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Rallying around the Flag:

Nationalist Emotions in American Mass Politics

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

by

Yuval Feinstein

2012

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Rallying around the Flag:
Nationalist Emotions in American Mass Politics

by

Yuval Feinstein

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Andreas Wimmer, Chair

This dissertation revisits the “rally-round-the-flag” (RRTF) phenomenon in which the popularity of sitting U.S. presidents increases abruptly and sharply after major war events and during security crises. Chapter 1 opens with a review of the existing approaches to the RRTF phenomenon. Based on this review, I claim that despite four decades of scholarship, the RRTF phenomenon is still not well understood for at least four reasons. First, existing explanations are often overly rationalistic, ignoring the crucial role of emotions in the formation of political attitudes. Second, when scholars do consider the role of emotions, they tend to focus on negative ones, such as fear and anger, and overlook the role of positive emotions. Third, none of the existing approaches focuses on the nationalist framing of the situation or the nationalist emotions of pride, confidence, and hope, which are essential components of the RRTF effect. Fourth, approaches that focus solely on the role of elite rhetoric, which steers public opinion in war time, miss the fact that the RRTF effect is co-produced through an interaction between official rhetoric and the perceptions and diffused nationalist sentiment of the general population.

Chapter 1 outlines a new approach to the RRTF phenomenon based on a fundamental sociological principle of looking at individuals as members of collectivities that pursue a symbolic politics of status achievement and maintenance. A summary of the argument is as follows: I argue that the RRTF effect emerges when and if a major war or security crisis is portrayed as opportunities to reclaim or enhance the prestige of nation vis-à-vis other nations, thereby activating a widespread nationalist sentiment. Under these circumstances, individual citizens experience positive emotions associated with their membership in the nation: national pride, hope for victory, and a high level of confidence that “our” government and army will achieve victory. These emotions facilitate a positive evaluation of the use of military power against the perceived enemies of the nation, and therefore motivate individuals to support the president who ordered the use of force.

Chapter 2 seeks to uncover the conditions under which and the processes through which events turn into rally-points. I apply the qualitative comparative analysis technique to a data set that contains detailed information about all major war events and security crises in the United States from 1950 to 2006. The findings reveal that RRTF periods have emerged in the United States when the nature of the event, the presidential framing of the event, and the supporting historical circumstances have jointly led the public to perceive that the national honor of the United States was at stake. There are two general scenarios in which national honor is linked to the super-power status of the United States: In the first scenario, an event is construed as an opportunity for the United States to reclaim its national honor after its super-power status has been challenged. In the second scenario, the United States actively claims an international leadership role in a military coalition operation with the goal of restoring world order, and thus reinforces its national honor as the world leading state. In addition to describing these general

scenarios, Chapter 2 offers a detailed discussion of all major rally-points, and discusses events that, because they did not become rally-points, provide illuminating contrasts to RRTF events.

Chapters 3 and 4 test hypotheses regarding the links among individuals' nationalist identification, the emotions they experience, and their support for the president and his foreign policy during RRTF periods. Chapter 3 analyzes survey data collected during the presidency of George W. Bush. The findings show that support for President Bush during two RRTF periods—the first following the September 11 attack and the second during the 2003 invasion of Iraq—was motivated primarily by positive emotions about Bush's antiterrorism policy rather than by a sense of security threat or a rational calculation of the chances of the foreign policy succeeding. Further, the analysis reveals that the experience of positive emotions was related to increased identification with the nation.

Chapter 4 reports the results of a survey-based experiment conducted with a nationally representative sample, which tests whether causal links exist between official rhetoric, nationalist sentiment, and emotions and attitudes about the use of military power. In the experiment, nationalist sentiment was stimulated by official rhetoric announcing a plan to use military power against Iran. The results show that participants who were exposed to rhetoric that used nationalist language to justify military action reported higher levels of nationalist sentiment, pride, and confidence, and were more likely to support military action than participants who were either exposed to internationalist rhetoric or assigned to a control group. In addition, the chapter addresses gender and racial variations in support for military action. The findings suggest that the generally lower levels of support for military actions among women and black Americans can be attributed to (average) lower propensities of the members of these categories to experience nationalist sentiment.

The dissertation concludes by calling for sociologists to consider emotional dispositions as integral components of collective identities in general, and ethnic and national identities in particular. The study further proposes that a sociological perspective that situates emotional reactions in the shared meaning that individuals attach to events, and in the collective identities made salient by these events, can effectively explain the processes through which emotions that are experienced at the individual level contribute to the emergence of mass political phenomena.

The dissertation of Yuval Feinstein is approved.

Michael Mann

Robert Denis Mare

David O. Sears

Andreas Wimmer, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

For my parents, Miri and Aharon (Puni)

CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	xi
Acknowledgments.....	xii
Biographical Sketch.....	xv
Introduction: The Rally-Round-The-Flag Phenomenon Revisited.....	1
Chapter 1: Explaining the Rally-Round-the-Flag Phenomenon.....	13
Chapter 2: From Events to Rally-Points: A Comparative Historical Analysis of American Security Crises since 1950.....	44
Chapter 3: Individual Motivations.....	121
Chapter 4: Nationalist Framing, Emotions, and Support for War: Some Experimental Evidence.....	158
Conclusion: Toward a Sociological Understanding of Nationalist Emotions in Mass Politics.....	199
Appendices.....	206
References.....	234

TABLES

Table 1.1: Summary of the Main Explanations.....	14
Table 2.1. Distributions of Binary Variables.....	60
Table 2.2. Pathways to RRTF.....	61
Table 3.1. Binary Distribution of Categorical Variables from a Gallup Poll, March 22-23, 2003.....	126
Table 3.2. Coefficients from Logistic Regression Models of President Job Approval, Gallup poll, March 22-23, 2003.....	128
Table 3.3. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Variables, Public Reactions to the Events of September 11.....	134
Table 3.4. Coefficients from Logistic Regression Models of President Job Approval, Public Reactions to the Events of September 11.....	135
Table 3.5. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Variables Included in SEM Analysis...	144
Table 3.6. Coefficients from Logistic Regression Models of Change in President Job Approval.....	152
Table A1. Variables and Data Sources for Qualitative Comparative Analysis.....	207
Table A2. List of Events and RRTF Coding.....	209
Table A3. Truth Table.....	211
Table A4. of QCA with Borderline Cases Coded “Major RRTF Event”.....	212
Table A5-1. Testing Rationalist Arguments.....	214
Table A5-2. Testing the Communication of Threat Argument.....	215
Table A5-3. Testing the Elite Consensus Argument (passive support by the leadership of the opposition party).....	215
Table A5-4. Testing the Elite Consensus Argument (active support by the leadership of the opposition party).....	215

Table A5-5. Combining Alternative Explanations.....	216
Table A6. Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients for Structural Equation Models in Chapter 3.....	217
Table A7. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (Chapter 4).....	221
Table A8. Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients for Structural Equation Models in Chapter 4.....	223
Table A9. Propensity Score Matching Estimates of the Average Treatment Effect of Nationalist Framing on Nationalist Sentiment.....	225
Table A10. Coefficients from OLS Regression Models of Level of Nationalist.....	226
Table A11. Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients for the Structural Equation Model.....	232

FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Summary of Argument.....	43
Figure 2.1. Pathways to RRTF Periods in the United States.....	66
Figure 3.1. President George W. Bush’s Job Approval Rates since First Inauguration.....	124
Figure 3.2. SEM of Emotions as Predictors of Support for the President.....	146
Figure 3.3. Higher-Order Effects of Anger and National Identification on Support for the President.....	149
Figure 4.1. Support for Air Strike in Iran by Framing Condition.....	173
Figure 4.2. Nationalism by Framing Condition.....	175
Figure 4.3. The Emotional Links between Nationalism and Support for Military Action....	178
Figure 4.4. The Nationalist Emotions Argument vs. Rationalist and Realist Alternatives....	182
Figure 4.5. Support for Air Strike in Iran by Framing Conditions: Males.....	184
Figure 4.6. Support for Air Strike In Iran by Framing Conditions: Females.....	185
Figure 4.7. Nationalism Scores by Framing Condition and Gender.....	187
Figure 4.8. Variation of Framing Effect by Gender (SEM).....	188
Figure 4.9. Nationalism Scores by Race.....	191
Figure 4.10. Support for Air Strike by Race.....	192
Figure 4.11. Nationalism vs. Patriotism and Internationalism.....	196
Figure A1. Higher-order effects of Anger toward Saddam Hussein and National Identification on Support for the president.....	218
Figure A2. The Nationalist Emotions Argument vs. Rationalist and Anger-Centered Alternatives.....	231
Figure A3. Nationalism (average 3 items) by Framing Condition, Ideology, and Gender....	233

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Yuval Feinstein received bachelor of arts degrees from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (*summa cum laude*) and the Honors Program (*cum laude*) at the University of Haifa, and master of arts degrees in sociology from the University of Haifa (*summa cum laude*) and the University of California, Los Angeles. In the fall of 2012, he will begin a tenure track position as a lecturer in the University of Haifa Department of Sociology.

For his master's thesis at the University of Haifa, Feinstein studied the dynamics of contention between the state and grassroots activists in the context of the construction of the separation barrier in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The thesis received an honorary mention from the Israeli Sociological Association, and resulted in several publications, including an article in *Mobilization*, the top peer-reviewed journal on social movements.

As a graduate student at UCLA, Feinstein collaborated with Professor Andreas Wimmer in a research project addressing the global proliferation of the nation-state over the last 200 years. For this study, the pair developed a novel global dataset, and used event history analysis to uncover the logic of nation-state formation in the modern world. An article reporting the findings of this study was published in the *American Sociological Review* and received a Best Article Award from the Comparative and Historical Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association (ASA).

Two other manuscripts based on chapters of Feinstein's doctoral dissertation have won best paper awards. "War that Feels Good," an article based on Chapter 3 of the dissertation, won the Elise M. Boulding Graduate Student Paper Award granted by the Peace, War, and Social Conflict Section of the ASA, and the Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award from the

Sociology of Emotions Section of the ASA. A manuscript titled “Nationalism and Popular Support for War: New Evidence from a Survey-Based Experiment” won the Best Doctoral Student Paper Award from the Nationalism Section of the Association for the Study of Nationalities.

INTRODUCTION

THE “RALLY-ROUND-THE-FLAG” PHENOMENON REVISITED

Since the 1960s, scholars of public opinion have sought to understand what John Mueller (1970, 1973) has dubbed the “*Rally-Round-the-Flag*” (RRTF) effect during war and other international crises. RRTF periods in times of war are characterized by widespread agreement that the country is fighting a just war, and that the president is handling the situation in an adequate way. In the public opinion literature, RRTF periods are identified through soaring of presidential job approval ratings. For example, during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, Kennedy’s job approval rating increased from 62% to 76%. Following the invasion of Panama in December 1989, Bush’s job approval rating of 71% increased to 80%. At the beginning of the First Gulf War in 1991, eight out of every ten Americans approved of President Bush’s performance as president and his decision to go to war. A decade later, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, an estimated 94% of US citizens supported military action against those responsible for the attack (Larson and Savych 2005: 94), and a presidential approval rating of 51% skyrocketed to 86% (ibid: 92, n.7). Finally, at the onset of the Iraq War in March 2003, three quarters of the American public supported the war and an estimated 73% of the public approved of the way President George W. Bush was handling his job, an increase of 13% from his job approval rating before the war.¹

The rally-round-the-flag is a notable phenomenon for students of mass politics, because it embraces most of the population, and thus temporarily reduces the otherwise pivotal effects of variables such as gender, race/ethnicity, and partisanship on public opinion in the US. Existing

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, presidential approval ratings are based on Gallup Polls retrieved May-25-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

explanations attribute the emergence of RRTF periods to the public's direct reaction to extraordinary war and security crisis events or to the political elite that uses the media to steer public opinion. However, despite four decades of scholarship, the RRTF phenomenon is still not well understood for at least four reasons. First, approaches that focus on the role of elite rhetoric in war time miss the fact that the RRTF effect is co-produced from below, through *interaction* between that rhetoric and the perceptions and emotions of the population at large. Second, existing explanations are often overly rationalistic, ignoring the crucial role of emotions in the formation of political attitudes. Third, when scholars do consider the role of emotions, they tend to focus on negative ones such as fear and anger that are generated by a perceived threat to one's security, thereby overlooking the role of positive emotions such as pride and confidence. Fourth, none of the existing approaches points to the nationalist framing of the situation and the nationalist emotions of pride, confidence, and hope, which underlay the rally-effect. They take for granted, in other words, what is analytically one of its most salient features: That rallies are crucial expressions and consequences of a deeply institutionalized nationalist sentiment.

Following a review of the existing explanations of the RRTF phenomenon, Chapter 1 lays out a new approach based on a sociological understanding of emotionality. In short, I argue that the RRTF effect emerges when a popular nationalist sentiment is activated, when and if a major war or security crisis is constructed as challenging the international prestige of the nation. Under these circumstances, individual citizens experience *positive* emotions associated with their membership in the nation: national pride, hope for victory, and high confidence that "our" government and army—which are seen as representing and embodying the collective self of the nation—will achieve victory.

Previous explanations have also struggled with methodological limitation: They have

been based almost entirely on correlational evidence found through regression analysis of survey data. Though pointing to some interesting associations between independent and dependent variables, studies that are based solely on regression analysis cannot offer a deep and comprehensive understanding of the processes through which war events and security crises have transformed into rally-points. This dissertation is based on a mixed-methods approach that allows a better understanding of the RRTF phenomenon. In Chapter 2, I develop a comparative-historical perspective using the technique of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and a data set that was compiled specifically for this chapter and contains detailed information about all major war and security crises in the US from 1950 to 2006. QCA allows me to uncover the configurations of conditions that have resulted in RRTF periods in the US. Chapter 2 thus goes beyond the conventional investigation of partial effects of independent variables via regression analysis, and instead focuses on the *interaction* effects between variables. Rather than from events *per se* or from elite-manipulation of information, the chapter shows, RRTF periods have emerged in the US when the nature of events, presidential framing of these events, and supporting historical circumstances *jointly* let the public perceive that the international prestige of the US was at stake.

The following two chapters test hypotheses regarding the links among individuals' nationalist identification, the emotion they experience, and their support for the president and his foreign policy during RRTF periods. Chapter 3 analyzes survey-data collected during the presidency of George W. Bush in order to detect the motivations of individuals to support the president in actual RRTF periods. The surveys used in this chapter are special, because in addition to conventional questions of public opinion polls they also contain questions about the emotional reactions of individuals to high profile security events: the September 11 attack in

2001, and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. These unique data sources allow me to test the approach advocated for in this dissertation, which centers on the role of positive emotions, against the main alternative approaches that attribute the RRTF effect to individual rational assessment of success chances of the president's foreign policy or to the widespread sense of security threat and negative emotions. Furthermore, in addition to conventional regression analysis, in Chapter 3 structural equation modeling (SEM) technique allows me to test more complex models that include both direct and indirect effects of variables on support for the president. In addition, SEM uses multiple survey questions to measure emotions as a latent dimension of individual attitudes, thereby reducing the measurement error relative to the use of single indicators.

Chapter 4 reports the results of a survey-based experiment that was conducted in order to further dissect the relationship between nationalist sentiment, emotions, and attitudes that is pivotal to my approach. Survey-based experiments retain the strengths of traditional experiments including the increased ability to determine cause and effect. However, unlike conventional laboratory experiments that make use of convenience samples, survey-based experiments are administered to representative samples. Thus, the findings of survey-based experiments can be generalized to the entire population. Chapter 4 utilizes this innovative method to examine key *cause-and-effect* parts of my approach that cannot be tested with conventional cross-sectional survey data.

The Rally-Round-the-Flag as a Sociological Topic

So far, the study of the RRTF phenomenon has been the exclusive domain of political scientists. However, this phenomenon should be of interest to sociologists for at least three reasons. First, it involves micro-level processes of collective group identification long studied by

sociologists. More specifically, this study builds on one of the most fundamental insights of social psychology, according to which threats to the value of a group or to its distinctiveness increase the salience of group-based identities. The same mechanism also applies, as I will show, to identification with larger, imagined groups such as the nation. The empirical chapters reveal that this “symbolic threat” mechanism, which so far has been observed only in laboratory experiments, also motivates the larger American public to rally behind the elected national leader and his foreign policy during RRTF periods.

Second, the RRTF phenomenon provides sociologists with a topical domain that allows reintroducing emotions into theories of mass-political behavior. Emotionality plays a significant, if largely overlooked role in classical sociological theory of political change. The early Marx and Engels predicted that the *alienation* of the laborer will be transformed into the *rage* of revolutionaries (Marx and Engels 1978[1848]). Durkheim put the finger on individuals’ *euphoria* during moments of “collective passion” that shared rituals evoked (Durkheim 2001[1912]; see also Collins 2004). And Simmel wrote about the emotionality of the “masses” in mass politics (Simmel 1950: 34-35). More recently, sociologists have begun to study the role of emotionality in everyday life, including the shaping of emotional dispositions through socialization (e.g., Gordon 1990; Pollak and Thoits 1989; Power 1984) or emotion management in social interactions (Collins 1981; Hochschild 1979; Kemper 1978; Kemper 1981; Smith-Lovin and Heise 1988). Others have studied how social categories relate to emotions, demonstrating, for example, that being assigned to a minority category affects the emotional experiences of individuals, thereby affecting also their preferences and choices (e.g., Harlow 2003; Hochschild 1983; Kang 2003; Lively 2006: 574-577; Shields et al. 2006).

While remarkable progress has been made in the study of these micro-sociological

aspects of emotions, the focus on large scale political phenomena of the classic authors has generally been abandoned (Turner and Stets 2005). The psychological theories of mass behavior that emerged as a response to the fascist and communist movements (Allport 1924; Hoffer 1951; Kornhauser 1959; Lasswell 1930; Lasswell 1948; Smelser 1963) acquired an ill reputation from the 1960s onward, when sociology turned a more friendly eye on the political role of the masses in social movements.

The “crowd psychology” literature highlighted the excitement that individuals feel as part of a “mob”, while attributing this feeling to a process of de-individuation: A temporary replacement of personal identity by an emerging crowd-identity which also involves an indulging sense of anonymity. Furthermore, under the influence of psychoanalytical approaches, and because fascism and communism were considered evil, scholars identified collective action as pathological, arguing that individuals join the crowd to overcome social and psychological deficits, such as being immature, narcissistic, unsatisfied in personal life, insecure, and so forth.

