-0.14	-0.08	$0.39^{\dagger}$	0.02	0.10	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.20)	(0.08)	(0.20)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.06)
N	6,661	544	1,046	784	1,283	1,102	1,902
Adjusted R^2	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.06

$^{\dagger}p < .1$; $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

exposure – generally correlate *negatively* with shift perception. This substantially bolsters the hypothesis that presidents actually aren't shifting here, and the perceptions of shifts that we so often observe observe simply reflect random, and unbiased, misinformation. Age and shift change are positively correlated, albeit with a very small effect size even given the small units of age. Party ID correlates negatively, suggesting that Democrats perceive shifts more often and/or of greater size. Finally, the respondent's own level of liberal/conservative polarization (how far their own reported liberal/conservative position deviates from the midpoint of 4) also correlates negatively with shift perception, suggesting that moderates are more likely to perceive shifts.

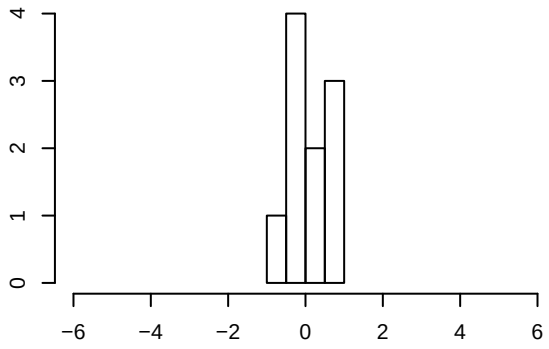

Figure 4.11: Mean Perceived Shifts Among Those Most Likely to Perceive Shifts

Fig. 4.11 presents a histogram of the mean shifts per issue-period as perceived by just these respondents most likely to perceive a shift: older, less-educated Democrats.[6] These means are not quite as clustered around zero as the overall ones (fig. 4.8), which does suggest a greater degree of agreement on when and how presidents have shifted within this subset; the standard deviations around each mean are quite large, however, such that even the most robust mean perceived shift is still only 0.44 standard deviations from zero. Thus, we have here too a failure to statistically identify any real or even generally perceived presidential shifts.

6. Dropping those with little FT change as well did not change the results.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter serves both to support the empirical existence of expectation costs and to motivate the following chapters. We can say that when people perceive the president as shifting his or her position, they generally react as prospect theory predicts, with the reference point determined by the president's perceived initial position in relation to the individual's own; this in turn generates costs for inconsistency, and less favorable reactions to individual shifts overall, as formally proven in the previous chapter. The evidence is not as strong as it could otherwise be – namely, PT loss aversion and the accompanying net costs for the leader are not identifiable with regards to presidential job approval or all of the other ways in which respondents rated presidents in our surveys, nor does the PT S-curve consistently fit reactions to shifts on each individual issue area we've asked about – but all statistically significant findings are in the expected directions, and, notably, there is a striking absence of evidence here for audience costs as we would traditionally think of them.

The case studies which follow serve as standalone investigations of expectation costs, and as plausibility probes for the theory, but they are given special significance by the puzzling findings, or rather the lack thereof, regarding the origins of the reported perceived shifts on which this chapter's analyses have relied. The above does nothing to counter – though I would not say it feeds – the arguments that domestic audiences will usually fail to identify a leader's policy shift and/or that their reactions to those real shifts will prove politically manageable. By looking closely at the most significant real-world cases of presidents reversing themselves on foreign policy, we can most directly fill this gap and assuage, or perhaps vindicate, these doubts and concerns.

Chapter 5

Lincoln: Interfering with Slavery

> Is it desired that I shall shift the ground upon which I have been elected? I cannot do it. You need only to acquaint yourself with that ground, and press it on the attention of the South.
>
> Abraham Lincoln, Dec. 15, 1860 (1953, 151)

Abraham Lincoln was well known as an opponent of slavery from the beginning of his political life. The failure of the Missouri Compromise was apparently what drove him to seek the presidency (Benson 1917, 118). He was a vocal proponent of states' rights to harbor freed slaves, a tireless lobbyist for compensated emancipation schemes, and, most zealously of all, an opponent of the spread of the "peculiar institution" into newly-established states. His stance was unambiguously moralistic: he famously wrote to the Vice President of the just-declared Confederacy that "the only substantial difference between us" is that "You think slavery is *right* and ought to be extended; while we think it is *wrong* and ought to be restricted." (Lincoln 1953a, 160)

But Lincoln was no abolitionist (Donald 2001, 31) – he preferred the label "anti-extensionist," in fact, to make the distinction clear (Baringer 1945, 204; see also Benson 1917, 268). In that same letter to Stephens, he insisted, as he had many times before, that he had no intention of forcibly abolishing slavery where it already existed:

> Do the people of the South really entertain fears that a Republican administration would, *directly* or *indirectly*, interfere with the slaves, or with them about the slaves?

> If they do, I wish to assure you, as once a friend, and still, I hope, not an enemy, that there is no cause for such fears. The South would be in no more danger in this respect than it was in the days of Washington (Lincoln 1953a).

Lincoln would in due time break this promise and become, for all intents and purposes, *the* abolitionist – if not by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation as a wartime measure, then certainly by insisting on full and uncompensated abolition as a condition of the Confederacy's surrender. Lincoln indeed "converted" the Civil War in to a "crusade against slavery," as so many charged him with doing, and as he more or less acknowledged in the course of things. And while the degree to which this "conversion" truly came as a surprise to most voters is often hard to judge through the milieu of political histrionics that practically defined the politics of that time, it is reasonably clear that his distinct and at times apparently ruinous domestic difficulties were due in no small part to the expectation costs he paid for the broken promise. This is to say that, had he managed to win the presidency on a full abolitionist platform and subsequently governed as he did, he likely would have enjoyed substantially more public support, and, in turn, the North would have been able to wage the war more effectively, and likely end it sooner. The casualties would have been substantially fewer not just on the battlefield, but in the streets of a riotous New York and a rebellious Indiana; far fewer Union solders would have been executed by courts-martial, as well.

Several case-specific issues present themselves as points to clarify and/or questions to resolve in light of the evidence. To what extent did Lincoln's moralizations against slavery prime voters to expect from the beginning that he would abolish slavery, no matter what he said otherwise? Was it the making of the proper Emancipation Proclamation that constituted the policy shift in people's minds, or was it the preliminary Proclamation that was made over three months prior – or was it the "To Whom It May Concern" letter he wrote 19 months after, in which he insisted on abolition as a condition for peace? Lincoln's support also depended, of course, on battlefield successes and failures, as well as objections to his derogation of various Constitutional checks and especially suspending habeas corpus; swings in his popularity due to these factors must be separated out from the effect(s) of his

major policy shift. This case also involves stark polarization among the public on the issue in question, with factions both violently opposed to and violently supportive of slavery, so it must be established, to the greatest degree that it can be, how much of any asymmetries in these factions' reactions can be explained by differences in the strength of these factions' preferences, as well as differences in their sizes.

In terms of bargaining theory and credible signaling, there are two sets of foreign observers to consider: the South, which decided to secede and fire the first shot of the war despite Lincoln's reassurances of nonaggression; and the great powers of Europe (to include Russia), who had all abolished slavery by this time and all decided to stay neutral, not coming to the North's aid but also not supporting the South against it. I find that the South did take Lincoln's pledges to be fully credible, but they were resolved to war regardless, and so there was very little deliberation on their part which would have allowed us to tell why they believed this part of his rhetoric in particular. England and France were rather surprised by the outbreak of the war itself, and so there is similarly little deliberation to parse on their part with regards to the cheapness of Lincoln's talk in their eyes. It is clear, though, that European decision-makers discounted the signaling value of the Proclamation and Lincoln's reversal, and the impact that it had on their decisionmaking calculus, while substantial, worked almost entirely through the approval that their publics exhibited toward the apparent shift.

5.1 Making the Promise

5.1.1 Lincoln's Words

It is unclear when Lincoln asserted for the very first time that he would never directly act to abolish slavery where it already existed. By the time he was in the public eye, he was always framing issuances of the promise as exasperated reiterations, as for example in an 1858 speech in Springfield, in the lead-up to the debates with Stephen Douglas: "I have again and again said that I would not enter into any of the States to disturb the institution of slavery." (Lincoln 1953k, 189) He pointedly mocked the notion that he might "go on the banks of the Ohio and throw missiles into Kentucky, to disturb them in their domestic

institutions." (Lincoln 1953k, 189) In another 1858 speech, he characterized his entire party as "eminently conservative. It proposes nothing save and except to restore this government to its original tone in regard to this element of slavery, and there to maintain it, looking for no further change, in reference to it, than that which the original framers of the government themselves expected and looked forward to." (Green 2011, 31) He condemned John Brown's abolitionist insurrection as no more honorable than an assassination attempt (Benson 1917, 152).

Even earlier, in 1855, Lincoln separated himself from abolitionists, while lamenting the difficulty of successfully doing do: "You inquire where I now stand. That is a disputed point. I think I am a Whig; but others say there are no Whigs, and that I am an Abolitionist." (Lincoln 1953g, 322-3) Biographer Godfrey Benson wrote that Lincoln "had remained in the past coldly aloof from the Abolitionist propaganda when Herndon and other friends tried to interest him in it, feeling, it seems, that agitation in the free states against laws which existed constitutionally in the slave states was not only futile but improper." (Benson 1917, 126)

The day prior to the 1860 election, the *New York Times* "devoted most of its editorial page to" "disprov[ing] the contention" that Lincoln was an abolitionist (Baringer 1945, 44). Following his election and the immediate declarations of secession it provoked, the *New York Herald* remarked that the Republican party was republishing Lincoln's two-years-old campaign speeches "To prove the conservative position of Mr. Lincoln . . . But they do not meet the necessities of the case. What we want is a letter or a speech from Mr. Lincoln now, on the present crisis in the South, embracing his views for the preservation of the Union." (32) Lincoln responded by ghostwriting a speech for Senator Lyman , a known surrogate of his. The speech began:

> I have labored in, and for, the Republican organization with entire confidence that whenever it shall be in power, each and all of the States will be left in as complete control of their own affairs respectively, and at as perfect liberty to choose, and employ, their own means of protecting property, and preserving peace and order within their respective limits, as they have ever been under any administration. Those who have

> voted for Mr. Lincoln, have expected, and still expect this; and they would not have voted for him had they expected otherwise. (Lincoln 1953h)

The *New York Post* opined that "Mr. Trumbull is as explicit as he well can be" (Baringer 1945, 39-40) and that this all justifies war against the groundless secession. The *Illinois State Journal* (a Lincoln ally) wrote that "His speeches, his political record, the platform. . . , all show that he proposes no interference with the constitutional rights or internal affairs of any State Government;" they practically pleaded with the South to give Lincoln a chance to prove himself on this point (56-8). In a speech in Cincinnati shortly before taking office, he once more directed such reassurances toward the South: "We mean to leave you alone, and in no way to interfere with your institution; to abide by all and every compromise of the constitution . . . " (Davis 1971, 28)

Lincoln's first inaugural address, after some minor preliminaries, opened with a reiteration of the promise:

> Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States, that by the accession of a Republican Administration, their property, and their peace, and personal security, are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed, and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." Those who nominated and elected me did so with full knowledge that I had made this, and many similar declarations, and had never recanted them (Lincoln 1953d, 262).

The initial outbreak of the war, complete with Northern mobilization and offensives, drew from Lincoln further reiterations rather than a reversal. Foner (2010, 163, 173) writes about those early days that

> In none of his proclamations did Lincoln mention the word "slavery" or indicate that military efforts had any purpose other than to suppress "insurrectionary combina-

> tions" that prevented the execution of the laws. In his call for 75,000 militiamen issued two days after Sumter surrendered, he explicitly stated that the "utmost care" would be taken to avoid any "interference" with property in the seceded States. Two weeks after the war began, Lincoln assured Garrett Davis, a unionist senator from Kentucky, that he intended to "make no attack, direct or indirect" on the domestic institutions of "any state".

"During the first twenty months of the war," Franklin (1963, 136) wrote, "no one had been more careful than Lincoln himself to define the war merely as one to save the Union."

Some of Lincoln's most controversial moves to this day are those he made between the outbreak of the war and the Emancipation Proclamation to override Generals who acted on their own initiative to free and/or recruit slaves. These were Generals Frémont, Butler, and Hunter. While his treatment of Hunter signaled that his thinking had at least begun to change, he used the confrontation with Frémont to reiterate his promise not to interfere with slavery. Lincoln must have come to regret his words, so effectively defending the position he would soon abandon: "You speak of it as being the only means of *saving* the Government. On the contrary it is itself the surrender of the Government. Can it be pretended that it is any longer the Government of the United States – any government of constitution and laws – wherein a general or a president may make permanent rules of property by proclamation?" (Lincoln 1953n, 532)

The Promise to Avoid War

It is also the case, as Levy et al. (2015, 988) point out, that Lincoln promised "no invasion – no using of force against or among the people anywhere." He also reiterated this promise after Fort Sumter, and shortly before attacking Confederate forces at Manassas (the First Battle of Bull Run). However, I do not consider this to be a broken promise on his part, or at least not one warranting further study, for two main reasons.

First is the often-dropped first half of this statement, which specifies important conditionalities: "... there needs to be no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me, will be used to hold,

occupy, and possess the property, and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion." (Lincoln 1953d, 266) It is highly relevant, then, that Fort Sumter was a customs house. The argument has indeed been made that the war was over tariff policy and enforcement, rather than slavery, and that this statement now read as a promise of peace was in fact a threat, that he simply made good on (DiLorenzo 1998; esp. DiLorenzo 2002, 236-7). While I hardly support or directly address here this overall argument about the causes of the entire war, I would contend that Lincoln promised war as well as peace, and, given the actions of the South, Lincoln could in fact only stay true to these words and avoid any possible inconsistency cost *by* invading.

Second: following the attack on Fort Sumter, Lincoln's prosecution of the war was almost universally perceived as a necessary reaction to Southern aggression that was beyond his control and rendered his promises of peace moot. Many have cast Lincoln's actions leading up to that first shot as either political genius or underhanded connivance, but in so doing, they all affirm that he successfully brought about the circumstance that would cast his fighting the war, if he was to fight it, in the best possible and least aggressive light (DiLorenzo 2002, 117-21; Maihafer 2001, 40). Lincoln himself seemed pleased with the outcome in this regard (DiLorenzo 2002, 118-9). At any rate, Donald (2001, 171-2) finds that there would have been domestic costs if Lincoln had sent arms to Sumter, though only of the simpler preference-driven kind, where doves would have punished it; and hawks, likewise, would have straightforwardly punished inaction. Sending only food and supplies apparently avoided not just these costs but, in the end, avoided any audience costs he might have otherwise suffered for the promises of peace. Even the breaking of his subsequent promise not to retaliate by invading Virginia came two months after Sumter (Levy et al. 2015, 988); presumably, Southern mobilizations in the meantime were seen to justify that reversal too, such as it was.

5.1.2 The Party Platform and Ideological Composition

The Republican party overall was far from abolitionist, though it was certainly number one with abolitionists (Foner 1970, 303-4). Lincoln's fellow Republicans sent only signals

reinforcing his relatively moderate position (Stampp 1980, 118; Benson 1917, 168,192; Davis 1971, 11). The grand young party had recently moved conspicuously away from abolitionism, in fact: its 1856 platform, "notable for its brevity and forthrightness" according to Stampp (1980, 152), had dubbed slavery one of the "twin relics of barbarism" (along with polygamy), while the 1860 version instead promised to respect "the right of each state to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively." (152-3) A speaker at the 1860 convention proclaimed:

> I say, sir, and I wish it to be understood everywhere, I am not here for the purpose of making war on the slave states, nor do I believe that there is a man in this house who is. We have been charged with that. It is false and they know it. We are here for the purpose of satisfying the American people that we are willing to give the slave states their entire rights. (151)

There were, of course, actual abolitionists Republicans could nominate, most prominently Lincoln's future Secretary of State, William H. Seward (see also Foner 2010, 89,297), but the delegates specifically preferred Lincoln's relative moderateness (Benson 1917, 168). Foner (2010, 84) argues that Lincoln had indeed placed himself "squarely in the middle of the spectrum of northern antislavery opinion." As Davis (1971, 11) wrote, "The influential *New Orleans Bee* observed that Lincoln was chosen over Seward precisely because his moderate views on slavery would command more votes in the North: 'In the choice of a Presidential candidate ... the Black Republicans have furnished a signal manifestation of their determination to avoid extremism.'"

There was certainly no shortage of racism among the Republican party (DiLorenzo 2002, 24). Arguably, the heart of the Republican "Free Soil" movement, based on a resistance to slavery expansion that might seem enlightened, was that whites were repulsed by the idea of the presence of black people expanding anywhere, where they might have to experience their presence in any capacity (Stampp 1980, 109-10); and if that's one's thinking, then the maintenance of slavery where it exists becomes critical, as it keeps black people confined to where they already are, with those whites who can tolerate being around them enough even to enslave them. As Trumbull put it, "There is a very great aversion in the West – I know

it is so in my state – against having free Negroes come among us. Our people want nothing to do with the Negro." (Stampp 1980, 109) He also infamously proclaimed in a Chicago speech: "We, the Republican party, are the white man's party. We are for the free white man, and for making white labor acceptable and honorable, which it can never be when negro slave labor is brought into competition with it." (110) While Lincoln's persistent affection for "colonization" schemes – a euphemism for the deportation of black people – was based, it seems, on a politically realist belief that white and black Americans could not coexist peacefully as equals (Lincoln 1953j, 402; see Kaufmann 1996, for a similar modern argument), these proposals also clearly helped to endear him to racists (DiLorenzo 2002, 30-1; Trefousse 1969, 31).

DiLorenzo (2002, 46) estimates that only about 2% of all Americans could have been considered Abolitionists; he argues that "not one in ten thousand" of Lincoln's voters did so hoping to see slavery abolished (46). One retired Ohio Whig of the day expressed the belief that "19/20 of the Northern people do not desire to interfere with Slavery in the Southern States . . . " (Baringer 1945, 242) True abolitionists, at any rate, were unquestionably in the minority even within the Republican party, at the elite or electoral level. But there were enough of them to make a point, especially by criticizing Lincoln and, in so doing, making his moderations salient. Green (2011, 110) writes that "Abolitionists, best described as the Republican fringe, actually may have helped Lincoln. . . . [I]t probably did him no harm with undecided or more conservative voters that Phillips and some of his [abolitionist] followers attacked Lincoln." Henry Clay, whom he famously idolized, was a slave owner, and was decried as such by radical Republicans; they labeled Lincoln's views "negrophobic." (Donald 2001, 124-5) He was, of course, anti-secession above all, and this, at least during the election, only meant to abolitionists that he might soften on slavery in order to avoid war – and any war, after all, might result, however messily, in abolition (Foner 2010, 146). Once Lincoln was in office, the papers that were among "the stanchest supporters of the administration" aimed to "protect it against the radical anti-slavery group within the Republican party." (Gray 1942, 59) This tug of war between moderate/conservative and radical Republicans all served to make it very clear to observers where Lincoln did stand and what forces he was perpetually resisting by standing there.

Republicans' most credible signal of a commitment to the "rights" of slave states was doubtlessly the Corwin Amendment, which would have protected slavery not just from Congressional action but, as it read, from any subsequent Constitutional amendments that might seek to ban slavery. By the time Lincoln was inaugurated, it had passed Congress; he stated in his inaugural address that he had "no objection to its being made express and irrevocable;" (Lincoln 1953d, 270) and he forwarded it to the states about two weeks later (Holzer 2008, 429; though cf. Foner 2010, 156-7, as Lincoln seemed keen to sabotage the amendment in not calling Congress into special session). By then, though, the South had fully made up its mind to secede, and wouldn't even bother to ratify it.

It is noteworthy, then, that neither Lincoln nor his party seemed to consider any sort of costly dynamic associated with this or any of their other promises and policy commitments, prior to making them. Lincoln's prior focus seemed be entirely and genuinely on what he believed right and proper: namely, he considered it right to fight slavery in every way, but improper, under the Constitution, to force emancipation upon slave owners. He vehemently resisted compromises to the South, but out of an apparently pure desire to demonstrate resolve in the face of secessionist coercion rather than out of fear of being inconsistent or disappointing radicals (Baringer 1945, 244-5; Davis 1971, 44).

Donald (2001, 124) asserts that "Consistency meant little to Lincoln." This deserves at least some qualification. Lincoln was clearly conscious of a general danger of making promises one couldn't keep, and gained quite a reputation for being very hard to pin down when that was what he desired (Stampp 1980, 163), but this seemed to matter for him only in regards to the low politics of jobbery and policy execution: he once instructed his surrogates to "make no contracts that bind me," but this was before the 1860 Republican convention and referred specifically to promises of appointments and other such back-room deals for the nomination (Green 2011, 51). He equivocated on the Monroe Doctrine, as his opponents pointed out, but it is not clear why (Nelson 1980, 51).

He resisted the publication of a supposedly authorized biography out of concern for the anti-slavery views it might purport him to have, but this seemed out of a dual fear that it would simply confuse people people further as to his true positions, and repel the conservatives he was careful to court, rather than that it might make commitments he would

then find it costly to break (Green 2011, 85). He hesitated to reiterate his positions on the big issues when urged to on a number of occasions, but always, it seems, out of fear of being misunderstood,[1] or of having the sheer number of reiterations inadvertently signal some form of weakness or dishonesty (99-100). Thus, Lincoln was very much aware of, and vocal about, the binding nature of his promises, but only, it seems, after they were made, e.g. his reply to a paper as president-elect: "I am not at liberty to shift my ground ... that is out of the question. If I thought a repetition would do any good, I would make it." (Baringer 1945, 54-5)

Just as the party chose the relatively moderate Lincoln in an attempt to appeal to both sides, Lincoln only considered policy adjustments in light of holding the party together. Every time, it seems, this meant refraining from an adjustment rather than making one. He resisted calls to moderate for fear of repelling radicals (Foner 2010, 152); he resisted calls to get more radical for fear of repelling moderates (Baringer 1945, 72). As I discuss further below, be seriously considered numerous concessions to the South that would have contradicted the party's "Chicago platform," but he deemed in each case that the internal backlash would destroy the party, just as compromise had supposedly destroyed the Whigs (Stampp 1980, 166-7).

5.1.3 Public Expectations

Proper and direct measurements of what people expected Lincoln to do would have to be based on behavior prior to his reversals, and ideally even before the election. These are difficult if not impossible to reliably gather, however, due to the swirl of propaganda, distortions, and rumor-mongering that surrounded the 1860 electoral process and defined the media environment of the day.

This was, of course, the era of "yellow journalism." Here, this means that journals freely and baselessly attempted to paint Lincoln as whatever would fit their partisan agenda with regard to slavery and rebel negotiations – and Lincoln as an abolitionist fit both

1. Davis 1971, 15-16. The fear of being misunderstood, or rather, of having his words twisted, was indeed well founded. Nichols (1968, 396-7) wrote that "Clues in regard to his policy were awaited, grasped eagerly when they were dropped, and just as often as not misinterpreted. At Indianapolis a brief attempt to differentiate between 'coercion' and 'invasion' was quickly interpreted as a declaration of war."

those agendas. Radical and conservative rags alike would assure their readers without any evidence whatever that Lincoln's assurances to the South are but for show, and behind them lies the heart of a true abolitionist. They fed directly off each other. Abolitionists crowed ambiguously that "Lincoln's election will be the downfall of slavery," and papers like the *New York Herald* took the bait and ran (Baringer 1945, 38; see also Nelson 1980, 39). "[I]f Lincoln is elected," they said, "you will have to compete with the labor of four million emancipated Negroes." (Green 2011, 88-9) The *New Orleans Crescent* maintained, as Maihafer (2001, 38) put it, "that Lincoln's alleged conservatism was an abolitionist plot to disarm the South, the easier to carry out antislavery schemes; the Crescent reviewed Lincoln's record and was convinced it proved him 'a thorough radical Abolitionist, without exception or qualification.'"

A Democrat who apparently knew Lincoln well and who was willing to allege that he had conspired with John Brown was aged to the hilt by Lincoln's rivals; and as Baringer (1945, 43) pointed out, "If politicians who had known Lincoln for years found it convenient to regard him as an abolitionist, a disunion force, there was small chance that strangers would correctly interpret his position of resistance to extension of slavery into the territories and non-interference with slavery in the states."

The *Times* declared that, in this era of misinformation, the greatest danger to the country was not disunion but a slave rebellion sparked, essentially, by expectation costs among slaves. They feared prior to the election that slaves were already under the impression that a Lincoln victory meant they were automatically and immediately free, and that the disappointment of being corrected would drive them to rise (60).

Still, there are some reliable indications of what at least some segments of the public really expected Lincoln to do, as opposed to what they found it politically advantageous to claim that they expected to him to do. Hindsight makes it very clear that the *Times* was overestimating slaves' susceptibility to sensationalist alarmism – there is no indication of even one such incident of post-election agitation – and the letters of prominent moderates suggest that the mass public largely tuned out the alarmism as well. Gideon Welles, a Democrat turned Republican due to his anti-slavery views, wrote:

> We dare not tell [the South] now that their stories are false; that Lincoln and the Republicans were never intended to intermeddle with their political interests, to disturb their slaves, or interfere with their laws; therefore the deception will go on, and perhaps will until Lincoln enters upon his duties. They will then learn the falsity of the statements that have been made and which the sham Democracy continue to repeat. This will produce a reaction. (Baringer 1945, 63)

Welles would serve as Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy.

One "prominent St. Lous lawyer," according to Baringer (1945, 73), who was not a Republican, wrote that: "Mr. Lincoln is no abolitionist – he is no fanatic . . . These [moderate] views . . . I think are those of Mr. Lincoln and the dominant politicans of his party – perhaps Seward may be an exception." The *Kentucky Statesman* wrote: "If we believed that the Federal Administration would and could now be used to carry out the aggressions of fanaticism against slavery our voice would now be for resistance. But we cling yet to a hope for Union . . . " (Statesman 1860) A prominent North Carolina politician wrote that "There is but little bitterness of feeling against him individually. . . . He is regarded as neither a dangerous or a bad man. We have no fears that he is going to attempt any great outrage upon us." (Baringer 1945, 242) As discussed below, the western states proved to be the real hotbed of pro-slavery insurrectionist sentiment within the wartime Union, and one letter to Trumbull read, "In the West the people are all right and will stand by Lincoln and our platform. We elected Lincoln and are just as willing, if necessity requires it, to fight for him, as to vote for him." (236)

Once the propaganda is set aside, there is virtually nothing left to indicate any genuine belief among radicals that Lincoln would prove more radical than he let on. Williams (1960, 131), notably, writes that "In the spring of 1862 they saw little hope of forcing Lincoln to espouse emancipation" – but Lincoln publicly did just that in July or September of that year. Instead there seemed be nothing but worry right up until then that he would moderate: "The chief apprehension during the first weeks appears to have been that Lincoln's cabinet would not be vigorously Republican." (Baringer 1945, 63) "Worry," it should be noted, is an ambiguous concept under the theoretical framework of expectations-based prospect theory.

One worries, presumably, because they place a substantial amount of weight on possible outcomes they would find undesirable, but this must be relative to the outcomes they find not just more desirable but also more likely; otherwise, they would do more than "worry," and would instead object or oppose. Thus, while reliable evidence is scant, it seems most likely that Lincoln's eventual shift in a more radical direction was, if anything, more of a surprise to radicals than to conservatives, and would thus be seen by them as a gain even more reliably than it would be seen as a loss by their wary ideological counterparts.

It should be noted, though, that there was a well-established line of American political thought, stemming from John Quincy Adams, that a civil war started for any reason would inevitably end in the "extirpation of slavery from this continent." (Foner 2010, 163-4) Adams had even provided the exact legal argument that Lincoln and his supporters would revive in order to assert emancipation as a war power. This led many educated individuals of all factions to begin fully expecting Lincoln's reversal as soon as the war began, or even before, if they had first arrived at the belief that war was inevitable (163-4). Even so, though, not all such people would credit Lincoln for the large positive reaction they would have to abolition: one radical Senator, who even expected Lincoln to nullify the Emancipation Proclamation after he made it, expressed confidence that emancipation would come, "protracted by the obstinacy and stupidity of rulers it may be, but come it will nevertheless." (Williams 1960, 138)

5.2 Breaking the Promise

5.2.1 Consideration of Initial Reversals – "Masterly Inactivity"

Many of Lincoln's supposed movements away from either his promises or the party platform (which agreed with each other exactly) were ephemeral – the product of supporters' paranoia and opponents' propaganda. Most of Lincoln's statements were drawn, as the Trumbull speech was, simply to "protect himself against possible charges of Republican extremists that he had retreated from the Republican platform." (Baringer 1945, 210-1) This, of course, itself suggests the intense negative reactions, consistent with loss aversion, that supporters would have had if the charges had proven true.

Baringer (1945) chronicles Lincoln's actual flirtations with compromise, all of which predated Sumter and ended afterward. There were certainly no considerations of moving in a more radical direction at this time, not including as such the numerous attempts at compensated emancipation and "colonization." The first incident of note is Thurlow Weed's attempt to restore the Missouri Compromise, i.e. to allow some extension of slavery. Distinctly consistent with expectation costs, the preliminary reactions to the idea, floated after Lincoln was elected, "astonished his contemporaries and brought much denunciation, and some applause;" Lincoln quashed it without hesitation "." (204-5)

Later, however, Lincoln offered one state up for slavery expansion: "Nor do I care much about New Mexico, if further extension were hedged against." (224) "He seemed to be ready to concede a point for the sake of holding the border states," Beringer wrote, "But he was moving with extreme caution to avoid alienating his radical Republican support." (224) This proved exceedingly wise, as it would soon become clear to Lincoln that he would need to completely disavow even this single overture. Rumors that it had been made in the first place met with disbelief of an ominous tone. The *Illinois State Journal* wrote:

> We have no hesitation in declaring that Mr. Lincoln has committed himself to no compromise whatever, and that the whole thing is a canard of the first water. . . . The country may rest assured that in Abraham Lincoln they have a Republican President. . . . Mr. Lincoln is not committed to the Border States compromise nor to any other. He stands immovably on the Chicago platform, and he will neither acquiesce in nor counsel his friends to acquiesce in any compromise that surrenders one iota of it. (231)

"Republicans in Congress," Baringer (1945, 232-3) wrote, "issued a denial that Lincoln had urged them to reach a settlement. From Lincoln's office came in denial. . . . They were not inclined to commit political suicide . . . " Northerners (or those with the relevant preferences) would clearly see any such concession as a loss, in light of Lincoln's election; one wrote to Trumbull asking, "but where would we be if the Republican and Union men give way to an ignoble compromise and give up the whole ground that we had fought & won?" (238)

Baringer (1945, 337) argues that Lincoln would have preferred to compromise, in principle, to avoid war, but that it was the ex-Democrat abolitionists, in particular, who would

have punished him for it with an unendurable passion. Thus Lincoln executed no policy reversals whatever prior to the outbreak of the war – and this alone brought praise, dubbed "masterly inactivity" not just by Republicans who feared his moderation but by Democrats who feared his possible radicalization. One of the latter wrote that "the self command that Mr. Lincoln has shown in keeping entire silence ... has given evidence of good sense and sound discretion and has greatly increased the confidence of all sensible men in him." (Baringer 1945, 241)

5.2.2 Deciding Upon the Proclamation

Up until the first Confiscation Act, signed four months into the war, the Lincoln administration continued to send all escaped slaves right back to their masters, in full accordance with the Dred Scott decision and the Fugitive Slave Act (Foner & Mahoney 1990, 116). Only the second Confiscation Act, almost a year after the first, actually freed any slaves, and both only applied to slaves whose masters were deemed guilty of participating in the rebellion. Thus the Emancipation Proclamation was a true turning point in the administration's policies, even though, as so many pointed out then and since, it freed no slaves initially, and only committed Union forces to freeing slaves in the territories it would subsequently capture (Incidentally one Southerner at the time argued that the Proclamation "will, in no wise, differ from the effects already experienced in those districts of the South which have been subjected to the rule of the enemy. ... Whenever a Yankee army has appeared practical emancipation has followed." Franklin 1963, 68; see also Foner & Mahoney 1990, 115)

Lincoln's personal preference was most certainly to free slaves without delay – he said right before signing the full Proclamation that "I never in my life felt more certain that I was doing right than I do in signing this paper" (White 2014, 96) – and he only maintained his course for as long as he did out due to the closely connected concerns of appeasing moderates and minimizing his derogations of Constitutional checks (Benson 1917, 316-7). He was also sensitive to the social chaos that immediate and uncompensated emancipation would cause, as he claimed to be to Stephens (Davis 1971, 96; Foner 2010, 219). But as Foner (2010, 151-2) points out, one of the reasons Lincoln's repeated assurances about not

freeing slaves never seemed to reassure was that Lincoln seemed personally unable to author them without the accompaniment of some sort of "moral condemnation of the institution [of slavery] and hope for its ultimate extinction." The idea of becoming the great emancipator, and ending this root cause of national division, was clearly attractive to him in itself, but only political events could push him to make that incredibly risky leap. In one part of an earlier speech to Congress widely interpreted as referring to slavery, Lincoln had said, "In considering the policy to be adopted for suppressing the insurrection, I have been anxious and careful that the inevitable conflict for this purpose shall not degenerate into a violent and remorseless revolutionary struggle." (Lincoln 1953b, 48-9)

Benson (1917) wrote that, "Above all, he would not act till he felt that the North generally would sustain his action, for he knew, better than Congressmen who judged from their own friends in their own constituencies, how doubtful a large part of Northern opinion really was." Lincoln had indeed flatly stated once that "Public opinion in this country is everything." (Donald 2001, 130) Writing after the fact, however, he asserted that he had had no such luxury as waiting until others had come around: "Things had gone from bad to worse, until I felt we had reached the end of our rope on the plan we were pursuing; that we had about played our last card, and must change our tactics or lose the game. I now determined upon the adoption of the emancipation policy." (Maihafer 2001, 81) But he had hesitated so much in the first place because he anticipated a popular backlash so great that it might itself cost him the game: "I would do it," he had said to Charles Sumner, "if I were not afraid that half the officers would fling down their arms and three more States would rise." (Franklin 1963) Less than three weeks later, he would present the first draft of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet. Thus, Foner (2010) is no doubt correct that the war would have ended with slavery "weakened but intact" if General McClellan had taken Richmond, as many argue he could have, in the spring or summer of 1862.

American public reactions aside, the most direct strategic appeal of freeing all Southern slaves was that it would guarantee that none that came within the reach of the Union army would ever return to rebel masters. The existence of the policy would also naturally embolden slaves in rebel states to escape, or, it was believed, to assault their masters

(though this they did not do) (Douglas 1963, 55: "there were no bloody incidents in the South between whites and blacks as a result of the Emancipation Proclamation"). "Liberate the slaves by proclamation," General Hunter had written, "and the props of the Southern Confederacy are knocked away." (Williams 1960, 137, 160)

But of perhaps equal importance was the foreign policy dimension, governed as it was by the substantial disapproval of slavery that by now existed in France, Russia, and especially the global hegemon, England. The South was obviously *the* slavocracy of the western world, made explicit enough in its new Constitution, but three factors counterbalanced this in Europeans' minds. The first and most well-known one was cotton interests, especially for England. The second factor, most relevant to the prospect of an emancipation proclamation, was that the North had not really taken any anti-slavery stance – arguably the only difference between the two sides was that the northern climate made slaves less profitable. Third, the South was clearly winning in 1862; even if the European powers didn't give aid to one side, they were close to recognizing the South and perhaps helping to broker peace (Benson 1917, 256-60). While the possibility of Europe riding to the North's rescue had always been remote at best, its aiding the South in at least some form was becoming increasingly likely, and the Proclamation might forestall that (DiLorenzo 2002, 37-8).

5.2.3 Going Public with the Proclamation

The very first public indication of Lincoln considering something like the Emancipation Proclamation is to be found in May of 1862, about two years into the war, in his proclamation revoking General Hunter's freeing of the slaves within his reach. There Lincoln chose to state the following:

> I further make known that whether it be competent for me, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, to declare the Slaves of any state or states, free, and whether at any time, in any case, it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintainance [sic] of the government, to exercise such supposed power, are questions which, under my responsibility, I reserve to myself, and which I can not feel justified in leaving to the decision of commanders in the field (Lincoln 1953i, 222-3).

In this way, Lincoln artfully *began* to reverse himself. He would of course eventually exercise this power to free slaves, but he would first determine that he had such power, and here he merely asserted that he had the power to determine that he had the power to free slaves. While this was unarguably incompatible with his earlier position that a slave-freeing proclamation would be the end of democratic governance no matter who issued it, it was also perhaps the most mild and legalistic way imaginable to begin publicly deviating from that position.

As a further illustration of how far Lincoln's underlying anti-slavery resolve had apparently come by this point, U.S. ambassador Carl Schurz claimed that in a private conversation with him about Hunter's order to free slaves, Lincoln complained: "I wanted him to *do* it, not *say* it." (Foner 2010, 207)

The Emancipation Proclamation was to take the form of a coercive measure, directed at state governments. The punishment for rebellion was the forfeiture of all slaves. While there is no indication that anyone expected this to convince any rebel states to lay down their arms – the idea was to instead deter the border states from joining them – the proper way to implement it as such was to make a preliminary proclamation setting a date for the proclamation proper and giving rebel states until that date to give in.

Lincoln brought his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation before his cabinet for their consideration in July 1862, a scant two months after opening the door for it while overriding Hunter. As Foner (2010, 218-9) observed:

> Now, Lincoln audaciously proposed to extend wartime emancipation to all the slaves in most of the places where the institution existed. Abolition would be immediate and without compensation. Whether the owner was loyal to the Union or a rebel would make no difference. Lincoln's cabinet seems to have been stunned by this announcement. Chase, the most radical member, remained silent. He admitted shortly after the meeting that the plan went "beyond anything I have recommended." ... Montgomery Blair expressed opposition, fearing that emancipation would cost Republicans votes in the fall elections.

"Thurlow Weed," according to Foner (2010, 219), "warned that the proposed proclamation

would produce serious 'disaffection' in the border states . . . "

The cabinet discussion resulted in one course correction. Seward convinced Lincoln of the danger of making the preliminary Proclamation while the North was so clearly losing (Foner 2010, 219-20). This was, at least in hindsight, an obvious paradox: the move *was* a desperate appeal to Europe insofar as it was a foreign policy at all, but it would fail as such the more it was seen as such. Even Lincoln's intention to make the actual Proclamation would be questioned, not to mention his implementation of it. Thus, he decided to wait until the war was seen as having turned in the Union's favor to make the preliminary Proclamation.

It seems to have been a known and accepted fact of the times, though, that anything that left anyone's brain in any form would end up somewhere in the next day's newspapers, with highly predictable distortions dutifully applied and an accompanying editorial longer than the report. Many of the documents I referenced above were public statements issued via the medium of private correspondence. Thus, Lincoln's decision to hold this cabinet discussion was his going public with the Proclamation. Foner (2010) writes that:

> With the cabinet divided, and perhaps still uncertain himself, Lincoln decided to put his emancipation order aside. Nonetheless, news of the proceedings, if not the actual result, quickly found its way into the press. A correspondent for the *New York Evening Post* reported that the cabinet had agreed on "total abolition" in the Confederate states "or I am grossly misinformed." Over the next few weeks, other newspapers related that Lincoln had decided on emancipation but had delayed his announcement because of the "determined opposition" of Seward and Blair.

The next notable event was abolitionist editor Horace Greeley's boldly titled *The Prayer of Twenty Millions,* calling for the rumored Proclamation to be made. Lincoln's response aimed mainly to head off accusations that he now valued abolition above union and peace: "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that." (Lincoln 1953l, 388) Lincoln would later insist that he never contradicted these words, but as Maihafer (2001, 76) observed, "he was telling the

world that the war was *not* about slavery." Abolitionists were indeed critical. The *New York Times* opined that the response "ensures the country of abundant sanity in the White House." (Maihafer 2001, 75)

5.2.4 Making the Proclamation

The Battle of Sharpsburg/Antietam was more of a draw than a Union victory, but Lincoln decided it was enough (Weber 2006, 63). He made the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22nd, 1862, with the actual proclamation to go into effect on New Year's Day, 1863.

He continued to focus predominantly on the accusations that restoring the union was no longer his primary goal: "My enemies say I am now carrying on this war for the sole purpose of abolition. It is & will be carried on so long as I am President for the sole purpose of restoring the Union. But no human power can subdue this rebellion without using the Emancipation lever as I have done." (Lincoln 1953f, 507) True as this might have been at the time, it was largely beside the point that he had gone back on his promise not to interfere with Southern slavery, and especially not by force of arms. As Foner (2010, 243) points out, "The Emancipation Proclamation differed dramatically from Lincoln's previous policies regarding slavery and emancipation, some of which dated back to his days in the Illinois legislature and Congress." He reversed himself on black troops, too: "Having previously opposed black recruitment and doubted blacks' military capacity, Lincoln in 1863 became an avid proponent." (250) As Foner & Mahoney (1990, 117-8) point out, the Proclamation made the war "precisely" the "remorseless revolutionary struggle" Lincoln had spoken of avoiding earlier.

"The President was once charged," Douglas (1963, 56) relates, "with having changed his mind [on emancipation] within a short time. 'Yes I have,' he replied. 'And I do not think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday.'"[2]bad promises are better broken than kept

2. Lincoln also said later, with regards to a different matter, that Donald 2001, 130.

5.2.5 Beyond the Proclamation

Benson (1917, 314) argued that the Proclamation "committed the North to a course from which there could be no turning back, except by surrender; it made it a political certainty that by one means or another slavery would be ended if the North won." This is an overstatement not just because the Proclamation did nothing on its own to end slavery in loyal states and territories, and not just because it could be undone by either of the other two branches of government of they were so inclined (Lincoln even pointed out in late peace negotiations with Confederate leadership that enforcement of the Proclamation would ultimately be up to the courts Davis 1971, 95-6) but because its issuance placed no institutionalized constraints upon the president who had issued it; only its implementation could render his reversal a matter of action rather than rhetoric, and implementation was inherently an ongoing and cumulative process.

Thus began a major test of Lincoln's nerve, from the outset. According to Franklin (1963, 86),

> Some critics of the Administration and opponents of the Proclamation hoped that the Republican losses in the [1862] elections might deter Lincoln from issuing the Proclamation on January 1. He was visibly shaken by the reverses at the polls in October and November. Everyone waited to see if those defeats would cause him to modify his announced policy regarding freedom for the slaves.

[3]

Lincoln held this line for well over a year,[4] and then, in July of 1864, went well beyond it. He sent Horace Greeley to negotiate peace in a meeting with Confederate agents at Niagara Falls, with a one-sentence memo addressed to and subsequently known as "To Whom It May Concern". It included "the abandonment of slavery" as peace condition, the first diplomatic communication to do so (Lincoln 1953o, 451). Needless to say, the talks faltered.

3. Of course, once he had made the Proclamation, abolitionists' hopes were up, so, in theory, their backlash to its repudiation would have been tremendous. Greeley had written during this time that "the promise of freedom must be kept." Maihafer 2001, 132

4. He once quipped that "broken eggs can not be mended. I have issued the emancipation proclamation, and I can not retract it." Franklin 1963, 123

According to Weber (2006, 163), Republican National Committee chairman Henry Raymond later "begged" Lincoln to reconsider:[5]

> Just three days before Raymond wrote his letter, Lincoln once again had rejected this notion of trading emancipation for peace, saying that if he agreed to such a swap he would be "damned in time and eternity for doing so." But upon receiving Raymond's letter, Lincoln waffled. . . . On August 24 Lincoln drafted a memo to put Raymond's plan into play, authorizing him to meet with Davis and proposing an immediate ceasefire based on the restoration of the Union. All other questions would be dealt with later. Then the president changed his mind. He rejected Raymond's plan within twenty-four hours of writing the memo, telling the editor that "sending the commission to Richmond would be worse than losing the presidential contest – it would be ignominiously surrendering it in advance." . . . Lincoln made this choice believing he would not be president for much longer (see also Benson 1917, 415) (Weber 2006, 163-4)

After surprising everyone, including himself, by winning reelection, Lincoln did far more than confirm his intention to maintain an abolitionist agenda. In his last annual message to Congress, he declared, astoundingly, that "If the people should, by whatever mode or means, make it an Executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another, and not I, must be their instrument to perform it." (Lincoln 1953c, 152) As Benson (1917, 428-9) points out,

> This last sentence was no meaningless flourish; the Constitutional Amendment prohibiting slavery could not be passed for some time, and might conceivably be defeated; in the meantime the courts might possibly have declared any negro in the Southern States a slave; Lincoln's words let it be seen that they would have found themselves without an arm to enforce their decision.

He was also behind the endorsement in the 1864 Republican platform of an amendment to ban slavery (335). He would never actually embrace the contention that abolition had

5. According to Weber, though, chairman Raymond's only concern was the bad optics of Lincoln's hard line on slavery – he trusted the rebels would refuse all the same without the abolition requirement, as they had indeed claimed they would.

overtaken peace as a priority of his, but this was a distinction without a difference. The mainstream belief among abolitionists, and even some who were not personally opposed to slavery, had always been that slavery was the root cause of secessionist tendencies, and so if secession was indeed to be forbidden, then only abolition could *truly* secure peace (e.g. Baringer 1945, 163). Lincoln himself had greatly and somewhat deliberately fueled this general thinking with the controversial "house divided" speech of 1858, though he had strenuously argued that we can and should acknowledge the threat that slavery poses to the Union without resorting to abolition by force and war (Benson 1917, 147; Lincoln 1953k, 514). Not long after refusing Raymond, Lincoln wrote: "Much is being said about peace; and no man desires peace more ardently than I. Still I am yet unprepared to give up the Union for a peace which, so achieved, could not be of much duration. The preservation of our Union was not the sole avowed object for which the war was commenced." (Lincoln 1953m, 1) Lincoln seems to have shied away from naming slavery in this instance, but it must have been the "avowed object" he was referring to.