The way students of social movements in the early 1970s viewed and presented participants in movements was radically different: They depicted the activists as rational, goal-seeking actors, partly because the researchers themselves identified with peace and civil rights movements and their goals. Therefore, in effort to distinguish social movements from the unorganized “crazy” mob depicted by “crowd-psychology” theories, social movement theories have developed with a rationalist bent: They highlighted the organized and strategic aspects of collective action, while effectively downplaying its emotional side (Goodwin and Jasper 2006; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000). To be sure, social movement scholars have not been unaware of the emotional aspect of mobilization and participation in movements. However, they have often argued that, though emotions motivate individuals for action, individuals often choose

not to act upon their emotions. Therefore, they maintained, the experience of emotions itself cannot explain *how* political action actually happens. Instead of emotions, students of social movements have emphasized structural conditions—most notably the available resources and political opportunities—as the variables that determine if and which collective action will take place (*ibid.*).

Only recently, students of social movements have taken up the baton left by the classic authors. Committing to participate in collective action is an emotional act, they argue, and such emotional commitment emerges and is reproduced in social interactions and through the use of emotion-rich narratives (Aminzade and McAdam 2001; Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004; Jasper 1998). However, social movements are only one form of political action and one domain in which emotions and politics should be studied. Much of democratic politics, in contrast, is not organized around or driven by social movements, but hinges on diffuse mass sentiment. Little has been done to understand how emotions affect this aspect of mass politics.

In order to be able to incorporate emotions into the analysis of mass politics, we need a framework that links political phenomena at the macro-level to the emotional experience of individuals at the micro-level. Such a theoretical framework is offered in Chapter 1 of this dissertation and it is put to test in the three subsequent empirical chapters. Drawing insights from the social psychology of emotions and the sociology of nationalism, I propose that individuals who share collective identities also share emotional dispositions, and thus experience similar emotional reactions to certain events and circumstances they consider as related to their collective identity. Unorganized mass-political phenomena are, in turn, the consequence of this

similarity of emotional reactions. The RRTF phenomenon provided a good empirical field to study such emotional-political processes at the mass-level.

Ethnic violence is another empirical field in which the relationship between emotions and collective identities has recently been explored by few prominent social scientists (Horowitz 1985; Kaufman 2001; Petersen 2002; Tambiah 1996). This dissertation is inspired by these important studies, but I strategically chose not to use them as the springboard for my discussion. Similar to the earlier discussions about collective violence under fascism and communism, present studies of ethnic riots focus on one of the most extreme and notoriously violent forms of collective action, which involves intense emotionality. This focus may once again create the impression that emotions are located at the dark, irrational, and episodic side of human behavior. In contrast, the approach advocated in this dissertation assumes that emotions are integral component of even the most benign and seemingly “emotionless” human choices and behavior. Emotions should thus be of interest to sociology at large and not only to sociologists who study extreme forms of collective action. The RRTF phenomenon makes a useful case study for this argument, because it shows that emotions play a central role even in a relatively mild mass-political phenomenon.

Third, the RRTF phenomenon should be of special interest to sociologists who study nationalism, because it offers an opportunity to combine fundamental insights from the two main strands in the field—social constructivism and ethno-symbolism—in order to get a better theoretical understanding of how, and under what conditions, national identities shape the political preferences of individuals. The *constructivist* strand often uses a cognitivist language that refers to national identity as “scheme” or “lens”, and to nations as “imagined communities”. Scholar who use this language conceptualize nationhood as socially acquired *mental*

representation, through which individuals imagine themselves as being part of a larger group, define their relationships with other members of the “nation” and with members of other nations, acquire taste and norms, set their individual and collective aspirations, and of course make political (often territorial) claims (Anderson 1991; Billig 1995; Brubaker 1992; Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004; Calhoun 1998; Greenfeld 1992; Greenfeld 2006; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Kaufmann 2008). This conceptualization is based on the assumption that individuals’ sense of nationhood is stored in, and is experienced through the cognitive functions of the brain such as reasoning, memory, speech, and metaphorical thinking. Consequently, though constructivists do not dismiss the role of emotions, they often leave it implicit and undertheorized.

Nonetheless, locating nationhood in the realm of perception and imagination has been an important theoretical development, because it allowed sociologists to go beyond the study of nationalism as a political ideology that had previously used for explaining the macro-phenomena of nation-state-making and modern warfare, and instead shift the focus to more mundane and seemingly private aspect of national identification (e.g., Brubaker 2006; Calhoun 2007; Hearn 2007). Furthermore, by defining collective identity as a socially acquired psychological construct, sociologists and social psychologists have turned the spot light on one of the most fundamental characteristic of national identity: Rather than being constant and omnipresent (as perhaps lay people would say if asked about their national identity), constructivists emphasize that the *salience* of national identity relative to other identities depends on the social context. One cannot overstate the important of this insight, which is also pivotal to my approach to the RRTF phenomena, as we shall see.

Nevertheless, several scientific developments outside of sociology suggest that conceptualizing collective identities as mental representations might be limiting, and it needs to be supplemented with a more explicit discussion of emotions. First, studies in developmental psychology have shown that a sense of *self* starts developing already in infants through *affective interactions* even before the infant has the cognitive capacity to develop a *self-concept* (Emde 1983; Gergely and Watson 1996; Sroufe 1996; Stern 1985; Trevarthen and Aitken 2001). These findings suggest that the concept of “identity” cannot be reduced to the metaphor of “lens” or “frame” through which people *see* the world; instead, we should also look at identities as ways of *feeling* the world. Second, the notion that individuals’ sense of place in the world is emotional no less than cognitive is further supported by recent studies of “empathy” in the emerging field of social neurosciences: These studies demonstrate that people are predisposed to feeling empathy toward other members of their group who experience pain, and also show that this kind of empathy for peers is neurally distinct from other forms of empathy such as more general empathy for the human kind (Cheon et al. 2011; Chiao 2011; Chiao and Mathur 2010; Mathur et al. 2010; Singer 2006).

Third, and most importantly, studies in neuroscience have shown that emotions are instrumental to the capacity of individuals to set preferences and make decisions in response to changing circumstances. Following Antonio Damasio’s groundbreaking research, neuroscientist have consistently shown that people who because of brain injury cannot experience emotions, while being capable to cognitively process information, are nonetheless incapable of setting preferences and making decisions (Adolphs and Tranel 1999; Bechara et al. 1994; Bechara et al. 1997; Bechara, Damasio and Damasio 2000; Damasio 1994; Lehrer 2009). These findings suggest that treating collective identities as mental representations is limiting, because it does not

provide a sufficient explanation as to how the subjective experience of membership in groups influences individuals' preferences, choices, and behavior.²

In contrast to constructivism, emotionality plays a more explicit and central part in the second strand in the study of ethnicity and nationalism: The *ethno-symbolic* approach, which investigates how cultural materials such as ethnic and religious symbols, historical myths, language, rituals, and customs, create an emotional attachment to the group, to its homeland, and to its culture (Banti 2009; Connor 1993; Connor 1994:202,212; Guibernau 1996:73; Guibernau 2007:12; Smith 1986; Smith 1987; Smith 1991; Smith 2001:chap.4).

The two strands of scholarship are often presented through their disagreement about the appropriate way of understanding the global spread of nationalism and the national state.³ But this debate aside, the emotionality that is highlighted by the ethno-symbolic approach can be easily integrated into the constructivist view of national identity as a psychological construct with changing degrees of salience. The key, I argue, is to identify the culturally-induced emotional dispositions that are *intrinsic* to national identities and get activated when this identity becomes salient.

Rogers Brubaker has proposed using the term “self-understanding” in reference to the psychodynamic, emotional dimension of individuals' identification with groups (Brubaker 2004:44). He further defines *self-understanding* as “a dispositional term that designates what might be called ‘situated subjectivity’: one’s sense of who one is, of one’s social location, and of

² This argument is also supported by a recent study of racial discrimination (Talaska, Fiske, and Chaiken 2008), which found that holding stereotypical beliefs about other racial groups is a weaker predictor of discriminatory behavior than having an *emotional prejudice* (experiencing different emotional reactions to members of an outgroup than the emotions felt toward members of the ingroup).

³ While the constructivist approach considers nationalism as a product of modernity, the ethno-symbolic approach stresses that the spread of nationalism in modern times has been possible because this ideology built upon existing ethnic sentiments and made use of the pre-modern cultural materials that were already internalized in the consciousness of individuals (see for example the debate between Ernest Gellner and Anthony Smith (Gellner 1996; Smith 1996a, 1996b).

how (given the first two) one is prepared to act,” and explains that, “as a dispositional term, it belongs to the realm of what Pierre Bourdieu has called *sens pratique*, the practical sense—at once cognitive and emotional—that persons have of themselves and of their social world” (ibid). Through the case of the RRTF, this dissertation demonstrates how one can empirically detect and theoretically identify the specific emotional dispositions that are embedded in nationalist self-understanding and get activated during moments of crisis.

The next chapter reviews existing explanations of the RRTF phenomenon and then lays out the approach pursued here. Three empirical chapters follow: The first takes a macro-comparative-historical perspective on how events become rally-points. The second uses survey data to examine the motivation of individuals that led them to support President George W. Bush during two RRTF periods: The first, following the September 11 attack, and the second during the invasion of Iraq. The third chapter presents the results of an experiment that was designed specifically to investigate the relationship between nationalist sentiment, emotions, and political attitudes.

CHAPTER 1

EXPLAINING THE RALLY-ROUND-THE-FLAG PHENOMENON

The first of studies of the RRTF phenomenon offered a simple explanation. Polsby (1964), Waltz (1967), and Mueller (1970, 1973) proposed that RRTF periods emerged as direct response to international events with American involvement. Citizens close ranks behind the president, they argued, because they wish to see their country succeed in the international arena. Succeeding scholarship has advanced in two different, though sometimes closely related directions. On the one hand, several scholars have expanded the definition of “rally-events” to include domestic events or those related to the president’s health and life (Brace and Hinckley 1992; Lee 1977; Newman and Forcehimes 2009; Ostrom and Simon 1985). On the other hand, a growing field of studies seeks for better understanding of *how* events turn into rally-points, focusing primarily on war. This dissertation project joins the second line of investigation, thus the rest of this review section focuses on studies that have sought to explain how and why RRTF periods emerge in times of war or during security crisis.

Perhaps the best way to review this second strand of scholarship is to distinguish between different assumptions about the *motivations* of individuals who rally behind the president. The *rational choice* paradigm, which has been dominant in political science in general, has also cast much influence on the study of the RRTF phenomenon. Taking the rationalist view, scholars have argued that people rally behind the sitting president when they believe that his foreign policy is likely to succeed at a tolerable cost. The main alternative to rational choice has come in the form of *realist* arguments, according to which people close ranks behind the president when they seek to protect national security or other vital interests of the nation (and thus themselves) that seem to be threatened.

Both rationalism and realism can be further differentiated into sub-types depending on which *agent* is thought to be steering public opinion during RRTF periods. Some explanations assume that public opinion in rally-periods is influenced primarily by the nature of *events* themselves, and thus may be titled “event-based” explanations (Groeling and Baum 2008). Other explanations center on the role of the political elite and the media that guide public opinion, and are therefore labeled “opinion leadership” explanations.

Table 1.1 maps existing explanations along the two criteria specified above: It’s horizontal dimension represents *motivation* (rational choice/realism), and its vertical dimension represents agency (events/opinion leaders).

Table 1.1: Summary of the Main Explanations of the RRTF Phenomenon

Agent \ Motivation	Rational Choice	Realism
Events	<i>Rational Public:</i> 1. Events as informational cues 2. Feasibility of policy objectives are assessed	<i>Security-concerned public:</i> 1. Events that are perceived as posing security threat produce negative emotions 2. Military initiatives are assessed based on their contribution to security
Opinion leaders	<i>Elite consensus:</i> Congress members serve as opinion leaders	<i>Manipulation of threat:</i> President steering security threat

The two most dominant explanations of the RRTF phenomenon share a rationalist view of public opinion. On the one hand, a *rational public* explanation proposes that RRTF periods emerge when ordinary citizens assess that military reaction to an event is likely to succeed at a reasonable cost. On the other hand, an *elite consensus* thesis proposes that RRTF periods

emerge when the political elite feeds the public with information that is biased in favor of the president and his foreign policy, resulting in a biased public assessment of the president and his policy as well. Two alternative, yet less influential arguments take the point of view of *realism*, arguing that the public rallies behind presidents because of security concerns. Within this type of explanation too, some scholars have drawn a direct line between events and public reactions, arguing that events that induce a sense of threat or military initiatives that are believed to increase security become rally-points. Other scholars have emphasized the role of the political elite that communicates security threats to the public. I titled these two arguments “security concerned public” and “manipulation of threat” respectively. In what follows, the four main approaches to the RRTF phenomenon are reviewed and an alternative approach is proposed.

The Rational Public Approach

Taking the rationalist view, scholars have argued that people rally behind the sitting president when they believe that his foreign policy is likely to succeed and that the cost, measured primarily in number of American fatalities, is tolerable (Gartner and Segura 2000; Larson 1996; Larson and Savych 2005). However, most scholars would agree that the public is unable to gather sufficient information for a rational assessment of the costs and benefits of war. Therefore, one line of argument proposes that the public uses the outcome of major battles and casualty figures as informational cues to assess the success of foreign policies relative to their cost. In times of war, events such as winning a major battle become rally-points because they signal to the public that the war is going well (Eichenberg, Stoll and Lebo 2006; Eichenberg 2005; Voeten and Brewer 2006). Large numbers of American casualties, in contrast, are said to have a negative effect on support for the war and the president, because they signal to the public

that the war is not going well (Gartner and Segura 2000; Lorell et al. 1985; Russett 1990:46). However, because empirical studies have shown that there is not a straightforward relationship between the number of casualties and public support for war (Baum and Groeling 2010:208-209; Berinsky 2009:chap.4; Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2006; Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2009; Kull and Clay 2001; Voeten and Brewer 2006), the *rational public* argument had to be modified.

In the first extension and modification of the *rational public* approach, scholars have shown that the public reacts differently to casualties across different *phases* of the war. For example, during the first few months of the second Iraq War, Americans tended to be more tolerant of U.S. casualties than during other phases of the war (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2006). To account for this anomaly, defendants of the *rational public* approach argue that casualties have little effect on popular support “when the public appears to be confident of a U.S. victory But if the public’s confidence is shaken, then casualties erode support” (ibid: 23; for similar arguments see Eichenberg 2005; Kull and Clay 2001; Voeten and Brewer 2006).

By adding “confidence” to the equation, scholars have departed from a strictly rationalist approach and introduced an emotional mechanism. But where does this initial confidence in the government and its war effort come from? To what extent is this confidence based on rational calculus? What can cause the public, which often expresses general skepticism or even mistrust of politicians, to lay this incredulity aside during rally periods? This question seems the most puzzling with regard to the rally periods that followed major catastrophes such as the attack on Pearl Harbor or the September 11 attack. One might expect that such devastating attacks would have caused Americans to lose confidence in the very officials that failed to protect them. Instead, the popularity of the sitting presidents skyrocketed in the aftermath of both events (Schildkraut 2002). Therefore, while high levels of confidence represent an important

mechanism of the RRTF phenomenon, *it is precisely this boost of confidence that needs to be explained*. I argue that the increase in confidence during rally periods is an emotional effect that results from greater identification with the national group and its leaders, a point to which I will return later.

A second modification to the *rational public* argument focuses on varying support for different types of wars—irrespective of the casualties suffered or anticipated. This line of argument suggests that public support or opposition is formed through people’s assessment of the *policy objectives* of wars. Thus, according to Jentleson (1992), the onset of wars tends to produce rally-periods when the war is aimed to restrain foreign aggressors, because this policy objective is feasible and likely to gain international legitimacy. In contrast, using military power for intervention in another country’s internal political affairs is not a policy that the American public is likely to support, because success is less feasible and because the international community sees this type of war as a breach of the principle of national sovereignty (see also Eichenberg 2005; Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2009:chap.4; Jentleson and Britton 1998).¹

This “policy objective” explanation is based on the problematic assumption that winning wars is a fixed interest, which means that the public is *always* interested in winning wars, and therefore support for an actual war is determined by whether the public believes that this war can achieve its goals. Instead of such an assumption of fixed preferences, I propose that the public only rallies behind the government if the war is perceived to be in the nation’s collective interests. In other words, the lukewarm support for internationalist intervention in other people’s civil wars has to do with the nationalist framing of interests, rather than with the feasibility of the

¹ Other studies took this line of investigation a step further, pointing to characteristics of events such as the level of hostility, having a revisionist goal of imposing a new order in a foreign country or region, and whether the use of military force was a US initiative, as predictors of increase in presidential job approval rating (e.g., Baker and Oneal 2001; Lian and Oneal 1993).

war's objectives. More specifically, nationalistic frames define perceived interests in two analytically (though not empirically) distinct ways: First, by prioritizing in the public's mind "national security" over other competing interests (e.g., personal security or economic stability); and second, by defining *whose* interests count—i.e. those of "our nation" rather than those of other peoples. Therefore, wars against an aggressor state tend to be more popular than other types of war not because they are easier to win, but because they resonate better with the nationalist framework. Indeed, this dissertation will show that nationalism and emotions are far more central to public support for war than the *rational public* approach is willing to acknowledge.

The Elite Consensus Thesis

The *rational public* argument is often based on the assumption that the public responds directly to events, to the number of American casualties, or to the objectives of presidential policies. This idea has been challenged by scholars who argue that almost everything the public knows about events and policies is learned from the media. In studies of public opinion during wars, researchers highlighted the media's capacity to shape public opinion through priming, framing, and agenda-setting (Groeling and Baum 2008; Iyengar and Simon 1994; Scheufele, Nisbet and Ostman 2005). This approach conceives of people as "information processors", suggesting that people's assessment of events and governmental policies depends on the informational input they receive through the mass media (Taber 2003). However, though the media has the power to shape trends of public opinion, scholars usually do not attribute sudden shifts in public opinion to the media itself, but to the political elite that *utilize* the power of the media to influence public opinion.