Lincoln would, of course, go one more step further, and reverse himself on black citizenship and voting (he had said to applause in the debates with Stephen Douglas, for example, that "I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes") (Lincoln 1953e, 145; see also Weber 2006, 160). He did so, during the ongoing celebrations following the Confederacy's surrender, in a poetic speech at the White House: he referred to the "colored man," and "grant that he desires the elective franchise". As Maihafer (2001, 250) wrote: "The mention of black voting was enough to enrage one man in the crowd, a dark-haired Shakespearean actor named John Wilkes Booth. 'That means nigger citizenship,' Booth told a companion. 'Now, by God, I will put him through. That is the last speech he will ever make.'"

5.3 The Domestic Political Consequences

> The President tells me that he now fears a "fire in the rear" ... more than our military chances.
>
> Senator Charles Sumner, January 17, 1863
>
> Cited in Weber 2006, 81

5.3.1 Preferences and Approval Prior to the Reversal

Radical Expectations and Costs of (No) Compromise

The Republican party's 1860 Chicago platform lacked an abolitionist's policy of ending slavery by any means necessary, but it also lacked a conservative's policy of allowing slavery in any new states. Any deviation from the platform would move toward either of these extremes, and in so doing please one camp while offending the other. There were, however, many committed moderates who would be offended by such a deviation no matter which direction it moved in.

Lincoln's category of *anti-expansionism* is thus very much legitimate and useful. It is needed, for example, in order to understand the border states, and Lincoln's supporters there who kept those states loyal – far more so, it turned out, than the western states. Baringer (1945, 51) recounts a meeting between the President-elect and Kentucky unionists, "who complained that they had experienced a great difficulty explaining away Lincoln's celebrated 'House Divided' speech," but such explaining they had ardently done.

The strategic concerns of that speech are instructive in that they seemed to revolve not so much around backlash from conservatives directly, but around anti-expansionists, who worried about both abolitionism and alienating conservatives. Green (2011, 15) wrote that it "opened [Lincoln] to charges of radicalism, which could have hurt his efforts to position himself as a moderate and to attract support from ex-Whigs less concerned about slavery." Given these cross-pressures and the general uncertainty of just how numerous any of these ideological factions would prove to be during as well as after the election, it is remarkable how little real contradiction there is to be found between the addresses that Lincoln tailored

to each of them (Green 2011, 31).

My central argument and theoretical prediction regarding abolitionists is that their psychological reference points did not include the abolition of slavery that Lincoln eventually delivered to them, and their positive reactions to it were relatively weak for this reason. It would be problematic, then, to find that many abolitionists had high reference points which did include such radical policies. While I argue below that their muted reactions to the reversal are highly consistent with my predictions, it is also clear from their reactions to Lincoln's prewar attempts at compromise that their reference points fully included all of the anti-expansionist policies he had promised them, and they would have been very much in the domain of losses had any such compromise been struck. It was entirely their advance communication of this, in fact, that caused Lincoln to recoil from each of these attempts as he was making them, which indeed implies that his setting of relatively high expectations among anti-expansionists and abolitionists was a cause of the war. John Taylor, the retired Ohio Whig quoted earlier, had also written, "I think, and have so said to many of my Southern friends, that Mr. Lincoln would make a good & conservative President and would strive to be the President of the nation & *not of a party,* even if he should disappoint the very ultra[radical] men among his supporters." (Baringer 1945, 243) Taylor would instead be among the disappointed.

The already-discussed attempt to cede New Mexico to slavery is perhaps the clearest example of the mighty backlash threatened by the anti-expansionist/abolitionist coalition, but another can be found in the reaction to an unauthorized addition of Trumbull's to the speech he made on behalf of the President-elect. Unsurprisingly given his above-quoted statements, he chose to specify a Republican opposition to "negro-equality or amalgamation." (Lincoln 1953h, 16) Davis (1971, 16) wrote that "The reaction to this gesture was immediate and widespread. Northern critics feared the abandonment of Republican principles, and the Southern press was silent or suspicious." Lincoln wrote to Raymond that "This is just as I expected, and just what would happen to any declaration I could make;" he made no other until he was in office (16-17). Baringer's (1945, 68) analysis speaks particularly clearly of the expectation-cost pattern as a result of the shift perceived in Trumbull's speech: "Springfield gossip . . . was agitated by a possibility of trouble in Republican ranks because

the speech was too conservative. It might cause defections of Republican extremists. Yet his moderation produced no good effects on the opposite side." And when the New Mexico compromise was floated, "As was the case in November [after Trumbull's speech], the chief concern of Republican voters was that there be no desertion of Republican principles." (Baringer 1945, 234)

To be sure, though, the country was so highly polarized and impassioned that it can easily be imagined that the necessary compromises would have been too costly no matter where expectations were set. Much like World War I, the American Civil War was likely overdetermined, i.e. there were more than one factors and/or sets of factors that would have each been sufficient to cause the war under the circumstances (Cf. Goertz & Levy 2007, on the necessity/sufficiency causal paradigm). Seward, after all, had infamously forecast it as "the irrepressible conflict." (Seward 1860) Fittingly, Lincoln did find himself caught between some contradictory expectations, and paid costs in 1861 for disappointing moderates like Taylor: "As spring came on there were indications that large numbers of the voters who had no fixed party allegiance were swinging over to the Democrats. ... The charge that [Republicans] had provoked secession by their agitation of the slavery question and then had, for partisan reasons, prevented the working out of a reasonable compromise was taking a serious toll." (Gray 1942, 48)

Rallying 'Round the Flag

The Northern reaction to the firing on Fort Sumter very well may have been the most intense rally-'round-the-flag effect in American history. The Democratic party in some states declared itself nonexistent: "At war rallies spokesmen of both parties proclaimed the adjournment of politics for the duration of the hostilities." (55) In Ohio, Republicans invited Democrats to form a new Union party, so they did; the original Democrat nominee for Lt. Governor refused to run, "on the ground that it was not a time for the existence of a party in any respect opposed to the federal administration." (62) Iowa Republicans, being stronger in that state, insisted that Democrats just become Republicans, which they generally did; the remaining Democrats nominated two men who turned the nomination down before a third "was finally prevailed upon to accept it." (62) The two party poles in Kalamazoo,

Michigan were cut in half, spliced together, and reerected. Lincoln's favorite rival, Stephen Douglas, declared that "There can be but two parties, the party of patriots and the party of traitors. We [Democrats] belong to the former." (Weber 2006, 15)

Government recruitment quotas were set not as minimums but as maximums; volunteers waited in line for hours (Gray 1942, 55). Democrat recruits seemed just as numerous as Republican ones (62).

Belief that the Union could and should be preserved by force was certainly the prime driver of this war fervor – along with some unvarnished hatred of the South (Williams 1960, 164) – but perhaps the next biggest driver was the belief, as always, that the war would be gloriously short. A ninety-day war, specifically, seemed to be the prevailing notion, and on both sides (Weber 2006, 15). This would itself, of course, generate expectation costs for those considered responsible for building up those expectations. In the North, it seems, the Republican party absorbed much of it, with Lincoln himself largely, and appropriately, exempted (Gray 1942, 97; c.f. Gray 1942, 75). Recruitment also saw a significant lull, as well, while 1861 was coming to a close and victory was only moving farther out of reach; Grant's victories, though, then revived it (Gray 1942, 75-9). Even with the defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run, however, the reaction was more fervor rather than less: "The defeat of our army has created another Fort Sumter rising of the people in their might." (60)

The War over the Purpose of the War

"Most Democrats," Weber (2006, 16) observed, "including Douglas, agreed, though, that the war should have one aim: to reunite the country. Altering Southern institutions, especially slavery, was not among their objectives." That "the Republican policy was gradually being directed toward using the war to free the slaves" was a "latent fear to which an effective appeal could be made . . . ;" the Democratic Party of Putnam County, Indiana (a state immune to bipartisanship) declared, ". . . We will therefore vote for men and money to suppress rebellion . . . but when perverted so as to interfere with the Constitutional rights of any of the people of the several States, we will then vote against men and money and the prosecution of the war." (Gray 1942, 65) Congress passed with near-unanimity the Crittenden-Johnson Resolutions, known jointly as the War Aims Resolution, shortly after

First Bull Run. They specified that the war's purpose is not "overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and to preserve the Union, with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired; and that as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease." The confiscation acts would get through Congress, but the rally effect had clearly passed, and Democrats were arm-in-arm against any real anti-slavery action (Foner 2010, 203).

Lincoln's reversal would begin mid-1862, but even right up to that point, Lincoln found allies among moderate Republicans and Democrats alike; according to Gray (1942, 80), they considered him "a buffer against the Radical wing of the Republican party." There was, though, the outspoken minority that clearly believed, without proper evidence, the true prophecy of John Quincy Adams, and would not be surprised, at least in this early stage of the war, if Lincoln started freeing slaves. "Even War Democrats," Weber (2006, 22) wrote, "were wary of a hidden agenda to get rid of slavery. ... Suspicion about the Republicans' real aims ran so deep among some Democrats that Lincoln met with scoffs when he insisted that he had no intention of touching slavery where it already existed." Some abolitionists seemed particularly confident and hopeful, but only when the war was going well: "Abolitionist congressmen who had been most critical a short time before," Gray (1942, 79) wrote, "began to counsel their like-minded constituents to have patience with Lincoln and to trust the natural course of events to lead to slavery's extinction". Owen Lovejoy, a friend of Lincoln's, would tell his fellow abolitionists that Lincoln is in a carriage being pulled by "the Radical steed. ... If he does not drive as fast as I would, he is on the same road." (Foner 2010, 209) Abolitionist Wendell Phillips exhibited the curious and doubtlessly strategic behavior of shifting immediately after Sumter from persistent and vocal doubt of Lincoln's character to insisting that he had "always believed in the sincerity of Abraham Lincoln." (164)

Other abolitionists, most notably Greeley, exhibited the opposite pattern. Some months prior to Lincoln deciding on the Proclamation, Greeley had publicly confronted him about the purpose of the war and Lincoln had stood firm. Asked about it later, Greeley replied: "It is said that but for my action in the convention, Lincoln would not have been nominated.

It was a mistake ... the biggest mistake in my life." (Maihafer 2001, 59) Greeley, clearly, had let himself get his hopes up. Assuming that he then renormalized downward and saw Lincoln's eventual reversal as a gain would help to explain the well-known tensions that perpetuated between the two men.

On November 2nd, 1861, less than 7 months into the war, Lincoln rescinded the slave-freeing order of General John C. Frémont, relieved him of command, and issued the previously-quoted order declaring actions such as his an attack on Constitutional democracy. Because of this event, Foner (2010, 181) wrote, "the debate had become public, and it would not go away."

There are some indications that abolitionist sentiment grew somewhat in the following months (209-10). The *New York Times* applauded Lincoln's decision, yet contended that Frémont's actions were "in harmony with public sentiment throughout the North." (178) Abolitionists of course objected while others commended: Foner (2010, 181), quoting a friend of Lincoln's in Congress, wrote that "Lincoln's strongest support came from his former opponents, while 'Republicans, thus far, complain the most.'" Maihafer (2001, 51) wrote that "Longtime Abolitionists such as Greeley were disappointed by Lincoln's action, and papers such as the *Chicago Tribune* were quick to denounce it."

While this may be curiously reminiscent of the expectation-cost pattern, abolitionists seemed in fact rather forgiving: "Even in Massachusetts, however, most Republicans had no desire to break with the president [over Frémont]." (Foner 2010, 180-1) Greeley included in an editorial that "the President has doubtless done what appeared to him not only expedient but urgently necessary." (Maihafer 2001, 51) The usually-critical *Herald* wrote that "The President, who has always been known as an upright man, of late months has justly earned the reputation of a wise and energetic statesman ..." (51) "The Radicals," Williams (1960, 143) wrote, "wrote off the episode as another indictment against Lincoln, but their machine made no move to save Frémont."

5.3.2 Reactions to the Proclamation

The Gratitude of Abolitionists

The abolitionist *Chicago Tribune* seized immediately upon Lincoln's proclamation regarding Hunter, writing that it "sounds like a prophet's word" and that freedom "will soon dawn." (Foner 2010, 207) Williams (1960, 14) wrote that "as they slowly compelled Lincoln to adopt the radical policies, the Jacobins [radical abolitionists] became increasingly vigorous in their support of the war." Gray (1942, 100-2) wrote extensively, though, of the weakness of these positive reactions: "Republican difficulties were multiplied by divisions and lethargy within the party. The split between the anti-slavery radicals and the more moderate elements of which Lincoln was a representative had gone deep, and lasting animosities had been built up. The radicals had become increasingly exasperated with the reluctance of the administration to make use of the opportunity presented by the war for the abolition of slavery. . . . [Abolitionists'] resentments and suspicions could not be dissolved overnight. . . . [T]he preliminary announcement of emancipation was naturally regarded as a grudging and tardy concession."

One of Grant's staff officers even characterized abolitionist ingratitude as "abuse": "They repeat all that the Democrats said last year and were disloyal for saying." (White 2014, 99) Benson (1917, 321) observed that "the strong Republicans for their part had acquiesced in [the Emancipation Proclamation] coldly, some of them contemptuously." Those who did not "dread . . . revolutionary action," he wrote, considered him "timid and half-hearted." (322)

The preliminary Proclamation had been made right in time for the 1862 midterms, in which the Democrats "registered some overwhelming triumphs" (Gray 1942, 108) (Cf. Weber 2006, 69). Republicans of all stripes considered racist backlash to be a major factor in 1862 defeat (Gray 1942, 109). Democrats bragged that "radicals have ruined themselves and abolitionism," that this was "the beginning of the end of the utter downfall of Abolitionism", and, it seems, a number of radicals themselves agreed (Weber 2006, 69). Lincoln's friend Orville Browning called the Proclamation "disastrous" (along with the suspension of habeas corpus) (69). "In this disintegration of Republican morale there were overtones of hysteria,"

Gray (1942, 127) wrote. "Some wondered if emancipation had not after all been a mistake, perhaps a fatal one . . . "

An argument that runs counter to theoretical predictions here comes from Franklin (1963, 144): "The enthusiasm of the abolitionists was greater than that of a group that had reached the conclusion that half a loaf was better than none. Their initial reaction of dissatisfaction with the Preliminary Proclamation had been transformed into considerable pleasure over the edict of January 1." Franklin (1963, 88) also observed, however, that, specifically with regards to their reactions to the Proclamation, "The President had some supporters in Congress but they were neither as vehement nor as vocal as his enemies." He also points out that the *London Times* praised the Proclamation "however tardily, reluctantly, and partially made." (131)

"Within Republican ranks," White (2014, 98) wrote, "radicals and abolitionists had been disappointed by Lincoln's sluggish move toward emancipation and black citizenship." Weber (2006, 61) asserts that "The most vocal Northerners were those who criticized the administration, not those who defended it."

5.3.3 The Conservative Backlash

The Birth of the Copperheads

While shock and disappointment began to set in as soon as Lincoln made his remarks regarding Gen. Hunter, the making of the full Proclamation no doubt brought the brunt of it. Weber (2006, 76) wrote that, "Although the proclamation had been circulating since late September, its enactment stirred doubts even among War Democrats."

"[S]ince the Proclamation of Emancipation," Benson (1917, 386) wrote, "the North had again become possessed . . . of an organized Opposition ready and anxious to take the place of the existing Administration." Elsewhere, Benson (1917, 326) wrote that "The Democrats, who from this time on became very formidable to Lincoln . . . chiefly denounced the President for trying to turn the war into one against slavery." He argued, further, that "it is easy to understand the difficult position of the orthodox Democrats, who two years before had voted against restricting the extension of slavery, and were now asked for the

sake of the Union to support a Government which was actually abolishing slavery by martial law." (Benson 1917, 384)

As Gray (1942, 73) put it, "a movement was getting under way to commit the Democratic party to an anti-war policy, reoccupying the position that it had generally held before fighting began. . . . [Their Ohio platform] stipulated that Democratic support was pledged only to a war aimed at the restoration of 'the Union as it was.'" "No effort was spared by the anti-administrationists," he wrote elsewhere, "to tar the Republican party with the charge of Abolition intentions. . . . [They] called attention to the accumulating indications that the radicals were forcing President Lincoln toward their position – a view which some of those radicals, among them Horace Greeley, were coming to share." (90-1)

"[S]ince its organization," Gray (1942, 98) pointed out,

> the Republican party had always officially insisted that its program called for no interference with slavery in the Southern states, and this had been adhered to during the war in the face of repeated Democratic charges that it was the Republican intention to discard that promise at the first opportunity. . . . the Democrats attacked the new policy from every direction. They scorned it as an emblem of Republican hypocrisy . . .

Moderate Republicans who could not stomach becoming Democrats openly discussed forming a new party of their own (129).

Ohio Democrat and soon-to-be-former Congressman Clement Vallandigham was the natural candidate to lead this ascendant movement of Peace Democrats, scornfully dubbed Copperheads by Unionists who saw them as poisoning the North. Among those who had resisted even the initial winds of war fever, Gray (1942, 57) wrote that Vallandigham was "Most conspicuous of all". He managed to get 50 votes in favor of (with just 70 against) a bill to preemptively declare Lincoln "guilty of a high crime against the Constitution" if and when he issued the full Proclamation, specifically on the grounds that it would render false and misleading his previous reasons for waging war (115-6). He claimed to have had a "vision" of the "gospel of peace" being replaced by the "gospel of abolition and war;" (Maihafer 2001, 100) the "piercing-eyed, calmly arrogant Ohioan" argued in a long speech

two weeks after the Proclamation that "War for the Union was abandoned; war for the negro openly begun." (Gray 1942, 119)

One usually first hears of Vallandigham as the Congressman that Lincoln arrested (after he left Congress) for agitating against the draft, and exiled following a military trial (e.g. DiLorenzo 1998, 263). According to Douglas (1963, 156), he was arrested "for declaring that the Lincoln administration had needlessly prolonged the war in order to liberate the blacks and enslave the whites in America." He specifically accused the administration in that speech, according to Weber (2006, 95), of "misleading the people about the goals of the war."

"Emancipation," as Weber (2006, 119) points out, "was the first item on a lengthy list of the conservatives' grievances." There is indeed a seemingly endless litany of remarks to be found from prominent individuals speaking directly to the sense of surprise and loss they experienced due to the reversal. The following examples are worth highlighting:

- Congressman Crisfield of Maryland: "As the thunderbolt from a cloudless sky, the *proclamation* fell upon the country, men stood mute in amazement. Its suddenness, its utter contempt for the Constitution, its imperial pretension, the thorough upheaving of the whole social organization with it decreed, and the perspective of crime, and blood, and ruin, which it opened to the vision, filled every patriotic heart with astonishment, terror and indignation." (Franklin 1963, 87-8)

- Congressman Wright of Pennsylvania called it "a fraud upon the gallant men" fighting for the Union (87).

- Congressman Cravens of Indiana: "The people would never consent to it, and it was not an issue at the beginning of the war." (87)

- Lt. John M. Garland: "the administration have at last shown their hands, and that their principles and their hearts are blacker than the 'nigger' they are fighting for." (White 2014, 47)

- William Jarvis of Connecticut: "It will unite the whole South, and protract the war indefinitely. I did not think Lincoln could be such an obstinate old fool." (Weber 2006,

65)

The month following the preliminary Proclamation, the *Chicago Times* (not to be confused with the abolitionist *Tribune*) ominously wrote: "The democratic party resists the southern rebellion with fire-arms. As yet it resists the abolition rebellion only with arguments and ballots; we pray God that it may suppress it by these weapons and that it shall not be compelled to resist it with bullets." (Gray 1942, 104)

As Weber (2006, 64-5) describes, "Copperheads shouted their 'I told you so's' from every corner." To be sure, many of them may have genuinely not been surprised and therefore not overweighted the reversal as a loss. H. B. Whiting claimed to welcome the Proclamation on behalf of "those stupid thick-headed persons who persisted in thinking that the President was a conservative man and that the war was for the restoration of the Union under the Constitution." Weber (2006, 66) also specifies, though, that this massive growth of the Copperheads was due mainly to those who were in fact disappointed by the Proclamation, and highly motivated to boot: "The people who joined the ranks over the coming months had for more than a year given Lincoln the benefit of the doubt, but when the end came for them and they jumped to the antiwar ranks, they were as fervent and vitriolic as the people who had been there from the beginning."

There is no question that much of the dissent at this time was due to the Union army being on its heels rather than disapproval of the Proclamation. Weber (2006, 2) aptly observes that Democrats' "influence waxed and waned in counterpoint to the Union armies' successes and failures," which proves particularly relevant to Lincoln's reelection, discussed below. As Benson (1917, 326) points out, Lincoln might as well have waited for a victory before unveiling the Proclamation just so the outcry would be cushioned. But Antietam was hardly a resounding victory as already mentioned, and most unfortunately for him, it turned out to be a relatively bright spot in a long chain of losses and setbacks after it as well as before it, ending finally with Gettysburg. As I discuss in the next section, though, this is very likely endogenous to a very large degree: the continuing battlefield losses were themselves due in no small part to the blow the unexpected Proclamation dealt to troop numbers and morale.

Lincoln was visibly stressed and practically in ill health over the midterms that were to occur between the preliminary and full Proclamation (Donald 2001, 156). Democrats-cum-Copperheads only had a few short months to mobilize their post-Proclamation retribution, but they did, ending the Republican majority in the House. Maihafer (2001, 85), quoting the editorials post-election, observed that "The voters were serving notice ... that they approved a war for the restoration of the Union, but not for 'the bloody extermination of slavery.'"

Taken as a measure of expectation costs, in fact, the midterm election results are certainly an underestimate. Republicans made gains in the Senate, but this was almost certainly due to major advantages the electoral calendar happened to give them at that time. Gray (1942, 108) goes so far as to assert that "these fortuitous circumstances deserve recognition among the decisive factors in the outcome of the Civil War."

The midterms, also, would be the last time that the Copperheads would be able to tamp down their extremist impulses and nominate electable candidates. White (2014, 19) wrote that, "In their moment of triumph following the 1862 elections, Democrat leaders overreached. Believing that the northern populace was moving toward the Peace movement, they ran three archconservatives for the governorships of Connecticut, Ohio, and Pennsylvania in 1863. ... Republicans were horrified by the Democrats' choices." Gray (1942, 143) wrote similarly: "It was apparent [in 1863] that the peace Democrats had not only failed to attain their objectives but had by their extremism alienated many of the conservatives, even of their own party, who had supported them the previous fall as a protest against Abolition and arbitrary acts of government." Interestingly, it seems that Lincoln had at one point made overtures to the Democrats, seeking new allies after his own party's support proved weak, but, here too, their extremism caused them to throw away the opportunity presented them. This incident dismayed more level-headed Democrats and stoked divisions within their ranks, as well (White 2014, 14-5).

Weber (2006, 6) writes that Copperhead views "took on a bizarre, even reckless quality. Their refusal to deal with the complexity of the war and of governance nearly consigns their ideas to the realm of fantasy." One of the greatest ironies of the war is that fanatical Copperhead agitation drove many governors to reluctantly turn to Lincoln and become

dependent on his aid and support, substantially increasing his centralized and personal power in the process (Weber 2006, 2).

This is not strictly predicted by expectation cost theory, and in fact ultimately runs somewhat counter to it: if the disappointed public is put so far in the realm of losses that they adopt disastrously risk-averse strategies, then they will in fact inflict less of a political cost on the leader in question. It is certainly consistent, though, with prospect theory, and with the theorized process that results in net costs on balance. Here, at any rate, it can be argued that this paradoxical muting of costs is part of the causal story, and of the explanation for why Republicans were not punished more severely than they were.

Gray (1942, 214) writes that Democrats in fact mounted their "supreme challenge" in the 1863 municipal and special elections, which is true only in a certain sense. The Union got lucky on the battlefield during the election (Maihafer 2001, 149-50), and this coupled with Copperhead extremism led to modest Republican gains (There are also indications that Lincoln had begun to persuade a significant number of voters to embrace abolition Foner 2010, 256-6; Donald 2001, 171). At the same time, these Copperhead candidates did so much better than expected that it caught the attention of the South – "Is this not evidence of a very strong hostility to Lincoln?" wrote a Georgian Senator to Jefferson Davis – which in turn began the important saga of the Confederate attempts to coordinate with the Copperheads using agents based out of Canada (White 2014, 124).

There was, in fact, very nearly an organized, large-scale, and armed revolt across the West, to be aided by these Confederate agents. Vallandigham was to reenter the country and his arrest would be the signal and supposed impetus. The only apparent reason it did not occur was that Lincoln refused to do his part, and refrained from arresting Vallandigham (Gray 1942, 169). Two other foiled plots, hatched in Indiana and southern Illinois, are certainly of note: one resulted in the confiscation of hundreds of weapons and several treason convictions, and the other sought to overthrow Lincoln's government outright (Weber 2006, 148-51). One costly incident of Copperhead-Confederate coordination likely did occur, as cavalry raider John Hunt Morgan, in Weber's Weber (2006, 113) words, "carved a path through Indiana and Ohio."

The Military Cost

It may not be an overstatement to say that the Emancipation Proclamation devastated the Union army. It did this in three ways. First, it took a large number of troops out of the fight through either desertions or courts-martial; second, it demoralized a large number of the troops that were still in the fight; and third, it made recruiting far more difficult and expensive.

Depletion of the Ranks

One estimate places the number of desertions attributable to the Proclamation at over 200,000 (DiLorenzo 2002, 45). According to McPherson (1995, 63), "Plenty of soldiers believed that the proclamation had changed the purpose of the war. They professed to feel betrayed. They were willing to risk their lives for the Union, they said, but not for black freedom." (see also Gray 1942, 123). There were "intimations that the men in the army should consider themselves freed from any obligation of further service since the proclamation had added a new purpose to the war." (122) Democrat-aligned newspapers made this exact argument openly (133). "Open defiance to the administration's policies was almost commonplace," Weber (2006, 92) wrote, "especially in the form of desertion. Some families, fed up over the Emancipation Proclamation and the mounting death toll, advocated it." States under Democrat control even seriously considered ordering all troops from their state to return home until and unless the Proclamation was rescinded. Some Kentucky politicians did publicly demand this (Gray 1942, 130-1).

One Illinois Sergeant simply proclaimed: "the President has broken his oath, and I have a right to break mine." He was dishonorably discharged after six months hard labor (White 2014, 92). While the vast majority of punishments and discharges were handed down after impassioned and truly unprofessional outbursts and/or refusal to carry out assigned duties (48-54), the administration was clearly eager to make examples of soldiers at even the first sign of post-Proclamation discontent. White (2014, 53) provides an instructive account (emphasis in original):

> A court martial convicted Lt. Hugh H. McClune of the 135th Pennsylvania of disloyally criticizing the government for "waging an abolition war against the South." McClune

> had said these things while stationed on Capitol Hill in early October 1862, just two weeks after Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Hoping to make an example of McClune, the court sentenced him to be "cashiered and be deprived from ever holding any office or post of honor or trust under the United States, and that he be confined by imprisonment in the Old Capitol Prison, or such other place as the commanding General may direct, during the present rebellion, *and that this sentence be published throughout the United States.*"

Another instructive case is that of Pvt. Thomas Clifton, who deserted after the preliminary Proclamation, got caught, and explained his reasons plainly in court: "I took an oath that as soon as the war was for the abolition of slavery, I would take no further part. At the first opportunity, I took my chance to remain neutral." (White 2014, 87) He was sentenced to death by firing squad, and Lincoln approved the sentence. What is instructive here is the contrast with other cases. Another private who deserted on the very day of the Proclamation and went on an unhinged rant about Lincoln, abolitionists, slaves and death, got his death sentence commuted, along with the vast majority of other such sentences (though he was still sentenced to hard labor – where he couldn't vote – for the duration of the war) (86). Evidently, the surest way to exempt yourself from Lincoln's renowned mercy was to justify your behavior by reference to personal disappointment of his recent policy shift.

As I discuss below in relation to the 1864 election, the Union army came to be quite favorable to Lincoln, if not outright abolition, and much is often made of this (Weber 2006, 199)steadfast support. Arguably, though, this was entirely the product of the departure of those who were not supporters, and not at all due to the persuasion of the troops or their conversion into Republicans. Just five months after the full Proclamation, in fact, one of them had written: "what soldiers are left are true Blue[;] what few Butternuts [i.e. Copperheads] we had have either disserted or resigned." (White 2014, 154)

Demoralization of the Ranks

Union troops wrote a new marching cadence to mark the Emancipation Proclamation (Weber 2006, 78):

> "De Union!" used to be de cry –

For dat we went in strong;

But now de motto seems to be,

"De nigger, right or wrong!"

"This we know," one Democrat paper read: "had this proclamation been issued sooner, many in the army would not have voluntarily gone ...." (Gray 1942, 108) Soldiers expressed feeling "swindled," "deceived," and "duped" (White 2014, 81). Weber (2006, 67, 78-9) chronicled their "disgust, discontent, and even expressions of disloyalty," in explicit connection to the Proclamation (none of the quotes or other evidence I provide in this chapter along these lines is not explicitly a result of the news of the Proclamation). One officer wrote "I don't want to fire another shot for the Negroes and I wish that all the abolitionists were in hell. ... I do not fight or want to fight for Lincoln's Negro proclamation one day longer." (DiLorenzo 2002, 46) Another wrote that "If emancipation is to be the policy of this war ... I do not care how quickly the country goes to pot." (45-6)

One may think, given the above, that Union soldiers would be highly motivated at least once the conservatives had all deserted or been drummed out, but they were significantly disheartened by the victories and clear enthusiasm of the loss-averse Copperheads, who there themselves, of course, motivated by the loss aversion that they were experiencing due to Lincoln's earlier promises. "It is a common saying here," one soldier wrote about his unit in perhaps a deliberate imitation of Lincoln, "that if we are whipped, it will be by Northern votes, not by Southern bullets." (Weber 2006, 69) Even soldiers whose views seemed more or less aligned with the Copperheads' were demoralized by their victories and what it seemed to signal: "It looks like patriotism and decency had deserted the people, and conservatism and common sence [sic] had deserted the administration. The people have voted their sympathies for the rebellion, and the President has taken away the strongest hope of the army." (70)

It didn't help that the commander of the army and Lincoln's future presidential challenger, General George McClellan, was clearly one of those disappointed by the Proclamation. His immediate reaction to news of the preliminary Proclamation would have been more than enough to get him executed if not, presumably, for his rank: "[it is now] almost

impossible for me to retain my commission & self respect at the same time . . . to fight for such an accursed doctrine as that of a servile insurrection." (White 2014, 42; McClellan refers to the widespread and erroneous belief that the Proclamation would cause violent slave revolts) His subsequent address to the troops, supposedly to maintain discipline and deter disloyalty, raised a legendary stir with the line, "the remedy for political errors, if any are committed, is to be found only in the action of the people at the polls." (Benson 1917, 375)

Recruiting Difficulties

Volunteering literally stopped in the period immediately following the Emancipation Proclamation (Gray 1942, 136; Weber 2006, 86). Those that volunteered while the Proclamation was merely rumored to be in the works generally did so reluctantly, and would hardly make for reliable troops; one citizen recounted that "As many as 2,000 came into Jonesboro last Saturday, cursing the Republicans, and wanted to volunteer – to volunteer for nine months and get the bounty." (Gray 1942, 85) Lincoln expressed grave concerns to his Vice-President: "the stocks have declined, and troops come forward more slowly than ever. . . . The North responds to the Proclamation sufficiently in breath; but breath alone kills no rebels." (Franklin 1963, 63) A draft of unprecedented size would be required "in spite of unprecedentedly high bounties and other inducements." (Gray 1942, 136) It would prove so difficult that many Republican officials spent more time trying to fudge their quotas or get them reduced than legitimately filling them (209).

Just as it was widely argued that desertion was now acceptable in light of the Proclamation, it was argued that conscription and other required war contributions were now unlawful as well (123). One paper reported the killing of a draft officer with the headline: "Murderer at Heart Himself Murdered." (154)

As Benson (1917, 379) points out, times of good fortune on the battlefield eventually returned, but did not bring the volunteers they were supposed to, or even make drafting easier. Some drafting was completed successfully, but mainly due to the presence of troops ready to punish dodgers, and carefully laid plans to draft each district at a different time (which made the most of the available troops as they could move with the draft) – all on top of those recent battlefield success stories (Gray 1942, 140, 197-8). Still, according to Weber

(2006, 90), "Conscription ... was at best only a qualified success ... more men dodged the draft than paid commutation fees or hired substitutes."

Riots and the Rebel West

Gray (1942, 111-2) recounts a good number of instances of bloodless but destructive unrest that first began to occur after the preliminary Proclamation was made; he quotes a paragraph from an Ohio paper, filled with racial slurs and decrying the new purpose of the war, and then dryly remarks: "there were a good many hints that, though carried through this time, a more general measure of conscription in the future might meet with serious obstacles." (112)

Some bands of deserters "set up reigns of terror designed to drive out Union sympathizers and to make whole districts untenable for agents of the government." (134) Private letters contain intimations of intentions to commit genocide against abolitionists and/or Republicans, and they go well beyond the standard political expressions of frustration or fantasy. One soldier's family wrote to him not long after the Proclamation: "come home, if you have to desert, you will be protected – the people are so enraged that you need not be alarmed if you hear of the whole of our Northwest killing off the abolitionists." (133) A letter to Illinois Governor Richard Yates, from an anonymous resident of the conservative stronghold of southern Illinois widely referred to as "Egypt," read: "Some of them Say they are going to help Jeff Davis & others Say they are going to hang cut throtes & shoott every Republican in egypt they Say it will be sport ... killing the Republicans as they are scatiring." (Weber 2006, 23-4) The entire state of Indiana could be considered in a state of lawless rebellion from the time of the Proclamation until war's end (Weber 2006, 80-81; Gray 1942, 126, 194).

The first significant attempt at a post-Proclamation draft, in accordance with the 1863 Conscription Act, sparked the New York draft riots, "the most violent civil upheaval in American history except for the South's rebellion itself" according to Foner (2010, 123). It is worth noting that this was just days after Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, so this was while post-Proclamation war enthusiasm, was if anything, relatively high.

Weber (2006, 107-11) splits the four-day riot into three phases. In the first phase, the

mob targeted actual draft officers, Republicans, and the rich, who were able to buy their way out of the draft. The second consisted of looting. The third phase was, in Weber's words, a "full-fledged race riot." An orphanage was burnt to the ground with everyone inside because the children were black. The *New York Herald* reported that "Everywhere throughout the city, they [black people] are driven about like sheep, and numbers are killed of whom no account will ever be learned." (Maihafer 2001, 128)

The riots were eventually put down violently, by the very same troops arriving home victoriously from Gettysburg (DiLorenzo 1998, 248). Lt. Col. Merrill of Indiana had presciently written that "There will be terrible work if any of the regiments have to be called from the field to suppress riots." (Weber 2006, 84) Maihafer (2001, 129) endorsed the *New York Evening Post's* estimate of the death toll at between four and five hundred; DiLorenzo (1998, 248) similarly estimates between three hundred and a thousand.

The New York riot was hardly an isolated incident; it tends, understandably, to hog the spotlight, and distract modern observers from the smaller and subsequent riots that occurred in Boston, Fairfield, Portsmouth, Rutland, Wooster, and Troy Weber (2006, 112).

Other factors no doubt played significant parts in fueling these riots. The war had simply gone on for a very long time and with a very large cost, and the drafts also had to be particularly large because of a very inauspicious halt to recruiting that occurred shortly before the Proclamation went public (though as I argue above and below, respectively, these two factors are also best understood as expectation costs of their own). At any rate, it is clear that the Proclamation and the abolitionism it engendered were a major cause, at least. Just days before the riot, in fact, Governor Seymour declared at a mass meeting, "Remember this: that the bloody, treasonable, and revolutionary doctrine of public necessity can be proclaimed by a mob as well as by a government." (Maihafer 2001, 129) The *Chicago Times* wrote shortly afterward that rioting was "the natural and inevitable fruit of the lawlessness of abolitionism and for whatever comes of it abolitionism will be responsible." (Weber 2006, 116)

Indirectly, the reaction to the Proclamation helped cause the riots by helping to necessitate the draft that caused them. Weber (2006, 73) points out that, after the Proclamation, "Enlistments dried up, prompting the Congress to adopt a new draft law, which in turn

generated even more dissent." (see also DiLorenzo 2002, 43-5)

The threat of violent unrest, and especially organized insurrection, did not really abate until war's end. Weber (2006, 165-6) indicates fresh Copperhead insurrection plans right up until the fall 1864 victories that made victory certain. Gray (1942, 185), interestingly, argues that 1864 was peaceful not just because of the effectiveness of Lincoln's militarized policing but because the certainty of impending Democrat victories (which I discuss below) led the Copperheads to put their extrainstitutional resistance efforts on hold.

5.3.4 Reactions to Abolition as a Peace Condition

Lincoln's own party members were the very first to attack him for making abolition a condition for peace. Greeley himself, as the supposedly abolitionist emissary Lincoln sent to negotiate peace with the "To Whom It May Concern" letter, subsequently used his paper to criticize him, in Benson's (1917, 404-5) words, "as the person responsible for the continuance of senseless bloodshed." The Republican National Executive Committee declared in a pamphlet that "The responsibility rests *alone* upon [Lincoln]. He has been weak and vascillating [sic] throughout, seemingly incapable of settling upon any definite line of policy in regard to the rebellion." (177) Gray (1942, 177) places this in context:

> Combining denunciation of Lincoln with the assertion, astounding from a Republican source, that the President could have secured the peaceable return of the Southern states to the Union had he been willing to guarantee the integrity of slavery, the publication was disposed not only to inflame intra-party resentments but ot provide the Democrats with weapons of which they were not slow to take advantage.

Weber (2006, 156) wrote that it "struck a deep chord with Peace Democrats in the North" once they learned of it. One paper wrote that To Whom It May Concern "has done more to kill off the War Democrats than any one thing that has happened." Nelson's (1980, 74-5) analysis speaks particularly clearly to an expectation-cost pattern: "The demand for abolition ... triggered an avalanche of criticism as moderates within the Republican party wavered and peace Democrats vociferously condemned the president. ... Perhaps the President hoped to attract radical support by linking abolition to peace, but the alienation

of moderates seriously impaired his prospects for reelection." One of the Confederate agents sent to the meeting noted Lincoln's inconsistency in particular as a reason why the letter would cause him so much trouble in the North (Nelson 1980, 68), and wrote back to the Confederate Secretary of State that "Many prominent politicians of the U.S. assure us that it is the most efficient instrument for stopping the war that could have been conceived or expected." (Weber 2006, 156)

On August 22nd, 1864, Raymond (the Republican National Committee chairman, and editor of the *New York Times*), wrote Lincoln: "The tide is setting against us. Two special causes are assigned to this great reaction in public sentiment, – the want of military success, and the impression ... that we *can* have peace with Union if we would ... [but that you are] fighting not for Union but for the abolition of slavery." (Maihafer 2001, 199)

5.3.5 Interpreting Lincoln's Reelection

Lincoln won reelection in spite of the expectation costs he had suffered for the Emancipation Proclamation and, more recently, for To Whom It May Concern (or rather, for promising that neither of those things would occur). It is very much clear at any rate that he got extremely lucky with the timing of the election in relation to Union fortunes on the battlefield (Gray 1942, 189-90, 202; Weber 2006, 127). As Weber (2006, 9) points out, the price of gold can be used as a measure of public war anxiety and general domestic discontent, and that price hit its highest point during the 1864 election season, shortly before plummeting, momentarily but very sharply, right before election day. As she put it, "In late August 1864 [the Copperhead movement] was at the height of its influence ... By the time of the election two months later, the Copperheads were entirely disgraced." (1)

Even so, some consider the 1864 election to have been tellingly close (esp. Donald 2001, 169). Nelson (1980, 126) argues that "Both sides exuded confidence, and the outcome remained in doubt right down to the day of the election." It is certainly true that, right up until Sherman took Atlanta on September 2nd (two months before election day), virtually everyone seems to have agreed that Lincoln was losing, including Lincoln himself (Donald 2001, 111-2, 157; Benson 1917, 414, 417, 426; Weber 2006, 158, 164, 202). A second Republican convention was planned in September, to nominate someone who was more or less as

radical as Lincoln but who, crucially, was not Lincoln (Gray 1942, 178-9, 186). The country was so eager to cast him aside that he was forced to respond directly to attempts to alter the protocol and have McClellan replace him right after election day, assuming in the first place, of course, that he'd lose (Benson 1917, 417).

Not counting Sherman's march to the sea, Lincoln's unlikely and eleventh-hour victory was due to three major factors, all closely related to each other. First is the continued strategic blunders of the extremist Copperheads, as they forced McClellan to adopt a losing, excessively dovish platform. Second is the politicization of the military, for which Lincoln was mostly responsible but which Democrat extremism played a role in. Third are the significant election irregularities which unquestionably occurred, and were perhaps unavoidable given Confederate plots that would have been at least as disruptive had Lincoln not taken the measures he did.

The Copperheads Go All or Nothing

The 1864 election season began with Republican leadership already anticipating that the Democrats would fail to moderate. "Seeing that the Democrats had stranded themselves upon commitments to an extremist leadership," Gray (1942, 151) wrote, they set out to exploit the opportunity by doing everything possible to invite conservative Democrats to cross the party line. . . . Emancipation and arbitrary acts of government were kept in the background. And indeed, Democrats' recent setbacks "had not caused them to abandon or modify their position. They seemed, rather, to throw off such restraints as the campaign had imposed upon them." (158)

Like the Ku Klux Klan within the Jim-Crow-era Democratic party, or the Tea Party within the modern Republican party, the Copperheads were an extremist subgroup that could totally dominate certain states but only divide their party and unite the opposition in federal elections. They failed to nominate one of their own, but they succeeded in tying the nominee, McClellan, to a platform that included peace on any terms (Benson 1917, 285) and which he said he could not abide by "without violating all my antecedents – which I would not do for a thousand Presidencies." (Weber 2006, 180) "No true Democrat will support this war another hour," Copperheads replied, and "Peace men must rouse

themselves, sweep away the War leaders of the Democracy, [and] nominate a candidate for President who shall bear on his banner Peace and Subgenation [white supremacy].” (Weber 2006, 167-8)

Benson (1917, 413) aptly encapsulates the division:

> [New York Governor] Seymour, for the war, presided over the [Democratic] Convention; Vallandigham, against the war, was the master spirit in its debates. It was hard for such men, with any saving of conscience, to combine. The mode of combination which they discovered is memorable in the history of faction. First they adopted a platform which meant peace; then they adopted a candidate intended to symbolise successful war.

This infighting greatly delayed the Democratic convention, which allowed Sherman to take Atlanta beforehand and begin his celebratory march to the sea. Weber (2006, 176) nominated the convention for the title of “worst-timed event in American political history.” The Copperheads reacted by holding their own chaotic convention seven weeks later and just a few weeks before election day, out of which was produced a new nominee who refused to run and a few resolutions declaring McClellan’s and Lincoln’s policies “identical”: “we have before us two candidates, but no choice.” (175) (Vallandigham, at the last minute and for what it was worth, resigned himself to supporting McClellan and refused to attend.)

The Copperhead nominee who refused to run, Alexander Long, also publicly declined to vote in 1864 (175). The Copperheads, as a group, likely boycotted the election. They had done so in Delaware in 1863, when only fifteen Democrat votes were registered; notably, this was in protest of a military occupation there the previous year which was widely perceived to have thrown the election to the Republican (Gray 1942, 217). White (2014, 113-5) finds that Copperhead sympathizers in the military more or less boycotted the 1864 election as well, though they were also coerced into doing so, as I argue below.

Even if we assume that this Democratic party split was unrelated to Lincoln having created expectations that he then defied, the other half of the expectation-cost pattern – the discontent among the leader’s former supporters, directed personally at him – was clearly in operation, and only failed to split *his* party because of how frightening they found

the extremism across the aisle. At first, in fact, it seemed as though they too would split. Gray (1942, 176) wrote about the run-up to the Republican convention that, "Again, as in the campaign of 1862, the Republicans, faced by widespread discontent among the people and an aggressive Democratic attack, seemed more intent on quarreling among themselves than on preserving a united front against the common enemy. The congressional radicals had tried hard to prevent Lincoln's renomination." "Anger," according to Weber (2006, 126), "came mostly from the Radical wing of the party, where abolitionists thought the president had not done enough to help the slaves or to punish white Southerners for leaving the Union."

If the Republicans had ditched Lincoln in 1864 as at one point seemed likely, it would have been for a more radical candidate – one with the same policies as Lincoln now stood for, and namely Lincoln's famous pre-reversal insubordinates, Generals Butler or Frémont (Benson 1917, 409-11). This fits the theoretical prediction that a candidate who starts at one position and then moves to another that a given voter prefers will never be as strongly supported as they would have been had they started at that new position, or as another otherwise identical leader who did start there.

This alone also fits an audience cost logic, of course, which would suggest that radicals simply did not see Lincoln's new claims of support as credible in light of his inconsistency. Aside from the fact that support was lacking most from those whose preferences were strongest, which, again, contradicts audience cost theory (Tomz & Van Houweling 2012a; Chaudoin 2014) and fits expectation cost theory, the qualitative evidence for such rationalist inferences is somewhat lacking. Charles Sumner did assert that Lincoln "could not make up his mind on Emancipation" (he also declared that the Republican victory was a vote "*against* McClellan rather than *for* Lincoln") "." (Donald 2001, 114) Another Lincoln voter wrote that "he lacks much of the firmness, decision and sternness with which God so usefully blessed Andrew Jackson." (Gray 1942, 204)

White (2014, 99), though, provides the following telling account:

> The convention nominated Lincoln and placed him on a platform pledging restoration of the Union and a constitutional amendment to end slavery. Despite Lincoln's

> perceived shortcomings, the country knew where he stood on the issues, which gave him a good deal of credibility among Republican voters. "Somehow the President has impressed the people at large with the conviction that they know where to find him," noted Francis Lieber.

Wendell Phillips opposed Lincoln just the same, in a manner that speaks strongly of expectation costs and the undervaluing of previously experienced gains. Even when reminded of the Proclamation, which ended with the words "forever free" and which Lincoln had faithfully implemented over the past two years, "Phillips was unmoved. His American Anti-Slavery Society adopted a resolution saying its members saw 'no evidence' that Lincoln was working to guarantee the perpetual freedom of African Americans." (Weber 2006, 126) The Colored National Convention, similarly, railed against the Democrats, yet their actual endorsement of Lincoln was conspicuously lacking, for unspecified reasons (190).

Thus it was very much up to the Democrats to scare up radical Republican enthusiasm, and it was lucky for Lincoln that they delivered. It was driven home that they had when Frémont, who had indeed been campaigning on his own into September, "withdrew his nomination ... because he feared that, even with the military's change of fortune, Republican infighting could lead to a McClellan victory in November. Given McClellan's hostility toward emancipation, that scenario was unthinkable to the abolition-minded Frémont." (180)

Politicizing the Military

The Emancipation Proclamation set off a step-by-step process that transformed the military and, ultimately, the 1864 election. The entire process can certainly be seen as one of Lincoln reacting, adapting, and generally doing what he genuinely needed to do if indeed he was to seriously implement an emancipation policy, hold regularly scheduled elections with even a modest degree of legitimacy, and, of course, win a total war. The prudence of attempting all that may be open to some question, but the prudence and sheer resolve demonstrated by his means of pursuing it is as open to as little question as is the nobility of these goals.

The first steps in the process were those already detailed: the purging of those Copper-

heads who did not stay completely silent; and the near-ceasing of recruitment, especially among civilian Copperheads. The next step was the overt politicization of the military, not just in composition but in norms, operating procedures, and direct political action.

The Proclamation quickly sparked the advent of military units issuing "resolutions": public declarations, adopted by ad hoc and highly questionable means, always in support of the emancipation policy, usually supposedly unanimous (White 2014, 90-6). Some officers, including one Colonel, only called for the ayes in favor of the resolutions they authored, and called it unanimous; others simply threatened to shoot anyone who refused to sign it (94-5). These resolutions were also effectively encouragements for any remaining conservatives to identify themselves so they too could be drummed out or, at a minimum, publicly shamed (92). The wording of a great number of the resolutions is identical or nearly so, and while the available evidence probably wouldn't hold up in court, it is highly likely that various Republican elites secretly orchestrated their issuance (95). Lincoln's silence on the matter, as usual, was almost certainly consent rather than ignorance.

A soldier's approval of the Emancipation policy became as much a professional requirement for him or her (there have always been women soldiers) as loyalty to the Commander-in-Chief himself. The entire military institutional setting designed to manufacture such loyalty, not just in deed but in thought, was more or less totally politicized, for Republicans, against Democrats, and especially against Copperheads. Secretary of War Stanton barred McClellan's campaign material, and the policy was enforced by courts-martial (117); meanwhile, one of Lincoln's campaign circular distributors bragged that he had gotten almost 10 million copies to the troops (Maihafer 2001, 213).

As White's (2014, 38-43, inter alia) copious evidence makes clear, Union troops were not brainwashed so much as they were intimidated into acting as if they were. McClellan himself, after all, could hardly be converted. The new indoctrination only succeeded in reeducating them about the wide variety of punishments that would be unhesitatingly inflicted upon them if they did not play their part in the Great Emancipator's crusade. Timur Kuran's (1991) theory of preference falsification provides a very fitting model of the workings of this "preference regime," as it may be called. Thus, the soldier cited earlier, who thought all the butternuts (i.e. Copperheads) were gone and that all that were left were "true Blue", was

understandably mistaken.

This is all key because voting was not yet secret anywhere, even at normal civilian polls. Not only were there no private booths, the party ballots were each distinct colors, and large (White 2014, 6). This alone wouldn't render an election invalid, but in combination with any significant incentive to vote a certain way or at least not vote a certain other way – i.e., a preference regime – it obviously and easily can.

Thus the Republican party did everything in its power to turn the military into their own vote factory. Moreover, the Republican party was the reason soldiers in the field *had* the vote in 1864. Only a few states allowed absentee soldier voting in 1862, and after their losses that year, Republicans became roundly convinced that the troops being in the field was the reason, or that greater troop enfranchisement was the remedy at any rate (18). Since I argue that those losses were mainly due to the Proclamation, this is another way in which Lincoln's reversal and the resulting costs arguably spurred these political and military transformations.

Democrats fighting in a nakedly political manner to keep soldiers from voting simply because they were deployed likely further alienated the troops from the Democratic party (Maihafer 2001, 213) – it apparently did not truly convert them into Republicans, but it was yet another reason for Democrats to just let their own party take a hit in 1864. The Democratic party was in generally low standing with the troops as soon as its revival began in 1862; as an earlier quote from one soldier might suggest, many evidently started from the perspective that any opposition party would accomplish nothing but the prolongation of the war, and the Copperhead movement only cemented this perception, among the minority, at any rate, who were not Copperheads themselves (Weber 2006, 83-5). One moderate Democrat soldier wrote home,

> A year ago the soldiers thought the Democrats were their only friends, but the New York riot and the figuring of some men in evading the draft has changed the feeling greatly. . . . I tell you, we will soon end the fighting here and if the traitors north don't keep quiet we will fix them. Well, I guess this is nonsense enough, but I tell you it [is] the feeling of the soldiers (White 2014, 36).

Election Irregularities

As Weber (2006, 198) points out, 1864 in the United States was a historical first: a country in the midst of civil war held an election as scheduled from before the war began. It would indeed be all the more surprising, then, if the results of such an election could be taken at face value. Unfortunately, they cannot.

DiLorenzo (1998) asserts, almost in passing and with a citation of Donald (2001, 180), that Lincoln rigged the election, mainly by getting Kansas, West Virginia, and Nevada added to the electoral college. I focus here on the effects of the heavy troop presences in Chicago and New York, and I do not agree with the implication that the election's irregularities were deliberately orchestrated by Lincoln in a deliberate undermining of democracy. I do argue that these irregularities systematically helped Lincoln win, in tandem with the other coincidental advantages like Copperhead extremism and Democrat deserters as described above, but I also argue that the election was largely going to be rendered illegitimate either "[u]nder the protection of Federal bayonets," as Donald (2001, 180) put it, or by a Confederacy-instigated repeat of the New York riots. Thus, without blaming Lincoln for his actions, I simply agree with the man himself, that "The result of an election held in military camps, where the bayonets are all on one side of the question voted upon, can scarcely be considered as demonstrating popular sentiment." (cited in White 2014, vii)

To begin with, if soldiers had been able to freely consume media and vote their conscience, Lincoln would have certainly fared significantly worse in 1864. Lincoln officially won 79% of the soldier vote, but White (2014, 11) estimates that over 40% of soldiers chose not to vote, that the vast majority of those who didn't vote were McClellan supporters, and that many of those who did vote for Lincoln did so out of fear of appearing disloyal. One soldier claimed that hundreds of troops asking for McClellan ballots were simply not given them; another wrote to McClellan shortly after the election, "Every one not voting would, if allowed the expression of his free will, have voted for you." (117, 114-5) This suppression of the Democrat soldier vote definitely did *not* get Lincoln elected – if soldiers simply hadn't voted, he still would have prevailed (Weber 2006, 199) – but it was clearly *part* of why he won.

Importantly, White's estimate also assumes that no ballot-stuffing occurred – the true rate of non-voting in a unit would appear to be lower than it was, after all, if falsified votes had found their way into the ballot box. Before turning to the irregularities in the 1864 election, it should first be mentioned how deeply flawed the absentee voting procedures of the day had already proven to be. White (2014, 15) wrote that when Pennsylvania first allowed absentee troop voting in 1861, "Fraud permeated the elections. According to one report, one regiment cast a nine-hundred-vote majority for a Republican candidate from Philadelphia even though the regiment had only sixty or seventy men from the city. ... Several contested elections came before the state legislature and judicial system."

Very interestingly, one soldier wrote home that he "never was, can or will be a supporter of 'honest old Abe'", and yet, in the 1863 elections, he said he personally added "twenty tickets in our regiment and three or four times that number in other regiments against the Val. [Vallandigham] ticket." (26) This soldier may have been one of the many who disliked Lincoln and yet disliked the Democrats more, but if so, why was he bothering to commit voter fraud, and why did he fear prosecution so little that he wrote home about it? The best explanation seems to be that he, for one, was following orders.

Despite these past cases of ballot-stuffing and even the vacating of election results in some cases (Republican as well as Democrat), there is only one credible case of voter fraud to be found in 1864, and it's a case of Democrat ballot-stuffers being caught and convicted, for forging absentee soldier votes in New York. Importantly, this was organized by Gov. Seymour, who had recently lost a protracted battle against the Republican legislature's efforts to force him to accept the soldier votes in the first place – after he vetoed their bill, they amended the state constitution (215). Seymour obviously never saw the soldier vote as something he could turn into a net win for the Democrats via this fraud. Thus, this very much reads as a story of a Democrat attempting to fight fire with fire, and a Republican-controlled government successfully thwarting his efforts.

The Confederate plan was to begin by sending the relatively small number of agents they had staged in Canada to eventually rendezvous with known enclaves of escaped Confederate soldiers near both New York and Chicago. The Sons of Liberty, a Copperhead fraternity, was to rally to them, at which point the agents would dispatch smaller teams to create

diversions in Boston and Cincinnati. The real targets were the prison camps near New York and Chicago, full of Confederate prisoners. Finally, they would invade those two cities, right on election day (Nelson 1980, 152).

The above sections should make it clear that this plan was not far-fetched. In New York, the agents got so far as to plan out the operation from within the city on the eve of the election and make contact with some prominent New York co-conspirators. Before they were to rendezvous with the escaped prisoners, however, General Butler arrived with no less than ten thousand troops and announced his purpose of providing security for the election. The conspirators fled immediately (156).

Butler was arriving because the agents in Chicago had already been caught. Col. Benjamin Sweet, the commandant of the prison camp outside Chicago that the Confederates were to assault, had gained full intelligence on the agents and their plans via his own spies, called for reinforcements, and begun scouring the city for them and their co-conspirators. Sweet and Butler would both maintain their occupation of the cities through election day (156).

The evidence that the occupations of New York and Chicago contributed to Lincoln's victories there should not be overstated. There is no more direct evidence of the persecution of democratic voters or tampering with the ballot boxes than I have already provided. I believe, though, that I have provided copious indirect evidence, which would lead us to heavily suspect that the presence of military units, such as I have described, aggressively rounding up "suspicious persons" (156) throughout the day, resulted in more Republican votes and far fewer Democratic votes than there would have been otherwise. While many soldiers may have personally seized on the opportunity to affect the election by their presence, the perception that they might was likely the more significant factor by far.

White (2014, 25) points out that soldiers were being sent home all over the country, to vote, but also fully armed and equipped; one soldier wrote that he was himself greatly concerned for American democracy under such circumstances. White writes further: "Most politicians and soldiers were not as intellectually honest as this one. To many Republicans, the Civil War provided the federal government with an incredible and unprecedented tool for electioneering. The federal government could mobilize a powerful voting bloc in the army,

and when necessary could use the army to help control opposition at the polls." (White 2014, 25)

Lincoln had said to Pennsylvania election commissioners, "I want to get all the votes I can of course, but play fair gentlemen, play fair." (117) Given the above, it is hard to imagine what illicit role Lincoln *could* have played in stoking these individuals and other social forces working in his favor, if he had tried.

Lincoln told many "leetle stories" that annoyed and perplexed many, and have come to have been seen in hindsight as either stalling tactics or the sending of cryptic messages and orders. Benson (1917, 445) recounts one such case, where Lincoln tells Grant a story he had told before, about a teetotaling Irishman who regularly attended a bar and orders a non-alcoholic mixed drink. One day, a friend of his tells him that he suspects that the bartender does make that drink with some alcohol, to which the Irishman replies: "Well, I suppose that's alright with me, so long as I don't know about it."

Lincoln seems to have used this story to establish what we now call plausible deniability. In this case, Lincoln had been discussing with Grant how he was legally obligated to capture and treat as traitors any and all Confederate leadership, but that he was not so sure himself that that was altogether best. There, it seems, the alcohol was the sparing of rival leaders' lives; here, I argue, it was numerous actors' numerous violations of the letter as well as the spirit of the law that, taken together, made Lincoln's reelection far more likely than it otherwise would have been. Just as Lincoln largely got lucky with Sherman's breaking through Atlanta, he largely got lucky that these untamable social forces, especially within the military, were more on his side than against it. It is highly unlikely, though, that he was surprised by them, and he certainly didn't get in their way.

5.3.6 Post-War Approval

Historians have explicitly remarked on a readily apparent and, to them, unexplainable lack of appreciation for Lincoln's racial justice accomplishments among abolitionists in the time immediately following his death. "Lincoln's murder had a peculiar effect on the radicals," Trefousse (1969, 307) wrote. "At a caucus in Washington, the participants could hardly hide their satisfaction at the turn of events." Abolitionists would ultimately accept Lincoln

as one of their own and embrace his legacy purely for strategic reasons (Donald 2001, 4-5).

While expectation cost theory certainly does not predict that they would harbor an actual ill will toward Lincoln, it makes sense, given their very high expectations of Johnson as an abolitionist *coupled* with their underappreciation for Lincoln's actions, that they would react as positively to his death as they did. Williams (1960, 374) wrote:

> Brutally honest to the last, the Jacobins rejoiced at Lincoln's death. They knew Johnson favorably through his work on the [abolitionist-controlled] Committee [on the Conduct of the War]. They had applauded him when in April he went to Lincoln with demands that the Confederate leaders be executed. . . . They viewed his accession to the presidency as "a godsend to the country." Zach Chandler intoned that God had kept Lincoln in office as long as he was useful and then had placed another and a better man in his place.

Donald (2001, 41-3) proposes an explanation for this radical rejoicing that is instructive, in that it is the best alternative to the expectation cost explanation and is yet very much unsatisfying. He attempts a psychoanalysis of abolitionist leaders (he analogizes his efforts to that of a doctor investigating a patient's "excessive vehemence to a mild stimulus" which has raised suspicion of a "deep-seated malaise") and concludes that "The freeing of the slaves ended the great crusade that had brought purpose and joy to the abolitionists. For them Abraham Lincoln was not the Great Emancipator; he was the killer of the dream."

This certainly fits the evidence provided in Donald's rigorous study of the abolitionists' backgrounds, but it runs entirely aground on the fact that the fight was far from over at the time of Lincoln's death, and was in fact just beginning to reach its crescendo. The 13th Amendment was still eight months away from ratification, and the North would have to be made to sustain the Reconstruction effort, without which that Amendment – not to mention the next two – would be so many words on paper. And indeed, as I show below (and as Donald (2001, 5) himself mentions), the radicals were rather quickly disappointed by Johnson at least as much as they had been by Lincoln. Their crusade was far from over, their dream far from ending, and they surely knew this even if they did expect Johnson to serve as their noble champion. Thus the radicals' negative immediate reactions to Lincoln's

death is an outstanding puzzle in the historical literature that expectation cost theory can well claim to solve.

Ongoing resentment of Lincoln among non-abolitionists, of course, needs little explanation, and is very difficult to interpret in that particularly strong resentment is equally consistent with being in the domain of losses and with simply being very racist. The asymmetry of the lasting appraisals of abolitionists and racists, at any rate, is clear, leaving Lincoln with an abundance of enemies and an absence of friends. A Republican lawyer at the time remarked that "the most striking thing is the absence of personal loyalty to the President. It does not exist. He has no admirers, no enthusiastic supporters, none to bet on his head." (Donald 2001, 167) One famous moment of the 1864 election involved Thad Stevens introducing a newspaper editor to an Illinois representative by saying, "Here is a man who wants to find a Lincoln member of Congress. You are the only one I know and I have come over to introduce my friend to you." (168) A well-known contemporary diarist wrote that "*Death* has suddenly opened the eyes of the people (and I think the world) to the fact that a hero has been holding high place among them for four years, closely watched and studied, but despised and rejected by a third of his community, and only tolerated by the other two-thirds." (Weber 2006)

To be sure, public opinion had begun its steady but painfully slow movement away from racism by the time of the Proclamation (Douglas 1963, 56; Weber 2006, 186), and so Lincoln's reputation began to improve long after his death (Stampp (1980, 267) argues that by just 1866, slavery wouldn't have won referendum even in any Southern state). The Republican party, however, would continue to struggle with the ongoing resentment of pro-slavery voters for years after Lincoln (DiLorenzo 2002, 204-11).

5.4 Foreign Perceptions and Beliefs

5.4.1 Southern Appraisals of Lincoln's Intentions

Did the South see Lincoln's promises not to attack slavery where it existed as credible, or at least more credible because of the expectation costs he was exposing himself to? If so, then why did they still rebel, thereby starting the very war that we can now say in hindsight

caused Lincoln to break that promise in the first place?

Lincoln's election certainly caused the rebellion in the most direct sense: the secession declarations began immediately afterward, asserting, notably, that Lincoln had declared war on slavery (Stampp 1980, 42), and Lincoln analogized himself at the time of the inauguration to a farmer who had only gotten to the stable to lock it up after the horse had been stolen (Douglas 1963, 12). Southern counties had passed resolutions such as one in Marion County, Georgia, warning that they would consider Lincoln's election "an overt act of hostility on the part of the North, and . . . a declaration of War upon the rights of the South." (Baringer 1945, 44)

As One Kentuckian put it, however, "This election is made the occasion, but not the cause, of an attempted secession" (62) – the cause, to him, was the restrictions on slave-trading and on new slave states that had already been placed on the South and which they saw no end to under any president. Quoting a Southern letter-writer, Baringer (1945, 242) writes that "Lincoln's election was fortunate, for it provided an excuse to 'have done with people as infamously vile' as Northerners who daily 'incite to insurrection, murder and rapine.'"

There is ample evidence that Lincoln's stated *moral* positions on slavery, if not just the prevalence of the general social movement that his election represented, were enough to render the South resolved to war. In terms of the expectation cost model in ch. 3, they would be exogenously resolved to war, making the North's perceived credibility irrelevant to the bargaining outcome. It was the South, in fact, that had the credibility problem, due to its having threatened secession over countless policies and offenses that it then tolerated (41). The North could not perceive a difference between those past threats and the genuine ones the South was making during the 1860 election (Baringer 1945, 60-3; Green 2011, 109-10). The North too, though, may very well have been exogenously resolved, and so the war may have indeed been inevitable, with no credibility problems to blame: Lincoln once expressed his belief that only a statement from him that slavery was morally right would appease the South, yet he never seriously considered such a statement, and even railed in his Cooper Union speech about how unacceptable that would be (Benson 1917, 144; Green 2011, 34).

Lincoln was right: that and that alone likely would have satisfied the South for rational

as well as irrational reasons (On the latter, see Stampp 1980, 263). Whether or not their fears were warranted, it is no exaggeration to say that the political thinking of the South was centered almost entirely around the prospect of a violent slave uprising, and while many Northerners may have thought of themselves as simply speaking their conscience, the South was largely convinced that public criticism of slavery would embolden slaves so much that the North may just as well have been smuggling them guns (DiLorenzo 2002, 123-4). Such was what the above Southern letter-writer was referring to.

The other possibility is that the South may have been willing to fight over expansion alone – the prevention of new slave states may have been unacceptable to them. Foner & Mahoney (1990) argue, in fact, that by 1864, "[Stephen] Douglas' position on slavery in the territories was no more acceptable to the South than Lincoln's;" and Douglas wanted referenda to decide the legality of slavery in each new state. For one, the South believed that slavery needed to expand in order to be maintained, and that, especially given the normative attacks on its legitimacy, the institution would die out even in the South by 1880 (Crenshaw 1969, 303). Notably, Lincoln agreed, at least in private (Benson 1917, 127) – so this, too, was not a commitment problem, as Lincoln would not have committed the North to a policy to preserve Southern slavery in perpetuity even if he could have.

There is evidence enough that the South did appraise Lincoln's credibility, specifically with regards to the abolition question, and found it quite adequate. Ironically, though, the best evidence of this is simultaneously evidence of how far from their minds the more nuanced questions of expectation costs or any other such thing were from their minds.

First, Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens responded to Lincoln's letter, cited at the start of this chapter, as follows:

> ... in my judgment the people of the South do not entertain any fears that a Republican Administration, or at least the one about to be inaugurated, would attempt to interfere directly and immediately with slavery in the States. Their apprehension and disquietude do not spring from that source. They do not arise from the fact of the known anti-slavery opinions of the President-elect. ... The leading object seems to be simply, and wantonly, if, you please, to put the institutions of nearly half the

> States under the ban of public opinion and national condemnation. This, upon general principles, is quite enough of itself to arouse a spirit not only of general indignation, but of revolt on the part of the proscribed (Stephens 1870, 212-3).

As Baringer (1945, 212-3) points out, Stephen's reply can be read as an acknowledgment of an unmistakable fear among Democrat leaders nationally that if Lincoln *did* show the restraint he had promised, then their political careers, based as they were on fearmongering about this new and mysterious Republican party, would collapse. Lincoln alludes to this himself in a part of Trumbull's speech, that "Disunionists *per se,* are now in hot haste to get out of the Union, precisely because they perceive they cannot, much longer, maintain apprehension among the Southern people that their homes, their firesides, and lives, are to be endangered by the action of the Federal Government." (Lincoln 1953h, 142)

Davis (1971, 267-70) provides an apt expression of this in the South itself, though the author of those remarks would no doubt argue that the self-serving drives of the Democrat leadership were beside the point. He writes:

> Many Southerners conceded Lincoln's excellent personal character, his intention not to interfere with slavery where it existed, and even his desire to conciliate the South. But these personal qualities and proposed policies were dismissed as of little moment. The great power of the North seemed set up on a course hostile to the South, regardless of the character or purposes of the new President. . . . The *Southern Literary Messenger* saw an even greater and more subtle dangers in Lincoln's conservatism. Declaring "unreservedly in favor of a Southern Confederacy," the journal granted that Lincoln would be just and fair in his dealings with the South, would repudiate much of his party's platform, and might even "make the best President we ever had. Precisely for this reason we are opposed to remaining in the Union during his administration. The danger to the South will be in exact proportion to his 'goodness.'" . . . It mattered little, then, whether Southerners considered Lincoln the real head of his party or the mere instrument of powers behind the scenes. If leader, his professed conservatism was suspect; if instrument, his conservative intentions might be genuine, but inconsequential.

5.4.2 Appraisals of European Powers Considering Involvement

Expectation costs could have factored into the bargaining that occurred in the implicit competition between the Union and the Confederacy for the affections of the European powers, and especially England. The competition was a zero-sum game, and specifically a tug of war: any diplomatic advantage would both increase the chance of aid for your side and decrease the chance of aid for the other. The South had on its side its greater value as a trading partner, plus the global strategic preferences that almost any other state would have for a divided and weakened America. The North had on its side not much except the option of converting itself into an anti-slave crusader like England, or at any rate convincing Europeans that it had undergone such a conversion. Lincoln's turn toward the emancipation policy was indeed motivated to sway European sympathies, at least in part.

England was certainly an anti-slave crusader itself by this time, with its West Africa Squadron fighting the slave trade no matter who was engaged in it. The country had therein seriously risked war with Portugal not long before, raiding Brazilian ports and burning ships suspected of transporting slaves (Krasner 1999, 43-4). Whether or not it was for rational and strategic reasons, then, England cared a lot about countries' slavery policies, and convincing them that you were abolishing slavery anywhere would indeed increase the chance of them aiding you, or at least of them refraining from aiding your enemies. Much the same went for France, Russia, and others, who had all abolished slavery by then and were boastful of it (e.g. Franklin 1963, 134-5).

What, then, did they make of Lincoln's promise and/or reversal? In theory, they should have taken his initial platform and promises as credible signals, based mainly on the inference that he is himself aware of expectation cost dynamics and would be less likely to set those expectations if he did not plan on acting according to them. This in turn might explain why they did not side with the Union, while problematizing why they did not side with the Confederacy. His reversal, though, should also be taken as a credible signal by much the same logic: it might call into question why he set the initial expectations in the first place, but insofar as he is still presumably rational, his taking of the new position should credibly signal his intention to stick with that one, even if all he's done is generate

domestic expectations that that's the position he will now maintain. This ultimately problematizes Europe's refusal to aid the Union, while potentially explaining the refusal to aid the Confederacy.

Asking what European countries made of Lincoln's initial promise, or promises, garners very little of interest. "In sharp contrast to the depth of European interest in the bloody war that resulted from it," Sondhaus (2013, 225) observed, "the U.S. presidential election of 1860 attracted relatively little attention across the Atlantic." In England, interestingly enough, the complacency and disinterest may have been partly due to Seward's efforts, as he, like most Northerners, thought secessionists were bluffing, and thought it best to reassure England that their imports would not be threatened either by abolition or war (Benson 1917, 315). Thus their lack of initial interest may itself reflect their belief that Lincoln's promises to refrain from abolition were credible.

Benson (1917, 313) asserted that even the preliminary Proclamation was "an event which made it impossible for any Government of this country to take action unfriendly to the North." The specific evidence from other sources, though, contradicts this. Initial reactions to the emancipation policy understandably did not have much of substance to go off of: Lincoln had merely proclaimed his intent at a future date to begin imposing abolition upon any newly-captured territories from that date onward. At the time, it would seem that the credibility of his claim that he was shifting his position was irrelevant to foreign observers because the shift was seen as so minor.

Franklin (1963, 70) writes that "While the [preliminary] Proclamation elicited immediate reaction all over the world, it was not nearly so overwhelmingly favorable to the Union as the Confederates feared or as the North hoped."[6] According to Vanauken (1989, 67), Lincoln's "inconsistency" was proven in part because of his previous position-taking (which indeed speaks to an audience/inconsistency-cost logic, if foreign leaders are the audience), but the more significant factor was "his not freeing the slaves in 'loyal' Kentucky and other United States areas or even in Confederate areas occupied by the United States troops, such as New

6. It is conceivable that foreigners felt so invested in American slave policy that they had the kind of preferences that would engage prospect theory, and lead them to see the unexpected Proclamation as a gain. This, though, is not a component of expectation cost theory, on the assumption that such preferences are trivially rare among foreigners.

Orleans." Indeed, the reactions to the preliminary Proclamation were almost entirely about these shortcomings, plus the lack of any form of aid for the freed slaves, plus the fear that it would galvanize the South and prolong the war, plus the erroneous belief, apparently shared in Europe as well, that it would inspire violent slave insurrections (Franklin 1963, 70-8). There was in the end also that perception which Lincoln had hoped Antietam would avoid, that the Proclamation was out of desperation rather than virtue: a British magazine ran a cartoon depicting Lincoln at a poker table literally playing the Emancipation Proclamation as his last card (Foner & Mahoney 1990, 119).

The full Proclamation, though, and especially its actual implementation, provoked significantly more positive foreign reactions. As Franklin (1963, 78) wrote, "Only gradually, as Union victories gave support to the Proclamation, did its effect on European attitudes become clear." Abolition-friendly societies in numerous English cities and towns gathered to mark the first of the year with congratulations to the north and harsh words for "any of our countrymen who should have displayed a feeling of sympathy with those in America who are fighting to establish an oligarchical government on the basis of the enslavement of a weak and defenceless race . . . " (132-3)

It is clear both that the full Proclamation elevated the Union far above the South in the eyes of the English public, and that it was that public opinion that made the difference to English decision-makers. It never drove the country to provide actual aid to England, but that, it seems, would have taken massive incentives at any rate, and the argument can be made that England would have eventually aided the Confederacy if not for the Proclamation, maintained as it was. The son of the U.S. minister to Britain, writing from London, believed that "The Emancipation Proclamation has done more for us here than all our former victories and all our diplomacy." (132) Maihafer (2001, 95) wrote that after Lincoln seconded the Proclamation with letters addressed directly to various sections of English citizenry, "Lord Palmerston and his ministers knew they'd have a hard time generating public support for the Confederacy."

Alexander Stephens, for one, believed that "if the North disavowed emancipation as a war aim, the moral barriers to foreign recognition of the Confederacy would drop . . . and England might come to the aid of the South." (Nelson 1980, 140) Indeed, because of the

New York riots, at least some in England did fully expect Lincoln to "unreverse" himself. According to Weber (2006, 112-3), "The turmoil in the North was so intense that it caught the attention of the influential men abroad. . . . [Former Minister] Cobden said he would not be surprised if the politicians tried to compromise with the South to take it back, slavery and all."

Thus we can't know for sure whether the Proclamation was successful in keeping England from aligning with the Confederacy, but it is clear that, if it did, it did so by constraining English decision-makers via their domestic public's opinions. This is perhaps the only way in which it could have, but it is telling that the decision-makers attempted to gauge whether Lincoln was serious about the shift, and they failed to identify or appreciate the expectation costs that should have credibly signaled that he was both resolved to implement this new policy and politically motivated to stay the course once he had begun to do so.

For the sake of argument, we might ask whether the English public's appraisals and reappraisals of Lincoln's policy intentions were rational, or otherwise appreciative of Lincoln's domestic constraints. The broad strokes appear to be that the public took the full Proclamation as fully credible, but only that; the preliminary Proclamation was disregarded and perhaps distrusted, despite the negative reactions it provoked in the U.S. and would be predicted to provoke by expectation cost theory. Thus, overall, there is little to no room for expectation costs to form part of the explanation of English or European foreign policy regarding the U.S. civil war.

5.5 Other Case-Relevant Expectation Costs

Researching the case of Lincoln's reversal regarding abolition uncovers several other notable incidents of expectation costs, suffered by Gen. McClellan, Confederate President Jefferson Davis, and even the North and England, in a way; the Lincoln administration also suffered other expectation costs for two other actions. While these other incidents cannot be treated as successful tests of the theory to any degree, since their salience in the extant literature and therefore this chapter is no doubt a function of the fact that costs were in fact incurred and were particularly large, they are further suggestive of the potential for the theory to provide

more sophisticated and theoretically developed explanations of real political processes.

The first of Lincoln's other expectation costs involves expectations of personal favors among powerful party elites that he raised in order to win the nomination and hold the party together through the election, which is perhaps the story of any election. In this case, Gray (1942, 75) identifies the individuals that were particularly disappointed and the particular costs they inflicted in turn upon Lincoln in time:

> The Illinois group which had taken a leading part in maneuvering Lincoln's nomination had built up extravagant hopes as to the spoils of victory that would fall to them. Governor Yates and other State House officials in Springfield seemed particularly put out when they were not consulted on appointments to the degree that they had anticipated, and they were so placed as to be able both to hamper needed state and national co-operation and to endanger Lincoln's position as party leader.

Second, the draft riots and other forms of public dissent in 1863 were likely also fueled by the fact that people had been led to believe that a draft would not be required and that the war would generally be over soon. Gray (1942, 82) points out that Secretary Stanton disbanded the recruiting service on April 3, 1862, "at a time when expectations of approaching victory were making volunteers readily obtainable . . . " This was an "incredible error" because "it assured the people of the North that the administration considered the war to be virtually over and that no additional forces would be needed for the completion of the task. . . . In view of the anxious state of public feeling and of earlier assurances that no further enlistment would be necessary, federal leaders feared that a call for new troops might cause a panic." Those calls were in fact delayed and quotas lowered for this reason, which is a cost of a certain kind for the administration, clearly attributable to the raising of expectations.

Jefferson Davis suffered expectation costs of his own after 1864, for getting the South's hopes up that the 1864 election would result in either a Union president who would recognize the Confederacy, or complete breakdown of law and order after he successfully sabotaged the election and there was no legitimate winner. Even if Lincoln legitimately won, in fact, Davis genuinely seemed to believe that the Copperheads would react by destabilizing the Union

enough for the Confederacy to beat it (Nelson 1980, 150-1). More importantly, for all these reasons, Davis unabashedly reassured everyone in the South that as long as they held out until election day, their fortunes would turn around. When they didn't, the Confederacy became virtually ungovernable. Such, at least, is the argument made throughout Nelson (1980); which begins:

> Weary of the long war, many Southerners took solace in the evidence of Northern distress and found strength to continue the fighting in the hope that somehow, some way, the election would bring an acceptable peace. . . . As president of the Confederacy, Davis had an obligation to shape and to guide expectations among Southerners. Widespread false or inflated hopes would lead to moral disaster if the election failed to fulfill aspirations. . . . Coping with the dual challenge of the election proved beyond Davis's capabilities (xi-xii).

It is very closely related to this that McClellan had sought the Democratic nomination in a way that particularly aroused hopes among Southerners: he was widely believed to favor peace without union, especially after the party platform was established, and so his nomination began to raise Southern hopes. This might be surprising and not exactly predicted by the theory as I have constructed it, but it certainly seems to have happened nonetheless. When McClellan's nomination acceptance letter included rejoining the Union as a peace condition he would enforce, one Southerner remarked that "It effectually destroys the hopes that we had begun to entertain of an early termination of the war and renders the success or failure of his candidature a matter of comparative indifference." (123) Thus the Southern effort to aid McClellan may have already been hampered by an expectation-cost dynamic that had already played out before the election occurred. According to Nelson (1980, 123-4), the South's hopes returned once more when it looked like the Copperheads might replace McClellan with a "real" peace candidate, but then that effort too would prove disappointing.

It would also be fitting to say that the North suffered expectation costs for allowing the South to reenter the Union under certain expectations of what Reconstruction would be like. The South is best considered a foreign country, occupied by the North, up until at least

the Compromise of 1877; it is still telling, though, that Stampp (1980, 268) emphasizes how Southern expectations were set at a post-war status quo in which black people would be freed, but still marginalized and oppressed, and they were "understandably shocked" when the North imposed upon them institutions of racial equality that Northerners wouldn't dream of imposing upon themselves for another hundred years. On top of the resentment generated by the North's clear hypocrisy, then, the South was put in the psychological domain of losses during Reconstruction, when it may have been able to renormalize well enough to abolition alone. The North, of course, would ultimately pay the cost of a more expensive occupation of the South, with fewer lasting results, to put it mildly.

Given the subject of the next chapter, it is fitting to conclude with the expectation costs, of a kind, that England may have paid if, as Benson (1917, 261) implies, they had allowed expectations to be generated amongst the South that England would stand with them in their rebellion: "The South ... was led by its politicians to expect help, received none, and became resentful. It is surprising to be told, but may be true, that the embers of this resentment became dangerous to England in the autumn of 1914. In the North the memory of an antipathy which was almost instantly perceived has burnt deep ..." Benson, First Baron of Charnwood, writing in the midst of World War I and while England is still hoping that the U.S. will ride to *its* aid, may have been making too much of the ironic parallels, and looking for explanations of his current predicament where none existed. The logic, however, is suggestive, and all the more so in light of modern psychological theory.

5.6 Conclusion

The case of Lincoln's reversal on the question of whether slavery should be abolished by force appears to fit expectation cost theory very well in terms of there having been significant political costs Lincoln paid for the reversal which he likely would not have paid had he always been expected to pursue abolition. As in any case, this does not mean that the policy he ultimately enacted would have been popular (or unpopular) and provoked positive (or negative) reactions if only those policies had been expected. Racists will always rise up in outrage, and abolitionists will always cheer and rejoice, once slaves actually start to be

freed; but because the freeing was largely unexpected by both parties, the outrage was stronger, the cheering quieter, and the ultimate political position of the administration was significantly more precarious than it otherwise would have been.

The setting of the initial expectations here can hardly be considered unnecessary or unwise – no one could have been elected president in 1860 on a platform matching the policies Lincoln would ultimately represent, and successfully enact. If one was to abolish slavery at that time, then these expectation costs were part of the challenge one would have to overcome. Lincoln did of course overcome them, but only with a massive amount of help from other political and military leaders who were placed atop the federal power structure, *especially those* who evidently did *not* have a particular opinion on slavery and were far more concerned with keeping the south from seceding.

Abolitionists certainly helped, but certainly no more so than these relatively unopinionated Unionists, apparently because prospect of Lincoln's emancipation policy was, to them, a mere gain – a pleasant surprise. Conversely, racists put up such a fight that even if it could be said that they were dealt with, it would have to be admitted that the means required to deal with them were beyond the pale of civilized and lawful politics. This was perhaps a cost that Lincoln knew how to pay, in a sense – it did not permanently destroy American democracy, permanently politicize the military, etc. – but it was certainly a cost, to American society and families as well as to the administration and its power and resources.

As a theory of decision-makers bargaining rationally in the shadow of these costs, however, expectation cost theory simply falls flat in this case. The exceptions prove the rule, in that in the few instances in which expectation costs may have been accounted for and anticipated by the one who was exposed to or about to suffer them, no other actors exhibited either thoughts or behaviors that accounted for that actor's incentives. I generally do not find any actors here anticipating that any other actors might anticipate expectation costs. There was certainly room for expectation costs to serve this purpose of conditioning political interactions via mutual anticipation – the South could have been even more certain that Lincoln was not going to try and abolish slavery during his presidency, and, more importantly, English decision-makers could have been far more certain even in 1862 that Lincoln's abolitionist policies, and therefore the English grassroots support for it, were here

to stay – but this clearly never materialized. Expectation costs were almost always resulting from political events rather than steering them; and when they did "steer" events, it was in the aftermath of the costs having been dealt.

Chapter 6

Wilson: "He Kept Us Out of War"

> I can't keep the country out of war. They talk of me as though I were a god. Any little German lieutenant can put us into war at any time by some calculated outrage.
>
> Woodrow Wilson
>
> Quoted in Cooper 2009, 352

Krukones (1984, 31-2) codes the promise to stay out of WWI as Wilson's only major 1916 campaign promise, alongside the complementary promise to aid in Europe's eventual reconstruction. He acknowledges, however, that Wilson himself technically never made any such promise – it was made for him, and he immediately feared the consequences of being seen as breaking it. Its origin can be squarely traced to Martin H. Glynn's speech on the first day of the 1916 Democratic convention, or rather, to how the speech was practically derailed by the crowd:

> Ex-governor Glynn of New York, following instructions, played the patriotic card by using the undefined term "Americanism" as a refrain, but Glynn's speech took on a life of its own when he declared that the United States would stay out of war. The delegates exploded in applause. From there on, as Glynn recited times in American history when the nation had not gone to war, shouts arose, "Go on, go on." As he went on, the crowd would roar, "What did we do?" and Glynn would shout, "We didn't go to war." (Cooper 2009, 341)

This was followed up on the second day by William Jennings Bryan: "I join the American people in thanking God that we have a President who does not want this nation plunged into this war." On the third and final day, the committee adopted Wilson's proposed platform, but with one addition: "In particular, we commend to the American people the splendid diplomatic victories of our great President, who as preserved the vital interests of our Government and its citizens, and kept us out of war." Cooper (2009, 341-2) remarked that "The speakers and the delegates may have beaten the peace drum a bit too hard for [Wilson's] taste, but everything else had gone his way, and he was ready and eager to face the voters".

Cooper understates Wilson's concerns. This was a frustrating fait accompli, as Wilson's earlier-cited complaint to a confidant revealed: "I can't keep the country out of war. They talk of me as though I were a god. Any little German lieutenant can put us into war at any time by some calculated outrage." (352) But, presumably, a post-hoc denial of the peace-loving spirit of the convention, even in part, would have incurred expectation costs anyway, in addition to displaying party disunity. Audience cost logic is a far worse fit for explaining his hesitancy, as he could hardly be seen as inconsistent for correcting what other politicians had said about his policy intentions.

Wilson's strong affinity for peace, for Europe as well as for the U.S., was certainly compatible with the party line. His thinking during the election, though, was that he, of course, could not safely promise that the country would not get attacked, and he also feared, in one of the oldest paradoxes in international security, that he would not be able to mediate a peace between the European powers effectively if the possibility of the U.S. joining the war was taken completely off the table (Kennedy 2001). Thus, he was thinking about his rhetoric rather strategically during the election, with rational foreign audiences in mind. In the end, though, Wilson's various statements along the campaign trail, praising peace and affirming neutrality, were universally heard as binding commitments to avoid entry into WWI, mostly because others were characterizing them as such and Wilson's declining to correct them only grew more conspicuous as election day approached. Once America's entry into the war was in fact underway, the Speaker of the House (a Democrat) would threaten that Wilson could only count on his support so long as he was not seeking war, to which

Wilson would reply, "In God's name, could anyone have done more than I to show a desire for peace?" (Cooper 2009, 313)

Another contributor to the de facto promise was Wilson's growing willingness to characterize his Republican opponents as warmongers. When asked for more details as to how Hughes would depart from him on foreign policy, he replied, "There is only one choice as against peace, and that is war." (352) It appears that Wilson aimed specifically to paint his opposition as individuals who would not give peace any chance, and he himself definitely saw them as such (357), but this invited the fallacy of the inverse: that Wilson would not give war any chance. At any rate, he kept his lamentations to himself and his closest friends, and allowed everyone to expect of him a continuation of peace and American non-involvement.

Wilson's separate reactions to the sinkings of two other U.S. vessels (the *Arabic* and *Sussex*) had wrung diplomatic concessions from Germany during his first term, which had the effect of further cementing the expectation that he would keep the U.S. out of war. In the wake of the Arabic, one front-page editorial proclaimed that, "Without mobilizing a single regiment or assembling a fleet, ... he [Wilson] has compelled the surrender of the proudest, most arrogant, best armed of nations." It was in fact the widespread interpretation of these events as feats of Wilson's diplomatic skill that proved ultimately problematic for him, which clearly fits an expectation cost logic in its own right. Brands (2003, 71) wrote that, "Seizing on the German promise, while ignoring the conditions, he [Wilson] presented the Sussex pledge as a triumph for American – which was to say, Wilsonian – diplomacy. In doing so he borrowed trouble, but he guessed that repayment wouldn't be required till after the election. His campaign theme was 'He kept us out of war,' and it sufficed to keep Wilson in the White House."

Wilson further solidified doves' hopes, and hawks' disappointment, one last noteworthy time in between his election and his call to war, as he was striving to broker peace between the European nations:

> Wilson's words elicited broad and often enthusiastic approval in the United States. "We have just passed through a very important hour in the life of the world," said Senator Robert La Follette of Wisconsin. Senator John Shafroth of Colorado declared,

> "It was the greatest message of a century." The New York Times proclaimed, "This is not merely a guarantee of peace, it is a moral transformation." ... The applause was premature. (Cooper 2009, 77)

6.1 Breaking the Promise

Despite Wilson's concern over lone submarine captains, America did not, in fact, enter the war as a direct reaction to any one thing, even as a "last straw" atop other things. This is important to understand lest we overestimate the shifts in public hawkishness that are often credited with U.S. entry, which would in turn throw off our key theoretical inferences. To be sure, there were many significant events that definitely increased hawkish sentiments – the sinkings of the Lusitania, Sussex, and Arabic, the confirmed-authentic Zimmermann telegram, the Germans' explicit derogation of their earlier agreement to restrict submarine attacks – but it is more accurate to categorize the overall shift in public opinion as a move from "extremely dovish" to "substantially dovish." Wilson clearly did not feel pressured by public opinion at any rate.

It is hard to overstate the dovish and specifically isolationist sentiments of the American people from the outset of WWI. Wilson was actually seen from the outset as the moderate on the political stage in terms of foreign policy, not because his commitment to peace was suspect but because of the much more extreme pacifists and isolationists in his party and in the public at large. A cartoon of the day had Wilson standing between Bryan holding a dove and Roosevelt firing six-shooters into the air (294). Thus, it is quite possible that Wilson's entering the war was *not* moderating at all, and in fact placed him solidly to the right of the median voter. He may have also had no particular persuasive advantage with "fellow" doves, as that advantage may have belonged only to the likes of Bryan.

This relative moderateness earned him a valuable yet capricious alliance with William Howard Taft. Wilson found himself caught between the two extremes before his first term was up, when he deemed that measures of "preparedness" were called for. This constituted the raising of a part-time militia, conscientiously structured to avoid any possibility that it would transform into a standing army or signal undue hostility to European powers

(Kennedy 2001). As mild as this action was, it was interpreted by both sides as a reversal, resulting in a clear-cut "worst of both worlds" pattern quite characteristic of expectation costs:[1]

> No matter how much Wilson might try to soft-pedal this move, he was making an about-face from his earlier rejection of increased military preparedness. . . . *The ex-president* [Taft], *Lodge, and others speedily denounced any new defense program from this administration as too little too late.* Even more dangerous for Wilson were attacks coming from within his own party. As expected, Bryan quickly denounced any talk of strengthening the army and navy as a step toward war, and his followers on Capitol Hill soon followed suit. By reversing course on preparedness, Wilson was picking the biggest fight yet in his political life. (Cooper 2009, 297; emphasis added)

After Eugene Debs withdrew from the 1916 race, Wilson's perceived promise of peace, contrasted with Hughes' perceived warmongering, garnered the support of many socialists – many of whom, such as Jane Addams, would be slandered and blacklisted during the war – but his "about-face on preparedness" had at least made them think twice (354).

Even after the infamous sinking of the *Lusitania*, in which 128 American civilians died, only six out of one thousand newspaper and magazine editors called for war. Such a survey of editors was "the closest thing to a public opinion poll that was possible at the time," as Cooper (2009, 352) points out. Even the two most hawkish politicians of the day, Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, stopped (barely) short of calling for war at that time (352). The *Lusitania* predated American entry into the war by almost two years; it also predated Wilson's 1916 campaign where the promise of peace brought him victory, though hardly by a landslide. As Brands (2003, 68) wrote, "from the outset it was apparent that the European war, and America's relation to it, would have much to do with whether Wilson won reelection. And despite the genuine outrage that had followed the *Lusitania* sinking, it was obvious that the American people wanted to stay clear of the war."

If the turn did not come with the *Lusitania*, then, presumably, it would come with the German pronouncement that they would be deliberately disregarding all previous pledges

1. See also Brands 2003, 62-63.

and indiscriminately attacking all vessels in European waters. Wilson and Josephus Daniels deliberated at length about the perils of wartime economics and politics, then decided merely to sever diplomatic relations with Germany. As Cooper wrote:

> ... interventionist voices were few and mostly private. Publicly, editors and others nearly unanimously applauded the break with Germany, but most of them also seconded Wilson's wish to avoid war. The Senate passed a resolution approving the president's action, 78 to 5, with most of the supporters of the resolution likewise claiming that they wanted to stay out of the war. Peace activists held rallies in several cities and staged a march to the Capitol on February 12. Some of them called for the requirement of a popular referendum in order to declare war. (Cooper 2009, 376)

If the turn did not come with the resumption of unrestrained submarine warfare, then, presumably, it would come with the revelation of the Zimmermann telegram, complete with Arthur Zimmermann's confirmation that he had indeed sent it in his official capacity. In fact, the most that followed from this was the House's passage of a bill to arm ships vulnerable to submarines, a bill which had previously faced insurmountable resistance. Even as the bill itself passed 403-13, many of its supporters remarked that they would still not support war, and an amendment to prohibit the armed ships from carrying munitions attracted 125 votes (378).