A highly influential argument, titled the *elite consensus* thesis, is based on the notion that ordinary citizens form their attitudes toward governmental policies based on the reactions of their congressional representatives (Larson 1996; Larson and Savych 2005). This approach suggests that public opinion tends to be fairly monolithic and supportive of the war if the received information justifies the war. In contrast, public opinion becomes more polarized when the public conversation contains discordant voices, particularly if there is a substantial opposition to the war well represented in the media (Berinsky 2007; Brody 1991; Zaller 1992: chap.9). The *elite consensus* thesis thus suggests that rally-periods emerge when the leaders of the opposition party either explicitly support the president's policies or simply refrain from expressing criticism. Under such conditions, the RRTF effect emerges because the information that the public receives from opinion leaders is biased in favor of the president and his policy, causing a large portion of the opposition party's constituency and independent voters to shift to supporting the president (Berinsky 2007; Brody 1991; Brody 1994; Brody 2002; Zaller 1992; Zaller 1994).² According to this view, then, the RRTF phenomenon is a reflection of an elite consensus that is transmitted to the public by the media.³

Many empirical studies have indeed found that the media and public figures influence public attitudes towards war (e.g., Berinsky 2007; Brody 1994; Iyengar and Simon 1994). Yet, there are at least two reasons why we should *not* be satisfied with the *elite consensus* argument. First, it misses the fact that public opinion is co-produced from below. For example, individuals may consume certain media content (e.g., "patriotic" TV channels) not because this is the only

² For more integrative approaches to the RRTF effect, which point to the role of the political elite, the media, and individual-level attributes see Baker and Oneal (2001), Groeling and Baum (2008), Lian and Oneal (1993), and Oneal and Bryan (1995).

³ Another variant of this approach considers the mass media as an independent agent, which can mobilize popular consensus even when the elite are divided (Baum and Groeling 2005; Groeling and Baum 2008; Iyengar and Simon 1994).

content available for them, but because it fits their already established attitudes in respect to a public issue, a phenomenon known as “gratification effect” (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch 1973). More precisely, the public at large might already use a nationalist frame of interpretation of the situation, choose information accordingly and selectively, and overlook dissenting voices because the public expects elites to close ranks and present a unified front to the outside “enemy of the nation” (Groeling and Baum 2008). In other words, the *elite consensus* argument might actually mistake cause for effect: it is possible that during the rally period, the lack of oppositional voices is the *product* of the rally itself that forces the opposition to hold its tongue in order not to appear “unpatriotic” and betray the “national interest” (Hetherington and Nelson 2003:38). Furthermore, there might be a feedback effect between the public and the media: It is possible that during RRTF periods the media displays greater “patriotism” in order to satisfy its audience, thus further boosting the RRTF effect. To be sure, during war or security crisis the mainstream media may be biased, for its own reasons, in favor of the president’s policy. In this paragraph, however, I proposed that a causal relationship between the bias of the media and public opinion may emerge in two opposite but complementary directions: during RRTF periods, the bias of the media in favor of military action contributes to the mobilization of public support for the president and his foreign policy, while concerns by the media for its own public image solidify its “patriotic” message to the public and mute critical voices.

Second, elite-focused theories often tend to emphasize the power of elites and the media to *persuade* a public assumed to consist primarily of cold minded information processors (Taber 2003), thereby again ignoring the emotional aspect of attitude formation. Indeed, the *elite consensus* argument can be easily combined with the *rational public* argument discussed earlier: RRTF periods may occur when the information provided to the public by media and the political

elite is biased in favor of the war, such that the public does not receive sufficient information to effectively assess the cost/benefit ratio (Page and Shapiro 1992:173). However, the rationalist assumptions that have guided the bulk of previous research on public opinion in the US in general, and on the RRTF phenomenon in particular, have become increasingly problematic since recent research has demonstrated the strong influence of emotions on people's judgment in general (e.g., Adolphs and Tranel 1999; Bechara et al. 1994; Bechara, Damasio and Damasio 2000; LeDoux 1996; Lehrer 2009) and on political attitudes in particular (e.g., Marcus 2000; Neuman et al. 2007: multiple chapters).⁴ More specifically, the rationalist assumption is challenged by two well-established insights about political attitude formation. First, studies have found that the reactions of individuals to received information depend on their pre-existing emotional state or "mood" (e.g., Aday 2010; Druckman and McDermott 2008). Second, other studies also show that emotions that are generated in reaction to received information (or to non-verbal cues) influence the attitudinal response of individuals (e.g., Gross, Brewer and Aday 2009; Marcus 2000; Miller 2007; Way and Masters 1996).

Alternative *Realist* Arguments

Although *realism* has not produced a fully fledged explanation of the RRTF phenomenon, it has nonetheless introduced several arguments that can be read as alternative to

⁴ Though I am critical of rationalism, I do not propose substituting it with the opposite assumption that people are incapable of rational thinking. Numerous psychological and neuroscientific studies show that reason operates in tandem with emotion, some of which are cited in this dissertation. Therefore, I see no reason to adhere to the 'reason vs. emotions' distinction. I do argue, however, that the rationalist framework is *insufficient* for explaining mass politics, because it does not pay enough attention to the emotional mechanisms that intervene in the process of reasoning. For example, in the case of the RRTF phenomenon, emotional mechanisms may cause people to overestimate the chances that the war would be won. Rationalism also does not consider the possibility that "reason" sometimes works in the service of emotion. Thus for example, people who feel compelled to support the president may look for a way to "rationally" justify their emotions. It is not always important to decide what comes first, emotions or reason, because these processes may happen within micro-seconds. In any event, there is no need to decide *a priori* that reason comes before emotions or vice versa.

the rationalist explanations discussed thus far. First, scholars have argued that the public is more likely to support military initiatives that the public perceives as aiming to maintain national interest, and especially national security (Kohut and Toth 1994; Kohut and Toth 1996; Nincic 1997; Rielly 1979; Western 2005). Second, Chapman and Reiter (2004) argue that the American public monitors the opinion of the United Nations Security Council in order to verify that presidents only go to war for genuinely defensive purposes. Both arguments thus can be read as alternative to the *rational public* thesis, because they assume that what motivates the public to support or oppose the leadership is not the assessment of the chances of policy successes, but rather the public's concern for national interests, and more particularly concern for national security. Put it in other words, realist scholar assume that what the public considers is not so much the feasibility of military actions, but mostly which goals are worth (or even necessary) going to war for.⁵

However, these *realist* arguments are based a problematic assumption, according to which individuals actually *know* what the national interests are. These arguments thus assume the main thing that needs to be explained: How national interests are identified and defined during RRTF periods, and how a consensus about the need to protect those “national interests” emerges in the public. For instance, why was “fighting communism” a foreign policy objective that nearly every American supported during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, but announcing a similar policy objective during the invasion of Grenada in 1983 was received by many Americans with suspicion?

National interests are not objective facts that individuals simply “know”, but instead they represent *beliefs*. For instance, a person may believe that having the strongest military in the

⁵ The rationalist and realist approaches merge in the claim that when important national interest are at stake, if the public believe that a military action is likely to succeed, they will support the action even if it may lead to the loss of substantial number of American lives (Gelpi et al. 2006; Gelpi et al. 2009).

world is a national interest of the US. Similarly, in crisis situations, a person doesn't "know" that national interests are under threat, but instead she may believe this to be the case. This type of political beliefs is influenced by emotions (Mercer 2005; Mercer 2010). As Jonathan Mercer explains, "The experience of emotion is not a mere product of cognition, or a reaction to a belief. It is not an afterthought. Feelings influence what one wants, what one believes, and what one does" (Mercer 2010:2). Therefore, by ignoring the emotional basis of the RRTF, the two realist arguments outlined above might mistake cause for effect: A wide agreement about the definition of national interests and about the need to protect those interests is not the cause of rally-periods. Rather, such consensus emerges as part of the rally processes itself because of the nationalist emotions individuals experience. These emotions are triggered by mechanisms that do not require that individuals would have a thoughtful pre-definition of national interest.

A third *realist* argument proposes that RRTF periods emerge because of widespread sense of threat. This argument comes in two variants. On the one hand, political psychologists argue that security crises had generated a widespread sense of threat, taking 9/11 as their prime example (Huddy, Feldman and Cassese 2007; Kam and Ramos 2008; Lambert et al. 2010; Parker 2010; Perrin and Smolek 2009; Schildkraut 2002). On the other hand, other scholars emphasize the role of the president as "opinion leader": They have suggested that presidents are likely to garner public support for aggressive foreign policy when they frequently mention *security threats* to the US (Kaufmann 2004; Willer 2004) and when they justify military initiatives as "*protective intervention*" (Nincic 1997).

By emphasizing the role of the president in mobilizing (with the help of the media) public support during RRTF periods, these last two arguments put the finger on one of the most fundamental aspects of this phenomenon that is also emphasized in my own explanation.

Furthermore, although I do not think that the rally effect is caused by security threats, scholars who make this argument take us a giant step toward better understanding this phenomenon, because they often also suggest, explicitly or implicitly, that the RRTF has an emotional basis: Support for the president, they argue, increases because of widespread fear of the enemy that is threatening the American security interests.

The idea that RRTF periods are driven by fear is discredited by studies that show that individuals who experience high levels of fear tend to be risk-averse thus prefer policies that minimize immediate risks (Huddy et al. 2005; Lerner et al. 2003; Lerner and Keltner 2001; Skitka et al. 2006). Instead, these studies highlight *anger*, because this emotion drives individuals to action and for underestimating the risk associated with action. By differentiating the effects of anger and fear, studies have taken another big step toward better understanding RRTF periods, because they imply that support for the president during rally periods is motivated by a sense of collective *potency* that allow individuals to respond to security threats with anger rather than with fear. Nevertheless, these studies might have overestimated the effect of anger, because they tested it only against fear. In contrast to these studies, I propose that anger toward the enemy plays a less important role in motivating the attitudes of individuals during RRTF periods, which are driven primarily by positive emotions of pride about the nation, confidence in the capacity of the elected leadership and the military, and hope for a better future that military action would bring about. This argument is tested empirically in Chapter 3. This chapter now turns to present the *theoretical* foundation of my argument.

A New Approach: Nationalist Emotions and Perceived Symbolic Threats

While the existing approaches to public opinion differ greatly from one another in many respects, as we have seen above, they all assume that public opinion during war is driven by the same mechanisms as during peacetime: The public always rationally assess governmental policies, always bases its attitudes on opinion leadership, or always prioritizes national interests and security considerations. Against this continuity assumption, I argue that the RRTF effect is an irregular phase of public opinion formation during which nationalist sentiment is activated and produces a special emotional charge, which in turn drives individuals to close ranks behind the foreign policy and the government. The approach proposed here has roots in two sets of theories: The sociological approach to nationalism and *identity theory* in social psychology. Both allow us to move beyond existing theories of public opinion and to show how war enthusiasm is co-produced by the public's nationalist sentiment and related emotional dispositions. In the following, the two theoretical foundations of my argument are discussed subsequently.

What is “Nationalist Sentiment” and how is it Related to the RRTF?

Nationalism has long been recognized as an important driving force behind large-scale political phenomena such as state-building and international wars. The ethno-symbolic approach often attributes the capacity of nationalism to mobilize the masses to the emotional *bond* among individuals who share an “ethnic myth” of common descent, grand history, and destiny, as well as other shared cultural materials such as the notion of homeland and common language, symbols, values, taste, and customs (Banti 2009; Connor 1993; Connor 1994:202,212; Guibernau 1996:73; Guibernau 2007:12; Smith 1986; Smith 1987; Smith 1991; Smith 2001:70-72). During nation-building processes, nationalist entrepreneurs have employed the available

cultural materials in order to spread the notion of *sameness* among potential members of the national group, and to further claim the existence of a *national character* that distinguish the nation as a group from other nations (Horowitz 2002; Smith 1991:75; Smith 1998:90). The ethno-symbolic approach thus suggests that national identity continues to function as a potent political force because it involves a *sentiment of solidarity* based on the belief in the sameness of members of the nation and in the uniqueness of the national group.

However, as Hans Kohn notes in the introduction to his proverbial *The Idea of Nationalism* book, the belief in the cultural uniqueness of the nation often develops into a sense of pride in the nation and a belief in its superiority (Kohn 1944:5). Observing nationalism during its golden age in Europe, after the Great War, historian Carlton Hayes proposed a working definition of nationalism that centers on the sense of superiority:

“A condition of mind among members of a nationality, perhaps already possessed of a national state, a condition of mind in which loyalty to the ideal or to the fact of one’s national state is superior to all other loyalties and of which pride in one’s nationality and *belief in its intrinsic excellence and in its ‘mission’* are integral parts.”(Hayes 1926:6 – emphasis added)

The idea that nationalism often involves a sentiment of superiority is therefore old news. But how does this sentiment affect preferences and choices?

Membership in the “nation” is a subjective experience that, although not promising equal access to material and political resources, nevertheless offers to *all* “members” a shared symbolic resource: the nation’s prestige. Nationhood provides individual with what Weber calls “ethnic honor”, that is “the belief in a specific ‘honor’...not shared by the outsiders” (Weber 1978:391). Therefore, nationhood involves not only making distinctions between “us” and “them” based on an “ethnic myth”, but also a *sentiment of superiority* vis-à-vis other nations. The belief in the superiority of the nation is nurtured, as Stephen Van Evera (1994:27) notes, by the “chauvinist mythmaking” of nationalist agents—schools, journalists, and political elite. To be sure, the

narratives and myths that give specific content to the sentiment of superiority might emphasize different aspects of superiority such as moral greatness, culture achievements, or military successes, depending on the historical materials available to nationalist myth makers.

Because individuals' own sense of self-worth is closely tied to the prestige of their nation (Greenfeld 2006; Lebow 2008:17), they carry a fundamental commitment to the nation and for protecting its prestige (Greenfeld 2006).^{6,7} In normal times, the prestige of the nation is not challenged, thus national identification takes a "banal" form, which means that individuals do not devote much attention and passion to their national identity (Billig 1995). However, Liah as Greenfeld notes, national prestige is a precarious resource: Because the amount of prestige one nation has is measured relative to that of other nations, "no matter how much prestige one may have gained at a certain moment, one can be outdone in the next" (Greenfeld 2006:206). This precariousness of national prestige, I argue, is the root of the RRTF phenomenon, which emerges when that national prestige is challenged.

The discussion above might lead one to think that my argument stands in opposition to the ethno-symbolic approach, because I emphasize national honor while advocates of the ethno-symbolic approach usually emphasize national solidarity. But in fact, my argument builds on the ethno-symbolic approach. Similar to the ethno-symbolic approach, this dissertation highlights the emotional dispositions that national myths and symbols nurture in individuals, and claims that these emotional dispositions are integral ingredients of national identities that motivate

⁶ Similarly, psychoanalytical approaches to nationalism suggest that nationalist identification serves the "narcissistic ego" of individuals (Finlayson 1998).

⁷ Social psychologists make a similar argument about individuals' behavior in small groups: They argue that individuals' self-esteem is derived partly from their perceived membership in groups. Therefore, to the extent that group membership is central to one's self-concept, individuals tend to act in ways that enhance the value of the group, and consequently also enhance their own self-esteem. Typical examples for self-enhancing behavior would be favoring members of the ingroup and discriminating against members of the outgroup (Reynolds, Turner, and Haslam. 2000; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner 1975). Other social psychologists have extended the argument to larger groups, including the nation (see Drukman 1994 for review).

individuals to make choices and set their behavior. However, whereas in the ethno-symbolic approach to nationalist emotions is interpreted mostly through the “sentiment of solidarity” argument outlined above, this dissertation turns the spot light on the nationalist sentiment of superiority vis-à-vis other nations as an important source of emotionality.

Perhaps because ethno-symbolism has been developed as a counter-argument to constructivist and instrumentalist approaches to ethnicity and nationalism, it tends to focus on how cultural materials have been transmitted from an ancient past and thus foster a sense of continuity, kinship, and solidarity among present members of the ethnic or national group. However, some of these cultural materials also allow ethnic and national groups to act as *status groups* by emphasizing, for example, heroic episodes in the history of the group that deserve the respect of other nations. It is therefore possible, as Greenfeld argues, that the status a nation bestows on its members creates an emotional commitment to defend the group and its honor.⁸ A recent study by Snyder and Borghard (2011) provides support for this argument. Snyder and Borghard investigated public reaction to all threats issued by US administrations during international crises between 1945 and 1994. Their findings demonstrate that, more than any other aspect of international conflicts, public opinion in the US is concerned with the country’s international reputation for resolve and with national honor.

A sentiment of superiority and the popular determination to protect the prestige of the nation from challengers may be more prevalent in nations that hold a myth of being the chosen people. Here the paradigmatic case is Jewish nationalism, whose ancient biblical ethos of “chosen people” has influenced not only the modern Zionist movement, but through Christianity it has also been adopted by other modern Western nationalist movements such as in Britain,

⁸ The basic human need for recognition and respect, which has long been recognized by psychologists (Maslow, A. H. 1943), has also been identified as a major driving force of mobilization in social movements (Calhoun 1994; Honneth 1995).

France, Germany, South Africa (Afrikaner nationalism), Ireland, Poland, and of course the United States (Cauthen 2000; Hutchison and Lehmann 1994; Lieven 2004:32-36; Roshwald 2006:chap.4; Smith 1992). Furthermore, a popular belief in “chosenness” may develop and spread even without explicit religious content (sometimes, this belief is historically rooted in religious claims that have faded away and were replaced by non-religious claims). For instance, French nationalism has nurtured the myth of *la grande nation*, the nation that has perfected the principles of liberty and equality and spelled them to other peoples (Greenfeld 1992:188). A different example would be Swiss nationalism, in which a sense of *chosenness*—or as Roshwald puts it, “choosing to be chosen”—is based on the vision of Switzerland as the paradigmatic case of direct democracy and respect for diversity through political contract, as well as on the myth of Switzerland’s choice of armed neutrality that gives it a special role and respect in the international arena (Roshwald 2006:184; Smith 1992:446). The Swiss example is important, because it shows that the prestige of the nation does not have to be warlike, thus nationalist sentiment is not necessarily aggressive (Canada is another example of a country with prevalent sentiment of superiority that generally has a pacific character).

In the case of great powers, having the myth of “chosen people” creates a sense of mission to transform the world in their own image (Greenfeld 1992; Lieven 2004; Roshwald 2006:185-6). Furthermore, being a great power and the myth of “chosen people” may reinforce each other. On the one hand, the “chosen people” myth nurtures the aspiration to become a great power or provides a justification to behave as one. On the other hand, the fact of being a great power may be viewed as affirmation of the ideals and mission of the nation (for instance, the success of the US and its mighty power is often seen by American nationalists as evidence for the moral superiority and efficacy of America’s political culture). Still, it is important to

remember that the myth of “chosenness” is not limited to great powers, as discussed above (see Smith 1992 for review of additional cases). However, a *warlike* nationalist sentiment of superiority is more prevalent in great powers and in weaker countries with militaristic cultures (Israel is a contemporary example of the later).