The months that followed saw the expected series of submarine attacks that occasionally cost the lives of American passengers, and yet:

> Surprisingly to some, there was no great rise in interventionist sentiment. Roosevelt predictably scorned armed neutrality, and a cadre of northeastern Republicans joined him in pressing for intervention. Metropolitan newspapers such as the Chicago Tribune also came out for war... Most newspapers and magazines did not take a stand, however, and ordinary citizens did not seem to be in a belligerent mood. In Congress, several observers commented that more than half the members of the House would vote against the war if there could be a secret ballot. Clearly, the president was not feeling a push for war from Congress or the public. (381)

Even if Wilson had felt popular pressures to go to war, it is likely he would have ignored

them. For one, his strict ethos of self-control was channeled into resisting such influences (Cooper 2009, 380). Ironically, on the very day the Germans announced their resumption of submarine attacks, Wilson had been insisting to Secretary of State Lansing that war would not be called for even if they did just that (374). When, on the very eve of U.S. entry, his cabinet suggested that the public might force them into war (which must have either been either paranoia or hyperbole on their part), Wilson replied, "I do not care for popular demand. I want to do right, whether popular or not." (Brands 2003, 79)

This, of course, runs counter to any theory of anticipated public reactions in this case, taken at face value. There is indeed a striking lack of evidence that Wilson or any of his advisors discussed the public reactions to be anticipated in light of his reputation, promises, or previous rhetoric. Even more importantly in terms of bargaining theory, there was in their deliberations a striking absence of attempts to get inside Germans' heads, to update beliefs about their types and incentives based on the new information of German behavior, which was itself, after all, proceeding in light of Wilson's visible promises and reputation.

How, then, did Wilson come to the decision to enter the war? The increasingly hawkish counsel of his cabinet likely played a part, as did the Russian revolution since it suddenly removed the autocratic Russia from the otherwise democratic Allies, but it is difficult to say otherwise. Wilson's standard decisionmaking process involved much private contemplation, and in the days leading up to April 2nd, 1917, that private contemplation evidently included the authoring of the speech he would give to Congress urging them to war. Those around him during this period remarked, unsurprisingly, that he was particularly "peevish" and "solemn," promptly returning to his study after breaking for meals and such (Brands 2003, 79; Cooper 2009, 385). His only communications on the matter were to give Secretary of State Lansing one day's notice that he was about to declare war and to get feedback on the speech from his hawkish advisor Edward House on the same day he was to give it (Cooper 2009, 385).

Wilson's speech clearly won Congress over, when much winning-over was evidently required. The news also brought in many letters of support (Brands 2003, 388). The popular reactions would be due in large part to the short-lived "rally 'round the flag" effect (Mueller 1970), while the Congressional reaction was likely due to the sheer effectiveness of Wilson's

speech as written. Cooper (2009, 387) deemed it the greatest speech of his career and the greatest presidential speech since Lincoln's second inaugural address. Even so, several congresspersons questioned whether he had gone too far to the opposite extreme with his sweeping idealism of liberation, and whether he, as a man so devoted to peace, had the "stuff" to lead the country through war (Brands 2003, 81), which runs clearly counter to moderation benefits.

Wilson's breaking of his promise was not framed by him or his party as a reversal or inconsistency of any kind. The question of his arguable inconsistency was addressed at one point in his speech to Congress, which shows a concern for inconsistency costs, but only *post hoc*, after the decision to reverse had clearly been made regardless. Wilson had indeed never believed that the U.S. could avoid war under all circumstances, and had even always known which side he would fight for if necessary (Kennedy 2001); thus, he could honestly say as he did in that speech:

> My own thought has not been driven from its habitual and normal course by the unhappy events of the last two months, and I do not believe that the thought of the Nation has been altered or clouded by them. I have exactly the same things in mind now that I had in mind when I addressed the Senate on the twenty-second of January last, the same that I had in mind when I addressed the Congress on the third of February and on the twenty-sixth of February. . . . Neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved and the freedom of its peoples, and the menace to that peace and freedom lies in the existence of autocratic governments backed by organized force which is controlled wholly by their will, not by the will of their people.

All the same, Wilson was the peace candidate turned war president, and it would cost him and his party virtually all of their socialist supporters. The man who had run on staying out of war was now pronouncing that "There is. . . but one response possible from us: Force, Force to the utmost, Force without stint or limit, the righteous and triumphant Force which shall make Right the law of the world and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust." (Cooper 2009, 431)

6.2 The Domestic Political Consequences

As the above should make clear, there is no apparent evidence to support the theory that Wilson's status as the "peace candidate" – if he even really was that – earned him any special favor or credibility when he deemed it time to go to war. Those who had most desired peace, the anarchists and socialists of the day, railed against the war and often sacrificed their freedom for it, when, by rights, they should have trusted that if a man like Wilson deemed it so, then the war must be worth fighting. Conversely, those who had most desired war lambasted Wilson for his earlier hesitancy and wished he had left the fighting to the Republican presidential candidates who had always been prepared for it. These observations about the behavior of extremists do not necessarily work against Schultz's (2005) median-voter-driven model, however, which focuses on moderates who should now be reassured of the President's moderateness.

On that question, the behavior and statements of Congresspersons and other political elites are generally inconclusive. Especially once the war was in full swing, reappraisals of the president's true type were a moot point. The average citizens' willingness to follow Wilson into war, however, was conspicuously lacking. The draft was instituted six weeks into the war, when recruiters had only enlisted 73,000 out of a goal of one million (Zinn, 2014:134). As Goldstein (1978, 107) wrote, "Anti-war sentiment did not pose a threat of revolution or violence, but it did pose a threat of spreading disaffection which could paralyze the war effort." The number of draft-dodgers would total 300,000, the same number of servicemembers the U.S. had in total on the day it entered the war (Cooper 2009, 390; Goldstein 1978, 107). A large majority of those drafted sought exemptions (Goldstein 1978, 107). The Speaker of the House, Champ Clark, famously remarked in an in-session speech that "In the estimation of Missourians there is precious little difference between a conscript and a convict." (Cited in Cooper 2009, 393) A speech given by Eugene Debs praising a couple of draft-dodgers resulted in his imprisonment and conviction for sedition following an appeal to the Supreme Court, which resulted, in turn, in the May Day Riots of 1919. He received 3.4% of the vote, from jail, as a write-in candidate in the 1920 election, which was more than half the number he had received when he was actually on the ballot and free to

campaign.

Goldstein (1978, 107) argues that, "Given the tremendous amount of opposition to American participation in the war, the severe governmental repression which developed did not constitute an irrational response." It may seem straightforward to infer from the government's heavy-handed repression that the dissent was simply that bad, and perhaps Wilson that unpopular, that such measures were necessary; i.e., we may be tempted to take the extent of the repression as an accurate measure of public dissatisfaction, reflecting the state's accurate measure of that dissatisfaction. That would clearly be erroneous here. For one thing, Wilson expressed distinct sentiments and even recommended policies inimical to the tolerance of dissent while still in his first term. He drafted a provision in the party platform expressly condemning any group or individual who might undermine national unity, and proclaimed that there should be no tolerance for those who "inject the poison of disloyalty into our most critical affairs." (Stone 2004, 145) In his speech calling for war, Wilson alleged that "our unsuspecting communities and even our offices of government" had been "filled" with spies, and vowed that disloyalty would be "dealt with a firm hand of stern repression." (Goldstein 1978, 107) As Geoffrey Stone notes, Wilson's tolerance for criticism during war strikes a sharp contrast with Lincoln's; at the very outset of the war, Wilson said to a relative, "thank god for Abraham Lincoln" because "I won't make the mistakes that he did" (Stone 2004, 137; Cooper 2009, 390). It is also the case, besides, that Wilson's executive appointees, the Supreme Court, and especially the Congress were the prime movers of the legal structure responsible for repression during the war, not Wilson himself (Goldstein 1978, 107-21).

The results of the 1918 midterm election, though, can certainly be taken as a clear indication of where the public stood on Wilson and his party after their entry into the war. One of the key points of the "Nixon to China" model is that the dovish (or hawkish) candidate who acts contrary to type and initiates hostilities (or brokers peace) with a rival state must somehow establish themselves in the public's eyes as the better candidate going forward, even though their rival, by definition, has always been the one thought best suited to the new relationship of belligerence (or peacefulness; Schultz 2005, fn16; see also Cukierman & Tommasi 1998). Thus, while Republican candidates were the traditional and

consistent hawks and therefore might be considered better-suited to waging the war in progress, the median voter should fear that electing them would result in lost chances for a favorable peace, especially now that the Democrats had clearly proven, by entering the war, that they would not commit the opposite error of accepting an unfavorable peace.

Wilson essentially tried to capitalize on this logic by "mak[ing] the congressional contests a referendum on his handling of the war" (Brands 2003, 99) and rhetorically tying his party's fate in the midterm election to his prosecution of the war and of the peace to follow. Importantly, it clearly was going to follow; the armistice was signed just six days later, with the U.S. now in a clearly dominant global position, having suffered almost not at all compared to the other great-power combatants. Wilson made it clear that he was not impugning Republicans' patriotism but that he believed that less Republicans checking him in Congress would allow him to craft a more coherent foreign policy in the national interest, especially for the message it would send to the European leaders with which he would soon be negotiating a victorious peace (Cooper 2009, 445).

The voters, in response, gave the Republicans 38 more House seats and 12 more Senate seats, turning both chambers over to them. Many at the time and since have lamented Wilson's apparently disastrous, transparently partisan plea. Cooper, however, provides a more grounded, and revealing, analysis:

> Contemporary charges and wise hindsights about the appeal were overworked. Wilson's action made a bad partisan situation marginally worse, but opposition to him already bordered on and sometimes crossed over into hatred. Roosevelt and Lodge defined the far edge of bitterness, but the normally mild-mannered Taft... likewise assailed Wilson and his works with venom. ... If the electorate had been as war-mad as many people believed, the opposition party would have scored an even bigger victory. (446-7)

Brands has a similar appraisal, though he, notably, ties it directly to Wilson's perceived policy reversal. He argues that, as a result of this, "Republicans felt not only bitter but betrayed – or outsmarted, which was worse. For the next two years they battled the administration on nearly every aspect of the war." (Brands 2003, 99)

Perhaps even more problematic was Wilson's flagging support among liberals, which speaks particularly strongly in favor of an expectation-cost dynamic. His winning coalition of 1916 had included many socialists who had been bitten particularly strongly by the repressive wartime regime, and while they should have rationally been far more concerned about an even more repressive Republican regime, their present treatment "seemed symptomatic of the administration's rightward drift, and it profoundly discouraged many of those who had looked to Wilson for leadership. ... Long-time progressive Amos Pinchot stated the matter more succinctly when he said of the president, 'He puts his enemies in office and his friends in jail.'" (Brands 2003, 100)

Voter turnout in 1918 dropped to 39.9% – the lowest turnout in a federal election since 1798. This is consistent with both disaffected Democrats and torn Republicans staying home, though the theoretical prediction might arguably even be that particularly outraged Democrats would turn out to vote against their party. Altogether, there is very good reason to believe that expectation costs due to Wilson's reversal on the war cost his party control of Congress in 1918, which was one of the deciding factors in the fight over League of Nations membership.

Once the war ended, several other policy issues arose, and Wilson's stances on those issues would have their own independent effects on his popularity. Most importantly, it is necessary to rule out any negative effects from these other issues that might be mistaken for costs from Wilson's reversal on the war. There are three such issues to consider: the terms of the peace, the League of Nations, and (in)attention to domestic concerns.

The centerpiece of the peace talks both before and after the Armistice was Wilson's Fourteen Points, consisting of stipulations designed to deliver (in Wilson's oft-repeated words) peace without victory. The intention was to prevent a follow-up war by minimizing resentment and the revisionist motives that accompany it. Unsurprisingly, the European Allies who had borne the brunt of the war greatly preferred to extract reparations from the Central powers, but Americans mostly saw it Wilson's way. His unveiling of the Fourteen Points was well-received domestically (90).

The failure of the League of Nations, in terms of the U.S. refusal to join, is generally attributed to U.S. isolationism, partisan Republican obstructionism, or a combination of

the two. There is no doubt as to the role of the latter: Wilson's failure to include any major Republicans on his diplomatic team in Europe was seen as a major insult and, more to the point, it rendered any product of that venture, such as the League Charter, a purely partisan document, the success of which could bring credit only to Democrats (Cooper 2009, 456-458). Of at least equal importance was the personal animosity between Wilson and Henry Cabot Lodge: Lodge held great influence among Senate Republicans and could keep them galvanized against the League, despite the fact that his primary avenue of attack on Wilson had always been a hawkish interventionist one. Wilson, for his part, would not give an inch to any amendment or proposal that had anything to do with Lodge, which was exactly what Lodge counted on – what he relied almost entirely upon, in fact – to hold the anti-League coalition in Congress together.

This brings us back to the question of public support for the League. As historian Allan Nevins concluded, "Little doubt can exist that when he [Wilson] came home from Paris a majority of Americans desired ratification of the League. Hence, though the issue was uncertain, it was by no means a desperate struggle into which Woodrow Wilson plunged when he began his valiant Western journey." (cited in Smith 1966, xvii) Lodge and his fellow Republican Senators, in fact, were the ones with the uphill battle, and they always knew it. Early in the Senate battle, James Watson of Indiana privately said to Lodge, "I don't see how we are ever going to defeat this proposition. I don't see how it is possible to defeat it." Lodge assured him that they would defeat it with an endless stream of proposed reservations – reasonable ones, which Wilson would reject purely because they would be associated with Lodge (112). This ultimately earned Wilson a reputation for being unrealistic and uncompromising regarding America's role in the league, but as Brands points out, Wilson had already compromised a great deal on many major contentious points, including an escape clause, a guarantee of domestic sovereignty, and respect for the Monroe Doctrine (Brands 2003, 114). Thus, it is incorrect to infer from the League fight that average Americans were simply not ready to join the League on Wilson's terms; rather, it was Senate Republicans who went against the popular tide, and their success was due to a combination of their Congressional unity (and dominance) and the zero-sum nature of the fight, at both the partisan and personal levels (see also 128).

One of the reasons for strong public support of the League, as Republicans knew, was that Wilson had monopolized the oceanic cables while he was negotiating in Europe, giving him what they saw as an unfair advantage in the national debate (Smith 1966, 51). Wilson began his whistle-stop tour to campaign for the League not because support for it was lacking but because he knew that the people already agreed with him on it and they would need only to be mobilized in order to move Congress (54). This strategy was working and likely would have succeeded if not for Wilson's debilitating stroke en route to Wichita (73-75). Although Wilson's faith in public approval of the League can hardly serve as evidence of it (given his later mental state especially), it is worth noting that toward the end of his second term, Wilson came close to suggesting an unorthodox sort of referendum on the League by having several Senators step down and immediately run for re-election (135).

Lastly, we must consider Wilson's relative neglect of domestic affairs while negotiating in Europe and then campaigning for the League. Wilson's time abroad was greatly unprecedented, and he largely attempted to "sidestep" domestic issues, mainly via delegation (Cooper 2009, 459, 477). Under Lodge's strong leadership, Congressional Republicans worked to force upon Wilson this apparent neglect by blocking legislation on key domestic issues so the President had nothing to sign in between periods abroad (Brands 2003, 110).

The question is not so much whether this was a problem for Wilson – no doubt it was – but whether this was actually part and parcel of the expectation costs Wilson was suffering for his original policy reversal. The slogan that was used to criticize him for this domestic neglect – "America First" – was one of his early campaign slogans (Cooper 2009, 278). The counterfactual is not "what if Wilson had paid more attention to domestic concerns" but "what if Wilson had not been expected to focus on domestic concerns." In a sense, Republicans were simply preventing him from "unreversing" himself. It is not clear, after all, why Wilson could not compensate for perceived neglect of domestic matters with glory on the world stage – he was "the world figure of his time," hailed on banners as the "God of Peace," "The Savior of Humanity," "The Moses from Across the Atlantic." (Brands 2003, 104) Again, his largely interventionist foreign policies were widely popular, as individual policies. Unfortunately, they would come as pleasant surprises to interventionists, who would thus undervalue them, while coming as unpleasant surprises to isolationists, who would thus

overvalue them as negatives.

While proclaiming that the majority of Americans favored membership in the League, Wilson would link arms with Taft, inadvertently reminding the opinionated public that he was proffering the interventionist policies he had previously attributed to his opposition (Brands 2003, 110). Absent any expectation cost mechanism, this would have placed Wilson and his party right alongside the median voter with regards to isolationism vs. internationalism, if not hawkishness vs. dovishness. As it stood, the applause he received at home could not compete with the applause he had received in Europe, which reporters noted (Smith 1966, 59). Lodge and other Republicans, aiming to counter Wilson's speaking tour with their own, railed against Wilson himself as much as they did the League – about how he had "betrayed the American soldier" and was complicit in "duplicity unequaled in the history of the world." In relation to his supposed betrayal, crowds called, unbidden, for his impeachment (66). Congressional Republicans introduced an incendiary bill to investigate this newly victorious "God of Peace" for bribery from Europeans (75). After it had become clear that the League had failed in the Senate, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Theodore Roosevelt's daughter and wife of a Republican leader in the House of Representatives, remarked that some of the comments about Wilson "were noticeably lacking in the Greek quality of Aidos – the quality that deters one from defiling the body of a dead enemy." (143)

Wilson suffered his debilitating stroke shortly before the 1920 campaign season began, which would have precluded his nomination no matter what – there was a veritable conspiracy of his advisors to keep his name off the ballot out of concern for his health alone (151-6). Nevertheless, several aspects of the 1920 election speak decisively to the political liability that Wilson had become, mainly due to his key policy reversal.

While the 1920 Democratic convention celebrated Wilson symbolically – his massive portrait loomed over the opening proceedings – its nomination of James Cox was telling:

"It became a question of importance as to whether Cox would call upon the President. That McAdoo and Palmer had gone down to defeat was construed by many as a repudiation of the President, and many of Cox's people did not want their candidate, who was not closely identified with the Administration, to tie himself to the Administration's leader." (156) "From the beginning," Cooper (2009, 570) wrote, "the Republicans made him [Wilson]

their main issue. They denounced 'Wilson's league,' blamed all the country's troubles on him, and promised a return to 'normalcy' – a word their nominee, Warren Harding, made their chief slogan." The few restrained statements Wilson made only fueled this fire. Taft, turning on the President one last time, asserted, "The issue which the American people are going to vote upon, no matter what Mr. Cox wishes, Mr. Wilson wishes, Mr, Lodge wishes, or Mr. Harding wishes, is whether they approve the Administration of Mr. Wilson." (Smith 1966, 158) Smith (1966, 159) wrote that "It was obvious to all the world that the Republicans were going to win this election, that the country was going to throw out the Democrats with their taxes and war and crusading for the world's good."

Harding won the most lopsided victory in a Presidential race since James Monroe almost a hundred years prior; the Republicans won an additional 63 seats in the house and 10 in the Senate, giving them well beyond a full supermajority in both chambers. "We have torn up Wilsonism by the roots," Lodge proclaimed (161). Cooper (2009, 572), noting that many read the election as a referendum on the League, asserts that "people were voting against Wilson. If the election of 1920 was a referendum, it was a referendum on him." Charles Willis Thompson asserted that the American people in 1920 "did not vote for anybody; they voted against somebody; and the somebody they voted against was not a candidate; it was Woodrow Wilson." (Smith 1966, 188)

Brands (2003, 136) noted that, "When Wilson died, Americans mourned him respectfully for a moment, then made him a scapegoat for their collective disillusionment... 'We have been played for a bunch of suckers,' wrote Harry Elmer Barnes in a widely endorsed indictment of Wilson's wartime diplomacy." Wilson was, in the words of Mark Sullivan, the "symbol of the exaltation that had turned sour, personification of the rapture that had now become gall." (Smith 1966, 188)

6.3 The German Side of the Game

According to the argument advanced here, by leading his people to expect peace, Wilson was exposing himself to substantial additional costs if and when he had to go to war. Moreover, he was doing this in a thoroughly public and explicit manner. Can we thus

attribute Germany's boldness and antagonization of the U.S. to an overestimation of the degree to which Wilson was locked into peace?

In a word, no. Such an explanation would indeed fit Germany's outward behavior very well but is belied by even a cursory examination of the government's internal deliberations. No one in the German executive doubted that indiscriminate submarine attacks would draw the U.S. into the war; rather, the debate was over whether it was worth it nonetheless in order to block British trade and smuggling, and the state's behavior was determined by those who believed it was (Brands 2003, 77; Cooper 2009, 373). Given this, the puzzle is instead why the Germans were so confident that the U.S. would enter, to the point of interpreting earlier missives from the Secretary of State as "merely a pretext for American intervention," in Cooper's words (2009, 369). It is not clear whether there was any cognizance of the public political conversation within the U.S.

It is also unclear whether or not this was rational behavior of even the most basic kind on the part of the German governing elite. If imminent victory was necessary in order to quell unrest which threatened the leaders' freedom and even their lives – and Goemans (2000, 97) argues that it was – then letting the submarines loose was consistent with a perfectly rational strategy of gambling for resurrection (Downs & Rocke 1994). Even the total neglect of the possibility that the U.S. would not enter would be consistent with this logic – it would drive the point home that, even if the U.S. was certain to enter, it wouldn't change the Germans' calculus. However, there is one major element that can't be reconciled with this rationalist story (putting aside the question of when it is rational to believe that one is in such a do-or-die position), and that is that the British economy and lines of credit were already so thoroughly exhausted that there was no more commerce for the submarines to block, and the Germans knew it. Even the narrowest bureaucratic incentives of the military leadership cannot satisfactorily explain their disdain for victory by attrition under such dire circumstances. Amazingly, this disdain seemed *aesthetic* in nature: German decision-makers spoke dismissively of victory by attrition as a "shopkeeper's peace." (Cooper 2009, 373)

6.4 Conclusion

Woodrow Wilson began his second term under the universal public assumption that he would continue to keep the U.S. out of World War I. This brought him and his party great popularity, and continued to do so right up until his unexpected decision to enter the war. The massive and unexpected difficulties that the government encountered in raising sufficient numbers of troops speaks both to the continuing unpopularity of the war and the notably muted positive reaction of hawkish members of the public; the particularly sharp dissent among socialists and the far left more generally speaks to a particular sense of disappointment and resentment following Wilson's perceived betrayal. The significant defeat of the Democratic party in the 1918 midterm election can be traced to a general discontent with Wilson after his policy reversal, despite the fact that the resulting war had essentially already ended in victory. The extremely low voter turnout is particularly consistent with an expectation cost explanation.

The Democratic defeat in the 1920 election was apparently due to the massive sense of disappointment that still lingered as a result of Wilson's reversal. Competing explanations involving Wilson's and other Democrats' policy choices and political strategies cannot account for this and are more likely to have mitigated rather than imitated expectation costs. As predicted, the party's base exhibited particularly strong resentment toward anything associated with the individual who had disappointed them (Wilson), to the point of disregarding normal partisan political imperatives, while the members of the opposing party conspicuously refused to reward Wilson for his momentous and long-standing shift toward their preferred policies. These patterns are particularly hard to reconcile with theories and models that are driven by the median voter theorem and which do not include a prospect-theoretic component.

Chapter 7

Eisenhower: Negative, Futile, and Immoral Containment

> We can never rest – and we must so inform all the world, including the Kremlin – that until the enslaved nations of the world have in the fullness of freedom the right to choose their own path ... that never shall we desist in our aid to every man and woman of those shackled lands ... who keeps burning among his own people the flame of freedom or who is dedicated to the liberation of his fellows.
>
> Dwight D. Eisenhower (1952)

Eisenhower, and especially his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, frequently deployed bombastic rhetoric about ending Soviet control of generally unspecified "satellite" countries and territories. The countries in mind were widely taken to be those of eastern Europe which, it was clear, were now part of the Soviet Union only because it had beat Eisenhower's forces to them during the end stage of WWII. Many later observers, including Krukones (1984, 72) most importantly for this research design, saw this as engendering a major campaign promise that was then broken when Eisenhower refrained from aiding rebellions in East Germany and, especially, Hungary.

By all accounts, the cost of breaking the promise were minimal, and this is usually attributed to Eisenhower's political skills and/or unimpeachable credibility due to his status as the hero of World War II. Campbell & Steinberg (2008, 57) provide a prime example:

"Although critics from the right continued to assail Eisenhower for weakness, the skillful handling of the policy shift, combined with Eisenhower's own considerable credibility, allowed Eisenhower to escape with little damage at home or abroad." They remark similarly with regards to his eventually taking credit for peace in Korea: "His personal credibility on military issues likely played an important role in avoiding a campaign rhetoric trap that might have felled just about any other candidate" (p. 53).

As Campbell & Steinberg (2008, 53) also point out, however, Eisenhower's Korea policy is not an example of a candidate breaking a promise and avoiding the cost, but of a campaign strategy "designed to gain the benefits of campaign promises without making the kinds of specific commitments that would unduly tie the hands of the new administration." I argue that Eisenhower's policy toward eastern Europe, of "liberation" and "rollback", was similarly vague, and has been wrongly coded (or more informally categorized) by later observers as a "breakable" promise; it was instead a "rhetorical pledge," in the typology established by Pomper (1968, 236-7) (Krukones does not specify his criteria for determining when issue-related rhetoric becomes a breakable promise). Thus, Eisenhower certainly suffered almost no domestic political repercussions for his continuation of Truman-era containment, but this was because he was not actually expected to do otherwise.

This, in fact, was because he and Secretary Dulles had both fully anticipated the expectation costs they would expose themselves to as they approached that rhetorical line early in the campaign, and they had indeed fully pulled back, well before Eisenhower was even elected. Thus, this case supports expectation cost theory even as it fails to fit the bill, as originally predicted, of a case of expectation costs being suffered.

7.1 Making No Promises: Rhetorical Brinksmanship

As Campbell & Steinberg (2008, 48) observe, Eisenhower's initial campaign was in danger of falling prey to "tougher-than-thou syndrome." Even before the general election, in which he harshly criticized Truman as well as Roosevelt for various forms of weakness toward Russia, Ike had a surprisingly tough primary fight against the radically hawkish, and arguably even more anti-communist, Robert Taft (Campbell & Steinberg 2008, 57; Chernus 2002, 273).

Given Eisenhower's WWII hero status, Taft's strategy of choice was actually to emphasize what he and Ike had in common with regards to foreign policy. To counter this, as Chernus (2002, 272) put it, Ike had to "put distance" between himself and Taft. But he did this not by getting tougher than Taft, per se, instead arguing that Taft was an isolationist and that Ike had a better appreciation of the value of offshore allies (Tudda 2005, 8-9). Ike even admitted as much: "[This is] really a disagreement as to methods," he said at a press conference. "We all have the same basic objective." Taft agreed, privately at least (Chernus 2002, 273).

Numerous writers have remarked on the Republican party's, if not the country's, appetite for hawkish rhetoric in 1952. Ambrose (1991, 275) asserted that, "Despite the obvious dangers and risks of a call for liberation, the rewards were too great to ignore. Liberation was what the Old Guard wanted to hear. . . " Lyon (1974, 518) wrote that Dulles' rhetoric about liberating "captive peoples" was "removed from reality" and "composed primarily for domestic consumption." Bowie & Immerman (1997, 76) wrote that "as an issue to which the Republican right wing was emotionally attached, liberation was fundamental to the GOP electoral strategy. . . . By agreeing to run on this plan and delivering speeches that explicitly endorsed it, Eisenhower was unquestionably courting votes and placating his party's Old Guard. But he tried to minimize the cost."

Dulles later defined and promoted the strategy of brinksmanship: "The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art." (Sheply 1956) He and Eisenhower, in unbroken concert as I argue below, practiced a rhetorical brinksmanship during as well as after the 1952 campaign; and just as they successfully identified how high they could ratchet up Cold War tensions before igniting a war, they successfully identified how specific they could get with their rhetoric before any specific policies or outcomes would become expected of them. Their privately-expressed concerns and specific rhetorical adjustments, well before election day, stand in clear contrast to Lincoln, who desperately sought credible commitment, and Wilson, who, however nervously, allowed his party to carry him over the brink.

Dulles was employed to write the foreign policy planks of the 1952 GOP platform, and he provided, as expected, the hawkishness that would galvanize the party (Tudda 2005, 9):

> It will be made clear, on the highest authority of the President and the Congress, that United States policy, as one of its peaceful purposes, looks happily forward to the genuine independence of those captive peoples [in eastern Europe] . . . [A Republican victory] will mark the end of the negative, futile and immoral policy of "containment" which abandons countless human beings to a despotism and godless terrorism, which in turn enables the rulers to forge the captives into a weapon for our destruction (Peters & Woolley 2018d).

7.1.1 Eisenhower's Words

Chernus (2002, 277) claims that "Eisenhower was never enthusiastic about the 'liberation' theme, and he never wanted to make it a major issue." The closest thing to a breakable promise that Eisenhower himself made may be found in his sly response to the question, "Would you conquer subversion by helping resistance behind the Iron Curtain?" "My dear sir," Ike replied, "when I am in a thing like this, I believe in helping everybody who is on my side." (272)

Eisenhower's first major public address as a candidate pertained entirely to fighting communism. It alternated throughout between alarmism and reassurance. The *New York Times'* headline noted pithily: "[Eisenhower] Sees U.S. in Greatest Peril; No Time for Fear." The *Times,* though, also editorialized that Ike's tone was more reassuring than not, and that he would find a way "of living peacefully and permanently with communism in the world." (276-7) Indeed, as Childs (1958, 151) pointed out, "A large part of the Republican propaganda effort was aimed at exploiting the public's sense of the futility and waste of the Korean war, and the voter was encouraged in a variety of ways to believe that wars always happened under the Democrats, while the Republicans brought peace and with it prosperity." Ike was arguably the peace candidate – definitely "peace through strength," but peace nonetheless.

Still, he had also vowed that America would not "rest content until the tidal mud of aggressive Communism has receded within its own borders." (Bowie & Immerman 1997, 76) The belligerence that was to be found in the speech was seized upon by Democrat critics, and also stoked genuine fear in European allies who were far from eager to fight the

Soviets. Right after his first post-convention speech, it seems, was Ike's critical juncture, at the brink of an irrevocable expectation-setting: even if he had simply remained silent in the face of these responses, expectations that he would actually employ all means to help liberate eastern Europe may have set in, in the same way that Wilson's silence in the face of the "He Kept Us Out of War" chants allowed expectations of dovish policies to set in. Eisenhower, however, did not stay silent: just one week later, he made another speech specifying that liberation would occur "by every peaceful means, but only by peaceful means" – "That," according to Wicker (2002, 26), "was the death knell of 'liberation' in the campaign."

Ike further asserted that the American people were only ever dragged into war against their will, and that "only the losing of a modern war could be more disastrous than winning it." (Chernus 2002, 277) While he had spoken of using "every political, every economic, every psychological tactic" to free Soviet satellites, he nonetheless claimed that such a policy was "the farthest thing from an act of war." (Lyon 1974, 708) In light of all this, his affirmation to Congress shortly after inauguration that he would be "uncompromising" in his fulfillment of all campaign pledges carries less weight (518).

Expectations could, of course, haven been set at liberation without violence – Eisenhower could have promised the public that he would successfully coerce the Soviets to leave eastern Europe, and they might have been watching for it to happen during his presidency. But he made clear statements in the opposite direction. According to Bowie & Immerman (1997, 76), "Eisenhower was willing to make the *aspiration* for liberation a theme on which he would personally campaign" (emphasis added), and he did so in a way that specified not just nonviolence but a long-term and uncertain timeline for the results: the "passage of years," he pronounced, "will [not] put an end to the search for the peaceful instruments of liberation." (76) "Eventual liberation," through "psychological warfare," was the actual promise, such as it was (67-8).

Eisenhower later spoke of stopping the Soviet Union "in its tracks," but as Chernus (2002, 281) points out, "It was easy enough to tack on a quick reference to the enemy's internal atrophy, proclaim this goal as the new image of total victory, and thereby sidestep the whole 'liberation' issue. Working out 'a way of living with them' became the new image of apocalyptic triumph."

> He intended to campaign as a man of peace, and he knew better than anyone the anxieties stirred up among the NATO allies by U.S. talk of "liberation." He needed to reassure European allies that there would be no war of "liberation." Caught between these conflicting imperatives, he would walk (or skirt) the line between the two positions [of peace and war] without endorsing either one. (Chernus 2002, 272)

7.1.2 Dulles' Role

Many presidential administrations, it seems, come to be defined almost as much by a particularly prominent cabinet member as by the president themself – Kissinger under Nixon, for example, or Cheney under Bush Jr. – and with Eisenhower, that individual was unquestionably John Foster Dulles. This was the case before Ike became the Republican nominee, much less president: "During the campaign of 1952," Brands (1988, 11) wrote, "Dulles acted much like a candidate running for office." He was certainly speaking for Eisenhower in the public eye and could therefore set expectations on Eisenhower's behalf. Thus, we must consider his statements almost as closely as Ike's.

Dulles was and still is famous as a staunch anti-communist hawk – along with brinksmanship, he was also widely associated with the term "rollback," referring specifically to the desired Soviet withdrawal from Europe. It is thus all the more striking, and even perplexing, that there is such clear evidence of him openly drawing the clear and explicit line at waging wars of liberation or aiding violent revolutions. His otherwise sweeping exhortations ultimately called specifically for the *passive* resistance of oppressed peoples against Soviet rule (Stang 1968, 238). He did once, shortly after the convention, speak of liberation without the specifier of "by all peaceful means," which, as numerous authors noted, earned him an admonishment from Eisenhower (Bowie & Immerman 1997, 76; Stang 1968, 238; Brands 1988, 10).

Brands (1988, 9) argued that Dulles eventually shrugged off the admonishment, and that as election day neared, he "would 'slur over' peacefulness in liberation, implying that liberation 'awaited only a Republican victory.'" But Brands (1988, 10) also wrote that "his vagueness demonstrated the degree to which he had adopted the political campaigner's practice of saying what his listeners wanted to hear, without committing himself to anything

that might be refutable or embarrassing later on."

There is also the entire "hidden-hand presidency" argument to consider (Greenstein 1994), which upended the popular belief, even among scholars, that Eisenhower was a golf addict who preferred to leave governing to others as much as possible. It was, rather, his strategy to appear as such, while ensuring that subordinates never acted contrary to his wishes. "Dulles," according to Capitanchik (1969, 48), "was determined always to conform to Eisenhower's wishes." More to the point, Ike acted "with complete confidence, to delegate to [Dulles] an unusual degree of flexibility as my representative in international conferences, well knowing that he would not in the slightest degree operate outside the limits previously agreed between us." (48) While this could be read as a "good-cop bad-cop" arrangement, where the agreement was for Dulles to establish hawkish expectations that Ike would not, Ike's policing of Dulles' rhetoric belies this.

Dulles does not appear to have privately disagreed with the true thrust of Eisenhower's policy intentions, either. "For the near-term," Bowie & Immerman (1997, 66) wrote, "Dulles was content that Germany was still divided;" he and Ike shared the belief that Stalin would focus on expanding in Asia rather than Europe, and that this was preferable anyway.

In his confirmation hearing for Secretary of State, Dulles expressed his expectation that the Senators would make "allowance, of course, for the bombast and exaggeration incident to a campaign." (73) In a widely-read *Life* magazine opinion piece published not long after, Dulles made a remarkably plain statement of what Americans should expect – and indeed, how little they should expect – from the Eisenhower administration in Europe (emphasis added):

> . . . liberation from the yoke of Moscow will not occur for a very long time, and courage in neighboring lands will not be sustained, unless the United States makes it publicly known that it wants and expects liberation to occur. The mere statement of that wish and expectation would change, in an electrifying way, the mood of the captive peoples. . . . *We do not want a series of bloody uprisings and reprisals.* There can be peaceful separation from Moscow, as Tito showed, and enslavement can be made so unprofitable that the master will let go his grip. Such results will not come to pass overnight. But

> we can know, for history proves, that the spirit of patriotism burns unquenched in Poles, Czechs, *Hungarians*, Romanians, Bulgarians, Chinese and others, and we can be confident that *within two, five or 10 years* substantial parts of the present captive world can peacefully regain national independence (Dulles 1952).

While Dulles no doubt hoped no one would notice, this "new foreign policy," as the title claimed, was in violent agreement with the Truman administration's NSC 135/3 from less than a year ago, that "the internal conflicts of the Soviet totalitarian system should, with positive effort from us, subsequently cause a retraction of Soviet power and influence and eventually cause that system gradually to weaken and decay, although no time limit can be established by which these objectives will be achieved." (Bowie & Immerman 1997, 31)

7.1.3 Absence of Expectations in Survey Data

Early ANES polls exist to provide specific measurements of what the American public expected from an Eisenhower presidency, in both 1952 and 1956. The most relevant measurements are those asking voters what they liked and didn't like about Eisenhower as a candidate and president. One possible reason to like him was that he "will stop communism; will know how to handle Russia," and one reason to dislike him was that he "will get us into (full-scale) war." It is perhaps telling that his supposed promise to (work to) liberate eastern Europe was not a specific coded reason to like him, while "his promise to go to Korea" was. At any rate, those who did expect him to do whatever was necessary to liberate eastern Europe, and who also cared about such a policy either way, would be included in those who opted to mention either of these two reasons to like or dislike.

Out of 1,899 respondents in 1952, only 14 (0.74%) mentioned Ike stopping or even just knowing how to handle communism as a reason to vote for him; only slightly more (55, or 2.9%) expressed concern that he would get the country into a full-scale war as a reason not to vote for him. Accounting for sampling error, it can be said with 95% confidence that the true percentage of the former hawkish type, who stood to be disappointed by Ike's relatively dovish policies, was between 0.4% and 1.2%, while the true percentage of doves, who disapproved of his initial stance and would underappreciate his relatively dovish

policies, was between 2.2% and 3.8%.

7.1.4 Understanding the Rhetoric

What, if anything, did Eisenhower promise with this rhetoric, and what was expected of him? Krukones (1984, 77), in fact, provides the answer: a "Strong anti-Communist foreign policy" was another one of Eisenhower's major foreign policy promises, and it was kept. More than anything else, the accusatory, moralistic, and often belligerent-sounding rhetoric that Eisenhower employed – "psychological warfare," as he liked to call it – was what he promised, what was expected of him, and what he delivered (Bowie & Immerman 1997, 76-7; Tudda 2005). "We must realize," he said, "that as a nation everything we say, everything we do, and everything we fail to say or do, will have its impact in other lands. It will affect the minds and wills of men and women there." (Bowie & Immerman 1997, 77) "In practice," Lyon (1974, 708) pointed out, "these pledges had been honored by an incessant bombardment of the countries of eastern Europe with propaganda broadcasts over the twenty-eight transmitters of Radio Free Europe."

While Eisenhower sold this, for "domestic consumption," as a strategy of coercion – eventual, gradual, and therefore unable to have its success judged – the historical record shows that it was in reality a strategy of deterrence. If it seemed excessively bombastic for defensive purposes – and Ike indeed worried that it might have become so (Bowie & Immerman 1997, 49) – this was because the need for stronger deterrence was seen as particularly great, by those "insiders" who knew just how superior Soviet conventional forces were at the time, especially in Europe (Trachtenberg 1988; Gavin 2012, 57). Bowie & Immerman (1997, 48-9) argue that by the time he had even decided to run for president, Ike had come to view "modern war" as no longer "a conceivable choice in framing national policy" – but the "possibility of destruction," he said, "terrible though it is, could be a blessing," because it would stay the Soviets' hands as well as the U.S.'s. Unfortunately, it seems that the historical record can provide no evidence as to how Stalin appraised Eisenhower's intentions and credibility, beyond the simple fact that he was neither coerced out of Europe nor scared into a war in Europe.

What is most remarkable about Eisenhower's campaign – though perhaps not surprising,

given his hero status – is the leeway that he had to campaign without making any specific promises that he was not fully comfortable with. "It was fortunate for Eisenhower," Bowie & Immerman (1997, 72) wrote, "and to his credit, that the public's confidence that they could on faith entrust their fate to their World War II hero permitted him to keep his cards close to his vest." Childs (1958, 144) asserts that he wasn't even attacked as a candidate in 1952, in any sense, by anyone – that "to some it seemed scarcely possible that Eisenhower could lose the election no matter what he did or failed to do." (149) Lyon (1974, 453) even implied that Ike's policies were beside the point for most people, and his statements meant to set policy expectations might have failed to get attention even from the relatively opinionated voter:

> The fact was . . . that the voters did not much care what Eisenhower had to say. They greatly admired him, everywhere they poured into the streets to catch a glimpse of him, they were delighted to cheer him (and Mrs. Eisenhower, too); but the political reporters noticed that after they had seen and cheered him, as like as not they would turn around and go home, unwilling to tarry while he lambasted the Democrats.

Ike may have even resented this somewhat, especially as it manifested in his party members' disinterest in his policy opinions and ideas (450). More to the point, though, he was indeed taking advantage of this unique opportunity to win without making risky and possibly costly promises, and that was how he saw it: according to Bowie & Immerman (1997, 73), he "studiously refrained from articulating specific policy proposals that might later prove constraining. For Eisenhower this rule was especially important."

Dulles was, according to Brands (1988, 14), no less sensitive to the costliness of broken promises – for specifically expectations-related reasons, in fact – and so he focused his attention on maintaining the "Strong anti-Communist foreign policy" promise in safe, i.e. purely rhetorical, ways:

> The people who elected Eisenhower in 1952 had been promised – so they thought – a basic change in the direction of American foreign policy. Dulles knew that no such change impended; consequently he feared a backlash by a disappointed electorate. Dulles sought to avert this reaction by a campaign of distraction. He understood that

the Eisenhower administration could not *act* much more forcefully than its predecessor; the facts of nuclear life dictated caution. But the administration could, and through Dulles it would, *speak* more forcefully. Dulles would focus the attention of the public on what he said, rather than on what the administration did. By this means, the secretary hoped to divert attention from the fact that what the Eisenhower administration did differed little from what the Democrats had done.

7.2 Breaking No Promise

7.2.1 Repudiating Yalta: The Costs that Almost Were

The first relevant incident in Eisenhower's presidency was his fight with his fellow Republicans over the repudiation of the unpublished agreement Roosevelt had struck with Stalin at the Yalta conference in 1945. Republicans had long campaigned against it, railing more generally against "secret agreements" but always meaning specifically Yalta, and as Stang (1968, 239) aptly put it, Ike's hesitation "caused an uproar from the Republicans, who had confidently expected that one of the first acts of the Eisenhower administration would be an official out-and-out withdrawal" from the Yalta agreement. Dulles, in fact, had personally promised to fire everyone on the State Department who had had a hand in the agreement, which he did not do; Stang (1968, 242, 244-5), a radical anti-communist writing not long after, is so critical of Dulles for this that it might itself qualify as expectation costs (if so, notably, then Dulles absorbed the costs rather than Eisenhower).

The content of the Yalta agreement is what makes it so relevant to the question at hand, as it pledged U.S. recognition of Soviet claims to the territories it occupied. Indeed, according to Wicker (2002, 26), Taft Republicans began pressing Eisenhower on Yalta in the first place because his careful avoidance of making any real promises regarding liberation left them with no other way to push him on the subject. Dissent began to arise when Ike nominated Charles E. Bohlen, who had advised Roosevelt at Yalta, as ambassador to Moscow (Childs 1958, 194); it boiled over when Ike went public with the fact that he, as president, simply could not find any record of such an agreement to repudiate (Lyon 1974, 529).

Kennedy famously ran on a platform of closing a missile gap between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. that didn't really exist. Since the evidence of its nonexistence was extremely sensitive intelligence, Eisenhower had no choice but to watch Kennedy promise an undeliverable, and Kennedy had no way of knowing that an undeliverable was what he was promising. The parallels between this and the promise to repudiate the Yalta agreements are striking, even amusing. Ike's situation, though, differed in that he could still simply issue a public repudiation of any agreements that may have been made at Yalta, written or verbal. The statement he did issue conspicuously avoided the word "Yalta" or even "repudiation" (Lyon 1974, 529).

Ike was not being insensitive to expectation/inconsistency costs – he knew, according to Lyon (1974, 529), that "if he failed to repudiate those agreements and did not specifically mention Yalta, he would enrage most of the Republicans and find himself the architect of a rupture within his own party." He was weighing this cost, though, against two other dangers, foreign and domestic. First, the Democrats were, ironically, more his allies on foreign policy in general than were Republicans, and he knew that the Yalta issue was just as important to them, so he feared losing their support (529). The other concern is particularly relevant to this study, as it pertains directly to his future decisions not to aid the violent rebellions in eastern Europe, supposedly in contradiction to his promises and the public's expectations. Ambrose (1991, 275) wrote that: "What worried [Eisenhower] most was the Yalta issue. He wanted to denounce Yalta, but he did not want to hold out hope of American military aid to an uprising in Eastern Europe. He did want to hold out the hope of liberation, but he did not want another tragedy like the premature Warsaw uprising of late 1944."

To be clear, despite the terminology Ambrose used, what Ike feared here was likely *not* expectation costs as I define them. One need not be loss-averse in order to particularly resent it when someone else abandons you after you commit to a risky course of action based on the expectation of their support. Prospect theory and the derivative logic of expectation costs essentially imply that people carry this sort of resentment even when there was no risk taken or cost suffered in objective terms, but it is important not to take cases of (anticipated) rational resentment as evidence of the non-rational and possibly non-conscious resentment that drives expectation costs. Besides, Ike was clearly not worried about what the failed

rebels would think of him so much as about the general public optics of instigating violent rebellions that end tragically.