Scholars have argued that Americans are exceptionally more proud of their nation, and that their belief in national superiority is stronger than in other nations (Lieven 2004:chap.1; Hutchison 1994 for review of this argument). A recent comparative study of thirty-three countries found evidence that supports this argument: It ranked the US second in 1995 and first in 2003 in measures of average nationalist pride and sense of superiority (Smith and Kim 2006). These national pride and belief in America’s superiority may reflect the unique position the US has in the world, as well as the national myths on which the collective self-understanding of Americans rests. On the one hand, Americans are prone to feel nationalist pride and confidence because the US is a world hegemon with the strongest military in the world, and because it has a history of winning two world wars and almost all subsequent military interventions. On the other hand, a sentiment of superiority is rooted in the American national ethos of having a morally superior political culture and way of life. Usually, the belief in the “American creed” is coupled to support for political isolationist foreign policy. For many Americans, a sentiment of superiority is usually expressed as a desire to lead by example, to be the shining city on the hill, rather than to take the mission to the world. However, in times of crisis, when the national honor seems to be under attack, a more chauvinist and bellicose form of nationalism is awoken, based on the deeply rooted notion of *Manifest Destiny*: A mission to disseminate the American political culture and way of life in the world (Fousek 2000; Lieven 2004; McCartney 2004; Roshwald 2006).

Contemporary Germany provides an illuminating contrasting case: In Germany, identification with the nation is often less self-assured, and jingoistic elements tend to be suppressed or resisted. Surely, ordinary Germans may take pride in the exceptional cultural and scholarly achievements of their people, as well as in the industrial and economic success of their country or its success in sports. However, for many Germans, every expression of national pride, and indeed any authentic feeling of national pride, is hunted by the memory of the Second World War and the Holocaust (Breuilly 1998; Fulbrook 2002; Ignatieff 1994; Kattago 2001; Maier 1997). Therefore, being a proud German is often tinged with feeling guilt, shame, and embarrassment. The average American, in contrast, is free to feel and express nationalist pride and confidence. Correspondingly, in a 2003 cross-national study that estimated the prevalence of different types of nationalism in thirty countries, the US was ranked first in *ultranationalism* (a type of nationalism that is characterized by strong national attachment, high level of national pride, and jingoistic attitudes) and last in *critical nationalism* (a type of nationalism that is characterized by ambivalent national attachment and low levels of pride and jingoism). In sharp contrast with the US, Germany was ranked twenty-fourth in *ultranationalism* and third in *critical nationalism* (Bonikowski Manuscript submitted for review).

This dissertation highlights the American sentiment of superiority, but it will be *a mistake* to read it as advocacy for the “American exceptionalism” argument. Rather, my discussion focuses on the US because this fits the scope of my empirical investigation. Historically, jingoism was typical of great powers such as Britain and France. But even contemporarily, in a world in which the US is the only superpower, jingoistic pride and ultranationalism (albeit not necessarily of the militaristic kind) are prevalent in other countries such as Austria, Canada, Chile, South Africa, and Venezuela (Bonikowski Manuscript submitted for review; Smith and

Kim 2006). Therefore, to the extent that my analysis of the American case relates to other countries, it relates to a sub-set of countries with strong jingoistic nationalism. In contrast, in countries with lower levels of jingoistic nationalism such as contemporary Germany, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland (ibid), rally effects may operate through mechanisms that may not appear in the American case.

To sum up, nationalist sentiment is the part of identification with a national group that involves a sense of superiority to other nations. It is thus important to distinguish analytically between this sentiment and the more general sense of attachment individuals may feel toward the national group and “its” land and culture. For more than two decades, political psychologists have applied a similar analytical distinction between *nationalism*, which they defined as the perceived superiority of one’s country or nation, and *patriotism* or the “love of one’s country” (Kosterman and Feshbach 1989). Although, patriotism and nationalism are positively associated, studies have demonstrated that these two aspects of identification with the nation and “its” state have different consequences for political attitudes: Whereas “nationalism” is often associated with militaristic attitudes to foreign affairs and with authoritarianism and intolerance toward minority groups within the country, “patriotism” is more compatible with internationalist modes of cooperation and with liberalism and tolerance of diversity (de Figueiredo and Elkins 2003; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989; Li and Brewer 2004; Worchel and Coutant 1996).

Based on these findings, it seems also reasonable to propose that individual support for military action during RRTF periods is driven by nationalist sentiment of superiority rather than by a more general love of the nation or the country. But this dissertation takes this argument one step further: It claims that the nationalist sentiment comes not only in the form of an idea or belief about the nation (which is how nationalism is often conceptualize by political

psychologists), but it also involves certain *intrinsic* emotional dispositions. When the nationalist sentiment is activated, these emotions are triggered as well, and in turn affect preferences and choices. The following parts establish a theoretical connection between nationalist sentiment of superiority and the emotions that motivate individuals to follow the leader during RRTF periods.

National Identification and Emotional Reactions to International Crises

Sociologists now often assume a cognitivist perspective on “nationhood”, interpreting it as one of the lenses through which modern individuals view reality (Bentley 1987; Billig 1995; Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004; Hale 2004; Jenkins 1997). Rather than conceiving nationhood as a fixed “identity” (i.e., with constant degree of salience), as in some older approaches, sociologists and social-psychologists now often emphasize that *identification* with the nation occasionally takes center stage in individual’s cognition, but remains more peripheral at other times. Michael Billig (1995) uses the adjectives “hot” and “banal” to distinguish between these two situations.

“Hot” nationalism arises temporarily under extraordinary circumstances. For example, people may experience a moment of “hot” nationalism while watching the national flag being waved to the sounds of the national anthem at the opening of a sporting event or during a memorial service for dead soldiers. In such circumstances, individuals become aware of their membership in the nation. According to Billig, this cognitive transition is possible because during normal times the idea of the “nation” is present, but without much individual awareness of it. This “banal” form of nationalism is reproduced, for example, by national flags displayed in public spaces, which draw little attention from passersby but still remind them of the nation. Wars and other international crises bring the idea of the nation to the fore of people’s cognition,

thereby fostering a sense of “groupness” and solidarity among co-patriots (Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004). Yet, to understand why this transition to nationalist modes of interpretation also facilitates certain *emotional* reactions, we need a theoretical framework that links emotions to collective identities.

Identity theory in social-psychology provides such a framework. It portrays the human *self* as a structure of multiple identities that are organized according to their relative degrees of salience. These identities are connected to different sets of expectations regarding the social ties relevant to an individual, the appropriate behavior, and the role she is supposed to play in social interactions (Hoelter 1983; Stryker 1968; Stryker 1987). This version of identity theory forms one of the pillars of the current sociological approach to nationalism briefly referenced above.

However, since the late 1970s sociologists of emotions have extended identity theory by arguing that individuals’ sense of self and identity includes emotional aspects that cannot be integrated into a cognitivist conceptualization of self and identity as “frameworks” or “lenses” (Boyns 2006). The following principles of *identity theory* of emotions are especially important for our discussion. First, in contrast to other, stimulus-response theories of emotions, identity theory maintains that individuals acquire emotional dispositions through socialization (Geertz 1973:81; Gordon 1989; Hochschild 1975; Rosenberg 1990; Shott 1979). For instance, in many cultures certain emotions (e.g., compassion) are seen as “feminine” and are prescribed to women, while the experience of other, “masculine” emotions (e.g., rage) is considered more “appropriate” for men. Similarly, as we shall see, pride and confidence are emotions that are prescribed to anyone who is committed to a national identity in the US. Furthermore, identity theory predicts that the *intensity* of felt emotions depends directly on a person’s commitment to a particular identity (Burke 1991; Burke 1996; Stryker 1987; Stryker 2004)—more nationalist

individuals, in other words, should feel more proud and confident about their nation's past and future.

Secondly, identity theory also posits that the *salience* of particular identities varies across situations. Consequently, mass political phenomena such as the RRTF effect emerge when specific historical circumstances trigger widespread identification with a group and thus synchronize emotional reactions among its members (Stets 2006:204). Indeed, this insight is key for understanding how the emotions experienced at the micro-level accumulate to a macro-level outcome with political consequences.

Thirdly, and more precisely, it is not the events themselves that trigger an identity and the corresponding emotions, but the *meaning* people attach to these events (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003; Ortony, Clore and Collins 1988; Roseman and Smith 2001; Stets 2006). A classical finding here is that perceived threats to group identity (its status or distinctiveness) increase individuals' identification with the in-group (Branscombe et al. 1999; Ellemers, Spears and Doosje 2002; Gonsalkorale, Carlisle and Von Hippel 2007; Smurda, Wittig and Gokalp 2006; Spears, Doosje and Ellemers 1999; Spears, Doosje and Ellemers 1997). While social-psychological research has demonstrated the fertility of this approach on the micro level, I argue that status threats also operate at the level of national groups and activate strong identification with the in-group that is expressed in a heightened support for its leadership. With regard to the RRTF effect, therefore, those events that are effectively constructed as a challenge to the status of the national group will be most effective in bringing about enthusiastic support for the president. Conformingly, events have generated RRTF effects not because of the objective security threat they posed or because they suggested to the public that the foreign policy was successful—as suggested by *rationalist* and *realist* approaches respectively, but because of the

embarrassment or even humiliation of the nation, as observed by those who identified with the nation.

So far I have argued that events that are seen as a challenge to the nation's status and honor are most likely to increase the salience of national identities which in turn trigger emotions. But why should these emotions be positive, as I have argued? Aren't hate and fear of non-national others the emotional ingredients of war and conflict?

Why Positive Emotions?

Indeed, several scholars suggested that rally periods are motivated by negative emotions—fear or anger—that are triggered by the perception of a security threat (Huddy, Feldman and Cassese 2007; Lambert et al. 2010; Perrin and Smolek 2009; Schildkraut 2002). In contrast to such stimulus-response models, I argue that emotions can change over time depending on the interpretation of the situation (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003; Lazarus 2001). To be sure, the *initial* reactions to crisis events may indeed be dominated by negative emotions, but I maintain that the RRTF effect depends on a transformation—through nationalist identification—of these negative emotions into positive emotions that allow individual to cope with the crisis by developing positive attitude toward the commander-in-chief and his reaction to the crisis.⁹ For example, during the September 11 terrorist attacks many Americans felt fear because they saw security challenged. They were also angry, because the success of the attack on multiple civilian targets on American soil was perceived as an insult to national honor. However, shortly after the attack, the common view of 9/11 changed, from an apocalyptic nightmare to an opportunity to

⁹ A similar argument is made by Ronald Aminzade and Doug McAdam (2001) about mobilization for collective political action: “In it self, anger is not likely to produce organized collective action, but rather (usually individual) forms of resistance and/or expressions of discontent. It is only when anger gets joined with hope that the forms of action we normally associate with social movements and revolutions are apt to take place.”

display the American spirit, epitomized by the bravery of the passengers on United Airline Flight 93 and the heroism of the firefighters on Ground Zero.

Though nationalism facilitates the transition from negative to positive emotions, this does not happen automatically. In the case of 9/11, the transition to positive emotions was encouraged both from above and from below. From above, official speakers and the media interpreted the reactions to 9/11 as an exemplar of American bravery and unity (Alexander 2004; Tiryakian 2004). Recall for example how President Bush stood on the ruins of the twin towers hugging a firefighter with one hand and talking to an excited crowd through a megaphone he was holding in his other hand; or the iconic photo of three firefighters raising the American flag on the ruins of Ground Zero. From below, “rituals of solidarity” (Collins 2004), embodied in spontaneous and organized memorial services, contributed to the transition from fear and agony to pride, confidence, and hope. In this cognitive and emotional climate, Bush’s declaration of “war on terror” fell on fertile soil, further eliciting emotions of national pride, confidence, and hope with respect to the war against the enemies of the nation. Consequently, as we shall see in Chapter 3, support for President Bush arose not from the fearful and angry, but from individuals who had already transitioned into the positive emotions that nationalist identification allows and demands at the same time.

Therefore, while the initial reaction of individuals to what they see as security crisis may be dominated by fear or anger, if the situation subsequently evolved in the public conversations into a matter of national honor, individuals are likely to transition from negative to positive emotions about the situation and coping possibilities. This can be understood, again, with the help of identity theory. It suggests that certain emotions are driven by the human need to maintain congruity between an “identity-standard”—what a person believes is expected from her

based on her role in the group—and the evaluation of this person’s actual behavior. Negative emotions thus emerge when the individual fails to meet the identity-standard (Burke 1991; Scheff 1990a:chap.5; Scheff 1990b; Swanson 1989). For example, having an extramarital romantic affair is likely to cause people to feel *ashamed* or *guilty* if they believe that this kind of relationship violates the standard for moral behavior in “their” society (Tangney 1995; Tangney 2003). In contrast, positive emotions emerge when identity-standards are met (Fischer and Tangney 1995; Tangney 2003). For instance, donating money for charity organization may cause people to feel *proud* or *satisfied* if they believe that as members of “their” group (e.g., a Church) they are expected to contribute to charity. Positive emotions can also result from cognitive biases associated with effort to meet the identity-standards (Burke 1996; Kaplan 2006). For example, as further discussed below, the tendency of individuals to feel confident when their country goes to war is an emotional reaction that is driven by the need to maintain a positive sense national identity. This emotional reaction emerges even, or perhaps especially after suffering major defeats (Pearl Harbor and September 11 would be good examples for this type of situation).

This study singles out three emotions—hope, confidence, and pride—as associated with national identities, because experiencing these specific emotions lead individuals to support the government and its foreign policy. Psychologists have established that individuals rarely base their decision-making on pure cognitive elaboration. Instead, individuals often use *affective* reactions to inform their decisions. These affects serve as shortcuts for thinking. Put it simply, when forming an attitude toward a certain issue, rather than considering all available information that can inform that attitude, individuals simply ask themselves “how do I feel about this?” (Clore, Gasper and Garvin 2000; Peters et al. 2006; Schwarz and Clore 2003; Slovic et al. 2007). In politics too, the “how do I feel” question serves as one of the main heuristics that inform

attitude formation (Brady and Sniderman 1991; Conover and Feldman 1986; Kuklinski et al. 1991; Lodge and Taber 2000; Marcus 2000; Marcus 1995; Wyner and Ottai 1993; Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991b).

Therefore, in time of war or security crisis, being able to say to oneself that one feels proud, confident, and hopeful about the president and his foreign policy facilitates one's support for the president and the policy. In contrast, if a person tells herself, for example, that the president's policy makes her feel anxious, insecure, or sad, she is likely to disapprove of the policy and the president. Rally-round-the-flag periods thus emerge when large parts of society experience unusual high levels of positive emotions about the president and his foreign policy, which then serves as the basis for positive evaluation and support of the president and the policy. In other words, individuals close ranks behind the president because feeling proud, confident, and hopeful boosts their optimism about the future that presidential actions promise to bring about.

A similar argument has recently been made Sean Aday who pointed to the role of pride, confidence, and hope that motivate individuals to support military actions (Aday 2010). The argument advocated for in this dissertation shares with Aday the emphasis on positive emotions. However, whereas Aday applied a psychological-individualistic view of emotions—based on the *appraisal theory emotions* and on the theory of *emotional intelligence*—this dissertation takes a more *sociological* perspective, which views emotional dispositions as integral ingredient of individuals' membership in groups.

More generally, while *individuals* make use of emotions as heuristics, this use is mediated by factors that they share with other individuals. For example, Gastil and coauthors (2011) show that *culture* serves as the orienting force behind the affective heuristics that are used

for political attitudes formation. My argument is similar to that of Gastil and coauthors, but rather than pointing to “culture”, I propose that commitment to collective *identity* orients individuals’ use of affects as heuristics during RRTF periods. Therefore, in what follows, I elaborate on how each one of the three emotions is related to national identification.

Hope is a central emotion that informs political opinion, because it connects decisions that are made in the present to desirable future outcomes. During election campaigns, for example, candidates that incite hope in voters are likely to receive their support (Just, Crigler and Belt 2007). Hope becomes even more important in crisis situations, because feeling hopeful suggests that a turnaround is possible, which helps individuals to react to the crisis (Lazarus 1999; Rand and Cheavens 2009:328). However, in order to feel hopeful one must be sufficiently engaged in a situation and to care about its potential outcomes (Ortony, Clore and Collins 1988:19). In the context of international conflict, in order for people to feel hopeful about the war they must consider its potential consequences as relevant to *themselves* even if they are not expected to actively participate in the war, and even if the war takes place far away from home. Identification with the nation elevates the engagement of ordinary people, thus making it possible for them to feel hopeful about “our” war against “our” enemies. Identification with a nation—and especially with powerful and historically successful nations such as the US—gives hope a special drive: In times of perceived threat to the international standing of one’s nation, being hopeful is an especially effective coping mechanism to overcome negative feelings of fear or despair.

Confidence has a similar effect: confidence in the capacity of one’s nation to handle the crisis and turn it around in one’s favor is an effective coping mechanism (Johnson 2004). More generally, confidence is experienced when a person attributes to herself or her group the capacity

to achieve desirable outcomes (Ortony, Clore and Collins 1988; TenHouten 2006). Previous studies have found that confidence in the capacity of the US government and the military to win wars has been associated with increase in public support for those wars (Eichenberg 2005; Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2006; Kull and Clay 2001; Voeten and Brewer 2006). It is tempting to attribute the high levels of confidence that Americans often express when anticipating the success of military operations, to the objective military supremacy of the US. However, I argue that the source of that confidence is a popular nationalist sentiment, which involves a deeply rooted sense of superiority of one's—and everyone's—nation. Evidence for this emotional mechanism (Kaplan 2006:245) has been found in experimental studies of people's behavior in small groups (Blanton et al. 2001), yet this tendency to feel confident about the in-group is even greater when that group is a large collectivity such as a nation, a tendency that is nurtured by agents of nationalism such as schools, political elite, and the mainstream media (Van Evera 1994:27). During crisis, the belief in the military and moral supremacy of one's nation, which is coupled with the tendency to underestimate and derogate the enemy, is not based on a rational assessment of information, but on what Lawrence LeShan has labeled “mythic evaluation of reality” (LeShan 1992). Therefore, during rally periods, the average level of confidence is thus higher than normal, because the activation of a nationalist sentiment causes people to identify with the government and the military as symbols and guarantors of national sovereignty, hence to attribute the assumed superiority of the nation to these institutions.

Pride is the third nationalist emotions that this study considers. Much like confidence, national pride too is nurtured throughout the life course, especially in schools where individuals learn about the grand history and past achievements of their nation-state. Because this mythical perception of national history is developed in contrast to other ethnic or national groups (e.g., the

nation's historic enemies) (Smith 1991:27), feeling proud of the nation is intimately related to a sense of superiority. In other words, pride is an emotional *predisposition*, an integral component of the nationalist sentiment of superiority.

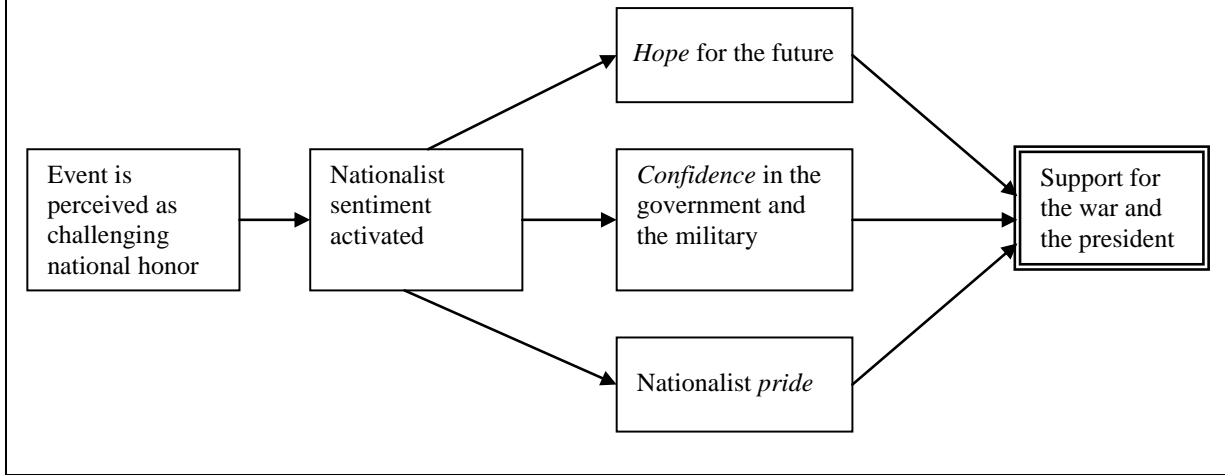
In sum, this study emphasizes hope, confidence, and pride, because of the substantial links between these emotions and national identity and because these emotions facilitate positive evaluation of the president and his foreign policy, thus allow individuals to be optimistic even under difficult circumstances.¹⁰ Pride, confidence, and hope are also considered adequate emotions once the national identity becomes salient since the historical greatness and exceptional mission of one's nation demand from individuals that they display or—even better—authentically feel these emotions. Because for the reasons discussed above strong national identification and the sentiment of superiority might be more prevalent in the US than in other countries, Americans are especially prone to feeling nationalist pride, confidence, and hope.

The RRTF effect thus emerges in the US when perceived challenges to national honor trigger emotions of pride, hope, and confidence which then spread throughout the population.¹¹ Figure 1.1 summarizes this argument. The first part of this argument is investigated empirically in the next chapter, which reveals the pivotal role of “challenge to national honor” in the process of transition of events into rally-points. The second part of my argument, which highlights positive emotions and their relationship to nationalist identification, is investigated in two subsequent chapters.

¹⁰ Occasionally, national identification may cause individuals to experience negative emotions such as shame or anxiety. However, in contrast to the positive emotions discussed above, these negative emotions do not motivate individuals to support the sitting president or his foreign policy.

¹¹ Pointing to hope and confidence as motivating public opinion is not entirely new. Some empirical evidence was already found to the importance of mobilizing hope and confidence for the success of election campaigns (Just, Crigler, and Belt 2007), and for supporting the government in times of crisis (Gross, Brewer, and Aday 2009). However, such studies are relatively rare compared to the abundance of studies on the role of negative emotions in politics.

Figure 1.1. Summary of Argument



CHAPTER 2

FROM EVENTS TO RALLY-POINTS: A COMPARATIVE-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN SECURITY CRISES SINCE 1950

On the evening of January 16, 1991, President George Bush, sitting by his desk in the Oval Office, made a twelve minutes televised statement to the nation in which he announced that the US and allies have opened a military attack against Iraq. There was nothing surprising about this announcement, which followed months of preparations that were broadcast by the media to the homes of most Americans. Nonetheless, the effect of Bush's statement on public opinion was dramatic: Overnight, presidential job approval rating increased by about 20 points to 83 percent. When ground assault started, on February 23, Bush's approval rating peaked at nearly 90 percent. Seemingly, this rally-round-the-flag effect has a simple explanation: Whenever the US stands at the center of militarized conflicts, Americans feel a patriotic obligation to support the county's elected leader. Nevertheless, a broader look at the US's military history does not support this interpretation: Out of dozens major war and security crisis events in which the US has been involved, only a few have resulted in considerable increases in presidential job approval rating.

Intrigued by this puzzle, this chapter asks the following question: Under what conditions and through which processes do war and security-crisis events become rally-points? For example, how come the announcement of the Gulf War generated a dramatic increase in Bush's popularity, but his announcement of the invasion of Somalia in December 1992 did not? Or, why did the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran in November 1979 and the resulting Iran hostage crisis give rise to a RRTF period even though none of the hostages was killed, but the

bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, in which a dozen American citizens died, was not followed by a rally period?

Thus far, the study of the RRTF phenomenon has mostly used regression-based analysis to estimate the average effects of independent variables on presidential job approval. Regression analysis estimates the *average* effects of explanatory variables on the *size* of a continuous outcome—for example, presidential job approval rating—or on the *likelihood* of a certain categorical outcome—for example, the likelihood that a person would approve of the president’s job. However, the regression-based approach suffers from three major limitations. First, by treating presidential job approval rating as a continuous variable, many studies have failed to draw a *qualitative* distinction between minor changes of public opinion and RRTF periods: In a RRTF period, a non-popular president becomes popular, or a president who is already popular becomes extremely popular. In contrast, in more minor changes of public opinion, the popularity of the president remains qualitatively the same (for instance, a moderately-popular president becomes slightly more popular, but not very popular). As we shall see, this chapter overcomes this limitation by developing a coding scheme that allows to distinguish analytically between major rally-points and more minor increases in presidential job approval rating.

Second, regression analysis provides only correlational evidence of causality. For example, studies have found that wars for restraining foreign aggressor are more likely to be followed by RRTF periods, or have, on average, a larger contribution to presidential popularity than wars aimed at political intervention in foreign countries (Eichenberg 2005; Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2009:chap.4; Jentleson 1992; Jentleson and Britton 1998). However, whereas some military invasions officially aimed to restrain foreign aggressor such as the two Gulf Wars gave birth to major RRTF periods, others did not, as was the case of the Korean War. Similarly,

whereas some wars of political intervention such as the invasions of Lebanon in 1958 and Grenada in 1983 did not produce rally effects, the 1989 invasion of Panama did turn into a major rally-point. Regression analysis thus cannot explain why some of the events that models predict to have become rally-points actually did not generate this effect, while other events that according to their characteristics as measured by the independent variables in the regression model were not “supposed” to turn into rally-points, actually did become rally-points.

The main reason for this limitation is the nomothetic logic that guides most quantitative studies in the field, which leads scholar to develop explanatory models that cut across all cases. Consequently, in order to estimate the general “effects” of variables on presidential approval rating, studies usually collect data that can be measured reliably and accurately across all cases such as the employment rates at the time of events or the number of time events were mentioned on the front page of a newspaper. This approach has been very successful in detecting general patterns, but it has a price tag attached: Studies that apply it often do not look deeply enough into important aspects of cases that are more difficult to measure quantitatively but may nonetheless account for the variation among cases that regression models leave unexplained. For example, the analysis in this chapter shows that establishing an “enemy” prior to security crises has been an important pre-condition for the emergence of major RRTF periods. However, because it is difficult to develop a standard measure of “established enemy”, this variable has never been used in regression analysis aimed to explain the RRTF phenomenon.

Third, regression-based studies usually do not explore the possibility that the RRTF effect has emerged through different processes. The reason for this limitation has less to do with the technical features of regression analysis. Rather, this limitation may be attributed once again to the nomothetic logic of investigation: Researchers who search for general patterns across all

cases tend to avoid in-depth investigation of single cases and clusters of cases that might have developed in different historical trajectories.

In order to move from correlation one step closer to causation, this chapter follows the logic of comparative historical analysis (Mahoney 2003; Skocpol 1984; Stinchcombe 1978). On the one hand, it compares different rally-points in order to detect common conditions that are, in turn, suspected of causing the RRTF outcome. On the other hand, rally-points are also contrasted with other similar events that have *not* produced rally effects, because this allows to single out the *configurations* of conditions that were present *only* in rally-points, thus further substantiating their causal role.

Furthermore, in order understand why certain events have given birth to RRTF periods, we need to look both at *circumstances* and *action*, and investigate how they had jointly caused the emergence of historical RRTF periods. For “circumstances”, I shall emphasize the specific characteristics of events and their historical context, while for “action” I will investigate whether and how the sitting president reacted publicly to each event.

This chapter applies the qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) method (Ragin 1987; Ragin 2008a; Rihoux and Ragin 2009) in order to identify the processes of transitions of events into rally-points. QCA is an analytical technique that uses Boolean algebra to apply the logic of qualitative comparison to small or intermediate-size data sets. The qualitative element of the investigation is achieved by the use of variable-rich data sets that thoroughly characterize each case and allow for comprehensive case-comparison. Computer algorithms maximize the number of comparisons that are made across the cases. Ultimately, QCA detects causal processes in the form of combinations of conditions and an outcome, which QCA distinguishes from combinations of conditions that do not include the outcome. Each outcome of interest may be the

product of one or several combinations of conditions. In this study, QCA helps identifying the configurations of conditions that distinguish rally-points from other events, but it does not show how these conditions are linked to the outcome. In a second step, I therefore discuss in more detail the *processes* through which major war-events and security crises have transformed into rally-points.

By using QCA, this study overcomes several limitations of previous research. First, it effectively differentiates the configurations of conditions that were present *only* in major rally-points from the configurations of conditions that were present in other events, such that the causal claims produced in this chapter do not have a probabilistic form. Second, QCA allows a given outcome to be the result of multiple trajectories—i.e., different empirical processes or “pathways”—that are expressed by different configurations of conditions. Third, QCA provides a more complete solution than standard regression, because while each configuration of condition explains only a few of the RRTF cases, the entire set of detected configurations explains all the cases. Finally, QCA is an effective tool for analyzing small and intermediate data sets, the kind of data sets that comparative historians can build without compromising their case-specific analytical sensitivity. In this chapter, QCA is applied to a data set that contains 54 events. Regression analysis, in contrast, would encounter serious problems when analyzing such a small but variable-rich data set.

Now that the analytical considerations have been clarified, I can turn to discuss the substantive expectations that I had when approaching data analysis. This will be followed by discussion of the data and the findings.

PRELIMINARY EXPECTATIONS

The literature suggests that war-related events and security crises are likely to boost the popularity of the sitting US president, but not all events that belong to this category have generated significant RRTF effects. This chapter proposes that RRTF periods emerge when war-events and security crises are widely perceived as challenging the international prestige of the nation and as opportunities to reclaim or enhance that prestige. In light of this emphasis on the symbolic international status of the nation, I propose that for war-events and security crises to develop into RRTF periods, two conditions must be present. First, the political leadership must actively pursue nationalist framing of the situation: If an American target was attacked, this needs to be presented as an “attack on the nation”, and if the US used its military power to reign a foreign country, official rhetoric should claim that the goal of the operation is to save the lives of Americans or to protect the core values of the nation, its honor, or its dignity—as opposed to rhetoric that justifies wars in humanitarian terms or as a means to achieve regime change in another country or to guarantee regional peace.¹

Second, nationalist sentiment is activated not solely *in favor* of the nation, but also *against* adversaries. As Mouffe (1993:2) explains, collective identities are always constructed through “constitutive others”, but this differentiation takes the friend/enemy form when the other “begins to be perceived as negating our identity, as putting in question our very existence”

¹ A similar argument has been made by scholars who analyzed the content of presidential rhetoric during wars and security crises and found a frequent usage of American cultural tropes such as “democracy”, “liberty”, “patriotism”, and “mission” (Gustainis 1993; Hutcheson, Domke, Billeaudeau, and Garland 2004; Longue and Patton 1982). However, the focus of these studies is on the rhetoric itself, rather than on the influence of the rhetoric on public opinion. Perhaps for this reason, this argument has not yet taken roots in the literature on public opinion during wars in general, and in the literature on the RRTF phenomenon in particular. Nonetheless, during data analysis, I did check whether RRTF effects could be attributed to presidential rhetoric that announced that the goal of military interventions was to bring democracy and civil liberties to other peoples. The results indicate that the presence of such a revisionist agenda is not a necessary condition for the emergence of RRTF periods. Some of the cases in which no major rally effects emerged despite an explicit revisionist agenda are the invasions of the Dominican Republic in 1965 and Grenada in 1983, and the Occupation of Haiti in 1994. In contrast, the Gulf War in 1991 and the Iraq War in 2003 generated massive RRTF effects even though presidential rhetoric initially did not set as a goal for the invasions to promote democracy and civil rights in Kuwait or in Iraq.

(Mouffe 1993:3). In this type of antagonistic relationship identification with the national group is the strongest. Therefore, the emergence of RRTF periods requires that the president clearly define an enemy—a foreign country or a terrorist organization—against which nationalist mobilization can emerge.

An additional scenario is related to the unique status of the US as a world superpower. As a superpower, the U.S. has launched several military invasions officially aimed to help other peoples in domestic or regional conflicts (Lebanon 1958, Korea 1950, Somalia 1992, Gulf War 1991). To be sure, some Americans tend to support this type of military intervention, either because they believe that the US should play a central role in world politics (Brewer et al. 2004; Herrmann, Tetlock and Visser 1999; Holsti 1992; Wittkopf 1990) or because they empathize with oppressed peoples (Crowson 2009; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989). Nonetheless, I suggest that in order to become popular, this type of military intervention needs to trigger widespread nationalist sentiment associated with a sense of collective superiority. This symbolic charge is created when the United Nations appoints the U.S. as the guarantor of world order, because this conveys a recognition of the moral authority and the military supremacy of the US, thereby making the war a test for both. However, in order that the public would perceive the situation as a test for the role of the US as the “leader of the free world”, the UN authorization must be communicated to the public by the president, and, as with the other two pathways to the rally, an enemy that is to be defeated must be clearly defined. In this third pathway, nationalist rhetoric is suppressed because it would interfere with the “leader of the free world” rhetoric that demands a different self-representation in the global arena. As we will see below, however, the public at large still sees this leadership role as an expression of the supreme standing of the nation in the

world—rather than a role derived from the legality and legitimacy of international institutions such as the UN Security Council.

Put in the form of hypotheses, my preliminary expectations were the following. I expected RRTF periods to emerge if the president used nationalist rhetoric and pointed to a clear adversary in one of two circumstances. First, the presidential nationalist rhetoric addressed a major war event (Hypothesis 1). Second, the presidential rhetoric followed an attack on American targets (Hypothesis 2). In addition, I expected RRTF periods to emerge during military invasions authorized by the UN if the president communicated the authorization and pointed to a clear enemy (Hypothesis 3).

These three hypotheses provided the initial set of explanatory variables. However, data analysis in QCA is an *iterative* process, in which theoretical arguments and their corresponding sets of variables are repeatedly modified in effort to produce an explanatory model that fully (or almost fully) differentiates the “positive” cases from the “negative” cases. This form of analysis follows the comparative history praxis of “[moving] back and forth between theory and history in many iterations of analysis as they formulate new concepts, discover novel explanations, and refine preexisting theoretical expectations in light of detailed case evidence” (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003:13). As a result of applying this principle of investigation, during data analysis several of my preliminary expectations were modified, as discussed below.

In addition to my three hypotheses, several other hypotheses will be explored as well, each representing one of the leading alternative explanations of the RRTF phenomenon in the US. Two hypotheses are derived from the “rational-public” argument. First, based on the rationalist emphasis on “successful events”, we can expect successful military operations by US forces to be followed by RRTF periods (Hypothesis 4). Another rationalist argument suggests

that individuals assess the success chances of foreign policies by considering whether their objectives are feasible or not. Specifically, according to this argument we should expect RRTF periods to follow military operations by US forces if their official goal was to restrain foreign aggressors that have acted against the US national security interests or to provide humanitarian aid, and not to occur in response to wars of political intervention (Hypothesis 5). Approaches that focus on the role of “opinion leaders” who steer public opinion in the US provide us with the last couple of hypotheses. In line with the *elite consensus* thesis, we can expect military actions and security crises that were followed by bipartisan support for the presidential policies to generate RRTF periods (Hypothesis 6). Finally, the *realist* approach expects RRTF periods to follow events that were framed as posing security threats to the US (Hypothesis 7).

DATA

For this research, I assembled a data set with 54 events from 1950 to 2006 (the database could not be extended to include events that happened before 1950, because opinion polls have not yet been well developed thus the data they provide are incomplete and are less reliable than in later periods). An initial list of events was compiled from three sources: First, in their book on how presidential policies are affected by public opinion polls, Brace and Hinckley (1992:185-187) provide a list of 106 events that have taken place between 1949 and 1988. Second, in a study that investigates the relationship between the popularity of US presidents and their effectiveness in the legislative arena from 1953 to 1980, Ostrom and Simon (1985) compiled a list of 85 “unanticipated events”—for instance, security crises, major diplomatic events, or events related to the personal life of the president. Third, Newman and Forcehimes (2009) set a goal for themselves to create an exhaustive list of “rally events”, while implementing new and

arguably better selection criteria than the criteria applied in previous studies. Specifically, they added “centrality of media coverage” as a necessary condition for coding events as rally points. Newman and Forcehimes’s coding effort resulted in a list of 120 events that have taken place between 1953 and 2006.

All three sources record both potential “positive” rally-points—events that had the potential of causing presidential approval ratings to increase—and potential “negative” rally points—events that might cause presidential approval ratings to decline (for instance, a sudden economic downturn). When compiling the candidate list of events, I dropped all “negative” rally events and kept only events that could enhance presidential approval rating. To these, I added a handful of events based on two other prominent publications (Eichenberg 2005; Jentleson and Britton 1998). The resulting preliminary list of candidates contained 88 events.