These post-Yalta politics, as they began to play out in the halls of Congress between political elites, fit the expectation-cost pattern well, right up until Stalin's death rendered the entire issue moot:

> Events marched in predictable fashion. The resolution [not repudiating Yalta] was sent to the Congress. It was hailed by Democrats and denounced by Republicans. ... The Republicans ... rammed through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee an amendment that warned of the possible "invalidity" of any agreements made with the Russians. The Democrats promptly announced they would fight that amendment on the floor of the Senate. Lyndon Johnson gleefully predicted that he would protect the President's prestige "before the country and the world." The stage was set for a splendid brawl. At this moment, most courteously, Stalin died. All hands fetched an immense sigh of relief and at once consigned the resolution to oblivion. (Lyon 1974, 530)

"Stalin's death," Wicker (2002, 27) wrote, "took everyone off the hook." Taft said to Eisenhower that it was probably better "to forget the whole thing;" Ambrose (1991, 311) wrote that "Stalin's death... allowed everyone to escape the dilemma by shelving permanently any resolution on Yalta."

Why was *everyone* so relieved by this simple evaporation of the issue? Under conventional understanding of such political battles, both sides would wish to cater to their supporters' preferences by forcing through a certain policy; one of the two parties, also, would presumably have the relatively clear upper hand, and that party would be chagrined if the issue was suddenly shelved and their victory snatched from them. The best explanation here relies on expectation cost theory: Republican politicians in general had worked hard to build both a strong preference and a strong expectation among their supporters for the repudiation of Yalta, all for campaign purposes, and so they saw this as a fight, in rational and objective terms, not to gain support but to avoid disappointing their base and losing the support they'd already won simply by winning the election on an anti-Yalta platform.

(Incidentally, this assumes that the personal policy opinions of the leaders themselves were of minimal weight.)

Thus the Yalta repudiation battle, interrupted as it was, suggests rather strongly that Eisenhower could and would have suffered expectation costs on the greater issue of liberation, had he made more specific commitments on it. Again, hawks seized upon the Yalta issue because it pertained to the one liberation-related policy that Ike had actually committed to and was not following through on. Even their seizing upon it seems to have been motivated not by simple hawkish preferences but by their fear of disappointment among their hawkish base, in light of the hopes that the platform had raised. In light of Ike's overall conscientiousness regarding specific commitments, coupled with his electoral security, the only question that still somewhat lingers is why Ike waited until he was in office to fight the Yalta repudiation policy, rather than fighting to keep it off the platform in the first place.

7.2.2 The Insignificance of Project Solarium

Shortly after Stalin's death, Eisenhower conducted a famous analytical exercise named Project Solarium (as it took place in the White House solarium). Being, as it was, an instance of exemplary and extremely rigorous foreign policy planning, it may be widely assumed that it greatly influenced the administration's policy going forward. Campbell & Steinberg (2008, 57) indeed cast it as the occasion of Eisenhower's apparent reversal on liberation (see also Lyon 1974, 520). It predated the "New Look" and the administration's de facto embrace of the Truman containment strategy, which, given Ike's and Dulles' campaign rhetoric, was certainly a reversal in some sense. It seems, however, that Solarium ultimately only confirmed Ike's preexisting thinking, and provided ammunition for him to continue to pursue liberation only on the limited terms that he and Dulles had, in fact, already specified.

Solarium consisted of three working groups, each assigned to develop policies of varying levels of belligerence against the Soviet Union. The third and most aggressive one was the rollback policy, "To create the maximum disruption and popular resistance throughout the Soviet Bloc. . . . While this policy is not designed to provoke a war with the Soviet Union, it involves a substantial risk of general war." The fourth alternative, an actual preventive war which would as a byproduct hope to liberate eastern Europe, did not even receive its

own working group, despite proposals (Bowie & Immerman 1997, 126).

General Goodpaster, who Ike put in charge of the rollback working group, later expressed his belief that Ike had in fact abandoned rollback "by the time of Solarium." (127, 137, 164) Later, Ambrose (1991, 484) wrote, he "dismissed liberation of Eastern Europe as an illusion, then explained [to his son John] what America's most realistic hope was: 'The President went into our long-term policy of holding the line until the Soviets manage to educate their people. By doing so, they will sow the seeds of destruction of Communism as a virulent power. This will take a long time to settle.'" While this was certainly in accordance with what Ike insisted were the "many similiarities" between the three Solarium working-group reports, which were "more important than the differences," (Bowie & Immerman 1997, 138) there is no indication that those reports *caused* him to take such a view. Indeed, as Bowie & Immerman (1997, 137-8) show, the nuances and equivocations evident in the three different reports were highlighted by Ike's advisors, but he essentially dismissed them.

7.2.3 Opportunities for Liberation

Brands (1988, 19) summarizes the three major opportunities the Eisenhower administration had to pursue a more aggressive liberation policy in Europe – more aggressive, as I have shown, than they actually promised they would. Brands also typifies the historical perspective that sees these refusals to act as inconsistent with Ike's rhetoric.

> In March 1953, Stalin's death prompted some in the Eisenhower administration to think that the time had come to act on the liberation threat of the 1952 campaign. Dulles, however, counseled circumspection, and the administration confined itself to an address by Eisenhower advocating peace. Later in the year, riots in East Germany again brought calls for putting libveration into practice. Again Dulles, recognizing the inability of the United States to take meaningful action against the Soviets in Eastern Europe without incurring the danger of general war, stood firmly against anything beyond moral support. The autumn of 1956 brought the *coup de grâce* to liberation. As Soviet armor crushed the rebellion in Hungary, the United States offered the insurgents only words. Liberation had fallen on hard times after the administration's initial

> manifestations of indifference, but in case anyone still harbored hopes that liberation was a serious policy, the Hungarian affair sank them. With Hungary's suppression, it became perfectly obvious that the administration was not about to risk war with the Russians for marginal interests like the independence of Eastern Europe.

Tudda (2005, 19) asserts, more specifically, that "In September 1953, U.S. diplomats in Europe noted that 'there is some inclination to believe that we let [the East Germans] down by failing to support the riots.'" I consider each of these points in turn.

It is somewhat hard to know what to make of the reaction to Stalin's death, as Tudda (2005, 13-6), with more evidence, cast it in the exact opposite light: the stronger calls were from doves urging a magnanimous response to the Soviets' so-called "peace offensive," and Eisenhower and Dulles rebuffed them, making a speech for further psychological warfare rather than peace. Tudda (2005, 15-6) provides survey evidence following the "Chance for Peace" speech showing that "The administration's use of harsh rhetoric had scared the audience." He argues, also, that the prevalent hawkish suggestions, coming mainly from the CIA, were to "exploit to the full" Stalin's death, but merely "through psychological warfare that had already begun under the PSB's auspices."

In plain English, then, the hawkish proposal was not to go to war, but to order the radio hosts in Europe to encourage more explicit unrest in Soviet territories. They also suggested Ike deliver a speech requesing a summit "to consider certain major outstanding issues." (13) Apparently, this would have been a provocative move, as the CIA proposal went out of its way to argue that it wouldn't be; and Dulles ultimately concluded that such a speech would "be interpreted as an appeal to the Soviet people to rise up against their rulers in a period of mourning." (13) While the proposed speech is of little importance, it is the proposal of a rhetorical ramp-up, coupled with this clear evidence of Dulles' caution regarding the encouragement of violent unrest, that strongly suggests that the administration's response to Stalin's death was in line with the limited liberation policy that had been promised, and that, if anything, the danger was that it would be perceived as a *hawkish* shift from where the administration currently stood.

With regard to East Germany, as well, there is relatively little to say, perhaps because the

riots were relatively small-scale, disorganized, and short-lived. Dulles seemed more pleased about them than worried about the consequences of not aiding them, calling the affair an "excellent propaganda opportunity." (Tudda 2005, 17) It could certainly be considered a product of the faithfully-applied psychological-warfare policy, as declassified CIA documents reveal the agency's role in coordinating the riots via the RIAS radio station (17-8). But Dulles "urged caution. Referring to the Plzeň protests of June 1, he reminded his colleagues that 'we had carefully refrained from urging the Czechs to open revolt, while encouraging them to passive resistance and to prepare for future possibilities'." (17) As always, direct aid to *violent* rebels behind Soviet lines was ruled out not just in practice but, more importantly, in rhetoric.

7.2.4 The Hungarian Rebellion

The Hungarian rebellion is more significant and deserving of more attention, but the conclusion to be drawn is much the same: aid was not given, the stated reasons made reference to the specific qualifications that had been placed on earlier promises, the domestic public apparently did not find the withholding of aid unexpected, and so no expectation costs were paid.

Hoopes (1973, 373-4) provides the key points of the nature of the revolt and of Dulles' reaction:

> On October 22, in the wake of [moderate Polish leader] Gomulka's success, demonstrations broke out in the Hungarian capital of Budapest demanding the return of a Communist moderate, Imre Nagy. . . . Dulles followed these developments with fascination, telling his staff they represented a clear vindication of the liberation doctrine, and declaring to the Council on World Affairs in Dallas on October 26 that "the weakness of Soviet imperialism is being made manifest. Its weakness is not military weakness nor lack of material power. It is weak because it seeks to sustain an unnatural tyranny by suppressing human aspirations. . . "

He later characterized the forcible putting-down of the revolt as "a defeat and setback for the Soviet rulers." (Tudda 2005, 34)

With that said, though, Dulles expressed nothing but contempt for Nagy himself. To the president he reported: "The Nagy government in Hungary includes a numbers [sic] of 'bad' people, associated with the Molotov school, and will have difficulty in attracting support." (Lyon 1974, 709) According to Lyon (1974, 709) the administration actually acted decisively *against* Nagy:

> Word of these assumptions spread quickly. Officials of the United Nations take note that the U.S. delegation, headed by Henry Cabot Lodge, is "active in the corridors ... but active not in support of the Nagy government, but against it. American aides would insistently tell one that Nagy was just as bad a communist as Khrushchev, that the whole dispute was just a falling out of thieves, that the Nagy representatives at the United Nations had an appalling communist record and so on." And on Monday, October 29, word of the U.S. propaganda line having reached the Munich headquarters of Radio Free Europe, the transmitters are aimed toward Hungary to carry a vehement campaign against Nagy ...

It is naturally difficult to determine how Eisenhower and Dulles truly assessed Nagy's rebellion, as they would naturally express such sentiments as excuses for inaction if they had already decided upon inaction for other reasons. The most obvious reason, of course, was to avoid U.S. involvement in a potentially escalating conflict, but another, often neglected factor was that landlocked Hungary would be one of the most difficult territories to support a revolution in. According to Ambrose (1991, 423),

> there was nothing the United States could do anyway. As always in grand strategy, geography dictated the options. Hungary was surrounded by Communist states, plus neutral Austria, and had a common border with the Soviet Union. It had no ports. There was almost no trade going on between the United States and the Russians. There was no pressure, in short, save for the amorphous one of world public opinion, that Eisenhower could bring to bear on the soviets in Hungary, He knew it, had known it all along, which made all the four years of Republican talk about "liberation" so essentially hypocritical.

Notably, events did play out in a way consistent with Dulles' unflattering view of Nagy

and his movement. Khrushchev's initial response to the rebellion was remarkably accomodating: he admitted "downright mistakes" on the part of the Soviet Union, acknowledged "serious shortcomings in the field of economic construction," and signaled openness to withdrawing the Soviet forces generally stationed in Hungary (Lyon 1974, 709). He proposed to Hungary an overall "noninterference in each other's internal affairs." (Hoopes 1973, 373) According to Hoopes (1973, 374), however, "The more ardent freedom fighters around Nagy broke (or could not exercise the necessary discipline to maintain) the cease-fire; moreover, they pressed demands (especially for Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact) that even Khrushchev was not prepared to accept."

In the historical narrative constructed by many and typified by Brands, the Eisenhower administration's refusal or neglect to aid the Hungarian rebels was the moment it really gave up on liberation and rollback. Krukones (1984, 72) wrote that "Although Eisenhower did offer food and medical supplies to the Hungarians, along with an offer to admit Hungarian refugees to the United States during their uprising, the United States never did engage in an active liberation policy when the opportunities arose in Hungary in 1964 and the East Germany [sic] in 1953." Capitanchik (1969, 62) wrote that "Hungary was also a final convincing demonstration that the part of the 1952 Republican party platform which called for the liberation of Communist-controlled countries in Eastern Europe was little more than campaign rhetoric." Bitingly, Ambrose (1991, 423) wrote that "Eisenhower issued a statement deploring the [Soviet] intervention [to put down the Hungarian revolt], but he turned down frantic requests from the CIA that it be allowed to fly over Budapest and air-drop arms and supplies. Liberation was a sham. Eisenhower had always known it. The Hungarians had yet to learn it."

Tudda (2005, 28) called Hungary "a concrete chance for liberation," which of course disregards the obstacles inventoried by Ambrose. In general, Tudda is the most ardent in arguing that the administration's rhetoric was rightly seen, at the time, as promising an intervention that never came. First and foremost, though, Tudda seems to be referring mostly to *Hungarians'* perceptions (which, again, is not expectation costs so much as resentment from a perceived betrayal of real consequence). Evidence of those perceptions is certainly the strongest of the evidence in his work.

It is indeed clear that the administration's radio propaganda deliberately led European listeners, albeit mainly by implication, to expect more aid than the administration would ever really give; most of the surveyed Hungarian refugees reported expectations of military aid (Tudda 2005, 34). (Most, though, also claimed that the moderates' victories in Poland, "and not alleged encouragements from the West," were the primary occasions for the revolt (34-5).) "The [Austrian] embassy reported that 'hundreds, if not thousands of Hungarians with whom we have had direct or indirect contact' were angry at the administration for not acting. They specifically mentioned the numerous 'radio and balloon operations' that led Hungarians to believe 'that we would be prepared to do more than we actually' did." (32-3) Nagy's delegate to the UN charged that Radio Free Europe had "gravely sinned by making the Hungarian people believe that Western aid was coming when no such aid was planned." (Lyon 1974, 710)

Domestically, it seems, there were two instances of criticism relating to Eisenhower's apparent inconsistencies. Ike told Henry Cabot Lodge around this time that the United States "had always been against violent rebellion" and that he was "amazed" that Lodge believed otherwise (Tudda 2005, 33). Lodge was himself under fire for the non-intervention – but by UN diplomats, not the American public. Also, as Tudda (2005, 34) points out, "The *National Review* editorialized that the administration had 're-enact[ed] the story of Tantalus' by holding out the false hope that the failed revolution would bring freedom to Eastern Europe." While significant, the editorial was about the betrayal of the Hungarian rebels, and not the disappointing of domestic supporters of a belligerent liberation policy.

Eisenhower and Dulles were both conscious of how Hungary might relate to their campaign promises (Lyon 1974, 708, 732), and seemed to fear *audience* costs as a result of the appearance of inconsistency (note that making the argument, correctly or not, that one's previous rhetoric is consistent with what one is now doing is uniquely consistent with the fear of others' conscious objections to inconsistency – expectation costs could not be lessened in this way). Ike insisted that he "never asked for a people to rise up against a ruthless military force;" Nixon, more darkly, simply insisted that the failed revolt *was* the successful implementation of the liberation policy (710).

Marks (1993, 89) provides an important corrective to the prevalent historical assessment:

> Asked if he was prepared to use force to overthrow the government of Egypt should it drift into the Soviet orbit, [Dulles'] answer was a categorical no; and earlier, when Truman proposed the interdiction of Soviet arms shipments to the Middle East, he was again opposed. Dulles has been accused of egging on Hungary's freedom fighters to rise against Soviet armor on the assumption that America would come to their aid. ... this was not true of the official Voice of America, nor did such language come from the lips of the president or the secretary. The latter made it clear time and again that Washington was offering nothing but moral support. In his book *War or Peace* published in 1950, Dulles stated clearly that his policy of rollback was not an invitation to armed insurrection: "The people have no arms, and violent revolt would be futile." ... It is hard to imagine how a cautionary message could have been driven home with greater force or clarity.

Marks (1993, 136) also argues that "Dulles never changed his tune on the matter of neutralism ... nor was there anything hollow about his talk of liberating captive peoples. Liberation ... occurred to an extent unparalleled during the administrations that came before and after." While I contend here that Dulles and Eisenhower did indeed act in accordance with all the *specific* statements that they had made before, Marks brings up the contrast with previous administrations, which is also illuminating.

While the Truman administration may have done less to spur liberation (or unrest toward that goal), its stated policies actually promised *more* along those lines than Eisenhower's did. As Bowie & Immerman (1997, 22) point out, NSC 68 (issued April 7, 1950) actually had called, in "selected countries," for "revolt" – a word Dulles only ever distanced himself from and which Ike apparently never used. Truman had announced himself that "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." (Lyon 1974, 499) Trachtenberg (1988, 11) emphasized that, "Contrary to what is commonly believed, the strategy called for in NSC 68 was not essentially defensive in nature, and the aggressive thrust of the document was probably linked to concerns about long-term trends in the strategic balance." More generally:

> For Acheson and Nitze [serving under Truman], the fundamental aim of American policy was quite ambitious: to bring about a "retraction" of Soviet power – to force the Soviets to "recede" by creating "situations of strength." The policy of NSC 68 was, in its own terms, a "policy of calculated and gradual coercion"; the aim was "to check and to roll back the Kremlin's drive for world domination." (Trachtenberg 1988, 13)

Brands (1988) opens his book *Cold Warriors* with the chapter "John Foster Dulles: Speak Loudly and Carry a Soft Stick." Dulles and Eisenhower both engaged in rhetorical brinksmanship which relied on a clearly hawkish tone, and this created a large disconnect between their policies and the general tone of their rhetoric, but there was essentially no such disconnect between their policies and their actual and generally clear policy statements, by careful and diligent design. Compared to the Truman administration, especially, they not only did somewhat more, but said they were willing to do substantially less.

7.2.5 Absence of Perceptions of Position Shift in Polling Data

Tudda (2005, 35) remains a distinct dissenting voice against this argument that Hungary did not disappoint American hawks nor come as a merely pleasant surprise to American doves. "U.S. policymakers," he argues, "were the only ones who believed that liberation was always meant to be peaceful. The audiences to whom Eisenhower and Dulles were appealing – conservative Republicans, East European émigrés, and indigenous resistance leaders, including some Hungarian revolutionaries – took the administration's words at face value." Assuming that Tudda is correct – and that the face value of those words did in fact favor violent revolt, despite the above – what would the public reaction have been? Since Eisenhower's overall political position was just about as strong in 1956 as it was in 1952, it would be most problematic for expectation cost theory if there had been many hawks that should have been particularly disappointed by the reversal. Expectation costs would still have existed if there had been many doves, but the costs would have been driven by doves' muted gratitude in 1956, and doves were obviously not an electoral threat to Eisenhower in 1952, so that expectation-cost prediction would still not hold.

A Nov. 1956 Foreign Affairs Survey (just weeks after the revolt began) asked, "Do you think our government did all it should to help Hungary win freedom from Russia, or should we have done more?" (National Opinion Research Center 1956b) Respondents said that it had done all it should by a margin of almost three to one, with 16% unsure. A repeat survey the following month asked, "Do you think our government has been doing all it should to help Hungary, or not?" (National Opinion Research Center 1956a) While, importantly, this was less inspiring wording – note the absence of "winning freedom" – the yeses outnumbered the nos by almost *eight* to one, with just 6% unsure. Thus, if a dovish shift had been perceived, it would have very largely manifested as the partial recouping of losses from the hawkish shift in 1952.

To the extent that the non-intervention did defy expectations of hawkish policies, this may indeed have happened. Wicker (2002, 95) wrote that "The twin foreign policy crises in Hungary and Egypt at the climax of the 1956 campaign overwhelmed all other political matters and, of course, favored an incumbent experienced in such matters." Childs (1958, 239-40) wrote that "the presidential campaign was drawing to a close, and any move that appeared to jeopardize the widely advertised peace would hardly have been welcome."

More to the point, we have the 1956 ANES to benefit from here as well. While the 1952 ANES respondents were not resurveyed in 1956, we can still gauge the likelihood of any changes between these time points in how the public at large perceived Eisenhower's positions.

There is no evidence there of any change in the percent of voters who like him because he will stop (or even, in 1956, *has* stopped) communism ($p = 1$); in turn, there is no evidence that those few who stood to be disappointed by a dovish shift of his, did actually perceive a shift, much less become disappointed. There *is* a significant drop in the (also already small) number of people who feared that Ike would get the country into a war, from 2.9% to 0.17% ($p < 0.001$). This is indeed one result that is consistent with the public perceiving a shift of the kind Krukones coded, but it is both limited (only among doves) and imprecise (was he perceived as moderating toward eastern Europe specifically?).

It would then indeed seem that Eisenhower managed during his first term to perform, in this sense at least, the selectively-perceived shift that any politician would prefer to

make: he further won over doves, by reassuring them, without disappointing or otherwise offending hawks in the process. Again, the expectation cost model generally assumes that leaders are unable to control the perceptions of their policy positions so selectively, so this is, in that one sense, evidence against the model; it is, however, very small in scale and limited in scope, given the very small rates of both hawks and doves on this one issue. This particular change in perception might also be due to some small number of very risk-averse voters who always fear that any new president might start a war, and who thus favor any incumbent, as the previous four years have proven that they will at least not blow up the world immediately, like a new president might.

Conveniently, the 1956 survey also coded any anti-Eisenhower responses that cited any (perceived) broken campaign promises. According to that coding, 1.53% of the public were in this group which both consciously perceived and objected to some inconsistency or inconsistencies on Ike's part. This group would, in theory, contain all those who are inflicting inconsistency-based audience costs and only some of those inflicting expectation costs, but it is still useful to ask how many of these 27 people were also those who, in 1956, disliked Ike because he had failed to stop communism. There are only 4 of the latter individuals, and none of them, in fact, are among the 27 who expressed objections to Ike's promise-breaking.

7.3 Conclusion

This case was selected along with the other three in this book as a case most likely to exhibit expectation costs being suffered, if the expectation cost logic is in fact true to reality. I find that expectation costs were not suffered in this case, but for the right reason: expectations were not in fact set, at the time and in the eyes of the domestic public, that did not accord with the policies then enacted. While the presentation of the theory here would be neater and more straightforward if, for example, Eisenhower had simply gotten hawks' hopes up and let them down, I believe that the extant evidence, quantitative as well as qualitative, is compelling enough to reassure one that this is not a case of the expectation cost logic failing to play out as it theoretically should.

As a case of avoided expectation costs, in fact, it helps to support the rationalist basis

for the international bargaining theory of expectation costs. While the Soviet Union is a "black box" here – even Lebow's & Stein's (1995) landmark research reaches only as far back as the Cuban missile crisis – so we cannot directly observe whether or not a proper rationalist bargaining interaction took place between the two governments, Eisenhower and Dulles may both serve to exemplify the theorized leader who acts in rational anticipation of expectation costs, and generally only exposes themself to those costs when the real perceived benefits outweigh the real perceived risks.

Chapter 8

Johnson: A Land War in Asia

> Sometimes our folks get a little impatient. Sometimes they rattle their rockets some, and they bluff about their bombs. But we are not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves.
>
> Lyndon B. Johnson (Peters & Woolley 2018c)

Lyndon Johnson won election to the office he was already holding against (what was thought to be) perhaps one of the most hawkish presidential candidates in American history. Johnson's single greatest advantage over Goldwater, arguably, was that the nation was so convinced that the latter's victory would mean a full-scale ground war, at best, and a distinct possibility of global nuclear holocaust at any rate. Johnson capitalized on this, occasionally touting his specific intentions to avoid U.S. involvement in a war in Vietnam. Moderates fell dutifully in line behind him (though actual doves, as I show, did not), while hawks dutifully flocked to Goldwater. And, of course, they were all famously deceived: the third-largest war in U.S. history occurred under President Lyndon Johnson, it was certainly a war that the U.S. could have avoided, and it would still be going on when Johnson would voluntarily leave office four years later, his approval rating almost 40 points lower.

Casual historical accounts commonly imply that Johnson's apparent conversion from dove to hawk was the great cause of his decline, second, of course, to the simple fact that he could not win the war, or figure out a way to keep South Vietnam alive without tens of thousands of American deaths. One might think, then, that this case study would merely

be to determine which he suffered: expectation costs, or audience costs or inconsistency costs of some other kind. This case, though, has been badly misrepresented by the casual accounts and conventional wisdom, and most, if not all, of Johnson's lost support was due to the *combination* of his inability to end or cheaply fight the war, and his embarrassingly optimistic assessments of the war and its prospects, which his public deceptions merely drove home. Thus, Johnson's political downfall does not fit any theory that relates domestic accountability to international bargaining.

Expectation cost theory, however, does provide far more specific and empirically supportable reasons for *why* Johnson's inconsistencies did not independently generate costs, relative to other theories. The mismatch between Johnson's rhetoric and his policies is not nearly as great as selective accountings might make it appear; more importantly, though, compelling evidence exists to the effect that public expectations of his policies were not far off the mark, nor did his supporters become more hawkish throughout his presidency, as we would expect from an electorate that had expected him to act more dovishly.

The general level of both attentiveness and opinionatedness amongst the general public is also strongly highlighted by expectation cost theory, especially as it is pitted against other theories of audience/inconsistency costs, and the conclusion in that sense is, if anything, very favorable for the former: the absence of costs related specifically and independently to Johnson's inconsistency is particularly problematic for audience cost theory, given these low levels of issue-specific opinions, and yet is particularly understandable under expectation cost theory. This distinction is itself more compelling in this case since there is polling data to establish that Johnson was widely recognized as inconsistent and untrustworthy even when he won his landslide 1964 victory.

8.1 Making the Promise

8.1.1 The Low Salience of Vietnam in 1964

There is very strong reason to doubt that Johnson's promise not to escalate U.S. involvement of Vietnam was a major component of his campaign, despite Krukones' (1984, 97) coding. One of Johnson's special advisors, Eric Goldman, remarked that "Candidate Johnson did

not talk much about the Vietnam war;" (Goldman 1969, 234) according to one of his chief speech writers, in fact, "Not a single [campaign] speech of President Johnson's was devoted to ... [the Vietnam] conflict." (Quoted in Unger & Unger 1988, 80) "Sarcastically or sympathetically," Goldman (1969, 379) wrote, "it may accurately be said that Lyndon Johnson became president without a foreign policy."

"[W]hat anxiety Vietnam had aroused," Heren (1970, 60) wrote, "was not articulated." Johnson's personal pollster was finding during the campaign that foreign policy issues as a whole were relatively unimportant to most voters (Altschuler 1991, 38). As Heren (1970, 62) put it, "The drone of military air transports bearing men and matériel halfway around the world could be heard by anybody who cared to listen, but Vietnam was never a campaign issue." Even in 1965, Johnson was arguing to a senator ally that "I don't think the people of the country know so much about Vietnam and I think they care a hell of a lot less." (Colman 2010, 37) Altschuler (1991, 40), quoting Kearns (1976, 206), wrote that "the public showed little interest in events in Vietnam, and 'Johnson wanted to keep it that way.'"

So did Goldwater – in fact, the two candidates had a secret agreement on the subject. According to Bornet (1983, 109), Goldwater said to Johnson in a secret meeting, "I asked to see you because I do not believe it is in the best interest of the United States to make the Vietnam War or its conduct a political issue in this campaign. I have come to promise I will not do so." Johnson, again according to Bornet (1983), "seemed greatly relieved." Goldwater later acknowledged that Johnson had been vulnerable on Vietnam, but not that he had violated that "private agreement" with any of the statements regarding Vietnam that he did make (110); thus, Goldwater upheld his end of the deal as he saw it, all the way through election day.

Bornet (1983, 77) provides a telling account of a *Time* magazine article attempting to raise public alarm in April of 1964, and of Johnson's hawkish response:

> [*Time* wrote that] "the nasty guerrilla conflict in Vietnam is beginning to look more and more like a full scale conventional war." Said Johnson at the time, "When the going gets tough the tough get going." He did inform a still inattentive nation on April 20, "We are in this battle as long as South Vietnam wants our support and needs our

> assistance to protect its freedom." Peace would come "once war seems hopeless." Notice had finally been given, but few noticed (Bornet 1983, 77).

Bornet (1983) and Unger & Unger (1988) both emphasize the weakness of the public reaction to the Tonkin Gulf resolution and U.S. counterattack. Unger & Unger (1988, 80) inventory how easily Congress passed the resolution and then remark that "There is every reason to believe that the American people – those who bothered to notice the resolution at all – supported it with equal enthusiasm." Bornet (1983, 78) referred to Tonkin as "the episode that would shortly arouse the slumbering public mind," and commented that Johnson's touting of U.S. military superiority between Tonkin and election day "laid an unfortunate foundation for the Vietnam stalemate soon to come and should have attracted more attention then and later." (109)

The 1964 promise not to escalate may tend to be seen as major in hindsight, in light of the massive escalation that occurred – in which case, it was the *breaking* of the promise that was major, and not the promise itself. This distinction is crucial with regards to expectation costs, as a promise that is of low salience before it is broken does not create widely-held expectations, and so the breaking of it, however severe and egregious due to the higher salience of the issue at that time, will not generally be viewed by the public from a reference point corresponding to the promised policy and/or outcome.

8.1.2 "We are not going north . . . and we are not going south"

> The American people knew what they were voting for in 1964. They knew Lyndon Johnson was not going to pull up stakes and run. They knew I was not going to go back on my country's word. They knew I would not repudiate the pledges of my predecessors in the Presidency. They knew too that I was not going to wipe out Hanoi or use atom bombs to defoliate the Vietnamese jungles. I was going to do what had to be done to protect our interests and to keep our promises. And that is what I did.
>
> Lyndon B. Johnson (1971)

Goldman (1969, 235-7) helpfully collected the full extent of Johnson's official campaign remarks on Vietnam, and from these, we can observe the unbroken pattern not just of

qualifying the promise with phrases like "at this stage of the game" and "just for the moment," but also of making the promise in conjunction with an equally clear promise to maintain South Vietnam's independence. In chronological order, and with emphasis added to the phrases promising a relatively hawkish policy:

- Sept. 25, 1964: "We don't want our American boys to do the fighting for Asian boys. We don't want to get involved in a nation with 700 million people [China] and get tied down in a land war in Asia. There are some that say we ought to go south and get out and come home, *but we don't like to break our treaties and we don't like to walk off and leave people who are searching for freedom, and suffering to obtain it, and walk out on them.*"

- Same date: "... we're hoping that in some way, somehow, these people that are invading [South Vietnam] and trying to envelop them and trying to take their freedom away from them will some day decide that it's not worth the price and they will leave their neighbors alone and we can have peace in the world. But we are not about to start another war *and we're not about to run away from where we are.*"

- Sept. 28, 1964: "We are not going north and drop bombs [sic] and this stage in the game, *and we are not going south and run out and leave it for the Communists to take over.*"

- Same date: "We are trying somehow to evolve a way, as we have in some other places, where the North Vietnamese and the Chinese Communists will finally, after getting worn down, conclude that they will leave their neighbors alone. And if they do, we will come home tomorrow. It is not any problem to start a war. ... I know some folks that I think could start one mighty easy. But it is a pretty difficult problem for us to prevent one, and that is what we are trying to do."

- Oct. 21, 1964: "In Asia we face an ambitious and aggressive China, *but we have the will and we have the strength to help our Asian friends resist that ambition.* ... But we are not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves."

- Same date: "We are going to continue to try to make these people more effective and more efficient, and do our best to resolve that situation where the aggressors will leave their neighbors alone. . . . *We are going to assist them against attack. . . . We will not permit the independent nations of the East to be swallowed up by Communist conquest.*"

Geyelin (1966, 187) uncharitably dubbed this "a confusing cacophony of hawklike cries and dovelike coos." Goldman (1969, 412) wrote that "In a very real sense he had adopted a compromise program, leaving large numbers of both hawks and doves unhappy. More forthright political leaders than Lyndon Johnson, attacked from both sides, have been known to try to be all things to all men." The 1964 Democratic platform, too, promised peace, yet put doves on notice that "the preservation of peace requires the strength to wage war and the wisdom to avoid it." (Peters & Woolley 2018a) The Republican platform naturally accused Johnson of lacking a virtuous aggressiveness toward a long list of countries that included Vietnam, but as Heren (1970, 60) points out, both parties were in clear agreement that Vietnam could not be given up on.

It is unclear exactly what hawks expected of Johnson, and whether they were relatively disappointed by Goldwater's loss – I have uncovered no evidence, for example, of hawks expressing relief and contentment, or alternatively, surprise, when Johnson makes good on his promise to provide all necessary support to South Vietnam. Still, if Johnson had, to use the Iraq war phrase, cut and run, it would have been at least as easy to accuse him of breaking a campaign promise as it was after he escalated. He certainly kept this promise to prevent the fall of South Vietnam – not only did the fall happen under Nixon, but more U.S. servicemembers died in the war under Nixon than under Johnson (Unger & Unger 1988, 132) – so this too seems to be a case of the contemporary significance of a promise being judged strongly in light of whether or not it was kept. Krukones seems to have overlooked the kept hawkish promise entirely.

Johnson's overall campaign rhetoric regarding Vietnam is best understood as a single and certainly bold promise to repel North Vietnam's aggression against the south with little to no casualties for U.S. troops *or* Vietnamese civilians. He promised not just victory, but

a cheap one – the proverbial best of both worlds. For those who were particularly invested in such a particularly ideal outcome, this would certainly set hopes very high indeed. A Johnson advisor wrote that "The country hasn't been suffering from a 'credibility gap' but an 'incredibility gap.' People can't believe that the president and the secretary of state really believe what they say. But they do." (cited in Bornet 1983, 152)

8.1.3 Johnson the "Dawk"

"[A]t the same time," Goldman (1969, 235) wrote, "the overwhelming impact of the LBJ campaign remarks on Vietnam was that he fully intended to stay out of the shooting war." There was, according to Patterson (2012, 32), "the widespread though misplaced sense that Johnson would manage to keep the nation out of war . . . ." Not two weeks before election day, Johnson promised simply that "there can be and will be, as long as I am President, peace for all Americans . . . ." (Goldman 1969, 412) After Tonkin, he famously emphasized that "we seek no wider war," and he also emphasized that he had not pulled the trigger on an extensive bombing campaign that hawkish advisors had already planned out for him (and which undoubtedly became Operation Rolling Thunder). According to Goldman (1969, 235), "in the later stage of the campaign, Lyndon Johnson preserved this tone. But he became a bit more explicit, largely in terms of contrasting his attitude with that of Goldwater, whom he more or less directly presented as a man ready to involve the United States in the shooting war."

One very early campaign moment, in February 1964, well illustrates Johnson's intent to avoid getting too hawkish; it may in fact have been the moment when he realized that a more hawkish position was politically disadvantageous. After a speech in which Johnson warned other countries that they would be playing "a very dangerous game" if they were to directly aid North Vietnam, his press secretary specified to reporters that this should indeed be read as a threat that the U.S. would directly involve itself in the war if other countries, including China, involved themselves first. According to Geyelin (1966, 187-8),

> This unattributable interpretation was dutifully disseminated, and it immediately kicked up reaction from those opposed to deeper involvement in the Vietnamese war.

> . . . The domestic backlash was such that [Secretary of State] Dean Rusk was obliged to summon a news conference for the purpose of playing down any speculation that the United States might "go north." From the White House came the curious news that the President himself could not imagine how such an extreme interpretation of his words could have gotten around.

Thus the attentive public could see very early on how determined Johnson was to avoid labels, at least regarding foreign policy, and that this would lead him to inconsistent rhetoric at the very least. According to Goldman (1969, 403), "The President disliked the words 'hawk' and 'dove,' and even more the word 'dawk.' Nevertheless, his thinking about Vietnam was dawkish in the sense that he was ready to use massive combat forces but only defensively, and he was convinced that his chief problem in doing this would come not from the dove but from the hawk sentiment in the country."

Johnson never seemed to fear he would lose to Goldwater – Goldman (1969, 238) wrote that he went through October "a happier man each day" – but he had fully renormalized to a presidency in which he would have the resounding mandate needed to implement unprecedented domestic reforms. Heren (1970, 62) noted that "Johnson's victory was much more sweeping than the most ebullient optimist, with the possible exception of Johnson himself, had anticipated," and also that, "Privately, he took it as a mandate to introduce far-reaching social legislation." Johnson's concerns, then, along the lines of the above regarding the objections of hawks and doves, must be understood on these terms. His margin of victory was never, and perhaps never could be, large enough for him to make any move that he thought might diminish it, or to neglect to make any move that might add to it.

While Goldman may have been alluding to hawks feeling that the limitations should be removed so that North Vietnam should be conquered/liberated, Johnson's very greatest fear regarding Vietnam, it seems, was that the south would fall: "God Almighty," he said to a newspaper publisher, "what they said about us leaving China would just be warming up, compared to what they'd say now" (Margolis 1999, 162) (see also Patterson 2012, 24, 30). Initially concerned about the south's political stability, Johnson had refused to take action against North Vietnam in early 1964 even in the face of pessimistic reports from advisers

(Altschuler 1991, 40), but by the time of the Tonkin Gulf incident, he was, if anything, looking for a somewhat hawkish move to make.

Heren (1970, 48) wrote that "Goldwater had criticized [Johnson] for his 'no win' policy, and the charge had rankled. The opportunity to act . . . was provided by the Gulf of Tonkin incident," in early August 1964. As Goldman (1969, 176) put it,

> Lyndon Johnson was running for President as a man of peace, but he had not the slightest intention of permitting Barry Goldwater to appear as the spokesman of the land of the free and the home of the brave. For the man of peace and the resolute defender of American principles, a bombing thrust against Communist attackers of United States ships – but only a single thrust – was ideal campaigning.[1]

And it was: 85% supported his actions, even considering the (in hindsight at least) shockingly broad authorization he sought and got from Congress to take further hostile action in perpetuity (Patterson 2012, 24). "Together with its accompanying military measures," Altschuler (1991, 40) wrote, "this resolution effectively defused Goldwater's charges that Johnson's foreign policy had not been firm enough, charges that some of Johnson's polls suggested were hurting him, albeit not very much."

This all very well fits a median-voter-driven model, with Goldwater to the extreme right and Johnson's response to Tonkin correcting what was previously a position that was a little too left. It was key, of course, not to overshoot. As Geyelin (1966, 191) observed, "Politically, there were limits as to just how prudent Lyndon Johnson could afford to be. He wished to appear more prudent than Goldwater. But he did not wish to appear to be a pushover. So there was little argument about launching retaliatory air strikes against the torpedo-boat facilities on a one-shot, tit-for-tat basis . . . ."

Another North Vietnamese attack, far more straightforward and more damaging than Tonkin, came the very day before the election. Vietcong mortars destroyed six B-57s that had been stationed menacingly at Bien Hoa. Johnson did not retaliate, despite the urgings of the ambassador to Vietnam.

1. Unger & Unger (1988, 78-80) notably imply otherwise: that "The Democrats' strategy called for tagging Goldwater as an extremist and warmonger, and at times they were shamelessly demagogic. It would not do to destroy the effect by requesting a new grant of presidental war powers." They acknowledge, however, that the Tonkin Gulf incident only became controversial much later.

The simplest explanation, assumed even by the rest of the U.S. embassy staff, was that Johnson thought it safer to ignore the attack in hopes that the voters would do the same – or perhaps they would merely assume that he would retaliate soon enough as they went to the ballot box (Geyelin 1966, 199-200; Patterson 2012, 26; Bornet 1983, 80). Geyelin (1966, 199-201) points out the intimidating complexities of the question – would immediate retaliation even demonstrate resolve, given the visible electoral pressure to appear to demonstrate resolve? – but two points of interest clearly stand out.

First, the electoral logic that held for Tonkin clearly did not hold here. This was no opportunity to further steal Goldwater's hawkish thunder without overly alienating doves. Hence this is further evidence of the median voter theorem in action. Johnson had apparently used Tonkin to make the rightward shift to just the right degree, and another similar incident and reaction would run too much of a risk of overshooting and landing to the right of the median voter.

Second, Hanoi may have carried out the attack because they had indeed read Johnson's mostly dovish posturing as credible. This can be inferred from Geyelin's (1966, 200-1) discussion of how Hanoi may have read the lack of retaliation from the attack:

> ... the failure of United States to respond to the Bien Hoa provocation, coming on the heels of a conciliatory Vietnam line in the campaign, in which Lyndon Johnson plainly made manifest his profound disinclination to widen the war, must certainly have encouraged Hanoi and Peking in the belief that Tonkin had been a special case, and that U.S. installations could be attacked with impunity. Nobody said it quite that baldly, though Dean Rusk was to tell *The New York Times* later that "perhaps the Communist world misunderstood our Presidential campaign."

As I show in the course of this chapter, it is highly likely that Hanoi was simply resolved to war, preferring to face full U.S. involvement (to the full extent that it ended up getting involved, at least) rather than leave South Vietnam independent; in which case, none of this signaling logic was in operation, or could be observed from state decisions if it was. If nothing else, however, it is clear that the Johnson administration's decisions to retaliate after Tonkin but not Bien Hoa were not carried out in ignorance of the signaling values of either

the actions themselves or the actions in light of Johnson's electoral incentives, incentives which were themselves thought to be viewed in light of Johnson's already established policy positions.

8.1.4 Goldwater the Madman

Johnson's reputation as "the peace candidate" must be carefully judged in light of the truly unique reputation that Goldwater had as a radical hawk. It was hardly deserved, to be sure – the Democrats' "shamelessly demagogic" strategy that Unger & Unger (1988, 78-80) referred to is well inventoried in Bornet (1983, 107-8), wherein a single suggestion to use tactical nuclear weapons to defoliate forests becomes a pledge to nuke Hanoi – but the belief, and fear, was rooted in voters' minds all the same. As Geyelin (1966, 194) put it, "Barry Goldwater never did seem to know what he was trying to say. ... Every awkward effort he made to explain just what he did mean only served to strengthen the impression of a man hell-bent for total victory over Communism at whatever risk of nuclear war."

While it may not generally be known how such public expectations for one candidate might systematically affect the expectations that form for the other – that is certainly outside the scope of expectation cost theory – it is clearly the case that Goldwater's apparent radicalism caused people to see Johnson as more dovish than he was, and even to expect more dovish policies than those he was actually spelling out. As Deakin (1968, 9-10) bluntly put it, "Because we wanted to believe [Johnson's promises], given Goldwater as the alternative, we are all gullible. Within a few months after the election, and on the flimsiest of pretexts, Johnson began the process of escalating the war, and the nation began to learn the hard lesson of credibility."

Altschuler (1991, 11) suggested, in fact, that voters may have similarly viewed Johnson as more consistent than he really was, because they saw Goldwater as "dangerously inconsistent," on top of the hawkishness. Altschuler (1991, 38) argued further that "Johnson's task was made relatively easy by Goldwater's image as a threat to peace. As with other issues, the president was able to remain statesmanlike by stressing unexceptionable generalities, such as peace coupled with firmness."

Goldman (1969, 411-2) compared Johnson's reversal on Vietnam to Woodrow Wilson's

	Doves	Moderates	Percent Hawks	No Opinion	Total
All	7.7	24	26	42	100
Johnson voters	7.4	29	24	39	100
Goldwater voters	8.3	12	50	29	100

Table 8.1: Vote Choice by Vietnam Opinion, 1964

on WWI. While arguing that Wilson's promise did "little damage" to him, Goldman emphasized that "A sensible person wanting to stay out of World War I and World War II conceivably could have voted for Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt or for their opponents. A sensible person wanting to avoid combat commitment in Vietnam had to vote for Lyndon Johnson – or, as many did, against Barry Goldwater." Goldman (1969, 521) reiterated that the 1964 trend was "as much anti-Goldwater as pro-Johnson." Thus, it seems, the public was in a mindset to form expectations about a Johnson presidency that rested on the fallacy of the converse: since a Goldwater presidency would so clearly mean full-scale war, a Johnson presidency would so clearly mean peace.

8.1.5 Evidence of Expectations in Survey Data

As with Eisenhower, we may benefit in this case study from modern polling, here focusing on ANES data. Fig. 8.1 provides the percentage of voters, overall and for each candidate, who fell within the three categories of dove, moderate, and hawk, as measured by whether they chose, when asked, to pull out of Vietnam, stay in to end the fighting, or invade North Vietnam. Those responding with "don't know" or another inappropriate answer are included as well, to illustrate the segment of the public whose opinions on Vietnam were not yet well-formed.

Comparing the overall Vietnam opinion rates to the corresponding rates among different candidates' reveals that Goldwater was the hawks' candidate, Johnson was the moderates', and what few doves there were didn't really have a candidate at all. The largest difference in evidence is the higher rate of hawks among Goldwater voters, as expected. Secondly, moderates made up a substantially larger segment of Johnson's than Goldwater's, supporting the contention that he was only considered dovish relative to Goldwater.

There is very little to suggest here that the average voter harbored any illusion that Johnson would certainly keep the country out of war. Doves were, if anything, actually *less* common among Johnson voters than among Goldwater voters. The plurality of Johnson voters, however, did not fall under any of these categories, which primarily confirms both the low salience of the issue and the deference on it that the public had toward the incumbent. There were a good number of unopinionated Goldwater voters, as well – more than there were non-hawks.

Moreover, when voters were asked if they had been paying *any* attention to "what is going on in Viet Nam", 21.66% said no. Including those who said yes but then said they didn't know whether or not getting into the fighting was the right thing to do, we find that 38.19% of the country, when asked directly, professed no opinion regarding U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war at the time of the 1964 election. Moreover, when asked what they thought the government should focus foremost on in the coming years, not a single respondent said Vietnam, nor did anyone say relations with China. In separate polls conducted, secretly and for internal use, by the administration itself in late '64 and early '65, 69% agreed with the statement that the fighting in Vietnam was "not very important."

We may also gauge how many people, when asked for reasons to vote for Johnson, said that he would "keep peace." Only 3.54% of respondents fall into this category of those who would presumably be disappointed. To contextualize, 9.6% mentioned his pro-civil-rights stand; and by a huge margin, the most common reasons given were issue-unspecific, i.e. that he was "a good man," had been a good president/vice-president, and/or would continue Kennedy's policies, with 30.75% of respondents giving at least one of these. Thus, the number of supporters who stood to be disappointed by Johnson's reversal was certainly larger than it was for Eisenhower, but it was also certainly a minor component of his coalition, paling in comparison, namely, to those who would be disappointed by a reversal on civil rights.