To create the final list of events from this candidate list, I applied two additional selection criteria. First, an event must have made it to the front page of the New York Times (NYT). The NYT is often used as an indicator for coverage of events by the national media. Obviously, sufficient media coverage is a pre-condition for an international event to trigger a RRTF period in the United States (Baker and Oneal 2001; Baum and Groeling 2005; Lian and Oneal 1993). Second, because of my specific interest in the relationship between conflict and support for the president, I limited the scope of the final list to acts of war and other security events. Thus, for instance, the signing of peace or ceasefire agreements is a type of events this study does not cover (For the complete list of variables and data sources see Appendix 1).

Coding RRTF events

Past quantitative research has treated any increase in president's job approval rating that could be attributed to a particular event as a RRTF effect, thus even events that were followed by minor increases of one to four points were considered "rally-point". This approach is problematic because it rips the meaning of the term "rally-round-the-flag", which is useful for distinguishing *extraordinary* boosts to the popularity of presidents from more modest increases. Therefore, in this study, a more qualitative approach to coding RRTF events was employed.

After carefully inspecting changes in presidential approval rates following each of the events on the list, the following coding scheme was applied. (1) *Non-RRTF events*: This category contains events that were followed by one or two points increase in presidential job approval rating, decline of approval, or no change. (2) *Major RRTF events*: in this category, sudden and sharp increases in presidential job approval ratings were recorded following the events. In addition, major RRTF events were followed by considerable declines in presidential job *disapproval* ratings, indicating that many citizens who have previously held oppositional views of the president transitioned to support. In all but one major RRTF event, the difference between support for the president and opposition to him has increased by at least twenty points (for example, support increased by nine points and opposition decreased by eleven points, totaling a change of twenty points). The exception is the 1989 invasion of Panama, which was coded "major rally event" even though the difference between support and opposition increased by eighteen points only, because the overall presidential job approval rating following the invasion was extremely high (80%) and disapproval rating was very low (11%).

(3) *Minor RRTF events*: events in this category were followed by more than a couple of points increase in presidential job approval rating, which indicates some "rally" effect, but the

magnitude of the effect was too small to deserve the coding of “major RRTF event”. Typically, in “minor RRTF events”, the difference between support and opposition increased by six to ten points (for instance, presidential job approval rating increased by five points and his job disapproval rating decreased by three points, totaling an eight points change). In contrast to major RRTF periods that only follow major war and peace events, smaller improvements of presidential popularity rating are also caused by other factors such good news on the economy, small market booms, or the passing of a popular law initiated by the president.² Therefore, the categories of minor RRTF and non-RRTF events were combined during data analysis, and jointly they provided the contrast to major RRTF events.

Two additional categories were created in order to deal with a few cases that did not fit to any of the previous categories. (4) Few events were coded as *borderline major RRTF events* because they were followed by boosts to presidential popularity that were too strong to be coded “minor” but too weak to be coded “major”. For instance, the 1986 air raid on Libya is a “borderline” case because it was followed by six points increase in Reagan’s job approval rating and seven points decrease in his job disapproval rating. During data analysis, the borderline cases were initially recoded as minor-rally events thus were effectively treated as non-rally points. The findings that are presented below are based on this coding. Then, in order to check the possibility of coding bias, an additional analysis was conducted with the borderline cases recoded as major rally-points (see results and discussion in Appendix 3). In the discussion section, a special attention will be paid to borderline cases that have been on the verge of becoming major rally-points.

² Significant rally-effects followed the Vietnam peace accord in January 1973 and the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in September 1993, in which the US was the main mediator.

(5) *Ambiguous cases*: in a couple of instances—the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion and the onset of the Afghanistan War in 2001—the president was already very popular prior to the event. Under this condition, even a small increase in presidential job approval rating might represent a major RRTF effect. In addition, Operation Desert Fox (the American-British bombing campaign against Iraq in December 16-19, 1998) was coded “ambiguous case” despite a considerable increase in President Clinton’s job approval rating, because the effect of this military operation could not be disentangled from the effect of The House’s decision to impeach Clinton in the Monica Lewinsky affair (December 19, 1998). All three ambiguous cases were initially excluded from the analysis. However, to check the possibility of “selection bias”, the three ambiguous cases were later reintroduced into the analysis. It turns out that the Afghanistan War fits well one of the pathways for the development of major RRTF (“Pathway 1” that is presented in Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1). The Bay of Pigs invasion, in contrast, does not fit in any of the pathways. However, the ambiguity of this case further increases upon closer inspection of the data, which reveals that Kennedy’s job approval ratings have started to increase already a few weeks *prior* to the invasion, perhaps because Kennedy seemed to have been taking a firmer line regarding communism. That firm line was expressed, for instance, in Kennedy’s national address on the advance of communism in Laos, which he delivered on March 23, 1961, almost a month before the Bay of Pigs. In the third Ambiguous event, operation “Desert Fox” in Iraq in December 1998, it seems clearer that the event was *not* a rally point, because the increase in presidential job approval rating has not started with the attack in Iraq. Instead, Clinton’s job approval rating rose only after December 18, the day in which the House of Representatives decided to impeach him.

Data for the “RRTF” variable came from two sources: The Roper Center at the University of Connecticut, and the American Presidency Project at the University of California

in Santa Barbara. In both sources, data sets have been compiled from various public opinion polls. In order to avoid measurement errors that are associated with differences in sampling design and wording of questions, whenever possible, coding decisions were made by looking at data collected by the *same* polling organization at different points of time. Furthermore, whenever possible, I first made the coding decisions based on the data collected in Gallup polls and then looked at other polls for confirmation. (For the complete list of events and their RRTF coding, see Appendix 2)

Explanatory variables

All independent variables have a binary format (1,0). Data for coding these variables were gathered from two types of sources: First, numerous secondary resources were used, primarily academic writing on specific events, US presidents, or particular historical periods. Second, major newspapers—the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and the Washington Post—were used for reconstructing the official framing of events, for assessing the reactions of other political actors, and for evaluating the intensity of media coverage.

Type of event: According to the argument outlined above, three types of events have resulted in RRTF periods. First, “*military invasion*” is defined as ground assault in the territory of another country. Second, “*war escalation*” is defined as event that deviates from previously more moderate conduct of conflict. Third, “*attack on American target*” may be either an act of a rival state or an act of a terrorist organization against an American target either in the US or abroad.

Two variables measure aspects of presidential framing of events. First, the variable “*identification of enemy*” codes whether the president named a country or a particular terrorist

organization as the enemy that confronted the US during the event. Second, the variable “*nationalist rhetoric*” is coded “1” if the president appealed directly to national sentiment, as defined by one of the following conditions: The president called for solidarity with fellow Americans whose lives military action was aimed to save, described the military conflict as a test for the US’s capacity to maintain its supreme international status, or devoted a significant part of the speech to the “American spirit” and the core values of the nation. In many cases, a presidential address combined all these themes.

“*UN authorization*” is a variable that records whether military action was authorized by the United Nations Security Council or not, and whether the UN authorization was mentioned by the president in his national address on the war.

During data analysis, three additional binary variables were coded in order to maximize the fit of the explanatory model. First, the variable “*attack on American civilian target*” is coded “1” if the attacked American target was *not* a military installation. Second, the variable “*prior enemy construction*” is coded “1” if the other side to a conflict had a history of publicly known confrontation with the US or if the White House has launched a campaign in order to constitute the opponent as “enemy” of the US *prior* to the event. Third, “*prior fiasco*” is a variable that records whether an event has been directly connected in the public conversation to a previous event or a set of events that had caused a great embarrassment to the US on the international stage. An example for this would be the Cuban Missile Crisis that was closely tied in the public conversation to the Bay of Pigs fiasco. The next section provides more information about these three variables and their analytical significance.

Several variables were coded in order to test the *rational public* explanation that emphasizes successful war-events and the official objectives of military operation. One variable

records whether an event was a clearly successful military operation by US forces (or was presented in the media as such). Three variables record the policy objectives of military operations as *humanitarian*, *restraining a foreign aggressor*, or as *intervention in internal political affairs of a foreign country* (some military operations fall into more than one policy objective category).

The realist approach suggests that presidents mobilize public opinion by pointing out threats to national security. This hypothesis was tested with a binary variable that was coded “1” if the presidential address connected events to security threats.

The *elite consensus* argument was tested through a variable that recorded whether the leadership of the opposition party stood behind the presidential policy in the aftermath of events or not. Two versions of this variable were used: In the first version, bipartisan support was coded “1” if the opposition party refrained from explicitly criticizing the president; the second version was more restrictive, recording bipartisan support only if the leadership of the opposition party expressed *explicit support* for the presidential policies.

Finally, an additional set of variables was derived from studies that have suggested that the size of RRTE effects varies by domestic economic and political factors: Unemployment and inflation rates, the average level of economic optimism or pessimism, the popularity of presidents on the eve of events, the party of the sitting president, having or not having a divided government, and whether or not another war was ongoing (Baker and Oneal 2001; Baum 2002; Edwards and Swenson 1997). Because these variables represent arguments that do not explain *why* RRTE periods emerge in the first place, they did not test independent explanations, but were used instead to check the robustness of the analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 2.1 presents the distributions of the main variables that were used for testing hypotheses. During the preparation of the data for analysis, eight of the 54 events were dropped: Five cases were dropped because there were not enough data to assess their effects on public opinion. The other three were dropped because they were coded “ambiguous RRTF-events”, but as reported above the three ambiguous events were later reintroduced into the analysis in order to examine the possibility of selection bias. The final list of events thus contains 46 events.

Table 2.1. Distributions of Binary Variables (N=46)

Variable	Percent coded “1”
Major RRTF Event (outcome)	15.22
Military invasion	19.57
War escalation	10.87
Attack on American target	36.96
Attack on American civilian target	19.57
Prior fiasco	21.74
UN authorization	8.70
Identification of enemy	50.00
Prior enemy construction	67.39
Nationalist rhetoric	34.78
Clear success	23.91
Goal to restrain foreign aggressor	34.78
Goal to intervene in foreign country’s political affairs	23.91
Goal of humanitarian mission	6.52
Bipartisanship 1 (lack of oppositional voices)	36.91
Bipartisanship 2 (expressed support by leadership of opposition party)	73.91
President mentioned threat to US security interests	20.10

Data analysis was conducted via the fs/QCA software in three steps. First, I entered the variables into a “truth table” (Ragin 1994) and eliminated configurations of conditions that were not present in any of the events (see Appendix 4). Then, I used a minimization function to combine configurations by eliminating logically redundant segments. For example, let the letter A denote an outcome of interest that is to be explained by three variables: B, C, and D. We shall

denote the presence or absence of a condition by capital and lowercase letters respectively, following conventional Boolean notation. Suppose that our analysis points to two configurations of variables that are consistent with the outcome: $A = B * C * D$ and $A = B * C * d$. The two configurations differ only with respect to condition D, which is present in the first configuration but absent in the second. The “D” condition is thus logically redundant, because if B and C are present then the outcome A is present no matter whether D is present or absent. Therefore, we can drop this condition and combine the two configurations to get one parsimonious configuration: $A = B * C$. Step 2 resulted in a list of parsimonious but non-exclusive configurations (meaning that events could be “explained” by more than one configuration). Therefore, in the final step, I used counterfactual analysis to test the plausibility of combining segments of configurations from step 2.³ The result, presented in Table 2.2, is an “intermediary” solution that balances complexity with parsimony, and contains four mutually exclusive pathways. These four configurations effectively explain all seven major RRTF events in the list, as can be learned from the solution coverage score of 1.000.

Table 2.2. Pathways to RRTF

Pathway	Military invasion	War escalation	American civilian target	Prior fiasco	Enemy identified	Enemy construction	UN authorization	Nationalist rhetoric	Number of events
1	+	<i>or</i> +		+	+	+		+	3
2			+		+	+		+	2
3			+	+	+	+			1
4	+				+	+	+		1

Note: solution coverage = 1.000, solution consistency = 1.000

Overall, the findings support my three hypotheses, but they also suggest some revisions. Two conditions are present in all four pathways. First, the definition of a clear opponent in a conflict—i.e., a rival state or a terrorist organization—by the president was an expected

³ For discussion of the conceptual and technical aspects of counterfactual analysis in QCA see Ragin 2008b:50-53.

necessary condition in Hypotheses 1-3. Second, the prior construction of the opponent in a conflict as enemy of the US. This condition, which was not included in my preliminary hypotheses, modifies one of my main arguments: Naming the enemy in a conflict is indeed a necessary condition for mobilizing public opinion, as I expected. However, many Americans might respond with suspicion to a decision to go to war against an enemy they are not already familiar with. Therefore, for a major rally effect to emerge, the “enemy” must be constituted *prior* to the event in one of two ways: Either the same enemy already has a history of confrontation with the US, or the administration has launched a campaign, prior to the event, aiming to convince the American people that a foreign country or its leadership has turned into an enemy worth fighting against. A well-defined and pre-established “enemy” facilitates the transition of event into rally-point, because it can easily become part of the narrative of conflict and symbolic challenge to the nation. Note that that having a pre-established enemy is not a trivial condition. The discussion section describes several examples of events that have not turned into major rally-points mostly because they have not included an official identification of a well-established enemy.

In line with Hypotheses 1, major war events (i.e., the onset of war or its escalation) have resulted in RRTF periods if presidents used nationalist rhetoric when publically discussing the events and their implications. However, during data analysis, it turned out that, the effect of nationalist rhetoric on public opinion depends on the *historical context*. To account for this contextual variation, an additional variable was coded and was added to the model: The presence of prior international fiasco that provided the context for public attitude to form around the desire to reclaim national honor. In other words, major war-events turned into rally-points if they were

seen as opportunities for the US to demonstrate its supreme power and reclaim international prestige after suffering a major setback in previous events.⁴

As expected by Hypothesis 2, foreign attacks against American targets have transformed into rally-points if they were responded to with nationalist rhetoric by the president. However, here too data analysis resulted in a modification of my initial argument. It turns out that only attacks on American *civilian* targets (i.e., targets that are not military bases) facilitated the emergence of major RRTF periods. Perhaps this is because attacks on civilians are perceived as a challenge for the government's capacity to secure the freedom and sovereignty of the American people, or may even be perceived as an attack on "the people" itself. This issue is further discussed below.

In line with Hypothesis 3, military invasions generate RRTF periods if the UN Security Council had appointed the US as the leader of a coalition force aimed to restore world order, and if the sitting US president pointed to a clear and well established enemy.

An additional pathway emerged inductively from data analysis. This pathway covers an attack on American civilian target—the 1975 Mayaguez incident—that, because of historical circumstances that are elaborated upon in the following discussion section, has transformed into a major rally-point despite a presidential rhetoric that lacked a clear nationalist tone.

⁴ Jon Western (2005) makes a similar argument about public support for wars, suggesting that it always a function of two critical elements: The information the public receives from the political elite, and the public's predispositions. Both Western and I argue that the public's experience in previous international conflicts sets both opportunity and constraints for the elite to make the case for taking military action. However, there is a profound difference between Western's argument and mine: He proposes that mobilizing public support for war initiatives depends on the elite's capacity to present a "credible threat" and a plausible "theory of victory". In contrast, I argue that what the elite mobilizes during RRTF periods is nationalist sentiment of superiority and positive emotions rather than a sense of threat. Nonetheless, much of the disagreement between our arguments may be attributed to different outcomes of interest: For Western, the outcome of interest is the public approval for wars. In contrast, I am interested in major shifts in *presidential* job approval rating. Indeed, some of the military operations that, based on Western definition, were successfully sold by the president to the Public—for instance, Lebanon and Grenada, nonetheless did not turn into major rally periods, as I define them, because they did not symbolically challenge the honor of the nation.

Data analysis also included testing hypotheses 4-7 that represent alternative theoretical explanations. This part of the analysis was conducted in four steps. First, the variables associated with each explanation were tested in separate models, but these models had poor outcome coverage scores. Therefore, in the second step, the variables that code the type of events (e.g., military invasion, war escalation, etc.) were added to all models. The idea behind this step was to allow different types of events to have different pathways to RRTF. While this addition greatly improved the coverage of all models, it nonetheless did not produce satisfactory results (see Appendix 5). These findings thus suggest that none of the alternative arguments—the rationalist arguments about the importance of success (Hypothesis 4) or the public’s assessment of policy objectives (Hypothesis 5), the *elite consensus* thesis (Hypothesis 6), and the realist notion that presidents mobilize public support effectively when framing the situation as a threat to national security interests (Hypothesis 7)—is sufficient for explaining rally effects. In the third step, variables from all four explanations—the two *rational public* explanations, the *elite consensus* thesis, and the manipulation of threat argument— were grouped into a single model, but this did not produce a theoretically coherent solution (see Appendix 5).

To check the robustness of my solution that is presented in Table 2.2, in the fourth step the variables associated with alternative explanations were added to the variables that form my own explanation. I did not find any evidence that might support hypotheses 4, 6, 7, but I found that the variable that records wars that were fought to restrain foreign aggressors can substitute for the “nationalist rhetoric” variable. At a first glance, this finding seems to support the rationalist argument about the public’s assessment of policy objectives (Hypothesis 5). Nevertheless, for this model to sustain high coverage of the outcome, the “previous fiasco” condition must be present as well, suggesting that not the policy objective *per se* mattered, but

the perceived implications that the confrontations with foreign enemies had to the honor of the nation.

Finally, the robustness of my findings was further examined by adding a set of control variables that previous research has found to be associated with the *size* of RRTF effects: Unemployment and inflation rates, level of economic optimism/pessimism, the popularity of presidents on the eve of events, party of the president, divided/undivided government, and whether or not another war was ongoing. Adding these variables turned out not to change the basic configurations of variables that my explanation rests on. While some of these economic and political conditions can certainly help to explain differences in the magnitude of RRTF periods, they do not seem to be necessary to understand the emergence of the RRTF phenomenon as such.⁵

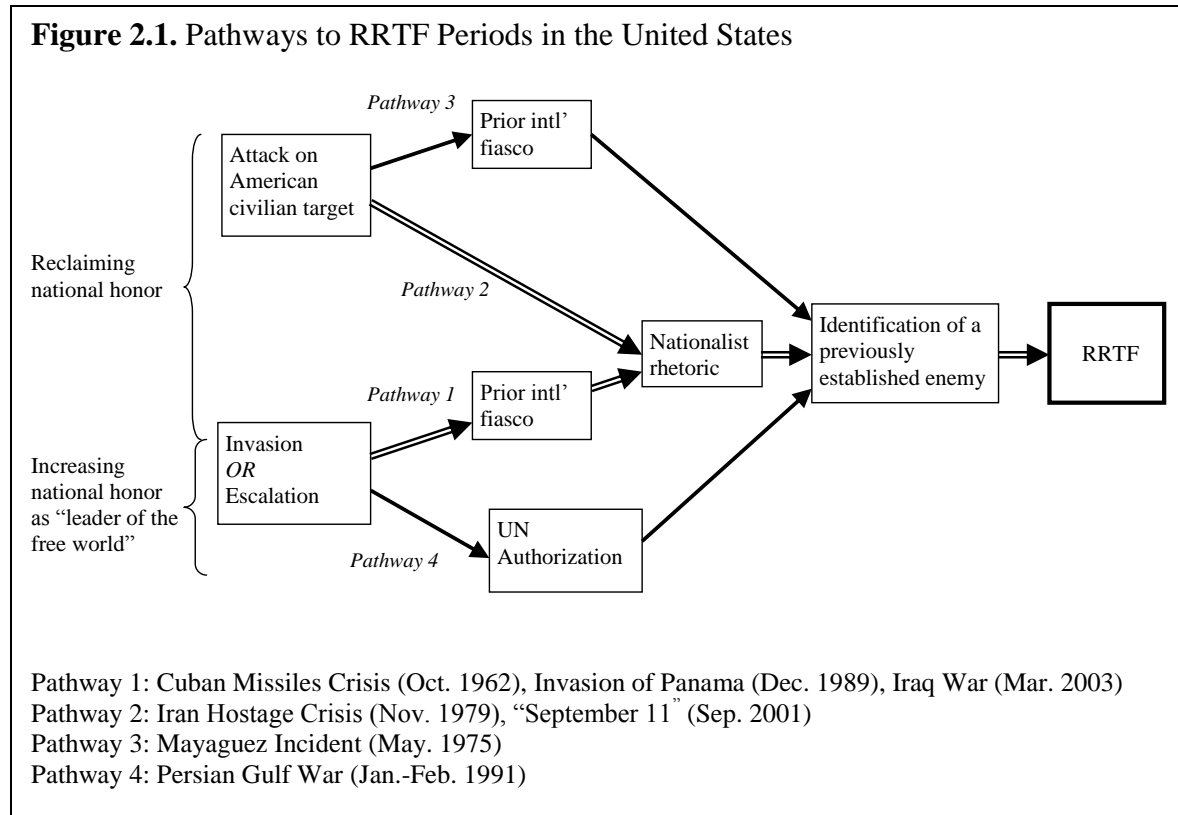
DISCUSSION

The four configurations of conditions that emerged from the data analysis share a common thread: they represent processes through which events have been charged with the symbolic meaning of putting the international prestige of the U.S. to test, thereby inciting popular nationalist sentiment. Two scenarios link national honor to super-power status: In the first scenario, events have been successfully constructed as opportunities for the US to reclaim its national honor after its super-power status has been challenged. In the second scenario, the US has actively claimed an international leadership role in military coalition operation aimed to restore world order, thus reinforcing the national honor of the world leading state. These two

⁵ A separate variable coded the number of American ground forces that participated in military actions. This variable shows that all military invasions that have turned into rally points involved sending a sizable force (the smallest was in Panama: 26,000). However, by itself, deploying a sizable force was found to be insufficient for generating a major RRTF effect.

scenarios are presented in Figure 2.1, which provides the structure for this discussion section.

Figure 2.1 divides rally processes in two categories: The first category includes pathways 1 to 3 in which the RRTF effect has emerged out of the desire to reclaim national honor, and the second category contains pathway 4 in which the rally effect is the product of assuming the role of “leader of the free world” that increases the prestige of the nation in the global arena.



The aim of the following discussion is to ground the insights that emerged from QCA in a deeper understanding of the concrete historical cases. In order to demonstrate the importance of key elements in each pathway, major rally-points are contrasted with other events that have not become major rally-points. This analysis relies on the secondary literature as well as a close reading of newspapers. The discussion also includes some quotes from letters to the press. These quotes are *not* part of the empirical materials this study analyzed, but are used anecdotally in

order to add some flavor to the otherwise rather dry analytical discussion. Most importantly, these quotes demonstrate the plausibility of my retrospective reading of historical situations by showing that the meanings I attribute to historical events were indeed shared by lay people in real historical time.

I. Reclaiming National Honor (Pathways 1-3)

Five of the seven major RRTF events in the list are covered by the two pathways at the center of Figure 2.1 that are marked with double lines: the invasions of Panama in 1992 and Iraq in 2003, the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, the Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979, and the “September 11” attack in 2001. In both pathways, public opinion has been mobilized by presidents who directly appealed to nationalist sentiment and pointed a blaming finger to a well established enemy against which the nation could unite. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the success of nationalist rhetoric has been conditioned by historical circumstances: Presidents could successfully appeal to national sentiment if prior events have created a widespread feeling that the national honor of America was compromised and needed to be reclaimed. This argument is further supported by pathway 3, which shows that under certain circumstances popular desire to restore national prestige can mobilize RRTF even without nationalist rhetoric by the president. I shall now turn to discuss each one of these pathways separately.

Pathway 1

Three dramatic war events have become major rally-points when presidents used nationalist rhetoric and defined the enemies against which the public could unite: The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the 1989 invasion of Panama, and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In his national

address on the Cuban Missile Crisis, on October 22, 1962, President Kennedy framed the Soviets' actions as a provocative breach of the status quo in the Western Hemisphere, and then appealed to national sentiment by referring to the American spirit and to the commitments of the US as a world superpower: He stated the need to take a firm action in response to Soviet provocation as "most consistent with our character and courage as a nation and our commitment around the world," and added that "one path we shall never choose...is the path of surrender or submission."⁶

Popular nationalist sentiment was also effectively mobilized during the 1989 invasion of Panama. In his national address on the invasion of Panama, on December 20, 1989, President George Bush said that Panama's leader, General Noriega, has declared a state of war with the US, and further described an incident in which Noriega's people killed an American serviceman, wounded another servicemen, captured and tortured a third servicemen and threatened to sexually abuse his wife. Then, Bush justified the military operation as aimed to save the lives of thousands of other Americans in Panama.⁷

Fourteen years later, on the eve of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, President George Bush Jr. told the American public that "[the regime in Iraq] has a deep hatred of America and our friends. And it has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda." Though commanding a coalition of countries, Bush justified the invasion of Iraq as an act of protecting America's national security.⁸ This declaration of Bush might also fit a *realist* argument, according to which the public rallied behind Bush because he defined the war in national security

⁶ New York Times. October 23, 1962. "Text of Kennedy's Address on Moves to Meet the Soviet Build-Up in Cuba":18.

⁷ New York Times. December 21, 1989. "A transcript of Bush's address on the decision to use force in panama":A19.

⁸ New York Times. March 18, 2003. "Bush's speech on Iraq: 'Saddam Hussein and His Sons Must Leave':A14; New York Times. March 20, 2003. "Bush's speech on the start of the war":A20.

terms. Nonetheless, as a section that discusses the Iraq War will show, Americans rallied behind President Bush not because of concerns for national security *per se*, but because the war was perceived as an opportunity to reclaim national honor by defeating the Iraqi regime, which the Bush Administration effectively constructed as the nation's main enemies in the post-9/11 era.

The importance of official nationalist rhetoric and definition of an enemy becomes even clearer when the 1958 invasion of Lebanon, which lacked nationalist rhetoric, is considered. Similar to the three cases mentioned above, the main justification for military intervention in Lebanon among *policymakers* was to protect the geopolitical interests of the US: The decision to send ground troops to Lebanon followed a series of events that convinced Eisenhower that without military intervention, the entire Middle East would soon fall into the hands of pro-Nasserite, Arab nationalist forces, and that this would allow the Soviet Union to become the only dominant global force in the region (Brands 1987; Dockrill 1996; Little 1996; Stivers 1987).⁹ Nevertheless, when publically announcing the landing of the American marine and military forces in Lebanon, Eisenhower chose to play down national interests, and instead opted to the use of an internationalist language, perhaps in order not to jeopardize his efforts to win the support of the UN Security Council: He stated that the primary reason for his decision to send American troops to Lebanon was helping the Government of Lebanon to preserve its

⁹ On February 1, 1958, Egypt and Syria announced their unification through the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR); in response, two weeks later, Iraq and Jordan announced a federation of the two states. On March 23, King Saud of Saudi Arabia succumbed to a pressure by pro-Nasserite forces in his country and yielded effective power to Crown Prince Faisal who the US administration considered to be pro-Nasserite. Then, on July 14, a successful coup was conducted in Iraq by army officers, which ended the short-lived federation with Jordan, and killed King Faisal and his prime minister, Nuri al-Said, who were considered Western loyalists. Though it was unclear to the White House whether Nasser himself was involved in the plot to overthrow the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq, the administration assessed that the coup was conducted by pro-Nasserite forces. This chain of events in the Middle-East increased the administration's concern that Arab Nationalism would take over the entire region, and that Western influence will be completely removed, leaving the door open to the Soviet Union to pursue greater influence in the region (Dockrill 1996; Stivers 1987).

independence and practice its right for self defense.¹⁰ The only connection Eisenhower made between the crisis in Lebanon and the Cold War was an implicit one, saying that the violence in Lebanon “*follows the pattern* of Communist aggression in Greece, Czechoslovakia, China, Korea, and Indochina” (Stivers 1987:208), yet by no means did he declare international communism to be the primary enemy to be fought in Lebanon. Thus, with a presidential rhetoric that had an internationalist tone, and did not point to a clear enemy, the “rally” effect of the intervention in Lebanon was limited to about five points increase in Eisenhower’s job approval rating, which reached a modest level of 57%.

At this point, the reader might be tempted to think that the American public rallies behind presidents whenever they frame dramatic war events in nationalist terms. However, this is clearly not the case. In fact, in only three out of seven major war events, the president’s appeal to popular nationalist sentiment succeeded and resulted in RRTF periods. The common thread of all three “positive” cases—the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the invasions of Panama and Iraq—is that they have offered the U.S. opportunities to reclaim national honor after being greatly embarrassed by prior events, as we will see in the following discussion of each of these cases.

The Cuban Missile Crisis

The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 gave President Kennedy the opportunity to show to the world and to the American people that the US was still dominating the Western Hemisphere after its reputation got a blow in the April 1961 failed US-sponsored invasion of Cuba in the Bay of Pigs. For months prior to the missile crisis, Republicans had been criticizing Kennedy for being indecisive in his foreign policy, and through their criticism they kept afresh the embarrassing memories of the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Consequently, already in early 1962, Cuba

¹⁰ Washington Post. July 16, 1958. “President’s Statement on Action in Lebanon”:A6.

was the only foreign policy issue on which Kennedy received negative public opinion rating, and most Americans wished to see the US act tougher on Cuba even before the Soviet missiles were revealed (Snyder and Borghard 2011:453). The criticism by Republicans intensified as the congressional election of November 1962 approached. Therefore, when the missile crisis was made public many Americans felt that the time had come to settle the bill with the Communist government in Cuba.¹¹ Moreover, this popular desire to reclaim the international reputation of the US probably influenced Kennedy's decision to impose a marine blockade on Cuba and to use threatening language against Cuba and the Soviet Union.¹²

A counter-argument might suggest that the rally behind Kennedy was a reaction of the public to the felt security threat. Undoubtedly, many Americans experienced a sense of threat during the missile crisis, but there are at least three reasons why we should not be satisfied with the "security threat" argument. First, evidence from multiple surveys leads Tom Smith to conclude the following:

"While the Cuban missile crisis was on most people's minds, the public was not overwhelmed by worries and did not dwell on concerns about death and nuclear survival. Nor were there notable declines in psychological well-being. Instead, psychological reactions were rather mixed and muted. Positive affect was down, [but] general happiness was up, and negative affect changed little. Likewise, measures of stress and anxiety showed little alteration and clearly presented no evidence that people were traumatized or debilitated by worries over the crisis.[...]In sum, the public did not panic, was not overcome by nuclear anxiety, and remained psychologically intact during the crisis." (Smith 2003:274)

Second, it is likely that a strong sense of security threat would have caused the American public to prefer a more careful policy over Kennedy's aggressive reaction that could have escalated into a military confrontation with Cuba, and perhaps also with the Soviet Union.

¹¹ New York Times. October 23, 1962. "Kennedy cancels campaign talks." Pp.1,18. This popular mood was also encouraged by the press: Many journalists openly expressed their own desire to see the US settling the bill with Cuba (George 2003).

¹² Scholars who examined the deliberations in the White House and in the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (ExComm) during the crisis, suggest that the administration's reaction to the crisis was not driven by a sense of security threat. Instead, it was driven by the Cold War doctrine according to which the US should never appear as weak in eyes of its enemies, and also by the concern that the American public would punish Kennedy and the Democratic Party for showing weakness (George 2003; Snyder and Borghard 2011; Stern 2003).

Theoretical support for this argument comes from psychological that have found that the experience of fear causes individual to overestimate risks and to make risk-averse choices (Huddy et al. 2005; Lerner et al. 2003; Lerner and Keltner 2001; Skitka et al. 2006). For example, Leonie Huddy and co-investigators investigated individual's emotionality in the aftermath of 9/11 and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Their study shows that individuals who experience anxiety tend to overestimate the risks associated with military initiatives and to be *less* supportive of taking military action (Huddy, Feldman and Cassese 2007). It is thus reasonable to assume that had American really believed that the Cuban Missile crisis was at risk of turning into a nuclear Armageddon, the majority of them would have preferred careful diplomacy over Kennedy's aggressive reaction.

Third, in his address to the nation Kennedy explicitly downplayed the threat element, emphasizing that Americans were already used to living "on the bull's eye" and the missile crisis thus only added to an already present danger. Therefore, rather than manipulating fear, Kennedy's reaction to the Cuban Missile Crisis was perceived as sending a firm message both to Cuba and to the Soviet Union that a year and half after the invasion of the Bay of Pigs the US was again ready to use force in order to stop any attempt to challenge its dominance in the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, many professional columnists and ordinary citizens who sent letters to the press expressed a view according to which Kennedy's decision to impose a marine blockade on Cuba showed that the U.S. was again determined to act as a world superpower in the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine (e.g., Nacos 1990:28).¹³

¹³ The symbolic aspect of positioning Soviet missiles in Cuba is likely to have been the reason for Khrushchev's decision on this move in the first place. Karl Mueller and coauthors explain that "The presence of Soviet nuclear weapons off the coast of the United States allowed Khrushchev to demonstrate a point about similar American weapons in Turkey. Now the Americans, Khrushchev believed, would learn how it felt to have a knife held close to their soft underbelly" (Mueller et al. 2006:174). "In concrete terms," they further maintain, "the missiles in Cuba did improve the nuclear balance for the Soviet Union, but not dramatically [because at that time the US held an overwhelming logistic and technological lead]" (ibid). Raymond Garthoff, who participated in the crisis deliberation

The Invasion of Panama

The December 1989 invasion of Panama too was related to a prior fiasco: The Iran Contra affair. In June 1986, the *New York Times* reported for the first time that General Manuel Noriega, Panama's ruler and a close ally of the US, was involved in drug-trafficking.¹⁴ Shortly later, it became known that the CIA had used drug money from Latin America to fund the Contra in Iran. Under these circumstances, drug trafficking from Latin America ceased to be only a health and crime problem, and became also a matter of national dignity. In turn, going after Noriega was the administration and the CIA's way of getting clean. Therefore, in its "war on drugs" campaign, the Reagan Administration depicted Noriega as the head of the snake (Scranton 1991:chap.6), and made much effort to compel him to step down, including Noriega's indictment by the US Department of Justice in drug trafficking charges on February 5, 1988.

Consequently, while the invasion of Panama had three official goals—"to restore democracy to Panama, to protect American lives and to capture General Noriega and bring him to the United States for persecution on drug-trafficking charge"¹⁵—it was mostly the war against Noriega "the drug-lord" that won the hearts and minds of Americans. For example, when interviewed by the press, grieving parents of American servicemen said that they found comfort and pride knowing that their son was killed or injured while fighting a just war against drug trafficking. Julie Otto, who lost her 19 year old son, said that "[her son] would have felt going out to oust Noriega was the right thing to do...[because he] was really against drugs. We do not feel his life was sacrificed in vain. It was for a major cause." Her husband added that "he was

as a staff-level adviser in the State Department, proposes a similar interpretation: He maintains that the Soviet missiles could not restore the balance of power between the US and the Soviet Union. Instead, the missiles in Cuba were meant to be used as a leverage to place pressure on the US to remove its military bases around the Soviet Union (Garthoff 1989).

¹⁴ Seymour Hersh, *New York Times*, June 12, 1986. "Panama Strongman Said to Trade In Drugs...":A1.

¹⁵ *New York Times*. December 20, 1989. "Ordered by Bush." P.1.

proud that his son had died fighting against drugs.” Similarly, Richard Turner, whose 19 years old son returned from Panama with a head injury, said that he supported the invasion because “the drugs Noriega was dealing were killing American kids, and now maybe that’ll stop.”¹⁶

The administration’s success in painting the target around Noriega’s head is revealed in multiple survey data collected shortly after the invasion, which suggest that about 80% of Americans supported an invasion that was aimed to overthrow Noriega, even though *few* believed that the invasion would actually result in a big reduction in the flow of drugs into the U.S.¹⁷ Furthermore, after military victory was achieved and Noriega became fugitive in his own country, nearly 60% of Americans still thought that without capturing Noriega the military intervention in Panama could not be defined as success.¹⁸ This evidence shows that for many Americans achieving the strategic goals of the military operation was not enough; instead, they demanded the head of Noriega, a dictator that the US had been nurturing for many years and became an enemy of the nation following the exposure, in the Iran Contra scandal, of his relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency. This view was expressed, for instance, in the following letter from Stanley E. Cohen of Bethesda, MD, to the Washington Post editor:

“As we contemplate the cost of restoring something resembling decent government to Panama, it is appropriate to remember that Gen. Manuel Noriega achieved power and thrived with the support of the United States, which nurtured him for his own purposes. So it is appropriate that our president accept responsibility for disposing our own Frankenstein. It is refreshing that President Bush has the integrity to clean up this mess.”¹⁹

¹⁶ New York Times. December 23, 1989. “For Military Families, Worry, Grief, and Pride”:14.

¹⁷ Gallup/Newsweek Poll, Dec, 1989; Gordon Black/USA Today Poll, Dec, 1989; ABC News Poll, Dec, 1989. Data were retrieved May-22-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

¹⁸ ABC News Poll, Dec, 1989; Los Angeles Times Poll, Dec, 1989. All data were retrieved May-22-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

¹⁹ New York Times. December 28, 1989. “Letters to the Editor”:A22.