The corresponding population, of hawks who would theoretically give up on the country's foreign policy under Johnson and then be pleasantly surprised by him, may be gauged by those saying that he shouldn't be voted for because he wouldn't stop communism abroad. They constitute only 0.6% of respondents. Thus, any expectation costs that were to come,

would come almost entirely from disappointed doves (and the question of hawks renormalizing downward before the reversal would be largely moot). Many would, of course, change their existing opinions or form them in the first place as the war escalated with no apparent progress, but, as always, such people would form the unopinionated public that, by the theory, cannot generate expectation costs.

On the one hand, what Johnson said about the issue clearly amounted to a promise that South Vietnam would be defended from communist aggression at virtually no cost to the United States; those paying attention and preferring such an outcome[2] would certainly get their hopes up. On the other hand, very few people, it seems, were paying much attention. The promise was most certainly not one of Johnson's major campaign promises, few voters had committed personal opinions on the issue when his initial position on it was taken, and so the theory would not predict a strong expectation cost pattern to show itself when the promise was broken and Johnson's position shifted.

It is worth noting, though, that the public in 1964 seemed generally very content, and optimistic about the future. If there is such a thing as a generalized national reference point, it was high. According to Patterson (2012, 18),

> When Johnson lit the national Christmas tree in December 1964, he presided over a nation at once hopeful and complacent, largely trusting its institutions and feeling assured about its future path . . . It was hardly surprising that a great many Americans, including millions of young people who were nearing adulthood, had developed high expectations. No people in the modern history of the world had had it so good.

Johnson had said at that Christmas tree lighting that "These are the most hopeful times in all the years since Christ was born in Bethlehem." Patterson (2012, 32) wrote that, "Given the good news that had graced the year, and the widespread though misplaced sense that Johnson would manage to keep the nation out of war, it is unsurprising that this statement,

2. Americans that would not prefer this outcome, and therefore not get their hopes up as a result of Johnson promising that outcome, would not be limited to those rooting for North Vietnam. It would also include the opposite extreme: hawks who would want to eliminate the north entirely, no matter the risk and cost.

ludicrous though it would have seemed if uttered during the contentious atmosphere that had blanketed the nation by December 1965, did not seem extreme."

Niven (2000) did find that generalized optimism about the country's future correlated with anti-incumbent and third-party voting in a manner consistent with risk-acceptant loss aversion. It could thus be argued that there is a sort of generalized and reflexive expectation cost that leaders might pay when they fail to meet generalized expectations about the country's overall condition, in which case Johnson would clearly have been eligible to suffer such costs. His precipitous decline in public support would likely fit that pattern; however, it is particularly hard to find evidence for or against the theory that the decline was linked to generalized expectations rather than expectations about a specific salient issue, and more importantly with regards to a theory of international bargaining, generalized expectations are presumably much harder for leaders to control and manipulate for strategic purposes beforehand.

8.2 Breaking the Promise

8.2.1 A Public Trust Ripe for Abuse

In the modern day, where the main question regarding the level of the American public's trust in government is how much lower it could possibly get, it may be difficult for many to even conceive of an America in which over three fourths of the country says they "trust the government to do what is right" at least "most of the time". This was the case, however, during the 1964 presidential campaign. About three weeks before election day, this public trust in government was recorded at 77%, higher than it had ever been scientifically recorded so far, and far higher than it would perhaps ever be again. Philip Caputo called the following years a "virtual explosion of anti-government feeling." (Patterson 2012, 242) For all the blame that Watergate gets for this critical initial phase of disillusionment and precipitous decline, public trust overall fell just as quickly under Johnson as it did under Nixon (Pew Research Center 2015, 18).

Such a trusting public, especially under the circumstances, could naturally be accused of laziness, naiveté, and a sort of dereliction of democratic duty. Bornet (1983, 71) is especially

critical (emphasis in original):

> [Johnson's] mail and polls revealed the unfocused public mind. *If Vietnam did not ultimately go well, in a democratic republic like the United States one must look at the Congress and the people themselves, for three national elections were held during the Johnson years. . . . The media made sure that whatever went wrong got the full glare of publicity, at least to the extent of their knowledge. Under the circumstances, the president cannot be allowed to stand alone, either in triumph or disaster.*

According to Patterson (2012, 13), it was "unbeknownst to most Americans" that some U.S. troops were in fact seeing combat in 1964. Even in 1965,

> Americans . . . had many ways of tuning out unpleasant overseas developments such as these. . . . then as later that year, most Americans, enjoying unparalleled prosperity, attended primarily to matters near to home, paying little regard to events in faraway Southeast Asia. . . . Following reports that the TV networks would turn heavily to color programming in the fall, Americans flocked to purchase color sets. Rather than dwell on news reports of Operation Rolling Thunder, Americans could turn on their TVs to watch the Division I NCAA men's basketball tournament, which lasted from March 8 to March 20 (35, 102).

Heren (1970, 98) remarked before elaborating at great length on the new luxuries of the day that "A large majority of Americans still supported the basic policy of resisting communist aggression. Life was also very good for them."

Patterson (2012, 104) suggests that much of the public may have shifted from trusting naiveté to a state of actual denial as the war escalated:

> The fact that such an old-fashioned, sentimental movie [as *The Sound of Music*] could entice millions of people when the conflict in Vietnam was rapidly escalating has prompted the suggestion that viewers, worried about the war, found the film to be a means of escape. . . . In any event, no survey of American population opinion between February and early April [of 1965] revealed the existence of significant popular opposition to the war. Gallup polls, for instance, while subject to varying interpretations,

> tend to confirm the conclusion that most people at the time were not greatly exercised about developments in Vietnam.

The administration, given its overall agenda and undying hope that North Vietnam would finally back down, naturally preferred public inattentiveness. "Rallying public opinion behind the war," McPherson (1972, 402) wrote, "was an almost neglected task." Tonkin may be the exception that proves the rule. Bornet (1983, 79) argued that the Tonkin incident was "a reason for escalating American military effort and especially to arouse American opinion in an election year behind the long-term Kennedy-Johnson posture in Southeast Asia." If so, it obviously failed. Thus, further efforts to build support for the intervention, while it was still relatively small at least, may also have failed even to draw serious attention to the issue.

Altschuler (1991, 45), in his study of public opinion polls in the Vietnam era, offers a more charitable, rational-ignorance interpretation:

> In essence, because of their lack of knowledge about Vietnam, people were willing to support any course of action that would work, deferring to the president's office and information. This deference can result in brief surges of support after critical events such as the Gulf of Tonkin attacks, but, in the long run, the public's support for large-scale American involvement could only be sustained if it could see significant progress in return for the cost.

A National Security Committee staff member ominously echoed this point, in fact, in late 1965: "The polls give the President high marks on Vietnam, but I have a vague feeling that this support may be more superficial than it is deep and committed (many people probably do not even understand what it is they are supporting)." (Patterson 2012, 233)

8.2.2 "A Policy of Minimum Candor:" Abusing the Public Trust

As is now widely known, the Tonkin Gulf resolution which authorized the entire war was passed by a Congress that was, to put it lightly, misinformed. The leak of the "Pentagon papers" wouldn't conclusively reveal the key facts until 1971 – that the *U.S.S. Maddox,* for example, was engaged in espionage rather than a routine patrol, and that the apparent

North Vietnamese attack may have been nothing but misread signal noise – but there had always been suspicions among elites and the attentive public. Senator Wayne Morse had raised questions about these very aspects of the *Maddox* incident in the Congressional debate on the Tonkin resolution (Divine 1981, 30).

This is emblematic of the entire national situation regarding the war for the duration of Johnson's presidency. Democratic institutions naturally prevented Johnson from keeping everyone truly in the dark, but he and his administration came as close to doing so as they legally could. Every conceivable tactic was employed to cast doubt on, reframe, and downplay any information that became available regarding every detail of the war – the aggressiveness of the mission, the scale and damage of the bombings, the weakness of the peace negotiation efforts, casualty counts for all sides, and even the number of troops actually being raised and deployed at any given time. Lies were told even about what was being planned and considered, so that when the really planned action was taken, it would, in a manner very much befitting expectation cost theory, come as a relief to an anxious public rather than a fresh outrage (Geyelin 1966, 295-6). It was, as Altschuler (1991, 46) aptly pointed out, "'a policy of minimum candor' that caused the press and much of the public to doubt official government pronouncements." Bornet (1983, 82) wrote that it "amounted to presidential conspiracy against the public mind." Thus, it becomes a complicated question to ask not just when the reversal happened (or when the promise of an easy victory was broken) but when the change became clearly visible to such a degree that we would expect the public reaction to identifiably occur.

Saunders (2015) provides a thorough inventory of this same domestic strategy with a theory-driven focus on the managing of elite cues: Johnson exercised many forms of influence over elites of many kinds, both inside and outside the executive branch, in order to head off criticism or even mere discussion of the escalation. As Saunders points out, these dynamics on display in the Johnson case problematize not just the substantiveness of democratic accountability, but also the standard stories of partisanized elite cues and opposition signaling, in which the opposition party consistently mobilizes supporters against policies that are either associated with the other party or are simply bad policies that would likely fail (Schultz 1998). In this section, I largely take these back-room elite bargaining

dynamics for granted, and focus on the overall picture that the public was still able to form over time, due to media reports and Johnson's own, often transparent efforts to build support for an increasingly serious war. The dam Johnson built against public criticism was certainly effective and deleterious to democracy in the traditional sense, but it could not hold completely, or forever.

It should be noted, to begin with, that it is abundantly clear that Johnson was confident that no one would ultimately notice or care what did or didn't happen in the Gulf of Tonkin in early August 1964, because the resolution and retaliation would deter any future aggression and the U.S. was certainly not going to go on the offensive. The escalations that occurred were certainly planned in advance, as I discuss below, but those plans were not devised until after the election, and when they were put into action, it was universally with the same attitude, that any misperceptions or lack of awareness about those actions would be moot soon enough because the war would be over and won.

Thus, Johnson's behavior in no way reflected a disregard for public opinion. On the other hand, there is no real evidence that his anticipations of public backlash followed the particular expectation-cost logic. Johnson may very well have had in mind only the straightforward disapproval of the strategic failure of his Vietnam policy, independent of the expectations he had built.

Obfuscating the Initiation of Combat

In late '65, a senator informed Johnson of his intention to introduce a bill to forbid further troops to be drafted for Vietnam; he was persuaded not to bother by Johnson's reassurance that the war would be over by the end of '66. As Deakin (1968, 46) pointed out, this avoided the public debate that would have been sparked by the Congressional debate on such a bill. The policy of minimum candor was in operation even before the election.

In fact, as Bornet (1983, 71-2) pointed out, it was in operation well before even Tonkin:

> [F]rom the very outset [Johnson] did not level with the American people. For example, when on February 14, 1964, he set up a "small committee" to manage American policy and operations in Vietnam, he said in secret National Security Council Memo-

> randum 280: "It is my hope and expectation that the establishment of this committee will permit an energetic, unified, and skillful persecution of the only war we face at present." Such a remark, if it had been made publicly at the time, would have been sensational. . .

Patterson (2012, 31), who provides perhaps the most comprehensive single account of the initial escalation, argued that the deception about escalating to full-scale war began well before Pleiku:

> Johnson made a decision in early December [1964]. When and if the political and military situation in Vietnam seemed to call for it, he would rely on the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and escalate America's military presence in Vietnam. He did not, however, share this decision with the American people – or with the media. Neither then, when it might have mattered, nor later was there anything approaching an open or high-level public debate in the United States over Vietnam policy. Unaware of Johnson's intentions, *Time,* for instance, concluded in its December 4 story that American escalation was improbable. . . . "The likelihood is that the President has no intention now of extending the Vietnamese war in any meaningful way."

From Johnson's perspective, the heat was very much on before the surprise attack on American troops at Pleiku. The South Vietnamese government had collapsed yet again, to be replaced by an equally illegitimate one, spurring Defense Secretary McNamara and National Security Adviser Bundy to write to Johnson that defeat was imminent, they had reached a "fork in the road," and they should bomb the north, i.e. implement the long-planned Operation Rolling Thunder. *Time,* and especially *Life,* ran articles of the dire situation, but of a very hawkish tone, casting the South Vietnamese as victims to be rescued and suggesting that enough troops be deployed to outnumber North Vietnamese guerrillas ten-to-one. Republicans, including Richard Nixon, and even some Congressional democrats began to rail against Johnson for "losing the war," despite the fact that the U.S. would never declare war and troops had still only been employed as advisors (90-1). Westmoreland requested two Marine battalions (3,500 troops) to guard Danang, and "Johnson quietly granted Westmoreland's request, though making it appear in official statements that the

landing, which would take place on March 8, was a short-term expedient." (Patterson 2012, 98-9)

The attack at Pleiku occurred shortly after this significant de facto escalation, on February 7, 1965, and Johnson responded not twelve hours later with a 150-plane bombing run against North Vietnam, which, due to a cycle of counter-counterattacks, would become an unbroken string of bombings and, in a month, Operation Rolling Thunder. Patterson (2012, 94-5) summarizes the public-relations results:

> Bundy . . . cautioned LBJ to alert the American people that "the struggle in Vietnam will be long" and that "there is no shortcut to success." [Vice President] Humphrey, too, recommended that he make the situation clear to the nation. But Johnson, not yet certain how long he would maintain the bombing, was reluctant to detail his policies before the people. He also feared that an open and high-level debate would over the war might undermine his efforts for the Great Society. He rejected Bundy's advice.
>
> Indeed, he never accepted it. Then as later, Johnson was secretive about his decision and about the course of the war. But it was impossible to conceal everything that the United States was doing. Well-informed members of the news media, resenting his attitude, were quick to complain.

Objections also came from the Senate majority leader, Walter Lippmann, the U.N. Secretary General, and Charles de Gaulle. They spoke as if the administration was entirely against negotiations, and it was in the sense that it trusted, or perhaps simply hoped, that the bombings would end northern aggression and the whole issue would go away. Patterson (2012, 42) wrote that "Johnson did not wish to alarm the public, so decisions to escalate were announced as quietly as possible. Such contradictions would eventually cause serious trouble."

Obfuscating the Escalation to War

Johnson developed a particularly adversarial attitude toward journalists around this time, calling them "crybabies," "bellyachers," growing "furious at leaks," and forbidding aides from talking to any press. A syndicated columnist who was actually quite a hawk wrote of

the "almost hysterical secretiveness which the Johnson administration has been carrying to extremes quite unimagined by anyone in any previous American government." (Patterson 2012, 107) Patterson (2012, 107) wrote that

> few people as yet had a clear idea of the escalating nastiness of the fighting taking place on the ground. . . . In the weeks and months ahead, the administration continued to do its best to conceal the broadening scope of the fighting. But even in April, doubters were becoming highly suspicious, believing that Johnson was not telling them anything like the whole truth. And the die having been cast, there was no returning to the more confident world of late 1964.

A Vietcong bomb outside the CIA station in the middle of Saigon led to at least twenty deaths, (mostly civilian) and another two battalions of combat troops, plus 20,000 support personnel, in early April. While the deployment was not necessarily kept secret, it was kept secret that Johnson authorized General Westmoreland to use troops in aggressive combat action against northern bases from which such attacks seemed to be coming (105). This would not be publicly admitted for two months; a related National Security Council memo specified the president's instructions that "premature publicity be avoided by all possible precautions. . . . The actions themselves should be taken as rapidly as practicable, but in ways that would minimize any appearance of sudden changes in policy." (cited in Bornet 1983, 82) "People," Bornet (1983, 82) wrote, "were still hoping for the best. Such an ambiguous situation, however, could not long endure without countervailing reaction of some kind."

Before April was even over, and despite significant anti-war protests on the 17th, Johnson "quickly and secretly" granted a request to double the current number of 40,000 U.S. combat troops in the country (Patterson 2012, 130-1). "[T]hrough 1966 and 1967," according to Unger & Unger (1988, 84), "Johnson authorized virtually every troop and arms request Westmoreland made, hoping that one more massive draught of military power would finally end the awful pain." But the only result was that the cover-up became more challenging. According to Patterson (2012, 136),

> reporters on the ground in Vietnam picked up information that penetrated the veil of

> administration secrecy, revealing the dismal results of some of these military engagements. ... But Johnson remained secretive, for he continued to fear that thorough (and unavoidably critical) media coverage of the escalation would threaten the passage of Great Society measures in Congress.

Pulitzer-prize-winning journalist Philip Geyelin, writing in 1966, actually found Johnson's early domestic strategy, or at least its execution, quite successful under the circumstances. "At that time, mid-1965," he wrote,

> no responsible American official thought American troops could be withdrawing from Vietnam anything like that soon ... But the Johnson art of persuasion and influence is a nearly magical one; it works even when it isn't convincing. It operates on the theory that almost any argument that isn't demonstrably false is justified in a good cause; if contradictions develop, they can be ironed out and retribution made at a later date. ... the escalation remained, for most of 1965, very nearly a political masterpiece. ... It was fully a year after Pleiku before opinion polls began to detect signs of public disaffection with the U.S. course, and it was a confusing disaffection, compounded of antiwar sentiment and of advocacy of more war, quickly, to end it all. (Geyelin 1966, 20, 222)

June brought what Secretary McNamara himself called a "bombshell" letter from Westmoreland to Johnson, informing him in no uncertain terms that another immediate doubling of troops, to 175,000, would be necessary just to keep the north from completely overrunning the South. McNamara urged him to send at least 100,000, and he decided to do so, but only announced that he was sending another 50,000, with "Additional forces" "sent as requested" "over a period of time." Johnson replied to a reporter's follow-up question with, "It does not imply any change in policy whatever. It does not imply any change of objective." (Patterson 2012, 173)

Secretaries Rusk and McNamara both attempted to smooth out the revelation that, yes, U.S. troops were actively engaged in fighting, by insisting that the South Vietnamese were still mostly responsible for military actions, even though they both knew that the south was, as Heren (1970, 85) put it, "hardly capable of fighting a platoon action successfully."

In a sense, even the basic claim that the troops were there to support the South Vietnamese government was a lie, as that government had not actually even requested the escalation (Heren 1970, 77).

Johnson had asked a dovish Senator about possibly getting another Congressional resolution as political cover; he responded, "If you make [an] approach to Congress, I really think the roof will blow off this time, because people who have remained quiet will no longer remain silent." (cited in Patterson 2012, 162) It became disturbingly clear to Johnson that domestic costs, of whatever kind, had only been delayed by his tactics; he was in a domestic political quagmire as well as a military one, and the only option left in either case, as he saw it, was to double down. "[T]he strains he was undergoing," Patterson (2012, 167-8) wrote,

> solidifed his secretiveness. They rendered him incapable of seriously engaging Congress in the decision-making process or of leveling with the American public. His refusal to tell the people what was at stake and thus to risk a great debate ultimately widened the credibility gap that had been growing since March. ... Being candid with the American people about the dire situation, he thought, would touch off what he later called a "right-wing stampede," which would bull ahead to demand even more bellicose responses ...

Even as he was ordering the rapid escalation of U.S. involvement in a full-scale war, he instructed his staff to somehow enact the policy in a "low-keyed manner in order (a) to avoid an abrupt challenge to the Communists and (b) to avoid undue concern and excitement in the Congress and in domestic public opinion." (171) "In June," Geyelin (1966, 220) wrote,

> a State Department spokesman made a valiant effort to spell out the terms of U.S. combat involvement in order to cushion the shock of its discovery by Congress and the country. But the headlines this effort elicited in turn produced another of those White House explosions, and the clarifying statement that ensued from the White House opened up another crack in the administration's credibility.

Bornet (1983, 90) points out that "when the vice-president got ready to say, in a Detroit speech in July, that the nation must be prepared for a 'long, costly, and ugly' war, the word

from the president was that this would not do; unfortunately the text was already out, so Humphrey only muted it in delivery."

Obfuscating the War

Patterson (2012, 169) points out that Johnson must have found "some consolation" in the 60% or so of Americans who continued to support "what was known of" the administration's course in mid-July. The support may have been based largely on misconception and distraction, but it was still there through the end of 1965. *Time* and *Newsweek* maintained it while profiting off it (who's to say which was the main intention) with glorified descriptions of the troops and their unspecified triumphs, assertions of renewed political stability in the south, and national back-patting about how racially "integrated" the infantry were. At the Christmas-tree-lighting in 1965, Johnson addressed Vietnam, but, as Patterson (2012, 223) put it, "If he had spoken with any frankness about the course of the war in his speech, he would have thoroughly depressed his listeners." McNamara had just returned from his seventh trip to Vietnam and, with novel candor, had told reporters simply, "It will be a long war." (cited in 229)

As Altschuler (1991, 47) wrote, Johnson's hard-working private pollster, Oliver Quayle, warned him at the end of the year that "public support for escalation grew out of the hope that it would bring peace quickly. If not, Johnson's support could evaporate. Quayle's 1966 surveys demonstrated that evaporation." Johnson's response consisted of a change in his domestic strategy and rhetoric, instead of any change in foreign policy. He began the 1966 State of the Union speech by addressing the "brutal and bitter conflict" in which, yes, the nation was engaged, and admitting that "It just must be the center of our concerns." (Peters & Woolley 2018b) The overall speech, however, was hardly the great "leveling-with" that many had urged Johnson to give or had asked to give themselves: 41% of viewers polled expressed their belief that the president was still withholding "important information." (Altschuler 1991, 54)

The cornerstone of this new strategy of persuasion, following a strategy of silence, was propaganda via the selective usage of polls. Quayle himself objected to it, but, somehow, a change in wording occurred in the administration's poll question which included no option

for people who were unconditionally opposed to the war (Altschuler 1991, 50-1). Altschuler (1991, 53) bluntly asserted that, "For the most part, the [administration's] main use of polls was to increase support for administration policy. The selective leaking of private poll results continued as did distribution of favorable published poll results." Notably, Johnson aimed to rely on his reputation as a dove to make the strategy successful: the touted polls claimed to show rising hawkishness amongst the public, and "Since the President considers himself the architect of restraint, he wants it known that he regrets this trend." (48) "The most bizarre study of all," according to Altschuler, was conducted in Vietnam, at significant expense, and custom-built to manufacture numbers to convince the South Vietnamese regime at the time to hold free and fair elections; Johnson's own pollsters objected to it, and one refused to participate (52-3).

Political science gives us reason to believe that such a strategy would prove effective. The belief that one's fellow citizens hold a certain opinion works to inhibit the expression of any contrasting views (Kuran 1991) and may even spur conformist shifts in genuinely held opinions, perhaps even more so than elite cues, from one's own party leaders (Kertzer & Zeitzoff 2016). But for Johnson, at any rate, the impact was underwhelming. According to Altschuler (1991, 51), "It would take more than new question wording to stem the decline in support for the Vietnam war. As the decline continued, the White House found new reasons for doubting Quayle's results."

1966 saw the landmark Fulbright hearings, where, as Unger & Unger (1988, 312) put it, "administration spokesmen stubbornly defended the American Vietnam involvements in three week-long televised Senate meetings conducted by the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee [a Democrat]. For the first time a national audience witnessed respectable, level-headed men attacking the war and denying its necessity." The administration's strategies as well as the situation both foreign and domestic followed their steady trends throughout 1966 and 1967. "By late 1967," according to Unger & Unger (1988, 85), "the United States was floundering in what everyone had feared: a major land war on the Asian continent."

Johnson may certainly have been genuinely convinced that North Vietnam would back down, or at least that banking on that was his best bet; but given that they wouldn't, the

policy of minimum candor was doomed to fail, if not backfire. Patterson (2012, 173) makes the point aptly:

> LBJ was especially mistaken in hoping that the people of the United States would stay a long course with him. . . . [M]ost people did not know what really lay ahead. In part because he did not level with the public about the seriousness of the situation, Johnson did not prepare them for sacrifices that would later be required. Imagining that Americans might tolerate ever-increasing costs and casualties, he overestimated the solidity of his popular support and the reverence of people for the presidency.

8.2.3 Johnson's Logic of Escalation

Johnson's campaign promises or other perceived policy positions apparently played no role in his overall decision(s) to escalate; if anything, in fact, he made the promises in the first place and delayed more hawkish policies in a manner heedless of any sort of inconsistency cost to come. Geyelin (1966, 186-7) implies that Johnson decided to shift course only after the election so he could benefit in the short term from the "sanctification" of Kennedy's policies and their continuation; Unger & Unger (1988, 78) argue, similarly, that Johnson delayed escalation because he "merely wanted to keep the war out of the election campaign."

This should not be overstated, though. Johnson certainly wanted to keep the war out of his legislative agenda most of all – as has already been alluded to, the reform of domestic racial and economic politics was his overriding imperative, and, if anything, he escalated because he thought the loss of Vietnam would be an even bigger distraction. As the peace protests gained steam in '65, Johnson told a friend in the State Department, "Don't pay any attention to what those little shits on the campuses do. The great beast is the reactionary elements of this country. Those are the people that we have to fear." (Patterson 2012, 195) While he famously told Doris Kearns that the Great Society was "the woman I really loved" and he feared and hated the distraction of "that bitch of a war," he saw no better option in letting South Vietnam fall and opening the floodgates of the argument from the right that he was a Communist appeaser just like Truman (92-3). (This also notably exemplifies a median-voter theory, whether or not it was intelligently applied.) The administration had

actually drafted what would be the Tonkin Gulf resolution before Tonkin occurred, but put it on the back-burner lest it distract Congress from civil rights; i.e., it would have likely never seen the light of day for years if not for the apparent attack at Tonkin (Divine 1981, 36, 38).[3]

Once the U.S. was really in the fighting because the domestic consequences of a fallen South Vietnam were deemed unacceptable, Johnson may very well have declared war and sought to end it quickly and aggressively if he didn't also fear the argument that his domestic programs would be too expensive to pay for along with the war (Colman 2010, 36). Being an extremely analogical thinker, also (Khong 1992), Johnson was convinced that a full invasion of the north would provoke China just as it had in Korea, which, of course, would also shut down domestic reform (Patterson 2012, 92).

Thus Johnson's limited-war policy had its own internal logic, revolving as it did around an extremely heavy discounting of the long-term consequences of his actions so that he could get his domestic reform bills immediately passed and signed. Johnson may very well have believed himself to be racking up inconsistency costs, of whatever kinds and among other costs, but he was so heedless of them that one wouldn't know either way.

In truth, it may very well have been inevitable that one with his personality would govern in such a manner, as one incident chronicled by Deakin (1968, 51) suggests:

> The dissident governments who trooped to the LBJ ranch in December 1966 where worried as much about the impact of the credibility problem on the Democratic Party as its consequences for Mr. Johnson personally. ... But when the governors warned the President that his image was partly responsible, they got little satisfaction. "I was born the way I am," he replied. "I can't do anything about it." One participant reported that Mr. Johnson would not admit that his public image was at fault: "He just doesn't believe it or doesn't want to believe it."

3. This fact is very telling of three things. First, it illustrates that Johnson always had escalation in Vietnam in mind, at least insofar as he wanted a free hand to escalate. Secondly, though, it shows that he much preferred to delay any such action before his domestic programs were fully implemented. Third, it strongly supports the argument that the administration's interpretation of the events in the Tonkin Gulf was genuine, rather than a cover story for aggression. The administration may have been extremely and irrationally "jumpy" in this sense, and so a Tonkin affair may have been more or less inevitable, but it was no conspiracy to mire the country in war.

Johnson also simply engaged heavily in wishful thinking, if not in the anticipation of public reactions, then certainly about current public opinion. The president's pollsters manipulated and selectively reported their innumerable polls not just to influence the public but to reassure the president (Altschuler 1991, xiii) and avoid the "killing the messenger" reaction to which he was unfortunately prone (Deakin 1968, 38; Altschuler 1991, 2). Johnson had, as Altschuler (1991, 2) wrote, an "obsession with his public standing," but this hardly led to democratic accountability; as one of his pollsters put it, Johnson was "the truest believer of polls, but only when they tended to support what he was doing." Once state-level polling numbers spurred Quayle to warn Johnson that a new national poll might show serious problems for him and his war support, the administration most certainly did not conduct one (47) – nor did it run any polls that would show just how bad the fallout from Tet really was (57).

There was also a clear interaction between Johnson's interpretative biases and the public's level of ignorance and inattentiveness, which was itself both naturally occurring and perpetuated by Johnson's own efforts. In the absence of credible information, the public tended to defer to the President, and said so, but since the President was taking increasingly hawkish actions, the causal arrow could be thought of as going in the other direction, with general approval for each new hawkish action making Johnson feel not just vindicated but pushed by apparent hawkishness into still more hawkish action. It was a feedback loop, which Goldman (1969, 485) at one point tried to break:

> During this period [early '66] President Johnson kept brandishing public opinion polls and asserting that the country was overwhelmingly behind the war. If he had a problem, he continued to say privately, it was the hawks, not the doves, whom he dismissed as a band of "rattlebrains." I thought it would be helpful for a loyal aide to say bluntly to the President – what he certainly knew but did not seem to be admitting even to himself – that the dove group increasingly included "a broad cross section ... When most intelligent, balanced Americans are asked, 'Do you in general approve of the President's Vietnam policy?' they are inclined to say yes. They respect their President and want to back him. They assume that he has more information, and has

> given more attention and thought to the problem, than they have. . . . But within this support there seems to be a degree of uneasiness, of concern and misgivings."

Johnson's selective readings of privately and often secretly commission polls never ceased (Altschuler 1991, 42-3, 48-9). The pollsters also found themselves very alone as the doubtful individuals on Johnson's staff – George Ball was apparently kept as the token dovish advisor, with the rest of Johnson's advisors all proving more hawkish even than Gen. Westmoreland (Altschuler 1991, 41-2; Unger & Unger 1988, 110). Johnson's decision-making group became an echo chamber that insulated him from hard truths about both the fragility of public support and the unlikeliness of a North Vietnamese withdrawal, though, clearly, that was exactly what Johnson wanted anyway (Geyelin 1966, 189-90; Heren 1970, 144-5).

8.2.4 The Shock of the Tet Offensive

In the conventional narrative of the Vietnam War, the Tet offensive was the most significant event since Tonkin – the spark that lit a truly widespread outcry against the war, and ended Johnson's reign. It famously spurred Walter Cronkite to visit Vietnam himself and return a born-again dove, which famously spurred Johnson to admit to his press secretary that that meant he had lost the American public (Divine 1981, 223-4).

Until Johnson withdrew, his administration stuck to the playbook. According to Heren (1970, 189), McNamara and Rusk "were required to appear on television. With cool professionalism, Rusk defended American policies as if the situation remained unchanged. McNamara, who looked as if he could not wait to leave for the World Bank, lightly dismissed possible mistakes in Vietnam with a philosophical quotation from one of T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*." Rusk then lost his cool, however, in a backgrounder (talking to reporters to be quoted as an unnamed high-level source): "There gets to be a point when the question is whose side are you on. I don't know why. . . people have to be probing for the things that one can bitch about." (Quoted in Unger & Unger 1988, 105-6)

McPherson (1972, 423-4) recounts that the cables from Saigon:

> were invariably optimistic, full of stratospheric enemy body counts, inspiring stories of South Vietnamese resistance, and so forth. . . . As it happened, there was truth in the

> assessment that the enemy had not achieved his aims in South Vietnam. But he had convinced the American public that after all the bombing, after all our expenditure of lives and resources, he was still vitally alive, resourceful, and determined. The horrific pictures of death and destruction kept coming on the tube, making a travesty of phrases like "body counts" and "surfaced enemy assets."

Regarding Tet specifically, there may have been significant expectation cost paid, though not because of the campaign promises – rather, from reassurances and optimistic predictions that the public was given just days before. Divine (1981, 51-2) argued that

> The administration itself was at least partially responsible for the shock of the North Vietnamese offensive. Concerned by the steady erosion of public support for the war, Johnson in late 1967 had launched an intensive public relations campaign to demonstrate that significant progress was being made. In several major speeches, administration representatives had even hinted that the end was in sight. Johnson and his advisers had "climbed way out on a limb, which the surprise attacks at Tet sawed off behind them," Don Oberdorfer has concluded.

Divine (1981, 233-4) similarly argued that

> No event proved more devastating to Johnson than the Tet offensive, which in the first few days of February 1968 utterly destroyed administration credibility with the American people. Coming hard on the heels of Westmoreland's optimistic reports, it seemed to make a mockery of administration claims to competence on the field of battle. . . . though in retrospect clearly a military disaster for the North Vietnamese, at the time [Tet] proved a psychological victory of overwhelming proportions. . . . Johnson no longer had a credibility gap – a mere problem with information management. The gap had become a chasm; skepticism had turned to massive disbelief.

Unger & Unger (1988, 7-8) wrote that "for months administration officials and the military had been proclaiming victory imminent. . . . the Tet offensive destroyed the illusion of impending victory and heartened the peace forces." Robert Kennedy, just weeks away from declaring his primary challenge against Johnson, proclaimed that "Our enemy, savagely

	Doves	Moderates	Percent Hawks	No Opinion	Total
All	9.1	36	36	19	100
Johnson voters	8.3	42	34	15	100
Goldwater voters	7.5	27	51	14	100

Table 8.2: Recalled Vote Choice by Vietnam Opinion, 1966

	Doves	Moderates	Percent Hawks	No Opinion	Total
All	21	36	32	10.4	100
Johnson voters	21	40	29	10.0	100
Goldwater voters	17	36	40	6.9	100

Table 8.3: Recalled Vote Choice by Vietnam Opinion, 1968

striking at will across all of South Vietnam, has finally shattered the mask of official illusion with which we have concealed our true circumstances, even from ourselves ...” (cited in Heren 1970, 188)

As the primary season began to start up right after, one of Johnson’s pollsters concluded that “somebody ought to be blunt to the president;” another forwarded Johnson a forthcoming column with the note, “the public wants concrete results, and that means getting the Communists to the negotiating table. The assurances of political and military leadership are not going to be swallowed whole any longer.” (Quoted in Altschuler 1991, 57)

8.2.5 Perceptions of Position Shift in Polling Data

Since we have ANES data from 1966 as well as 1968, we can better locate in time the bulk of the increase in public awareness and concern about Vietnam, as well as the shift toward more dovish views. The data clearly indicate that the great majority of the increase in public attention actually occurred earlier, between ’64 and ’66, and yet all of the dovish shift occurred between ’66 and ’68; the public, in other words, did actually start paying attention relatively soon after the campaign, but it didn’t start to turn against the war until later, and indeed perhaps because of Tet.

Shifts in Attentiveness

By '66, 26.13% still didn't know whether or not it was right to get involved in the first place, down from 38.19%. Only 7.04% of voters were paying no attention to Vietnam, down from 21.66%. 31.68% were already calling it the most important issue facing the country, up, as you may recall, from zero.

In '68, respondents were asked only if they paid "not much," "some," or "a good deal of" attention to Vietnam, instead of asking if they had been paying "any" attention; but only 9% reported paying "not much attention," barely more than the 7.04% that were paying *no* attention in '66. A solid majority (55.52%) were paying "a good deal" of attention by 1968. 41.3% were calling it the most important issue, an increase of 9.62 points from the '66 level. (The number who still couldn't decide whether or not it was right to get involved, however, held very much steady at 16.8%, perhaps reflecting deep indecision about that particular question, rather than apathy.)

Shifts in Opinion

As tab. 8.2 shows, hawks outnumbered doves by about 4 to 1 in '66, slightly more in fact than in '64. By the fall of '68, however, the ratio had plummeted to (a still quite high) 1.5 to 1 (tab. 8.2). Hawks themselves were almost as numerous as ever, as were moderates, but almost half of the no-opinion voters effectively moved into the dove camp within these latter two years, doubling the number there.

Throughout, interestingly, those claiming to have voted for Johnson differed almost not at all from the general population, despite these changes. They may have been more moderate and more opinionated, but to trivial degrees. If nothing else, this suggests that Johnson's elite cues did not polarize the country – those identifying as his earlier supporters did not, for example, end up more hawkish than others due to Johnson's efforts to build support for the escalating war effort, nor were they less hawkish, or more dovish, during the '64 campaign. If we look at those who say they would have voted for him in '68 rather than those who recalled voting for him in '64, we still see very little difference, except a slightly higher rate of moderates.

While this is not surprising insofar as Johnson was successful in maintaining a bipartisan elite consensus in favor of the war (Saunders 2015; Berinsky 2009, ch. 5), it is surprising in that when the major drop in support did come, it did not come from hawks or doves per se, or from those who had voted any particular way in the past. The most straightforward interpretation is that Johnson never did come to be viewed as falling into any of the particular ideological categories regarding the war, and his drop in overall support, as it related to Vietnam at all, had to have come instead from objections to dishonesty and/or the perception of simple warfighting incompetence.

The timing of these shifts suggests a modification of what we might assume, and what many scholars have argued, regarding the Tet offensive as well as Johnson's policy of minimum candor. Johnson may very well have been effective at maintaining support for the war for at least two years, but if so, it was mostly by misinforming the public so as to foster hawkish opinions, rather than by distracting them so as to avoid opinion formation. Tet, accordingly, did not so much rouse a slumbering public as confirm their worst suspicions, which they had in the first place because of Johnson's general credibility gap, discussed below.

8.3 The Domestic Political Consequences

> I think [my grandchildren] will be proud of two things. What I did for the Negro and seeing it through in Vietnam for all of Asia. The Negro cost me 15 points in the polls and Vietnam cost me 20.
>
> Lyndon B. Johnson, quoted in Mueller (1970, 18)

Many have alluded to the career-ending domestic costs that the Vietnam War inflicted upon Johnson. His greatest threat seemed to be a 1968 primary challenge, be it from Robert Kennedy or Eugene McCarthy. And yet, neither men differed notably from Johnson in their announced positions on Vietnam (Unger & Unger 1988, 299, 336; Heren 1970, 195) – neither did Nixon, in fact, as he plainly stated (Bornet 1983, 323-4). The discontent, then, was tied to Johnson personally, not his polices. Unger & Unger (1988, 336) make this point forcefully:

> Everwhere the [McCarthy primary] victory was interpreted as a referendum for peace. It was not. The Tet offensive *had* shifted public opinion sharply in favor of the dove positions. . . . [But] three out of five McCarthy supporters in overwhelmingly hawkish New Hampshire deserted the president because he was not hawkish *enough.* The truth is that for many reasons Lyndon Johnson had ceased to be a popular president and was no longer liked even by loyal voters of his own party.

Heren (1970, 172, 105) indeed compared Johnson's domestic trajectory and troubles to that of Lincoln – unfavorably of course – and argued that "in trying to insulate the electorate from the war [Johnson] committed a grave political blunder. It might almost be characterized as a crime."

Many analyses have similarly related the costs that Johnson paid to his campaign promises or other subsequent statements and public actions. Fishel (1985, 214) remarked that "His principal reversal, Vietnam, is a stark reminder of the costs of presidential flexibility." Altschuler (1991, 43) wrote that "Such contradictions" between Johnson's rhetoric and the secret escalations "would eventually cause serious trouble." Goldman (1969, 235, 255) wrote that

> the President's campaign statements later became the subject of widespread bitter feelings – at times based on severely abbreviated forms of his remarks which he and some of his friends considered misleading and unfair . . . Ardently presenting himself as the candidate of peace, he had made statements about his policy toward the Vietnam War that would recoil on him in months.

Were these expectation costs, audience costs, competence costs, the simpler form of inconsistency costs, or perhaps something else entirely? We may first focus on the reactions of those who did have stable policy-related preferences regarding Vietnam, to see if they fit the expectation-cost pattern of doves reacting strongly negatively, and voicing surprise, disappointment, shock, etc., while hawks react weakly positively, voicing begrudging support, minimizing the shift's significance, etc. Even if the pattern holds, we must then gauge whether this explains a significant part of the overall costs Johnson paid – namely, if these exogenously opinionated individuals were common enough, and/or their reactions lopsided

enough. Afterward, I then move on to consider the qualitative evidence of other types of theorized costs, which includes simple inconsistency costs, which, again, we would expect to stem from those who never did form a particular policy opinion on Vietnam, but did come to pay some degree of attention to it.

8.3.1 The Expectation Costs, or Lack Thereof

There is a smattering of observations made by various analyses of the kinds of reactions that constitute expectation costs as predicted. Heren (1970, 95-6) wrote that the public's "expectation of early negotiations was to plague the administration later ... [T]here was unprecedented abundance, and if this helped to keep the war at a distance the eventual shock was to be all the more damaging for Johnson when the war was seen to be unwinnable." Heren (1970, 148) casts the negative reaction to Tet as the result of higher expectations raised by the overall obfuscation campaign, and not just the remarks made immediately after: "There was certainly no longer any question of trying to insulate the country from the war, but, alas, Johnson had done the job too well. For the most part Americans were unprepared for what they saw, and they would not listen to Rusk."

Barry Goldwater, ironically, would say later that "the angry, disillusioned American public forced Lyndon Johnson to abandon his hope for a second term." (Bornet 1983, 288-9) Goldman (1969, 487) warned Johnson about "building excessive hopes which would produce acute disillusionment after the war." And Johnson himself would express regret that he hadn't lowered public expectations prior to Tet, namely in the State of the Union address preceding it (Rostow 1972, 481).

Patterson (2012, 96), on the other hand, characterized what negative reaction there was to Rolling Thunder as "more anguished than angry." If there were doves that were particularly disappointed due to high hopes about Johnson, their impact was apparently dwarfed by those who just didn't approve of such collateral damage, war or no. One passage from Goldman (1969, 416) runs about as distinctly counter to expectation cost theory as it possibly could: "Some indicators suggested that President Johnson's dawk war program might actually be increasing his overall support. At this stage it could have been losing only pockets of those who had voted for him in 1964, while winning over a large number of

Goldwater hawks who were happy to find the United States at last in the fighting." Again according to Goldman (1969, 417), a Republican senator remarked to Johnson in 1965 that "you're getting solid support from our side. What about the people in your party – the cut-and-run boys?" To be sure, Johnson enjoying "solid support" from hawks after running not just as a moderate, at best, but against one of the most famous hawks of the era, is contrary to expectation-cost-theory predictions.

Goldman (1969, 440-2) also implies, though, that Johnson suffered expectation costs of two other kinds. First and foremost, there is the question of Johnson's domestic agenda, which stemmed, after all, from a set of major campaign promises that raised their own set of hopes among supporters, while burning bridges with detractors. While it seems clear that Johnson simply believed wholeheartedly in each and every one of those reforms as his life's work, and so there was simply no occasion in which he would take notice of any pressure that might exist to uphold those promises, it fits with theory that the war may have inflicted expectation costs on him indirectly, by preventing the fulfillment of other promises. As Goldman points out, in fact, there are striking parallels to Woodrow Wilson, who was also elected to make strident domestic reforms, and who, as I show in ch. 6, also suffered separate expectation costs when an unwelcome war, coupled with partisan opposition, prevented him from delivering on those reforms.

The second expectation costs Goldman alludes to were not really suffered by Johnson at all; he argues, rather, that the masses of the non-communist states of southeast Asia, in general, had "explosive expectations" which their governments were "seeking their own ways to satisfy." He does not clearly elaborate on the source of these expectations (though he refers to them as "so justified"), but he does argue specifically that these regimes, of which South Vietnam was just one, were so perennially doomed by these expectation costs that it made U.S. support for them obviously futile. If Goldman is right, then Johnson and the entire United States indirectly very suffered greatly by effectively getting in between another state and its extremely disappointed public.

The Paucity of True Doves

Unger & Unger (1988, 300) aptly observed that "It was never easy to separate the anti-Vietnam and the broader pacifist components of the sixties' antiwar movement." I would go farther to say that it is difficult to pin down just who really did qualify as a dove in the general public at this time, much less what their reactions were to any unexpected actions Johnson took. Scholars disagree, and understandably so. This is exemplified most of all, perhaps, by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

Even in 1964, some prescient members on the SDS National Council were, in Margolis' (1999, 328) words, "convinced the fighting in Vietnam would soon become a real war and that Lyndon Johnson would wage it." They devised the popular quip, "Part of the Way with LBJ," to clearly signal that they were voting against Goldwater and not for Johnson; another slogan of theirs was "Johnson with Open Eyes" (Margolis 1999, 329; Unger & Unger 1988, 237). In 1966, SDS members at Harvard cornered McNamara and barraged him with questions and accusations to such a degree that he never exposed himself in such a forum again as defense secretary (Unger & Unger 1988, 312).

And yet the SDS, as an organization, had no official position on the war Patterson (2012, 127). It was a big-tent organization which included many who favored the war, and many who were not so much against it as concerned that it would prove distracting, just as Johnson himself was. One member told the *Times*: "We are working on domestic problems. . . . We feel passionately and angrily about things in America, and we feel that a war in Asia will destroy what we're trying to do here." (cited in Unger & Unger 1988, 238) As Margolis (1999, 329) bitingly put it, "The big issue was still civil rights. Students, especially, were not worried about going to war. They had draft deferments."

While those who were against it certainly participated in protests, they were either too small in number or not motivated enough to push out the hawks or form their own rival organization. They had come in the first place from a handful of smaller, actually dovish student groups; if they had been stronger as a bloc, they wouldn't have joined SDS in the first place (Unger & Unger 1988, 237). As Unger & Unger (1988, 245) put it,

> Campus rage at the Vietnam War dragged SDS into the antiwar movement willy-nilly.

> ... By 1967 campus anti-Vietnam activists could join the Resistance and the Student Mobilization Committee, groups that opposed the war without all the Hamlet-like dithering of SDS. On many campuses SDS found it either had to take a more active antiwar role or lose out to the competition.

And yet, for all its dithering, SDS never did really lose out – it remained the most significant antiwar organization, and it wasn't even really antiwar until Johnson's presidency was almost over.

Of greatest importance, though, is the above-cited fact that the genuine founding doves did *not* have high hopes regarding Johnson. His victory clearly and explicitly did not set their psychological reference points near their ideal point of U.S. non-involvement in the war, even though a Goldwater victory clearly would have set their reference points at an even less desirable. Thus, their relatively weak reaction, as a group, actually fits expectation cost theory well. It may be problematic for the overall theory if Johnson had been billing himself as "a peace-at-any-price man" – it would mean that Johnson's position-taking did not in fact set or adjust reference points – but since these exogenously opinionated voters got Johnson's stated positions just right, and reacted accordingly, the overall theory is strongly supported here. Counterfactually, if Johnson's rhetoric had been consistent with that of a true dove, then true doves such as the ones in the SDS would have gone "all the way" for him, and subsequently organized and protested much more zealously.

Similar ambiguities and conflicting accounts are found with regards to the intellectual class, including the professors that significantly contributed to the campus activism. Unger & Unger (1988, 82, 303-4) are apparently alone in arguing that academics were largely committed doves who had in fact gotten their hopes up about Johnson:

> Many academics, appalled by Goldwater's right-wing ideology and saber-rattling, had supported the president enthusiastically in November, as had the politicized portion of the student body. ... Now, feeling utterly betrayed, both students and faculty launched a campaign to force the reversal of American Vietnam policy [following Operation Rolling Thunder]. ... Johnson's decision to bomb North Vietnam sent a shock wave through American colleges and universities. Many of the nation's liberal

> professors disliked LBJ despite his New Dealish positions and policies. The attitude was partly snobbery. The president's folksiness seemed phony, his Texas persona alien. Yet in the fall of 1964, their fear of his bellicose opponent, Barry Goldwater, had led them to suspend their disbelief and toil for his election. Their outrage over the bombing, when it came, was reinforced by the feeling that they had been duped. At Ann Arbor in early March, professorial mortification created a new form of protest, the teach-in, and restored a new incandescence to the smoldering antiwar movement.

Even in arguing thus, Unger & Unger introduce the primary counterargument: that academics' dovish bona fides were suspect, and more personal and superficial differences with Johnson were the real fuel for their fire. The evidence is considerable. Goldman (1969, 432-3) provides the most striking account (emphasis added):

> Judging from my contacts with intellectuals and artists and from the other available evidence, in 1965 they had no composite attitude toward the Vietnam War. On the contrary, they seemed much like the general population – most of them going along without any great enthusiasm, some hawkish or dovish. Certainly they were not overwhelmingly anti-war. . . . [According to internal academic polls,] the idea of a "faculty consensus" against the war was "campus folklore." The teaching body divided almost evenly on the crucial question of an unconditional end to the bombing. . . . *One revealing statistic indicated that pro-LBJ men were especially numerous among faculty who had not previously expressed their opinion in any public form.*

Goldman (1969, 437) recounted being told by a Midwest professor, "I look at that Texas cowhand and listen to him mangle the language, and I say, 'No, dammit, go fight your own war.'"

"The long Vietnam War," Bornet (1983, 281) wrote, "would have a complex army of critics. They came from both major parties, had many motives, and chose different targets for their fire." While referring to Washington elites rather than the general public, Heren (1970, 45) wrote that "Hawks and doves were [to] be found in the strangest places." He also wrote, about the "New Left" more generally, that "Many were contemptuous of established political parties and institutions and believed that salvation could be found only

in participatory democracy. Definitions were not always clear, but causes were obviously more attractive than programs. Vietnam and the draft were of course heaven-sent (or hell-sent) opportunities." (Heren 1970, 116)

Either way, the negative reactions that could be traced to actual committed and pre-existing dovishness were generally quite weak. "Little or nothing of [the retaliation for Pleiku] was known to the American people," Heren (1970, 73) wrote, but concern over the bombing was not widespread. According to Patterson (2012, 231), "antiwar advocates were hardly a significant threat to the administration or to the war effort in October 1965."

Another significant factor, perhaps almost entirely forgotten today, is that, in the Dominican Republic in 1965, the U.S. pulled off virtually the exact same mission that would prove impossible in Vietnam. The Dominican Republic's governing junta was hardly a model of capitalist democracy, nor were the rebels a model of dangerous communist revolutionaries, but the U.S. military operation to stabilize the country was a model success: collateral damage was minimal, casualties were low on both sides, and, after a matter of months, the troops left the country in what Patterson (2012, 135) called "a surprising degree of stability."

To be sure, there were a few committed doves who objected to that intervention even in hindsight (Patterson 2012, 135; Geyelin 1966, 214-5). But Americans that would have otherwise been more cautious and vigilant about a quagmire and humanitarian crisis in Vietnam could quite reasonably be forgiven for expecting that Johnson's involvement in that country would in fact go the same way as it did in the Dominican Republic, if not in '65, then perhaps in '66, '67, or '68.

The Paucity of True Hawks

While it is generally difficult as always to discern how much of the negative reaction to a policy shift is related to inconsistency rather than strong issue preferences, there is substantial evidence that hawks' positive reactions to Johnson's substantial escalation and tenacious defense of South Vietnam were tellingly weak. Goldman's above-cited analysis is compelling, but so is the following. There is the separate fact that hawkish sentiment was, if anything, even thinner and more disorganized than that of doves, with the vast majority

of apparent or putative hawkishness based only on elite cues that were, themselves, under constant grassroots fire.

Patterson (2012, 93-4) goes so far as to suggest that Johnson's concerns about an agenda-interrupting punishment from hawks for losing Vietnam was ephemeral:

> It is arguable that he would not have suffered politically if he had refrained from escalating. . . . [w]hile public opinion polls were generally to indicate that majorities of the American people backed Johnson's military moves in 1965, this support was neither deep nor well informed in February. It is also unlikely that hawks, even if they were to ally with conservatives in struggles over domestic policies, would have succeeded in blocking Great Society programs as retaliation against a dovish Johnson policy approach to Vietnam.

Bornet (1983, 86, 256-7) argued that "there was a notable rallying behind the president" but that "The polls but measured a public opinion framed in ignorance . . . The public began to take notice. The time was at hand for a great debate on fundamentals. Instead, there would be simplistic protest, mixed with further automatic support from those who held traditional views. . . . [T]oo little attention has been given to the public acceptance of the war during most of the Johnson years. The antiwar demonstrators were vocal, but a minority. Much was heard of deserters and youngsters fleeing to Canada to avoid the draft, but the overwhelming majority quietly did what was required of them." A number of scholars have emphasized this deference, unsurprising given that this was the coming-down from the very peak of Americans' trust in their government.

Patterson (2012, 137) argues similarly, casting doubt on the depth of later dovish opinions as well as early hawkish ones. "contrary to later impressions (after the North won the war, many Americans did not admit to having supported it), antiwar opinion in the early months of the struggle remained relatively weak. Like Johnson, most people believed that 'appeasement' would be disastrous, that the United States must keep its commitments, and that international communism had to be stopped. So long as 'our boys' were in danger, they would continue to back their commander in chief."

Some hawks, though – perhaps the most committed ones of all – only seemed to register

greater discontent as the escalation continued. This too is highly ambiguous, as it is likely due more to substantive and preference-based judgments than any prospect-theoretic conditioning of perceived gains, but it is worth considering. "In the nation as a whole," Bornet (1983, 257) wrote that

> the hawks ranged from the simple patriotic to the counterrevolutionary right, which wanted to bomb North Vietnam into the Stone Age. They complained bitterly against the territorial limitations Johnson placed on the war, and some against the refusal to use nuclear weapons. Johnson could not ignore them. An early reversal of strategy, say before the 1968 Tet offensive, might well have provoked a revulsion of national feeling. Johnson was well aware of this, and if he traded on it to continue his strategy of military victory, other men shared his apprehension.

As Altschuler (1991, 46-8) showed, these committed hawks existed and were certainly brought to Johnson's attention, but his pollsters were relatively frank with him, that even among the most committed hawks, those who wanted him to get substantially more aggressive – invade the entire north, use nuclear weapons, attack China, etc. – were a trivial minority, not worth appeasing.

8.3.2 The Credibility Gap and its Costliness

By the close of 1965, journalists were writing about the "growing doubt and cynicism concerning Administration pronouncements ... The problem could be called a credibility gap." (cited in Goldman 1969, 409fn) Deakin (1968, 1), in a book on the subject published before Johnson had even left office, asserted that the president "has seldom been able to state a major position or make an important announcement in a straightforward and unequivocal way." Providing some ironic continuity with the previous chapter of this work, Deakin (1968, 55-6) illustrated the point by way of unfavorable comparison to the Eisenhower administration:

> the Eisenhower administration can be credited with originating the "cover story" technique that has become a favorite form of political deception. Moreover, many reporters were deeply suspicious of the evasive language employed by Eisenhower's Secretary of

> State, John Foster Dulles. Nevertheless, most reporters did not question the truthfulness of the administration's official statements on a day-to-day basis. They did not view with suspicion virtually everything the White House said. When [Eisenhower's] press secretary James Hagerty said that something was not going to happen, reporters did not automatically assume that it *was* going to happen.

Margolis (1999, 367) dubbed it "popular cynicism about the official account of just about anything." Patterson (2012, 108) wrote that "Cronkite's response [to Tet] was a classic rebound effect: from total belief to total doubt. ... By 1968 it was fashionable among academics, writers, and other intellectuals to disbelieve everything that emanated from the White House." Goldman (1969, 524) echoed this rebound-effect notion:

> President Johnson not only played faster and looser [than past presidents]; he did it amid a widespread conviction that self-serving deceit was a part of his essential make-up. This distrust militated powerfully against the whole presidential leadership of Lyndon Johnson. ... Few worried citizens hesitated to oppose Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam policy, and once in opposition, their attacks came with special virulence.

Journalists may have "felt" the credibility gap especially strongly, which naturally filtered down to the public. Tet, it seems, was journalists' personal breaking points. Patterson (2012, 106) wrote that "The journey of Walter Cronkite from faith to doubt was both a paradigm of media disillusion and a powerful additional push to public disenchantment." An ABC anchor "chided American officials for lack of frankness" (103) on the air. According to McPherson (1972, 436), Johnson knew that "the 'credibility gap' had become an abyss, when the sanguine assessments of his Administration, rendered in the fall of 1967, were mocked on the television screen during Tet."

By the time Robert Kennedy was waging his serious challenge for the party nomination, the credibility gap was a major part, if not the centerpiece, of his attacks. Referring to Johnson's evasive and indirect rejection of Kennedy's proposal of a commission to re-evaluate Vietnam policy, Kennedy said: "This incident reveals in the sharpest possible terms why the American people no longer believe the president and the White House; why the credibility of our political leadership has been so critically eroded; and why it is clear that the

only way we are going to change our policy in Vietnam is to change the administration in Washington." (Quoted in Heren 1970, 195)

Vietnam and his promises on it were by no means the *sole* sources of the credibility gap, but they were by all means the primary ones. "It is against this background of obsession with Asia," Deakin (1968, 9, 60) wrote,

> that the issue of Lyndon Johnson's credibility takes on its deepest meaning for the American people. This is simply because Johnson sold himself to the voters in the 1964 Presidential campaign as a dove, when in fact he was and is a hawk. ... Since 1964, the nation has been learning the hard way that he is a hawk, and this has been the chief reason for the evolution of the credibility gap as a major national issue. ... The credibility issue is compounded of many things, large and small. ... [But p]robably no conflict in hour history has been marked by so much government doubletalk as the war in Vietnam

(see also Goldman 1969, 410-1; Bornet 1983, 85; Patterson 2012, 125). Assessing the peace protests, McPherson (1972, 446) wrote that

> the sense of outraged impotence before a government that steadily escalated a bad commitment was genuine enough. So was the sense of being deceived. For though the Establishment had put the stakes high from the beginning, it had given the impression that they could be preserved by a relatively small number of professional soldiers. And now there was the draft.

Those who attacked the administration after Tonkin and Pleiku did so with very clear references to the credibility gap, and in a manner clearly criticizing the inconsistency and unpredictability in and of itself Divine (1981, 30-2). Even the military intervention in the Democratic Republic seemed to widen the credibility gap, despite its neat success, because it struck the public as out of line with his campaign rhetoric, and was not accompanied by admissions to that effect. Patterson (2012, 132, 135) wrote that "events in the Caribbean further revealed LBJ's aggressiveness as an anticommunist manager of American foreign relations, thereby prompting renewed complaints that his behavior was creating a 'credibility

gap.'"[4]

One data point – and only one, apparently – casts the credibility gap in a manner befitting audience costs, specifically of the international-reputation variety (Guisinger & Smith 2002). Deakin (1968, 52) remarked, and without much emphasis, that, "By itself, the credibility gap is serious enough. It involves the reputation of the American government for honesty and truthfulness. It tarnishes our image abroad."

8.3.3 Categorizing Johnson's Domestic Costs

How does Johnson's credibility gap best fit within the various academic categories of inconsistency costs? There was certainly, here, a clear and powerful connection between the mass public discontent and Johnson's inconsistencies, specifically between word and deed; it would be a powerful illustrative case of any theorized cost. It would distort much of the above, however, to read it as evidence of an audience cost, within any of the theoretical frameworks to which the term pertains.

Concerns over international credibility, reputation, honor, etc. are absent outside of Deakin's lone assertion above. On the other hand, the numerous aspersions against Johnson's competence and performance record plainly suggest that it was a competence cost a la Smith (1998); however, the logic of that actual theoretical model simply cannot be mapped onto the *costs* suffered in this case. This is a complex point that would be best made with explicit references to the model, but the key question is whether Johnson's misleading behavior led the audience to rationally infer that his warfighting abilities were lower than they otherwise would have, and the answer is no.

This is an awkward conceptual fit to begin with because competence costs, like all such bargaining-related costs, are plainly defined as existing when war does not occur, and, conversely, when war does occur, inferences of the leader's competence become unnecessary because competence is directly observed in the war itself. By the time of Tet, it seems, the public was indeed directly observing that competence level, and the fact that he had also tried to conceal that direct observation from them for so long did not somehow lower their

4. The fact that these were foreign policy issues meant that the President was given more initial leeway, and his dissembling and propagandizing became objectionable only when combined with the substantial costs that his policies were incurring (Deakin 1968, 39, 43).

appraisal of his *warfighting* competence even further. What the public did infer, however – aside from the simple fact that he had no faith in their ability to handle the truth, or respect for their right to it besides – was that he was very much incompetent as a strategist. The problem was not that he was bad at fighting wars, but that he was bad at realizing that he was bad at fighting wars, and acting strategically given that low competence level.

This is a sort of "meta-competence," which may seem to differ in no meaningful way from "warfighting competence" – it is certainly part of what we generally think of and refer to as overall leadership ability – but in the context of a rationalist model such as that which supports the theory of competence costs (and expectation costs insofar as leaders are concerned), the distinction is all-important. If we were to judge Smith's model entirely on the basis of this one case as an empirical test, we would conclude that the assumptions regarding the leader are fatally flawed and that we have no way of knowing whether or not competence costs, so defined, would exist if and when leaders acted as modeled.

The best way to conceive of the model slippage may be not that the leader failed to maximize expected value, but that the leader was unable to so directly observe the values that the model assumed he was – he could not in fact know his own competence level, and/or he could not observe the distribution from which the rival state's resolve level was being drawn. Empirically and inductively, we can know that the ability to make such observations, accurately and without self-deception, is a quality that varies from leader to leader and by which the public may judge leaders – they certainly did in this case – but this is a completely different "competence cost" from the one in the model. The distinction is by no means just technical: a cost such as the one found here has no sensible role in international bargaining. Rival state actors cannot infer anything meaningful about the leader or their future behavior, *a priori*, due to the existence of this domestic cost. It essentially just means that irrationally belligerent leaders exist and that their publics tend to remove them in the long run.

We may certainly be tempted to conclude that part of the costs Johnson suffered here were the simple inconsistency costs of saying one thing and doing another. These costs are, again, non-rationalist (or have simply not yet been modeled as resulting from some unobserved process of deduction and inference in the audience member's mind), but they

are the most empirically robust of all these theorized costs, and they also form the particular basis for the relevant theory here, that a kind of audience cost is also paid for "backing in" to a war (Levy et al. 2015).

One finding from the 1964 ANES problematizes that hypothesis here: LBJ didn't have much credibility to lose in the first place. Among reasons why one might not want to vote for him, the single most common category of responses was: "Lacks integrity, unprincipled, dishonest. Too ambitious. Promises everything." Almost as many respondents provided some pejorative labeling of him as a "politician." This, again, was at the very height of reported trust in *government* generally, and accompanied by Johnson's historic electoral landslide.

The unmistakeable implication is that the vast majority of people simply didn't care about Johnson's inconsistencies and rhetorical unreliability, in and of itself. What changed was not how trustworthy they saw him but how consequential they took that untrustworthiness to be. Put another way, they never thought they could particularly trust him to mean what he said, or act accordingly, but they did think they could trust him, like government in general, "to do the right thing," whatever it was. This relates back, then, to the more basic competence cost, with no bargaining relevance. The best-fitting explanation is that even the explicit objections to inconsistency were really just objections to the fact that Johnson had been clearly and severely erroneous in making such a momentous decision as to gamble on a quick and quiet victory in Vietnam with such high stakes. The fact that he had tried to cover it up was significant almost entirely because it confirmed that he had so drastically underestimated the risk and eventual cost as to think that it could be covered up. This, too, cannot be considered an inconsistency cost of any relevance to international bargaining.

8.3.4 Costs to be Found in Survey Data

Proper tests of any sort of inconsistency cost cannot be conducted with the available ANES data; the best analysis that can be run is a comparison of Johnson's mean feeling-thermometer rating within the different categories of people's issue positions on Vietnam. Tab. 8.4 presents these statistics.

	Doves	Moderates	Hawks	Undecided	Other
What to do now	59.2	63.8	56.4	63.8	52.6
Was invasion right	56.8	—	63.4	64.1	53.9

Table 8.4: Mean Johnson Feeling Thermometer by Vietnam Opinion as Measured Two Ways

As before, positions were measured in two ways: as retrospective opinions on the initial decision to get involved in the war, and prospective opinions on the policy that should now be implemented. Prospective opinions fell within the three previously mentioned categories – pulling out entirely, staying in and trying "to end the fighting," or fully invading North Vietnam – but judgments on the initial involvement were restricted to favorable or not favorable. Both questions coded "don't know" answers, but also a wide range of "other" responses; these were actually "no comment" to a large extent, but they also included several nuanced opinions about other specific strategies that some respondents were moved to lobby for. I leave this category as separate and present it without interpretation.

Most of the differences in average feeling thermometers are of a plainly small magnitude (thus I eschew significance tests, considering also the awkward comparisons), but perhaps the clearest pattern is that Johnson's strongest support in '68 came from the 10% or so of respondents answering "don't know" to the Vietnam opinion questions. Regarding the prospective opinions, these unopinionated respondents thought just as highly as the moderates, whose position Johnson was steadfastly maintaining. This runs counter to existing theories of audience costs and inconsistency costs, insofar as we take for granted the recent findings about these costs being dealt by those with no particular issue opinion.

One other informative finding is that Johnson got his highest marks among the opinionated public from those who supported both the initial decision to get involved and the moderate policy of staying in but not invading the north. This is unsurprising in that it matches Johnson's policies – such people may have formed such opinions for that very reason – but it drives home the fact that Johnson's coalition never really changed much in terms of its makeup. The plurality of his opinionated voters had always been moderates, as shown earlier, and, conversely, moderates had a particular tendency to support him, in general as well as over Goldwater. Thus, there is little evidence that he made a perceived

policy shift on Vietnam at all. While the situation on the ground certainly changed, and the results were not at all what he had promised or what anyone had hoped for, the policies he chose off the available menu were generally the exact ones the public expected him to choose, presumably because they were accurately interpreting his rhetoric after all.

8.4 Foreign Perceptions and Beliefs

To recap, theory predicts that North Vietnam, and other relevant actors such as China, would take Johnson's campaign rhetoric and other symbolic position-taking as credible signals of his forthcoming policies, not necessarily because it would be costly for him to do otherwise ex post – a very hawkish public would still reward him for a hawkish shift – but because it would have been irrational for him to take such a position in the first place if he was not relatively likely to maintain that position. Whether foreign leaders make such an inference about that leader and whether the inference is accurate for that particular leader are two separate questions, though, in theory, the answer should be yes to both. Having answered the latter question with regards to this particular case, I turn, lastly, to the former question.

Since Johnson's position was that of a highly committed moderate – committed to staying in the south until the north gave up, and committed against both withdrawal and northern invasion – this is what we'd predict foreign actors to expect. They would not have expected the massive bombing campaign, as Johnson had, for one, loudly criticized those who first pushed for that, but they would have otherwise expected Johnson to do just what he did: provide all necessary support to the south, and refrain from attempting to invade, topple, occupy, or otherwise fully neutralize the north and its regime. The expectation that he would stand firm would work to deter northern aggression, but the expectation that he would refrain from a full counterattack would invite it.

Evidence on the internal dialogue in Hanoi and Beijing is naturally lacking. The State Department's records of the diplomatic communications are classified; even the relevant parts of the Pentagon Papers are redacted (Divine 1981, 47). Some consensus exists amongst historical accounts, though, that Hanoi was simply resolved to the war that they got; I would

suggest, moreover, that they may have been resolved even *more* toward a larger war in which the U.S. would invade, because of the likelihood of a Chinese rescue – or a Russian one. After Pleiku, according to Unger & Unger (1988, 82), "Premier Kosygin immediately promised to supply North Vietnam with 'all necessary assistance if aggressors dare encroach upon [its] independence and sovereignty.'" While this is little more than speculation given the lack of evidence, it is based on sound formal theory about the bargaining incentives of great powers' allies (Frieden, Lake & Schultz 2013, 176-8; Izumikawa 2007); thus, the prediction would be that the expectation of Johnson's promised policies would work *against* northern aggression, because it would dash the north's hopes of provoking the U.S. into provoking the Chinese.

This, though, is largely a hypothetical exercise to illustrate the theory's logic, as, again, the evidence is considerable that North Vietnam preferred to maintain the war against the south, and the U.S., indefinitely. Any possibility of a larger U.S. involvement that would provoke China would then just be a bonus. Altogether, that would make the credibility of Johnson's policy promise irrelevant.

Unger & Unger (1988, 84) provide an instructive account of what we know of the U.S.-North Vietnam negotiations:

> The president was not opposed to negotiations. He launched periodic "peace offensives," offering to negotiate a settlement. Each of these collapsed over such irreconcilable issues as the reinforcement of Vietcong cadres during a truce, the recognition of the Vietcong as legitimate parties to any negotiations, the timing of bombing halts, and like matters that one side or the other considered crucial. The ultimate snag, however, was that Hanoi wanted a unified Communist Vietnam, while Washington wanted an independent non-Communist South Vietnam. Neither would yield the main point. ... What they lacked in numbers, the Vietcong made up in dedication or – as their opponents preferred to say – in fanaticism.

It is difficult to establish Johnson's truest personal appraisal of Hanoi's resolve, and easy to cherry-pick either way, but he did confide privately to McNamara even in mid-1965 that "I'm very depressed about it. Because I see no hope of doing anything, except just praying

and grasping to hold on ... and hope they'll quit. I don't believe they're *ever* going to quit. And I don't see ... that we have any ... plan for a victory – militarily or diplomatically." (Quoted in Patterson 2012, 166) Interestingly, Johnson once remarked to his staff that "If I were Ho Chi Minh, I would never negotiate." (Quoted in 106)

Bornet (1983, 84-5) is notably critical not just of the notion that North Vietnam was coercible, but that any signal could have possibly cut through the noise of the international system even if they had been:

> ... there was confidence that diplomatic signals and military actions could be coordinated in such a way as to send particular "messages" to the enemy. Many almost irrelevant events and confusions kept this academic idea from working out in practice. ... Moreover, the belief that the nation-seeking enemy would recognize the merits of rational cost-benefit considerations proved fallacious. The enemy proved to be complex in his own organizational patterns; his motives, goals, strengths, weaknesses, and options were anything but simple; his goal of an independent and Marxist unified state was unshakable.

Bornet (1983, 85) also argues that the Chinese and Russian support in Vietnam was so extensive that it makes one wonder if the distinction between their direct and indirect involvement really even had any meaning.

Lastly, however, Bornet (1983, 254) also mentions that "Hanoi seemed to know" that, by 1966 at least, "escalation to the point of crushing North Vietnam was ... out of the question politically." Given the substantial hawkishness of the electorate still at that time, this begs explanation, and some kind of inconsistency cost, if not expectation costs, fits the bill.

8.5 Conclusion

In the case of Lyndon Johnson's broken campaign promises not to involve the U.S. in a full-scale Vietnam War, there is no robust evidence to support a hypothesis that he paid expectation costs, or audience costs, or any other form of inconsistency cost as has been previously theorized. This was due first and foremost to the fact that the promise was

double-sided: it was made in the same breath with a promise not to let South Vietnam fall, and to provide whatever aid and assistance it required. The escalation in terms of increased U.S. involvement and troop deployments, therefore, was not, in and of itself, a breaking of a promise; nor, as I have shown, was it generally contrary to the expectations of those who had an opinion on the issue either way at the time the promises were being made.

Second, those who were so opinionated were in particularly short supply amongst the public, at this time and on this issue. As such, the case is very useful as an illustration of how the exogenous, preexisting, and opinion-driven attentiveness of the domestic audience is a crucial variable in expectation cost theory. It indeed meant that, in this case, expectation costs were harder to raise, they likely would have been relatively small even if Johnson had sought to maximize them, and their impact on international bargaining, in turn, would have been trivial. If such cases were the norm, then we would doubt the basic usefulness of the theory along with this overall relevance to international bargaining, but if the first two case studies of this work are an indication, then a case such as this one is the exception rather than the rule. The fact that public trust in government was so anomalously high also speaks to the uniqueness of the time in the American experience at least.

Third, theories of other kinds of inconsistency costs fare little better than expectation costs at explaining the precipitous decline of Johnson's domestic support. Even the robust experimental finding of a simplistic inconsistency cost for saying one thing and doing another largely fails to replicate here. Criticisms and protest language certainly hammered endlessly on Johnson's "credibility gap" and called him and his administration out for countless obfuscations and outright lies, but Johnson's penchant for hyperbole, secrecy, and over-promising were apparently well known at the very time he won his landslide victory against Goldwater; it was what was being covered up, and what the cover-up said about Johnson's inability to think realistically about the issue, that incurred the costs. If this had anything to do with his past campaign rhetoric, then it was just part and parcel of this inference that he had really always been so wrong in his assessment of Hanoi's resolve and the costs the war would entail. These could certainly be referred to as competence costs, but, as I have aimed to explain, they are entirely removed from the competence costs that have been theorized to have any relevance to international bargaining and threat credibility.

This case is perhaps the most complex and nuanced of the four in this work. To a large degree, it pushes the bounds of what any formal, deductive, or generalized theory can be expected to explain. This itself, however, carries some advantages; I would argue that it reflects well upon this family of theories that they can be used to make a relatively large amount of sense of any (mostly) qualitative study of a case such as this. A large number of data points, scholarly analyses, and interpretive opinions to be found in the extant literature on the case clearly relate to the same questions that these theories have aimed to answer, and, if nothing else, the theories bring a very original perspective to efforts to fully understand this historically important case.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Despite all the passionate work that has been done through the past several decades on international bargaining, threat credibility, and the role of domestic accountability, this subfield of international security studies remains defined largely by the puzzles it has never really been able to solve. Solutions that initially seemed most attractive due to their methodological elegance, similarities to more successful theories, or simple intuitive plausibility, have more often become foils for rival theories than sound and accepted bases for even better ones. Audience cost theories have perhaps seen the greatest whiplash of this kind. It is, indeed, a story of great expectations, unrealized promise, disappointment, and for many, clearly, frustration. One prominent scholar described their reaction to any early draft of Fearon's audience cost model as, "I was blind but now I see;" now, scholars are more of a mind to charge that "Audience Costs Are Toys." Such giants of the field as J. David Singer (2005, 832) have written that "When the uncertainties of international politics interact with the duplicities and chaos of domestic politics, audience costs represent the height of dubious academic concepts."

The best theoretical framework for explaining the dynamics and patterns of interest – namely, the apparent effects of domestic regimes on international threat success and the escalation from crisis bargaining to war – may prove to be in an entirely different mode from the ones currently employed, including the one developed here. It may, for example, be entirely constructivist, based on the conditioned beliefs and conventional wisdoms that leaders have about each other, their publics, and each other's publics. But insofar as we

do seek a theory that connects the real behaviors of domestic audiences with international bargaining and conflict outcomes, I contend that this is a more sound and more promising one than the current alternatives. In this concluding chapter, I recapitulate the major points of the argument, highlight the most interesting implications in and of themselves, and, finally, specify future research that would, according to this theory, likely prove most fruitful, in the fields of cognitive psychology and behavioral economics as well as in political science and conflict studies.

9.1 The Robustness of Expectation Costs and Related Public Reactions

This work was been primarily empirical, and within that, primarily about the robust existence of expectation costs, literally speaking – that is to say, audiences reliably inflict those costs under specific and observable conditions. Again, this distinction is key because of the prevalence of a "dark matter" conceptualization of political costs in general, which permits scholars to frequently refer to leaders avoiding a given outcome as itself evidence that that outcome is in fact politically costly (E.g. Kurizaki & Whang 2015, ; see; Trachtenberg 2012, 411-2 for a critique).

The research presented here should be sufficient to establish expectation costs as a reasonably robust phenomenon, in and of itself at the very least. To begin with, prospect theory is one of the most robust theories that social science has; it would have been a powerful finding in its own right if the average audience member in international bargaining was consistently found *not* to react to perceived gains and losses as prospect theory predicts. In that sense, empirical tests of expectation costs are little more than confirmatory exercises within the prospect theory research program – a relatively unremarkable extension of the theory, like so many others in numerous fields and subfields. The crucial tests here were the somewhat more implicit ones.

It is significant, first and foremost, that the prospect-theory pattern, of loss aversion at least, was found to exist, at standard significance levels, with the president's favored policies determining the reference point. Given the robustness of prospect theory in itself,

the question is not so much whether or not political issue-related gains and losses follow the S-shaped curve, but what determines the center-point of that curve. The findings of ch. 4 uniquely suggest that a person's psychological reference point with regards to a given political issue corresponds to the policy that they perceive the president as favoring. We have numerous observations of American voters with their own issue opinions adjusting their opinion of several presidents as they perceive changes in those presidents' positions, and those opinion changes are uniquely consistent with the hypothesis that a leader's established policy positions determine the reference point by which future position-taking is viewed and reacted to, by those who care to react at all. The best-fitting explanation, if not the only explanation, is that people do in fact expect to see realized the policies and policy outcomes that the president favors, and if and when it becomes clear to them that that won't happen, their reactions are both conditioned by prospect theory and channeled into their changing opinions of and personal feelings toward the leader. The result is that it is inherently and unavoidably costly for a leader if and when people come to perceive them as taking some new position that they either cannot or will not, in fact, maintain, in action as well as rhetoric, assuming that any non-trivial fraction of the public has any stable preference on the issue in question.

Given this, the empirical robustness question becomes much more about the quantity of these stably and strongly opinionated audience members than about the reliability of their reactions. There are always *some* voters that really care about any given issue, but it would be disingenuous, if not still technically true, to insist that expectations therefore always exist, on every issue. Implicitly, asserting their existence in a given case is to assert that they are substantial enough to make some political difference, and warrant active consideration and anticipation on the part of the leader in question. While the estimated effect sizes in ch. 4 are worth paying attention to, this question of the real significance of these costs is best answered qualitatively, and so I turned to the four cases in which U.S. presidents were believed to have made major policy reversals on foreign-policy issues. (It is perhaps telling that all four of these cases simply happened to pertain to national security and the prospect of major war, and three of the four did see the occurrence of major war.)

In two of the four cases (Lincoln on abolition and Wilson on WWI), the reversals were

indeed found to be clear and major, and so, too, were the expectation costs. As these were the major defining issues of the time, the public was highly and consistently opinionated, with large numbers of voters consistently categorized as active hawks and doves, and their asymmetric reactions constituted the identifiable costs the leaders ultimately paid for their taking policy positions that they could not and/or would not maintain in practice. The evidence is substantial, if not overwhelming, that Lincoln and Wilson would have been far better off in terms of their domestic political support if they could have begun their tenures as, respectively, a known abolitionist and a known hawk. Both were almost entirely abandoned by their former constituencies and yet failed to garner almost any additional support from those on the other side of the issue – and both despite clear and recent victories in major wars. It is difficult to imagine that either would have faced anything like the political challenges they did if they had risen to power advocating the agendas they then pursued – or if the public had not been so impassioned and opinionated about those issues.

Expectation costs were not found to have been suffered in the other two cases, but those cases were also both found to be ones in which the theory would not in fact predict the costs to be present and/or significant. A large part of the reason in Johnson's case was that the public was clearly disengaged during the time of the initial position-taking, with only a trivial percentage of voters holding consistent opinions related in any clear way to the country's Vietnam policies, but it is also notable that it was only here in which this was found to be the case. In Eisenhower's case, it seems that the public was very much engaged – he and Dulles both spoke loudly and often of policy toward eastern Europe, and faced many sharp questions on the topic – but Ike was both very careful about taking specific policy positions he could not keep, and even of taking specific policy positions at all, when he clearly just didn't need to in order to get elected. Thus what is called into question by the evidence presented here is not whether this was a major issue with an opinionated public of a politically significant size, but whether the leader's initial position really was different from the position from which they ended up governing, either in perception or reality.

Both of these "failed" cases, then fail for the "right" reasons, given the theory. They are both useful, in fact, as illustrative examples of exactly how and why expectation costs may, in

some cases, not exist. Moreover, there is no reason, to say the least, why we wouldn't expect foreign governments to carry out the same sorts of case-specific analyses that are conducted here; the evidence I have gathered here, in other words, was, for the most part, at least as accessible to the sovereign actors with which the U.S. was actively bargaining at the time. The case studies specifically support this, as well. The Confederacy is the only such actor on which we have real evidence that they perceived Lincoln's potential expectation costs and bargained accordingly, but, conversely, there is essentially no evidence of foreign leaders failing to appreciate expectation cost dynamics *if and when* they were at all interested in attempting to gauge U.S. intentions and resolve. Thus, it is at the very least plausible that foreign states' estimates of a state's intentions and resolve will tend to track the reality of that state's expectation costs, or lack thereof, as assumed in the formal model in ch. 3.

It should be well noted, though, that the empirics of this work have all been "observational," in the sense that that word is often used in social science – i.e., non-experimental. The theory is certainly amenable to empirical experimentation, and there is only so much that can be proven without them, but the great advantage here is that expectation costs can be said to exist outside the lab and "in the wild," when this is, far and away, the greatest challenge generally facing theories of this kind today (e.g. Mercer 2012). Prospect theory itself has received occasional charges from skeptical political economists to the effect that it is, as Robert Jervis (1992, 188) put it, "a hothouse artifact of the laboratory." Especially when it comes to public reactions to policy choices, survey experiments are very likely to overestimate the straightforward reactions from attentive and knowledgeable publics that theorists often posit Kurizaki & Whang (2015, 957-8). They are, essentially, easy cases for such theories.

With that said, expectation costs could always simply fail to materialize in the lab, and if so, the theory would dutifully fail in turn. There are many ways in which it could fail, however, in as well as outside the lab, which, I would argue, is another upside to the theory. Perhaps prospect theory itself fails in this context of reactions to international bargaining rhetoric and policies, in which case, the interesting and even necessary question becomes: what is it about this context, and possibly others like it, that in some way vitiates or precludes the dynamics identified by prospect theory? I close with a discussion of further

research such as this, but, if nothing else, the empirical strategy employed in this work should not be taken as a rejection of experimental methods.

9.2 A Reconception of Audiences' Roles in Bargaining

Expectation costs are, of course, just one of many factors in international bargaining, or of any other political process. In all four case studies here, in fact, they were indecisive. Lincoln employed all available means to credibly signal that he would not abolish slavery in the South, by force or otherwise, and he succeeded, just as expectation cost theory (among others) would imply; the question simply proved beside the point, and both states were exogenously resolved to war over other issues, namely slavery expansion and the right to publicly criticize the institution. Wilson's dovish intentions *were* disbelieved by Germany despite his observable exposure to expectation costs, but Germany was uniquely uninterested in carrying out any serious appraisal of U.S. intentions – they apparently took for granted eventual U.S. involvement against them from the very beginning and without any reason.

There is little to no evidence of how the communist world did or did not appraise U.S. intentions under Eisenhower and Johnson, respectively, but there is very little reason to believe that either of those leaders were expected to act other than they had said they would, despite the fact that neither leader really exposed themselves to expectation costs. They apparently did not need expectation costs to credibly establish their policy intentions; counterfactually, though, if they had (with engaged publics) chosen to raise public expectations that they would violently overthrow Soviet rule in eastern Europe or avoid war in Vietnam even if it meant abandoning the south, then these rival states would have presumably, or that reason, adjust their estimates accordingly.

This is a familiar story insofar as it indicates that accountable leaders usually mean what they say, because it is costly for them not to. It may not be *directly* costly for them to act contrary to their rhetoric, but it is overall costly for them to *say* they will act a certain way if and when they won't. This already, though, is a distinguishing quality of expectation cost theory: all other forms of inconsistency-related costs are supposed to arise when the

inconsistent action is taken, because that action is inconsistent. Expectation costs may, for a couple of reasons, usually take that same form in practice, wherein the unexpected action is generally unpopular and provokes a substantial crash from a level of popularity that was kept high in the first place by the expectations of popular policies. Such was indeed the case with both Lincoln and Wilson. The distinction, however, remains theoretically significant: other theories applied to a case in which the initially promised policy was unpopular and the novel one is popular could lead one to very confidently conclude that no inconsistency costs were paid when, in fact, there may have been massive expectation costs (Snyder & Borghard 2011, exemplify the sort of research strategy that could lead to such errors).

This is very much an interdisciplinary theory, with a relatively large number of scope conditions and qualifications stemming from concepts that are unfamiliar to political scientists (and others that are unfamiliar to psychologists and economists). At the same time, the theory follows an intuitive and even very familiar logic. Jervis (1970, 75-6) and Levy (2012, 387, fn. 16) perhaps put it best, even if they both described only the "getting hopes up" component and neglected what might be called the "burning bridges" component. To be sure, one can simply operate on the heuristic that you can't "play with peoples emotions" – whether you get people's hopes up and then disappoint them, or alienate them and then try and win them back over, you can't expect them to like you as much afterward. They may not even think of you as inconsistent, or even consciously care, but they'll have a bad taste in their mouth all the same, associated psychologically with you in particular. Vernacular such as this itself reflects a broad and intuitive understanding of expectation costs and their significance. Those who observe you changing your positions or contradicting yourself, and take note of it, might wonder why you're doing that, and they may judge you for it, but that's a separate dynamic, with costs a different kind, and often a different, usually lesser magnitude.

These psychological dynamics would naturally operate in the heads of the sociopolitical elite as well as those of the mass public. This is actually somewhat crucial for the empirical viability for the theory, since autocratic audience costs certainly exist (Weeks 2008). While "accountability" is usually thought of or spoken of as a matter of how many people in the country are included in the set of people with some form of influence over the leader

– what Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) dub the "selectorate" – the much more relevant quantity in terms of international bargaining and expectation cost theory is the degree to which the leader is accountable to any group at all. Indeed Weeks (2012) has constructed a "personalism index" that thoroughly quantifies accountability of this kind, and has shown that it has independent predictive value regarding security policy and bargaining outcomes.

The empirical tests and investigations performed here have concerned only the U.S. and focused on its mass public, but this was purely a matter of convenience and data availability. Conversely, the best research that could be done to relate the expectation cost concept to non-democracies, and test its implications on the available universe of global conflict data, has already been done, and has merely been reviewed and referenced here, especially in ch. 2. Hopefully this broad relevance of the theory, and its broad testability given the necessary data, are clear enough despite the very narrow empirical focus of this original research.

The formal model in ch. 3, also, presents several other important implications that deserve to be highlighted here. Greater accountability unconditionally increases threat credibility as it does in apparently every audience/inconsistency cost model, but the effect is generally nonlinear, and in a way that depends on the distribution or balance of relatively hawkish and dovish preferences across the domestic audience to which the leader is accountable. Under most distributions, there are diminishing returns: a given increase in accountability will increase threat credibility far less for a leader that is already highly accountable, and vice versa. This is especially true for states with a more hawkish audience. If, however, the audience is very strongly dovish, then the nonlinearity is of the opposite type, with threat credibility increasing at an increasing rate for already accountable regimes.

This itself has some interesting policy implications, if democratization (which would include here the "depersonalization" of an autocratic regime) is intended to give the country bargaining advantages and/or generally stabilize its international rivalries. The more significant implication, however, relates to the possibility of a novel explanation for the democratic peace. Such an explanation requires an unmodeled tendency for audiences in institutionalized democracies to be strongly and reliably dovish toward other countries that are themselves institutionalized democracies, but, as reviewed in ch. 3, that is indeed a robust empirical finding from other research that has been touted as a sufficient explanation

for the democratic peace in its own right. Expectation cost theory thus augments these findings with rationalist a bargaining logic (with rational leaders, that is) that ties those dovish tendencies clearly and directly to more efficient conflict resolution and, even more starkly, to the absence of crisis bargaining in the first place. All of this follows logically from the posited existence of expectation costs, which itself emerges deductively from the relatively simple assumption at audience members react to their leader's policy shifts according to the well-established patterns of prospect theory.

9.3 Theoretical Limitations and Unsettled Questions

There are, it would seem, no real "trouble spots" for the theory, of a kind where satisfactory explanations are generated for some known phenomena but at the expense of problematizing other phenomena that are otherwise explainable (For a discussion of such theoretical issues with regards to the behavior of democracies, see Bueno de Mesquita & Smith 2012). Points of remaining discontent or unease may be put into two categories: first, questions of conceptual complexity and clarity; and second, clearly defined but as-yet-unanswered questions about the psychological mechanisms and dynamics in question.

Prospect theory is at its clearest, and most robust, in monetary contexts, where the gains and losses have an inherent and easily measurable objective value. The mismatches between the objective and subjective valuations, then, can be deduced with almost as much confidence as the objective values themselves, given enough data on the choices people make under various circumstances. To be sure, prospect theory has proven at least as useful in understanding social and political processes that are inherently difficult, if not impossible, to put objective numbers on – risk attitudes and preference rankings can still be observed from vote choices, after all – but our confidence in those findings are inevitably a little weaker, as is our confidence that we are correctly operationalizing prospect theory concepts of reference points, loss aversion, risk acceptance, etc. This theory is, if anything, a step even further in this direction, exporting these concepts from behavioral economics into the even messier realms of politics and social conflict.

Chs. 3 and, especially 4, have hopefully made it clear, if nothing else, how I have exported

these concepts, so that errors can be clearly spotted, diagnosed, and corrected in future work. I hope I have also made it clear, though, what data I would have *liked* to have had, and how I have often made the best of what is available. Choices made out of necessity, in other words, have hopefully been identified as such, and the unavoidable slippages between conceptualization and measurement will not be mistaken for misconceptualizations.

It should also be clear, however, that, in some ways, these slippages are really assets, given the findings. An easier test, for example, would have made use of answers to questions asking voters specifically what they expected the president to do; that would have avoided the additional assumption that I was forced to make here, that voters expect the president not to shift their issue position(s). This assumption, though, is also theoretically useful if it proves sound, and since the results were generally positive for prospect theory while also relying on that assumption, the findings are all the more compelling and significant.

The theoretical model, also, is certainly vulnerable to a battery of critiques about its specification, (over)simplifications, and what might even be considered its missing components. Smith (1998) and Schultz (2005), for example, both have electoral/leadership-selection processes made explicit in their model, whereas the expectation cost model constructed here simply includes as part of the leader's utility the sum total of the audience's subjective utility. The model could certainly be expanded, and it is certainly possible that those expansions would significantly change the implications.

At the same time, the model may already be accused of a complexity that could perhaps cast doubt on its findings. As mentioned earlier, the intersection of formal theorists in both prospect theory and political science is certainly small, and so the current form of the model already raises concerns about its accessibility. Just as the political dynamics could be fleshed out more, so could the psychological dynamics – with reference distributions rather than points and consumption utilities accompanying prospect-theoretic utilities, to name two examples. Enhanced complexity and realism in the political dynamics should, by rights, be accompanied by symmetrical complexity and realism in the psychological dynamics, and vice versa. The model presented here is meant to strike a balance between the two, while minimizing overall complexity, and hopefully not outright misrepresenting the basic dynamics of either prospect theory or international bargaining. It is also unarguably unique

in the scholarly literature – perhaps the first formal model in political science to include the aggregated reactions of an arbitrarily large number of actors, mechanical or otherwise, who are subject to prospect theory – and so it should be taken for the first foray that it is.

The second class of outstanding questions pertains directly to room for subsequent research, in psychology as well as political science. This project can largely be considered an attempt to enhance our understanding of outstanding questions about political processes based on the more robust answers that psychology has to offer about the relevant psychological processes, and such an attempt naturally comes to highlight what knowledge about psychological processes we political scientists still currently lack and could make especially good use of. The most pressing questions of this kind, along with new questions raised about purely political properties, are as follows

9.3.1 What Establishes What Expectations?

The assumption heavily relied on here, that leaders and candidates for leadership are generally able to set and manipulate domestic audiences' political expectations via their "cheap talk," should not be interpreted in an extreme manner that would insist on expectations as a monocausal function of leaders' mere rhetoric. Even at its most robust and successful, expectation cost theory would only establish that accountable leaders have enough influence over the expectations of their opinionated audience members for them to be able to expose themselves to expectation costs of a relatively large and politically consequential magnitude.

In each of the four cases studied here, this notion was well supported – in each case, the public as a whole seemed to expect that the leader would enact the particular policies they said they would, and in each case, leaders exhibited a distinct awareness that their rhetoric would in fact straightforwardly create those expectations – but there are perhaps even more interesting questions to be asked regarding outside factors that could derail the leader's attempts to shape expectations about their subsequent reign. Those outside factors include, namely, the strategic behavior of other actors, who may have powerful incentives to put promises in the candidate's mouth. William Jennings Bryan and other democratic party elites definitely sought to do this with Wilson, and while I argue that Wilson likely

could have thwarted their efforts if he had acted quickly and decisively enough against them either in public or behind closed doors, we cannot be sure.

This is hardly the first study to impute political significance to people's expectations, and the expectations of mass publics have, if anything been the particular focus of other research (e.g. Niven 2000; Waterman, Silva & Jenkins-Smith 2014). As those researchers have lamented, however, the political expectations of voters and other political actors have gone virtually unmeasured; thus, we are still far away from proper investigations into the general determinants of political expectations, and even farther away from being able to tell which of two conflicting determinants would win.

9.3.2 How Slow Do Bridges Burn?

As previously mentioned, there are those who insist that one "never really gets over losses," and, at present, there is no research to prove them either right or wrong. Ironically, the research conducted here may itself be the extent of our empirical research on downward renormalization: the robustness of both the qualitative and quantitative findings regarding the relatively weak positive reactions of those with low expectations at least suggests that at least some renormalization did occur here, and does generally occur during the relatively lengthy periods of policy reversals we've observed. To be sure, I do not in any way observe here people having high reference points, experiencing a loss, and then experiencing some subsequent payment that they then react to in a way that suggests that their reference point had lowered. On the other hand, if reference points only ever *ratchet* upward, and they do in fact raise so quickly and easily, why, then, isn't it much, much rarer to see people reacting weakly to policies that pleasantly surprise them, relative to the reactions of those who despise that same policy and expected something much more preferable?

As with leaders' control over expectations, however, this theory should not be mistaken as relying on a downward renormalization that is anywhere near as quick or easy as upward renormalization. For one thing, even if downward renormalization is very slow, expectation costs would exist just as strongly and all the same in circumstances where the expectations can in fact be given the required time to set in. The question, then, becomes just how slow this process is. It is a crucial question, as it would powerfully affect the scope conditions,

especially with regards to international bargaining. If the process is too slow, for example, then a very dovish public will do virtually nothing for a leader's efforts to establish credibility in a nuclear showdown that lasts a matter of days. Hopefully, not only will future research gauge the speed of the relevant renormalization, but it will factor it more explicitly into a version of the ch. 3 coercion model.

9.3.3 Who Takes the Blame?

As explained in ch. 2, this theory also relies, if implicitly, on the theory of "blind retrospection," as well as the on-line model of political judgment. The coexistence of the two leads us to expect that people will blame (or reward!) the leader when the country takes an unexpected turn for basically any reason at all, and that reaction will become permanently "baked in" to people's overall opinion of the leader, as if keeping a running tally. As with outstanding questions regarding the setting of expectations and reference points, the positive findings of this research can be read as supporting these assumptions, but only to some partial degree.

Two questions remain unanswered. First, is it possible for a leader to significantly evade expectation costs under circumstances not researched or considered here, or perhaps using methods that none of the leaders researched here were able to devise? A leader most certainly has a more genuine claim to innocence when they desperately try to meet high expectations but are blocked by more powerful actors, foreign and/or domestic. Perhaps leaders are unable to fully evade expectation no matter the circumstances, but that doesn't mean that publics are entirely oblivious to those circumstances and never extend any degree of forgiveness or exhibit any such understanding. The research performed here simply cannot weigh in on that question.

Second, blind retrospection may mean that events generally factor into appraisals of the leader, but that doesn't preclude audiences from *also* adjusting their appraisals of other politicians, entities, organizations, etc. Indeed, the decline of trust in government under the Johnson administration, and of the democratic party after Wilson, seems to have been due to those entities being caught in the crossfire between the president and their disappointed public. Conversely – and perhaps especially – leaders may find themselves held accountable,

however senselessly, for unmet expectations that had nothing to do with them at all. This may even conceivably factor into international negotiations, as leaders may find themselves forced to pursue favorable outcomes on behalf of the country, their party, etc., as if those outcomes were associated with them and their known policy positions.

9.3.4 How Deep is the Average Leader's Understanding?

I suggested above that there is an array of vernacular language – getting one's hopes up, letting people down, lowering expectations, burning bridges, etc. – that arguably represents a widespread intuitive understanding of prospect theory as applied to expectations and social relations. To be sure, though, it is, at best, a folk theorem, that these nuanced psychological dynamics are so well accounted for in leaders' minds that they engage in international bargaining as the theoretical model predicts. Even if each leader is fully cognizant of their own expectation costs, they must also be fully cognizant of the other leader's expectation costs, *and* they must be fully confident in the *other* leader's ability to observe and trust in *their* understanding of these costs! Such extended logic, which certainly grows more suspect the more rigorously it is described, is rightly critiqued by Mercer (2012).

My reading of the evidence parallels Mercer's with regards to audience costs, especially because, as I understand it, the logic of audience costs includes more steps than that of expectation costs. This is an upside to the fact that the audience members in expectation cost theory are mechanical and, by at least one definition, irrational. Overall, I read the evidence as ultimately supportive of the contention that leaders do indeed at least approximate this rationalist bargaining process, under the specter of expectation costs specifically. Perhaps the process is usually as simple as Jervis described it, where a leader gets their people's hopes up so they can then literally point to them and credibly claim to fear for their position while negotiating with a rival leader.

The case selection strategy employed here was, again, designed to study bargaining failures to establish the existence of expectation costs as such, so it should not be surprising that such negotiations did not apparently occur in these cases. Ultimately, as Schultz (2012) implied, the question becomes: what is the best explanation available for the empirical patterns that we reliably observe (I understand this best-explanation imperative to closely

follow the famous line of argument in Lakatos 1970)? On this basis if none other, I argue that leaders' rational bargaining under the recognized threat of expectation costs drives the major patterns of crisis bargaining outcomes that the discipline has generally struggled to explain thus far.

This, though, is not meant to be a fully satisfying answer. Even if the theory is completely sound in this sense, it is an important, if not simply interesting, question to ask just what is the nature of leaders' mutual understandings of expectation costs. How intuitive is that understanding, and what are the general consequences of leaders relying on such intuitions rather than the explicit deductive logic of a rational-choice model? Do the leaders of certain types of countries tend to understand these processes more deeply, or with certain biases that other leaders do not? If so, are *those* perturbations of the bargaining process accounted for by other leaders?

Many, if not most, of these questions are naturally abstracted away from in modern social science theory. On the other hand, one does not really know which of these questions should and should not be abstracted away from until they have attempted to answer them.

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Appendix A

Appendix

A.1 Derivation of Expectation Costs

Proposition 1: Given any constants p_1 and p_2, and given that

$$v(x, p_1, p_2) = \begin{cases} (|p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| \geq |p_2 - x| \\ -\lambda(|p_2 - x| - |p_1 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| < |p_2 - x| \end{cases} \tag{A.1}$$

it is true that

$$v(x, p_1, p_2) + v(x, p_2, p_1) = (1 - \lambda)(||p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x||)^\alpha \tag{A.2}$$

where $v(x, p_2, p_1)$ denotes $v(x, p_1, p_2)$ with the values for p_1 and p_2 switched.

Proof. The value function for shift 2, given that that shift's p_1 is shift 1's p_2 and vice versa, is:

$$v(x, p_2, p_1) = \begin{cases} (|p_2 - x| - |p_1 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_2 - x| \geq |p_1 - x| \\ -\lambda(|p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_2 - x| < |p_1 - x| \end{cases} \tag{A.3}$$

Some basic rearrangements make it easier to see this function's relationship to the standard PT value function in eq. A.1. We can reverse the directions of both scope-condition inequalities, swap the order of the two cases as written, and change which of the conditions

covers $|p_2 - x| = |p_1 - x|$ (since $y = 0$ in either case) to arrive at:

$$v(x, p_2, p_1) = \begin{cases} -\lambda(|p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| \geq |p_2 - x| \\ (|p_2 - x| - |p_1 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| < |p_2 - x| \end{cases} \tag{A.4}$$

This shows how the scope conditions are identical to those in eq. A.1. We can then express both cases of this second-shift value function in terms of the standard function used for the first shift:

$$v(x, p_2, p_1) = \begin{cases} -\lambda v(x, p_1, p_2), & \text{if } |p_1 - x| \geq |p_2 - x| \\ -\frac{1}{\lambda} v(x, p_1, p_2), & \text{if } |p_1 - x| < |p_2 - x| \end{cases} \tag{A.5}$$

The sum of these two shifts, given fixed values for p_1 and p_2 as proposed, can then be expressed purely in terms of the standard PT value function, and then simplified:

$$v(x,p_1, p_2) + v(x, p_2, p_1) \tag{A.6}$$

$$= \begin{cases} v(x, p_1, p_2) - \lambda v(x, p_1, p_2), & \text{if } |p_1 - x| \geq |p_2 - x| \\ v(x, p_1, p_2) - \frac{1}{\lambda} v(x, p_1, p_2), & \text{if } |p_1 - x| < |p_2 - x| \end{cases} \tag{A.7}$$

$$= \begin{cases} (1 - \lambda) v(x, p_1, p_2), & \text{if } |p_1 - x| \geq |p_2 - x| \\ (1 - \frac{1}{\lambda}) v(x, p_1, p_2), & \text{if } |p_1 - x| < |p_2 - x| \end{cases} \tag{A.8}$$

$$= \begin{cases} (1 - \lambda)(|p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| \geq |p_2 - x| \\ (1 - \frac{1}{\lambda})(-\lambda)(|p_2 - x| - |p_1 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| < |p_2 - x| \end{cases} \tag{A.9}$$

$$= \begin{cases} (1 - \lambda)(|p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| \geq |p_2 - x| \\ (1 - \lambda)(|p_2 - x| - |p_1 - x|)^\alpha, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| < |p_2 - x| \end{cases} \tag{A.10}$$

Due to the scope conditions, the base of α is nonnegative in either case; it is therefore

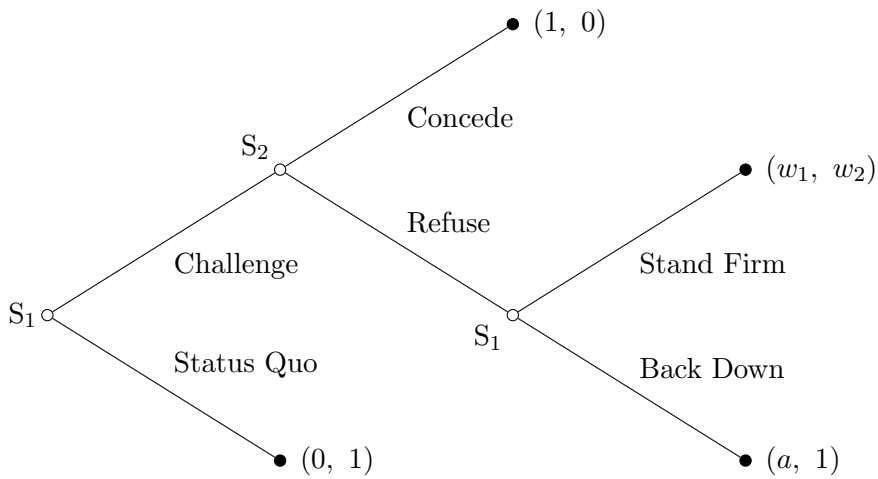

Figure A.1: The Basic Ultimatum Game

equivalent to its own absolute value, and we can substitute:

$$v(x,p_1,p_2) + v(x,p_2,p_1) \tag{A.11}$$

$$= \begin{cases} (1-\lambda)(||p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x||)^{\alpha}, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| \geq |p_2 - x| \\ (1-\lambda)(||p_2 - x| - |p_1 - x||)^{\alpha}, & \text{if } |p_1 - x| < |p_2 - x| \end{cases} \tag{A.12}$$

All terms within the bounds of an absolute value can be multiplied by -1 without changing the value; thus, the bases of α in each case are alternative and equivalent expressions of each other, which makes both cases entirely equivalent, and we can simplify to:

$$v(x,p_1,p_2) + v(x,p_2,p_1) = (1-\lambda)(||p_1 - x| - |p_2 - x||)^{\alpha} \tag{A.13}$$

Q.E.D.

A.2 Equilibrium Proofs

A.2.1 Basic Ultimatum Game

Proposition 2: *The following strategies and beliefs constitute the perfect Bayesian equilibrium to the basic ultimatum game.*

(P2.1) S_1 plays:

$$\begin{aligned} CH, SF &\quad \text{if } w_1 \geq \max\{a, t\}, \\ SQ, SF &\quad \text{if } t > w_1 \geq a, \\ CH, BD &\quad \text{if } a \geq w_1 > b, \text{ and} \\ SQ, BD &\quad \text{otherwise,} \end{aligned}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} t &= \frac{F_2(0)}{F_2(0) - 1}, \text{ and} \\ b &= F_1^{-1}\left[F_2^{-1}\left(\frac{a}{a-1}\right)[1 - F_1(a)] + F_1(a)\right] \end{aligned}$$

(P2.2) Let q denote S_2's posterior belief of the probability that $w_1 > a$;

$$\begin{aligned} q &= \min\left\{\frac{1 - F_1(a)}{1 - F_1(b)}, 1\right\} \quad \text{if } S_2 \text{ observes CH} \\ q &= \max\left\{\frac{F_1(t) - F_1(a)}{F_1(t)}, 0\right\} \quad \text{if } F_1(t) \neq 0 \text{ and } S_2 \text{ observes SQ, and} \\ q &= 0 \quad \text{otherwise.} \end{aligned}$$

(P2.3) S_2 plays:

$$\begin{aligned} RF &\quad \text{if } w_2 > \frac{q-1}{q} \text{ or if } q = 0, \text{ and} \\ CD &\quad \text{otherwise.} \end{aligned}$$

Proof. S_1 prefers SF to BD when:

$$EU_{S_1}(SF) > EU_{S_1}(BD) \Rightarrow w_1 > a \tag{A.14}$$

This corresponds to when S_1 plays SF here, both on and off the equilibrium path.

q follows Bayes' rule, given S_1's strategy and the possible range of game states. The major relevant distinction between game states is that $t > a$ and $a > b$ cannot hold simultaneously,

and it is therefore not possible in any given game state for S_1 to play both CH, BD and SQ, SF with positive probability. First consider $t > a$, remembering that $a \leq 0$ and also that $f_i(\cdot)$ is defined such that $F_i(0) < 1$:

$$\frac{F_2(0)}{F_2(0) - 1} > a \tag{A.15}$$

$$F_2(0) < \frac{a}{a - 1} \tag{A.16}$$

Next consider $a > b$, remembering that $F_i(\cdot)$ as a cumulative density function is non-decreasing and so the direction of inequality is never reversed here:

$$a > F_1^{-1}\left[F_2^{-1}\left(\frac{a}{a-1}\right)[1 - F_1(a)] + F_1(a)\right] \tag{A.17}$$

$$F_2(0) > \frac{a}{a - 1} \tag{A.18}$$

which precludes eq. A.16.

Lemma 1: *Within the equilibrium defined in Proposition 1, any given game state falls, observably and* a priori, *into one and only one of two categories: bluffing games, in which S_1 never plays SQ, SF, and no-bluffing games, in which S_1 never plays CH, BD.*

In the bluffing state, S_2 knows that $a > \max\{t, b\}$ and so all S_1s for whom $w_1 > a$ play CH, SF, but these S_1s are only a subset of those who play CH, for whom $w_1 > b$. Bayes' rule then dictates following CH that:

$$q = \frac{1 - F_1(a)}{1 - F_1(b)} \tag{A.19}$$

When the game is in the no-bluffing state and those who play CH are instead a subset of those who play SF, then eq. A.19 is an incorrect formulation of Bayes' rule and returns a value greater than 1; the proper application amounts to $\frac{1-F_1(t)}{1-F_1(t)}$ and simplifies to 1, so the minimum (min) operator in S_2's belief following CH parsimoniously adjusts the strategy accordingly.

The definition of q following SQ follows the same logic, instead utilizing a maximum

(max) operator as appropriate. q in the no-bluff state is the proportion of SQ-playing S_1s who would play SF off the equilibrium path:

$$q = \frac{F_1(t) - F_1(a)}{F_1(t)} \tag{A.20}$$

which evaluates to a negative in the bluffing state when all who play SF also play CH, and it is then set at zero in an implicit reformulation of Bayes' rule.

$F_1(b) = 1$ simplifies to $0 = -1$ and is thus impossible; $F_1(t) = 0$ is possible, however, namely if S_2's war costs are expected to be very high relative to S_1's. In this case, $q = 0$ following SQ because we are either in the bluffing state of the game and $q = 0$ is correct, or we aren't, all S_1s should play CH, and we are off the equilibrium path such that no belief is irrational to have.

S_2's strategy follows from her condition for preferring RF to CD in expectation given q:

$$q(w_2) + (1 - q)(1) > 0 \tag{A.21}$$

$$w_2 > \frac{q - 1}{q} \tag{A.22}$$

This condition also holds when $q = 0$ (because $1 > 0$), hence the defined special case.

Since q from eq. A.19 can be substituted into eq. A.22, S_2 plays RF after CH in the bluffing game state when:

$$w_2 > \frac{F_1(b) - F_1(a)}{1 - F_1(a)} \tag{A.23}$$

and in the no-bluff game state, where $q = 1$, when:

$$w_2 > 0 \tag{A.24}$$

Whether S_1 prefers CH to SQ in expectation depends on which outcome she will choose if S_2 plays RF. Define s as the probability of S_2 playing RF following CH. A resolved S_1

$(w_1 > a)$ prefers CH when:

$$sw_1 + (1-s)(1) > 0 \tag{A.25}$$

$$w_1 > \frac{s-1}{s} \tag{A.26}$$

In the no-bluffing game state, s is defined by the condition in eq. A.24 and so eq. A.26 simplifies to:

$$w_1 > \frac{[1-F_2(0)]-1}{1-F_2(0)} = \frac{F_2(0)}{F_2(0)-1} \tag{A.27}$$

which defines t and establishes the dual requirement for CH, SF that $w_1 > \max\{a, t\}$. In the bluffing state as per Lemma 1, it is the case that $a > t$, eq. A.27 holds whenever $EU_{\mathrm{S}_1}(SF) > EU_{\mathrm{S}_1}(BD)$, and it is not then rational for any S_1 to play CH, BD.

All unresolved S_1s $(w_1 \leq a)$ are indifferent between CH and SQ when:

$$sa + (1-s)(1) = 0 \tag{A.28}$$

$$s = \frac{1}{1-a} \tag{A.29}$$

As implied by Lemma 1, this s is irrational for S_2 in the no-bluffing game state, which defines that state and the absence of unresolved S_1s that play CH as per S_1's strategy. Specifically, S_2 never rationally plays CD when $w_2 > 0$, so $1 - F_2(0)$ sets a lower bound for s in equilibrium and eq. A.29 cannot hold when:

$$1 - F_2(0) > \frac{1}{1-a} \Rightarrow F_2(0) < \frac{a}{a-1} \tag{A.30}$$

Inequality A.29 must hold in the bluffing game state, so S_1 must bluff at such a rate as to make it hold given S_2's rational beliefs and strategy (eq. A.23):

$$\frac{1}{1-a} = 1 - F_2\left(\frac{F_1(b) - F_1(a)}{1 - F_1(a)}\right) \tag{A.31}$$

$$b = F_1^{-1}\left[F_2^{-1}\left(\frac{a}{a-1}\right)[1 - F_1(a)] + F_1(a)\right] \tag{A.32}$$

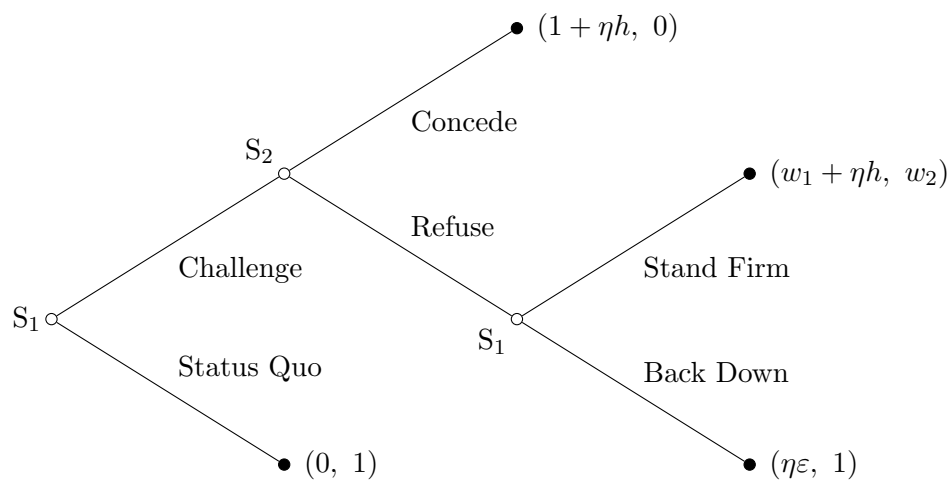

Figure A.2: The Ultimatum Game with Expectation Costs

Thus b is so defined.

It is possible for eq. A.32 to require $F_1(b) < 0$. While $F_i^{-1}(\cdot)$ is defined to then ensure that $F_1(b) = 0$, it results in such cases of the proposed equilibrium that eq. A.32 does not hold; the ratio of bluffs to genuine threats is smaller than it would be if either or both states' possible war costs were larger, and so S_2 plays RF with less probability than he otherwise would. Unresolved S_1s in such cases strictly prefer to bluff and resolved S_1s prefer CH to SQ by a larger margin, but neither of these properties violate equilibrium criteria as both players are still simultaneously playing their best replies. Q.E.D.

A.3 Ultimatum Game with Expectation Costs

Proposition 3: *The following strategies and beliefs constitute the perfect Bayesian equilibrium to the ultimatum game with expectation costs.*

(P3.1) S_1 plays:

$$\begin{aligned} CH, SF &\quad \text{if } w_1 \geq \max\{\eta d, t\}, \\ SQ, SF &\quad \text{if } t > w_1 \geq \eta d, \\ CH, BD &\quad \text{if } \eta d \geq w_1 > b, \text{ and} \\ SQ, BD &\quad \text{otherwise,} \end{aligned}$$

where

$$t = \frac{F_2(0) + \eta h}{F_2(0) - 1}, \text{ and}$$
$$b = F_1^{-1}\left[F_2^{-1}\left(\frac{\eta\varepsilon}{\eta d - 1}\right)[1 - F_1(\eta d)] + F_1(\eta d)\right]$$

(P3.2) Let q denote S_2's posterior belief of the probability that $w_1 > \eta d$;

$$q = \min\left\{\frac{1 - F_1(\eta d)}{1 - F_1(b)}, 1\right\}, \quad \text{if } F_1(b) \neq 1 \text{ and } S_2 \text{ observes CH,}$$
$$q = 1, \quad \text{if } F_1(b) = 1 \text{ and } S_2 \text{ observes CH,}$$
$$q = \max\left\{\frac{F_1(t) - F_1(\eta d)}{F_1(t)}, 0\right\}, \quad \text{if } F_1(t) \neq 0 \text{ and } S_2 \text{ observes SQ, and}$$
$$q = 0, \quad \text{otherwise.}$$

(P3.3) S_2 plays:

$$RF, \quad \text{if } w_2 > \frac{q-1}{q} \text{ or if } q = 0, \text{ and}$$
$$CD \quad \text{otherwise.}$$

Proof. Remembering that $\varepsilon = h + d$, S_1 prefers SF to BD when:

$$EU_{S_1}(SF) > EU_{S_1}(BD) \Rightarrow w_1 + \eta h > \eta\varepsilon \Rightarrow w_1 > \eta d \tag{A.33}$$

This corresponds to when S_1 plays SF here, both on and off the equilibrium path.

q follows Bayes' rule, given S_1's strategy and the possible range of game states. As in the basic ultimatum game, there are bluffing and non-bluffing game states: $t > \eta d$ and $\eta d > b$ cannot hold simultaneously and so CH, BD and SQ, SF cannot both be played with positive probability. If $t > \eta d$:

$$\frac{F_2(0) + \eta h}{F_2(0) - 1} > \eta d \tag{A.34}$$
$$F_2(0) < \frac{\eta\varepsilon}{\eta d - 1} \tag{A.35}$$

and if $\eta d > b$:

$$\eta d > F_1^{-1}\left[F_2^{-1}\left(\frac{\eta\varepsilon}{\eta d - 1}\right)[1 - F_1(\eta d)] + F_1(\eta d)\right] \tag{A.36}$$

$$F_2(0) > \frac{\eta\varepsilon}{\eta d - 1} \tag{A.37}$$

which precludes eq. A.35.

Lemma 2: *Within the equilibrium defined in Proposition 3, any given game state falls, observably and* a priori, *into one and only one of two categories: bluffing games, in which S_1 never plays SQ, SF, and no-bluffing games, in which S_1 never plays CH, BD.*

As in the basic ultimatum game, it may be the case that $F_1(t) = 0$, and that $q = 0$ following SQ, for the same reason; the addition of ηh in t alters the probability that $F_1(t) = 0$ but does not change the fact that $q = 0$ is correct in such a case, given Lemma 2. In this game, however, it is also possible that $F_1(b) = 1$, in which case $q = 1$ following CH for analogous reasons: either we are in the no-bluffing equilibrium, $F_1(b)$ is not part of Bayes' rule properly applied, and the proper application always returns 1, or no S_1s can rationally play CH (because $\eta h < -1$), we are off the equilibrium path, and no belief is irrational for S_2. S_2's belief and subsequent move in this case do not (and cannot) incentivize S_1 to change their strategy of playing SQ rather than CH when $\eta h < -1$.

S_2's strategy follows as in the basic game from his condition for preferring RF to CD in expectation given q:

$$q(w_2) + (1 - q)(1) > 0 \tag{A.38}$$

$$w_2 > \frac{q - 1}{q} \tag{A.39}$$

and this condition also holds when $q = 0$, hence the defined special case.

Given this as well as the value of q following CH, S_2 plays RF after CH in the bluffing game state when:

$$w_2 > \frac{F_1(b) - F_1(\eta d)}{1 - F_1(\eta d)} \tag{A.40}$$

and in the no-bluff game state, where $q = 1$, when:

$$w_2 > 0 \tag{A.41}$$

Define s as the probability of S_2 playing RF following CH. A resolved S_1 ($w_1 > \eta d$) prefers CH when:

$$s(w_1 + \eta h) + (1 - s)(1 + \eta h) > 0 \tag{A.42}$$

$$w_1 > \frac{s - \eta h - 1}{s} \tag{A.43}$$

In the no-bluffing game state, s is defined by the condition in inequality A.41 and so inequality A.43 simplifies to:

$$w_1 > \frac{[1 - F_2(0)] - \eta h - 1}{1 - F_2(0)} = \frac{F_2(0) + \eta h}{F_2(0) - 1} \tag{A.44}$$

which defines t here.

All unresolved S_1s ($w_1 \leq \eta d$) are indifferent between CH and SQ when:

$$s\varepsilon + (1 - s)(1 + \eta h) = 0 \tag{A.45}$$

$$s = \frac{1 + \eta h}{1 - \eta d} \tag{A.46}$$

As in the basic game, this cannot hold in the no-bluffing game state because this s would be irrational for S_2:

$$1 - F_2(0) > \frac{1 + \eta h}{1 - \eta d} \Rightarrow F_2(0) < \frac{\varepsilon}{\eta d - 1} \tag{A.47}$$

Eqs. A.46 and A.40 must hold in equilibrium in the bluffing game state, i.e.:

$$\frac{1 + \eta h}{1 - \eta d} = 1 - F_2\left(\frac{F_1(b) - F_1(\eta d)}{1 - F_1(\eta d)}\right) \tag{A.48}$$

$$b = F_1^{-1}\left[F_2^{-1}\left(\frac{\eta\varepsilon}{\eta d - 1}\right)[1 - F_1(\eta d)] + F_1(\eta d)\right] \tag{A.49}$$

Thus b is so defined.

As in the basic game, it is possible for eq. A.49 to require $F_1(b) < 0$ which merely results in a higher equilibrium rate of CD. Here it is also possible for eq. A.49 to require $F_1(b) > 1$, in which case S_1 never plays CH, BD, though she may play CH, SF in the no-bluff state; S_2's best replies in either case are prescribed as shown above, as is the rationality of these choices on the part of S_1. Q.E.D.

A.4 American National Election Studies Question Wordings

A.4.1 Issue Positions

1. **Government Health Insurance**: "There is much concern about the rapid rise in medical and hospital costs. Some feel there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses. Others feel that medical expenses should be paid by individuals, and through private insurance like Blue Cross."

2. **Government Welfare**: "Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on his own."

3. **Aid to Minorities**: "Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks [and other minority groups]. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help minorities because they should help themselves."

4. **Government Services**: "Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending. Other people feel it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending."

5. **Defense Spending**: "Some people believe that we should spend much less money for defense. Others feel that defense spending should be greatly increased."

After each of these issue descriptions, the respondent was asked to imagine a 7-point scale ranging between the most conservative and most liberal positions one could take on the issue; the question provides characterization of these positions which naturally vary entirely by issue. Respondents were then asked "where would you place yourself on this issue?" and "where would you place [president/winning presidential candidate] on this issue?"

A.4.2 Measures of Presidential Approval

Feeling thermometers were elicited with the following wording (ignoring some slight variations and tiny additions in certain years):

> I'd like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. I'll read the name of a person and I'd like you to rate that person using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorably and warm toward the person; ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorably toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person. If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person. Just tell me and we'll move on to the next one.

The main alternative to feeling thermometer as a measure of overall opinion of the president is the job approval question on a 4-point scale: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way that [the president] is handling his job as President? Do you (approve/disapprove) strongly or not strongly?" The rest of the DVs fall into two categories: perceptions of the president's traits, and respondent's affects toward the president.

Traits were asked about on a 4-point scale in the following way: "I am going to read a list of words and phrases people may use to describe political figures. Think about [name of president]. The first phrase is [trait]. In your opinion, does the phrase [trait] describe [name of president] extremely well, quite well, not too well or not well at all? (What about) [next trait]?" The trait words that were used in the survey panels were: knowledgeable; moral; leadership and cares.

Affects were asked about in the following yes-or-no way: "Now we would like to know something about the feelings you have toward [name of president]. Has [name of president] – because of the kind of person he is, or because of something he has done – made you feel [affect]?" Affect words used were: angry; afraid; hopeful; and proud.

A.5 R# Robustness Checks

[1] FALSE

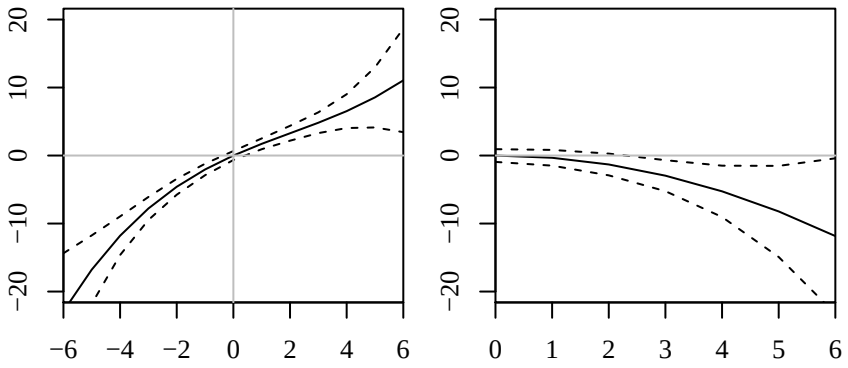

Figure A.3: Reactions to position shifts, estimated across issues (R6: using B-splines)

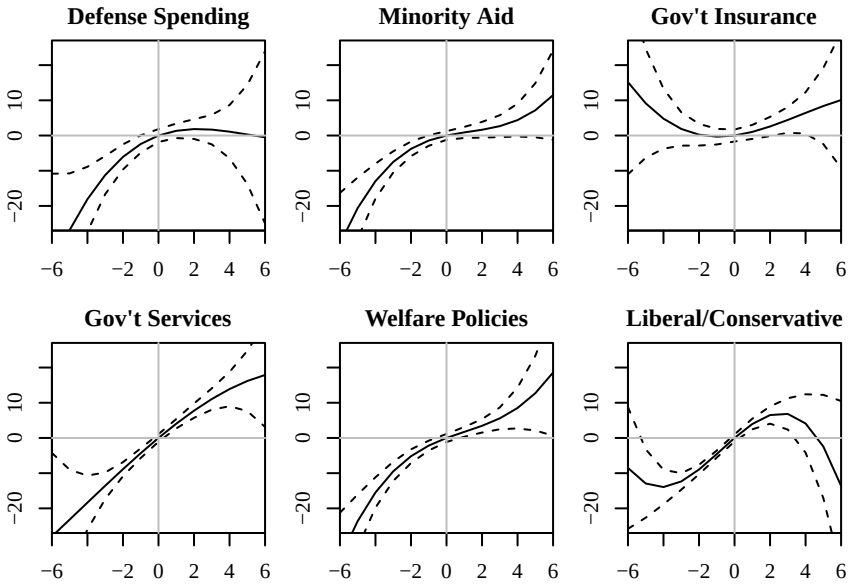

Figure A.4: FT changes (y) from changes in issue distance (x) per issue (R6: using B-splines)

Table A.1: Looking for audience costs (R2: only Rs with unstable positions)

	Dependent variable:						
	Change in Feeling Thermometer toward President						
	Pooled	Def. Spend	Min. Aid	Gov't Ins.	Gov't Svcs.	Welfare	Lib-Con
|Pres. Pos. Ch.|	0.3	-8.0^{***}	2.0	2.0	-0.6	1.0	4.0^{*}
	(0.9)	(3.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)
Media Exp.	-1.0^{*}	-4.0^{**}	-0.4	-0.4	-2.0	-0.3	1.0
	(0.5)	(2.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)
Pres. FT at Time 1	-0.4^{***}	-0.5^{***}	-0.4^{***}	-0.3^{***}	-0.4^{***}	-0.4^{***}	-0.7^{***}
	(0.02)	(0.1)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Dist. at T1	-6.0^{***}	-6.0^{***}	-6.0^{***}	-4.0^{***}	-7.0^{***}	-6.0^{***}	-9.0^{***}
	(0.4)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(0.9)	(0.9)	(0.8)	(1.0)
Change in Dist.	-5.0^{***}	-6.0^{***}	-4.0^{***}	-3.0^{***}	-5.0^{***}	-5.0^{***}	-9.0^{***}
	(0.3)	(0.8)	(0.7)	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.8)
|Pos. Ch.| * M.E.	-0.03	2.0^{**}	-0.6	-0.3	-0.1	-0.3	-0.9
	(0.3)	(1.0)	(0.6)	(0.5)	(0.6)	(0.5)	(0.7)
Constant	39.0^{***}	47.0^{***}	39.0^{***}	33.0^{***}	40.0^{***}	37.0^{***}	54.0^{***}
	(2.0)	(8.0)	(5.0)	(5.0)	(5.0)	(5.0)	(6.0)
Observations	1,826	222	356	347	460	441	311

$^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Table A.2: Looking for audience costs (R3: only Rs with stable positions)

	Dependent variable:						
	Change in Feeling Thermometer toward President						
	Pooled	Def. Spend	Min. Aid	Gov't Ins.	Gov't Svcs.	Welfare	Lib-Con
|Pres. Pos. Ch.|	−0.2	−3.0	2.0	1.0	0.6	−0.7	−0.1
	(0.6)	(2.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)
Media Exp.	−0.4	−1.0	−0.6	−0.1	0.1	−0.9	0.1
	(0.3)	(1.0)	(0.6)	(0.7)	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.5)
Pres. FT at Time 1	−0.4***	−0.4***	−0.3***	−0.3***	−0.4***	−0.3***	−0.5***
	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Dist. at T1	−5.0***	−5.0***	−4.0***	−4.0***	−6.0***	−4.0***	−7.0***
	(0.2)	(0.7)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)
Change in Dist.	−4.0***	−5.0***	−4.0***	−3.0***	−7.0***	−4.0***	−8.0***
	(0.2)	(0.7)	(0.4)	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.4)	(0.4)
|Pos. Ch.| * M.E.	0.2	0.5	−0.1	0.2	−0.4	0.3	0.1
	(0.2)	(0.7)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)
Constant	30.0***	31.0***	31.0***	25.0***	31.0***	33.0***	37.0***
	(1.0)	(5.0)	(3.0)	(3.0)	(3.0)	(3.0)	(2.0)
Observations	4,514	619	998	663	1,254	980	1,707

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.3: Looking for audience costs (R4: OLS instead of robust regression)

	Dependent variable:						
	Change in Feeling Thermometer toward President						
	Pooled	Def. Spend	Min. Aid	Gov't Ins.	Gov't Svcs.	Welfare	Lib-Con
|Pres. Pos. Ch.|	0.1	-5.0^{***}	1.0	3.0^{**}	0.2	-0.2	0.9
	(0.5)	(2.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)
Media Exp.	-0.7^{**}	-2.0^{**}	-0.8	-0.2	-0.6	-0.7	0.3
	(0.3)	(1.0)	(0.5)	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.5)	(0.5)
Pres. FT at Time 1	-0.4^{***}	-0.5^{***}	-0.4^{***}	-0.3^{***}	-0.4^{***}	-0.4^{***}	-0.5^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Dist. at T1	-5.0^{***}	-5.0^{***}	-5.0^{***}	-4.0^{***}	-6.0^{***}	-5.0^{***}	-8.0^{***}
	(0.2)	(0.6)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)
Change in Dist.	-4.0^{***}	-5.0^{***}	-4.0^{***}	-3.0^{***}	-6.0^{***}	-5.0^{***}	-8.0^{***}
	(0.2)	(0.5)	(0.3)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.3)	(0.4)
|Pos. Ch.| * M.E.	0.1	1.0^{**}	-0.1	-0.3	-0.3	0.1	-0.02
	(0.2)	(0.6)	(0.3)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.3)	(0.3)
Constant	35.0^{***}	38.0^{***}	36.0^{***}	32.0^{***}	36.0^{***}	37.0^{***}	42.0^{***}
	(1.0)	(4.0)	(2.0)	(3.0)	(3.0)	(2.0)	(2.0)
Observations	6,340	841	1,354	1,010	1,714	1,421	2,018
Adjusted R^2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3

$^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Table A.4: Looking for audience costs (R5: using job approval rather than FT)

	Dependent variable:						
	Change in President's Job Approval						
	Pooled	Def. Spend	Min. Aid	Gov't Ins.	Gov't Svcs.	Welfare	Lib-Con
|Pres. Pos. Ch.|	0.03	0.2**	0.01	−0.1	0.1	−0.04	−0.01
	(0.03)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)
Media Exp.	0.1***	0.1**	0.04	0.02	0.1**	0.01	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Pres. FT at Time 1	−0.6***	−0.7***	−0.5***	−0.5***	−0.6***	−0.5***	−0.7***
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Dist. at T1	0.2***	0.3***	0.2***	0.2***	0.3***	0.2***	0.3***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Change in Dist.	0.2***	0.2***	0.2***	0.1***	0.3***	0.2***	0.3***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
|Pos. Ch.| * M.E.	−0.02*	−0.1**	−0.01	0.002	−0.02	0.004	−0.01
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.7***	1.0***	0.3**	0.4***	0.9***	0.4***	1.0***
	(0.1)	(0.2)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)
Observations	5,268	817	902	961	1,648	940	1,520
Adjusted R^2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

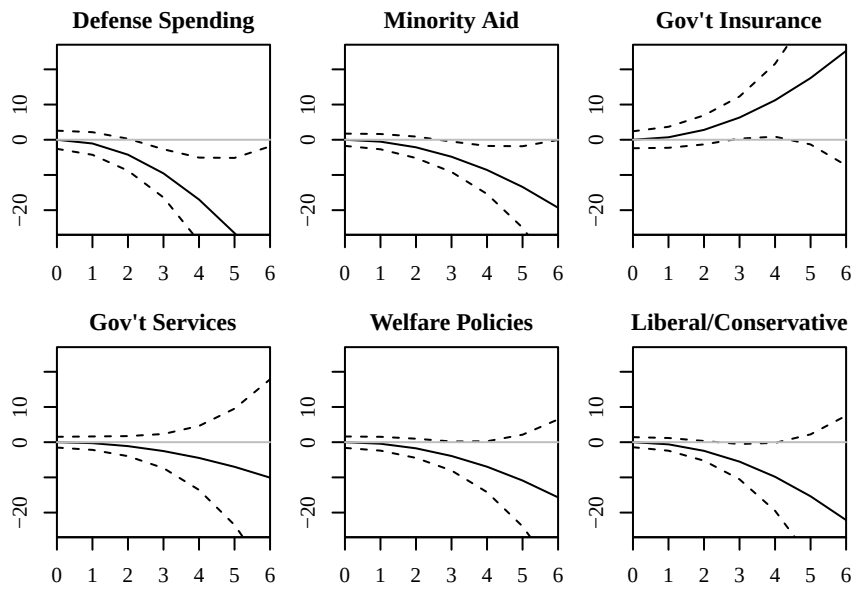

Figure A.5: Gain-loss balances per issue (R6: using B-splines)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	n
Pooled	-0.3	-1.3	-3**	-5.3**	-8.2*	-11.8*	4428
Def. Spend	-1.1	-4.2†	-9.5**	-17**	-26.5*	-38.2*	619
Min. Aid	-0.5	-2.1	-4.8*	-8.6*	-13.4*	-19.3*	1025
Gov't Ins.	0.7	2.8	6.3*	11.2*	17.5†	25.2	678
Gov't Svcs.	-0.3	-1.1	-2.5	-4.5	-7	-10.1	1640
Welfare	-0.4	-1.7	-3.9†	-7†	-10.9	-15.7	1360
Lib-Con	-0.6	-2.5†	-5.5*	-9.8*	-15.4†	-22.1	2171

Table A.5: Gain-loss balances by issue and shift size (R6: using B-splines)

	Linear AIC	Spline AIC	Spline AIC Lower?
Pooled	39284.80	39282.03	Yes
Def. Spend	5474.15	5471.97	Yes
Min. Aid	8837.51	8833.91	Yes
Gov't Ins.	5926.88	5927.40	No
Gov't Svcs.	14394.01	14396.84	No
Welfare	11820.94	11816.46	Yes
Lib-Con	19036.27	19031.26	Yes

Table A.6: Tests of expectation cost model validity using AICs (R6: using B-splines)

	Linear AIC	Spline AIC	Spline AIC Lower?
Pooled	22995.13	22996.22	No
Def. Spend	2682.35	2677.95	Yes
Min. Aid	4460.79	4459.95	Yes
Gov't Ins.	3044.60	3044.73	No
Gov't Svcs.	6587.62	6593.11	No
Welfare	5904.08	5907.76	No
Lib-Con	10932.41	10935.26	No

Table A.7: Tests of expectation cost model validity using AICs (R7: perfectly stable R positions)

Table A.8: Evidence of censoring of distance change (R8)

	Dependent variable:
	Distance Change
Time 1 Distance	-0.5^{***}
	(0.01)
Constant	0.9^{***}
	(0.02)
Observations	10,148
Adjusted R^2	0.3

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Time 1 Distance	Predicted Distance Change
0	0.92
6	-2.04

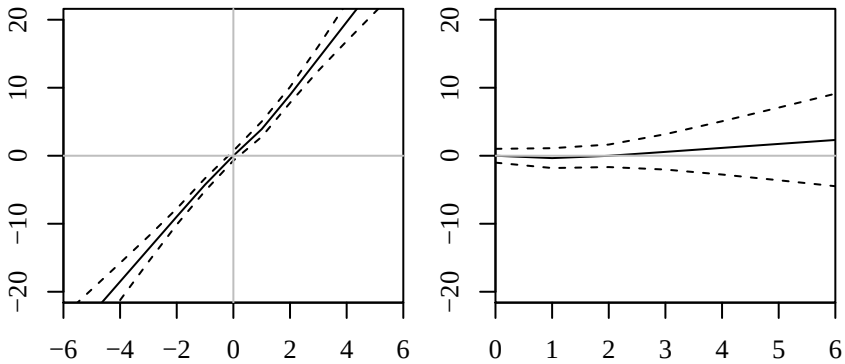

Figure A.6: Reactions to position shifts, estimated across issues (R10: No E.C. when controlling for time 1 distance)

Table A.9: Estimating censoring of FT change (R9)

	Dependent variable:
	FT Change
Time 1 FT	-0.4^{***}
	(0.01)
Constant	21.0^{***}
	(0.7)
Observations	5,405
Adjusted R^2	0.1

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.10: Estimating censoring of distance change (R9)

	Dependent variable:
	Distance Change
Time 1 FT	0.004^{***}
	(0.001)
Constant	-0.3^{***}
	(0.04)
Observations	10,120
Adjusted R^2	0.004

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

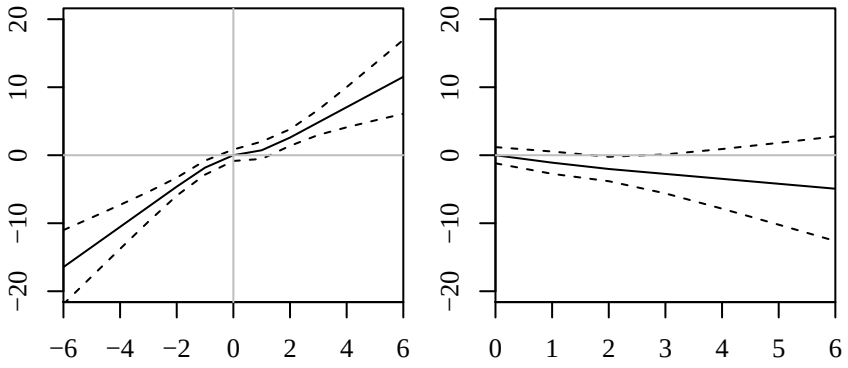

Figure A.7: Reactions to position shifts, estimated across issues (R11: with additional controls)

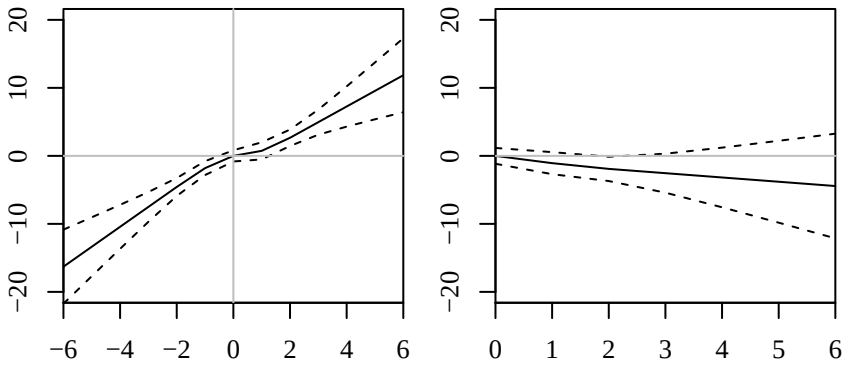

Figure A.8: Reactions to position shifts, estimated across issues (R11: model without controls but with cases dropped based on missing possible control data)