The Iraq War

In the case of the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, public support (initially at about 76%) stemmed from the sense of humiliation brought about by the September 11 attack, and from the frustration caused by months of futile hunt for Osama Bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda. Iraq had been first mentioned by President Bush as part of the “axis of evil” in his annual State of the Union address in January 2002, and had gradually been put at the center of his foreign policy. The invasion of Iraq thus became a test case to reclaim the honor and might of America (McCartney 2004). In order to sell the plan for a “preemptive strike” against Iraq first to the media, and then to policymakers and to the general public, the George W. Bush administration launched a massive information campaign, assisted by private public relations companies (Entman 2003; Gershkoff and Kushner 2005; Hersh 2003; Schechter 2004). The campaign centered on depicting Saddam Hussein as a supporter and sponsor of anti-American terrorism in general, and as collaborator of al-Qaeda in particular, and on the claim that Iraq was alarmingly close to developing a nuclear arsenal that would threaten the US. These claims, it should be noted, were not grounded in definite intelligence estimates (Entman 2003; Kaufmann 2004; Rampton and Stauber 2003), but were actually made despite the CIA’s assessment that Iraq was not cooperating with al-Qaeda, that its contribution to anti-American terrorism was minor, and that it was not coming close to developing nuclear weapons (Hersh 2003; Kaufmann 2004; Zulaika 2009:194-195).

Nonetheless, the campaign was successful. Despite the absence of evidence to corroborate the administration’s claims, on the eve of the war, no less than 88% of respondents to polls said that they thought that Saddam Hussein was involved in supporting terrorist groups that had plans to attack the United States and 85% thought that preventing Iraq from using

weapons of mass destruction or providing them to terrorists was a good or very good reason for going to war;²⁰ 77% believed that with no military action by the US, Iraq would use weapons of mass destruction against a neighboring country,²¹ and 73% said that disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction was a realistic expectation from the war.^{22,23}

During the invasion, the American public was presented with what was portrayed as a smooth and clean military success, thus the already high level of confidence in the government and the military further increased: A week after the invasion began, an estimated 87% of Americans thought that finding conclusive evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or the facilities to develop them was likely,²⁴ 85% assessed that the goal of destroying Iraq's capabilities of producing and using WMD be achieved, and 88% said that this goal was worth going to war for. In addition, 87% thought that making the United States safer from terrorism was a goal worth going to war for.²⁵ Ultimately, the success of the campaign on public opinion was expressed in the high approval rating of Bush's decision to go to war: 76 percent.²⁶

However, the campaign on public opinion was successful not simply because it constructed a security threat, as argued for example by Willer (2004), but because it reframed the crisis of September 11 and made it part of a broader "war" against America and its values,

²⁰ Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, Mar, 2003. Retrieved Aug-31-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

²¹ Princeton Survey Research Associates/Newsweek Poll, Mar, 2003. Retrieved Aug-31-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

²² NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll, Mar, 2003. Retrieved Aug-31-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

²³ For more extensive discussion of the misconceptions of the American public regarding Iraq see Kull, Ramsay, and Lewis 2003.

²⁴ Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, Mar, 2003. Retrieved Aug-31-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

weaving the binary distinction between the US and its “evil” enemies into official rhetoric (Krebs 2007; Smith 2005). The conflict with terrorist organizations thus became not only a matter of national security, but also of national identity and prestige: Evil enemies challenged the basic values and honor of America, and America had a mission to stand up for these values and show their universal validity to the world, and demonstrate its bravery to defend its national reputation against challengers (Krebs 2007; McCartney 2004; Roshwald 2006:203).

Although no individual-level data exist that would allow for testing this argument directly, several studies offer some indirect but compelling evidence. Using Latent Class Analysis of survey data collected in 1995 and 2003, Bonikowski (Manuscript submitted for review) shows a dramatic increase, from 43% to 62%, in the prevalence of “ultranationalism” in the US. Ultrationalists are characterized by intense geographical attachment to their country, a strong sense of national belonging and pride, and “high levels of hubris, including lack of shame in anything related to their country” (ibid:21). Based on the same data source, but applying a different analytical approach, Smith and Kim (2006) report that the average level of nationalist pride in the US, with its intrinsic sense of superiority over other countries, had increased from 1995 to 2003.

Though it is impossible to know for sure why considerably more Americans exhibited “ultranationalism” and felt more nationalist pride in 2003 than in 1995, these findings are in line with my argument that the September 11 attack and its subsequent framing in Bush’s rhetoric had triggered nationalist sentiment, which included not only the attachment of individuals to the American nation and “its” state, but also a sense of superiority vis-à-vis other nations. A more direct evidence for the effect of September 11 on popular nationalism in the US is offered by the National Tragedy Study that was conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC).

This study documented dramatic increases in measures of national pride and confidence in government institutions immediately after September 11, 2001 (Rasinski et al. 2002; Smith, Rasinski and Toce 2001). Similar findings were reported also by Gross and coauthors who used data from a different survey (Gross, Brewer, and Aday 2009).

In sum, the initial popularity of the Iraq War was the result of Bush's successful appeal to nationalist sentiment, a success that was preconditioned by the humiliation brought about by the September 11 attack. The War in Iraq, in other words, gave an opportunity to restore national honor. Anecdotal evidence for this symbolic connection between the two events can be found, for example, in the following excerpt from a letter sent by Martha and Michael Gardner of Hunt Valley, MD, to the New York Times a few days after the invasion: "Sept. 11 proved that New York is the greatest city in the world, and now the men and women in our military will enable us to show the world that the United States is the greatest country."²⁷ Similar feeling of reassurance and pride was also expressed by Gregory Jezarian of New York: "I live in a city where many refuse to appreciate and pay homage to what our brave military men and women in Iraq are scarifying. Yet, this is the same city that after Sept. 11 heard the comforting roar of fighter jets patrolling above us as if to say, "it's OK.; we're on the job now." Well, they're on the job again. And for that, I am thankful."²⁸

One might suggest that the public rallied behind Bush because the "war on terror" depicted the invasion of Iraq as a rational policy. Nonetheless, data from public opinion polls show that on the eve of the invasion most Americans thought that the war was likely to *increase* the immediate threat of terrorism in the US, and only about 50 percent thought that the war would reduce the threat of terrorism in the long-run; yet approval ratings for Bush and his policy

²⁷ New York Times. March 28, 2003. "Letters to the Editor":A16.

²⁸ New York Times. March 25, 2003. "Letters to the Editor":A16.

in Iraq were already very high and stood at about 65-70 percent. Only a few days into the invasion, the level of optimism about the war's chances to reduce terrorism increased dramatically and peaked at about 70 percent (Chapter 3 offers a more elaborated discussion of the RRTF effect during the invasion of Iraq that further substantiates my skepticism about the rationalist explanation).²⁹

To recapitulate the overall argument about *Pathway 1*: All three events covered in this pathway—the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Invasion of Panama, and the Iraq War—have been perceived as offering the opportunity to restore national honor that had previously suffered a setback; as a result, popular nationalist sentiment has been activated, turning the events into major rally-points. This argument is further supported by contrasting the above cases with three other major war-events—the invasions of the Dominican Republic (1965), Cambodia (1970), and Grenada (1983)—in which the sitting presidents have tried to play the nationalism card. But the absence of a previous episode of national shame and embarrassment or an established enemy prevented these events from turning into major rally-points. These cases are discussed next.

The Invasion of the Dominican Republic

The decision to deploy American troops in the Dominican Republic followed the eruption of violent clashes between “constitutionalists”—supporters of the former democratically elected President of the Dominican Republic, Juan Bosch—and “loyalist”—military forces loyal to the ruling junta. In his first public remarks on the operation (on April 28, 1965), President Johnson said only that the operation was aimed to protect the lives of Americans living in the Dominican

²⁹ NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll, Mar, 2003; ABC News/Washington Post Poll, Mar, 2003; CBS News/New York Times Poll, Mar, 2003; CBS News Poll, Mar, 2003; Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, Mar, 2003. Data retrieved Apr-20-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html.

Republic.³⁰ However, a few days later, on May 3, he faced the cameras in a national address, announcing that the operation had two main goals: An immediate goal to save the lives of thousands of American civilians and citizens of other countries that were trapped inside the conflict zone, and a more strategic goal of preventing communism from making this country “another Cuba”. The nationalist message of the address was delivered mostly in its opening and closing statements. “There are times in the affairs of nations”, Johnson announced, “when great principles are tested in an ordeal of conflict and danger,” and then emphasized that the military operation was meant first and foremost to protect the lives of Americans. As all American presidents who have announced military initiatives, Johnson too mentioned in his speech that the use of American military power will also benefit other nations. However, the way he chose to conclude the address clarified that his main message was about the national interests of the US and its international prestige:

“Before I leave you, my fellow Americans, I want to say this personal word. I know that no American serviceman wants to kill anyone. And I know that no American president wants to give an order which brings shootings and casualties and death. But I want you to know, and I want the world to know, that as long as I am president of this country we are going to defend ourselves. We will defend our soldiers against attackers. We will honor our treaties. We will keep our commitment. We will defend our nation against all those who seek to destroy not only the United States but every free country of this hemisphere. We do not want to bury anyone, as I have said so many times before, but we do not intend to be buried.”³¹

Nevertheless, these tough nationalist words did not suffice for generating a major RRTF effect, because neither the enemy nor the historical context were apt. Although Johnson and the top CIA officials were convinced that pro-Castro communists had infiltrated the “constitutionalists” rebelling forces (Brands 1987; Ferguson 1973), they could not explicitly stand behind the “loyalist” forces of the unelected military junta (Brands 1987). Therefore, rather than explicitly taking a side in the conflict, Johnson pointed a blaming finger to what he

³⁰ New York Times. April 29, 1965. “Presidential Text”:14.

³¹ New York Times. May 3, 1965. “Text of Johnson’s address on Moves in the Conflict in the Dominican Republic”:10.

described as “a band of Communist conspirators” that took over what started as a popular democratic revolution.³² This view of the conflict was also embraced and circulated by the press (Nacos 1990:58). Such a vague definition of the enemy could not pose the kind of symbolic challenge that we saw in the three major RRTF events discussed above: Unlike Castro in Cuba, Noriega in Panama, and Saddam Hussein in the second Iraq campaign, Johnson’s identification of communist regime in the Dominican Republic as enemy did not come with a historical legacy of previous confrontations and embarrassment to the US. Consequently, Johnson’s appeal to anticommunist sentiments was sufficient for generating only a minor rally effect of six points increase in his job approval rating that reached 70%, a level of approval below the average rating during Johnson’s first year and half in office.³³

The Cambodian Incursion

The Cambodian Incursion in the spring of 1970 (May 1 to June 30) was the last major war escalation by the US during the Vietnam War.³⁴ While making a televised statement about his decision to invade Cambodia, Nixon faced a special challenge. Not only was it hard to sell the decision to a public that was largely against the war, but there was a credibility issue involved as well: The decision was made only ten days after Nixon announced that 150,000 American soldiers would withdraw from Vietnam within one year as part of his overall “Vietnamization” program. In effort to convince the public that he made the right decision to invade Cambodia, Nixon laid out its context: Using a large map of Cambodia, he pointed to areas

³² Ibid. See also Brands 1987 and Felten 1999.

³³ Figures based on Gallup Polls. Data retrieved September 2, 2011, from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.
http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

³⁴ The 1971 invasion of Laos was another major escalation of the Vietnam War, but it did not involve sending American ground forces, thus it did not become a major public issue.

that had become military sanctuaries for North Vietnamese guerilla forces that launched hit-and-run attacks against American and South Vietnamese forces. He further claimed that growing hostile activity that comes from the North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia left the US no choice but to launch a joint military operation with South Vietnam in order to clean these areas in Cambodia. Seeking to portray his decision as coherent with his overall goal of ending the war, Nixon described the invasion of Cambodia as “indispensable for continuing success of that withdrawing [from Vietnam]”, and as essential for keeping the casualties of “our brave men” as low as possible.

Nixon must have known that discussing the strategic and tactical aspects of the operation would not suffice for convincing the American public, and he thus chose to appeal to nationalist sentiment. His address included some of the most nationalist and confrontational statements I have come across in this study. The following two quotes from the address illustrate this hyper-nationalist tone of Nixon’s speech.

“This attitude [of North Vietnam] has become intolerable. We will not react to this threat to American lives merely by plaintive diplomatic protests. If we did, the credibility of the United States would be destroyed in every area of the world where only the power of the United States deters aggression. Tonight I again warn the North Vietnamese that if they continue to escalate the fighting when the United States is withdrawing its forces, I shall meet my responsibility as the commander in chief of our armed forces to take the action I consider necessary to defend the security of our American men. The action I have announced tonight puts the leaders of North Vietnam on notice that we will be patient in working for peace, we will be conciliatory at the conference table, but we will not be humiliated. We will not be defeated.”

“The question all American people are asked and answered tonight is this: does the richest and strongest nation in history of the world have the character to meet a direct challenge of a group which rejects every effort to win a just peace, ignores our warnings, tramples on solemn agreements, violates the neutrality of an unarmed people and uses our prisoners as hostages? If we failed to meet this challenge all other nations will be on notice that despite its overwhelming power the United States when a real crisis comes will be found wanting.”³⁵

³⁵ New York Times. May 1, 1970. “Transcript of President’s Address to the Nation on Military Action in Cambodia”:2.

Seemingly, the invasion of Cambodia had all the materials required for turning into a major rally-point: It was a large scale military invasion and a war escalation, there was a well established and clearly defined enemy, and it was announced by the president using nationalist rhetoric that portrayed the event as a test for the capacity of the US to maintain its national honor and international prestige. Nevertheless, during the Cambodian Incursion, less than half of the public (48-49%) supported the operation, and Nixon's job approval rating stayed at similarly modest levels as before the incursion started (54-59%).³⁶ The reason for this, I argue, is that the incursion could not be perceived as an opportunity to restore some of the prestige the US had lost in the prolonged war in Vietnam. Rather, it was seen as yet another phase of the same messy conflict.

Indeed, Nixon's address to the nation was received with noticeable suspicion and skepticism. In a Harris Survey conducted in May 1970, 53% of respondents clearly did not buy the official argument that the operation in Cambodia was limited in objectives and scope, but instead said that by undertaking this operation the Vietnam War had been widened into a bigger war in all of Indo-China. In addition, 47% thought that Nixon did not tell people the real truth about the situation while only 42% thought that he was frank and straightforward. In contrast to the White House's official stance, 76% of respondents thought that it will not take a short time to complete the mission in Cambodia, only 43% agreed that the operation will better protect the lives of American troops in Vietnam, no more than 31% agreed that the operation will shorten the war, and as few as 25% agreed that as a result of the military operation in Cambodia North

³⁶ Approval ratings of the operations are based on a Harris Survey Conducted in May, 1970. Presidential job approval ratings are based on Gallup Polls conducted in May and June, 1970. Data retrieved Aug-26-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

Vietnam will be more willing to enter into serious negotiation in Paris.³⁷ Thus, rather than expecting the invasion of Cambodia to be a game changer, or at least an opportunity for “payback”, most Americans suspected that it would actually perpetuate the war.

The Invasion of Grenada

Arguably, the most interesting case that contrasts with *Pathway I* is the October 1983 invasion of Grenada. What makes it a particularly interesting case is the fact that concerns for the international reputation of the US took an explicitly central place in policy making, but no consensus about the need to protect or restore that reputation by invading Grenada emerged in the general public.

In March 1979, a military coup established Maurice Bishop, head of the New Jewel Movement, as the new ruler of Grenada, who subsequently tightened relationships with Cuba and the Soviet Union. The concerns of the US administration by this pro-communist partnership grew when Grenada started constructing the Point Salines International Airport, which US intelligence assessed that was meant to serve Soviet and Cuban aircrafts. However, similar to the Cuban Missile Crisis (though in a much smaller scale), the security threat that would have been created if the US had allowed the Soviet Union to gain a foothold in Grenada was secondary to the symbolic meaning of such a potential development: It seemed that the Soviet Union was once again playing war games in America’s backyard. Therefore, rather than making a significant strategic change, the invasion of Grenada was meant to send a message to the Soviet Union and its allies that, despite the defeat in Vietnam, the US was not a paper tiger and will not hesitate to use military power to protect its interests (Busch 2001:207).

³⁷ Harris Survey, May, 1970. Retrieved Aug-26-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

The more immediate circumstances that led to Reagan's decision to authorize the invasion on October 22, 1983, were the violent clashes that erupted after Bishop was overthrown in a coup conducted by a faction of his movement on October 13. Bishop was executed on October 19, and in response the new Revolutionary Military Council declared a ninety-six-hour shout-to-kill curfew. After being informed about these developments, Reagan said he became concerned by the possibility that 800 American students at the St. George's School of Medicine would become hostages. Here too, the actual security threat was secondary to a more symbolic threat: With the humiliating experience of the 1979-80 hostage crisis in Iran still fresh in his memory, Reagan was determined not to allow a similar situation to develop on his shift (Brands 1987; Busch 2001:206-207; Mueller 2006:182-184).

When publicly explaining his decision to invade Grenada, on October 27, Reagan stated clearly his two major concerns. He emphasized the need to block communist expansion to Grenada and described the island as "A Soviet-Cuban colony being readied as a major military bastion to export terror and undermine democracy".³⁸ To further mobilize anticommunist sentiment, Reagan drew the connection between the invasion of Grenada and the Beirut barracks bombing that took place on October 23, killing 241 servicemen: He said that "Not only Moscow assists and encourages the violence in both countries, but it provides direct support through a network of surrogates and terrorists".³⁹ In addition to the strategic goal of fighting communism, Reagan also presented the more urgent mission of rescuing the American citizens in Grenada, and appealed directly to the traumatic collective memory of the Iran Hostage Crisis, declaring that "the nightmare of our hostages in Iran must never be repeated".⁴⁰ Nonetheless, with no

³⁸ New York Times. Oct 28, 1983. "Report to Nation":1.

³⁹ Ibid:10.

⁴⁰ Ibid:1.

actual hostage situation going on, the need to stop Communist expansion has been the dominant theme in Reagan's rhetoric about the invasion of Grenada.

Calling for an anticommunist sentiment was not without success: The invasion was supported by a solid majority of Americans, and Reagan's job approval rating increased by a few points.⁴¹ Nonetheless, this event did not turn into a major RRTF point. Even after it became clear that a quick and relatively cheap success was achieved, Reagan's job approval rating reached only modest levels.⁴² The main reason for this is that—unlike Castro in Cuba, Noriega in Panama, and Hussein in Iraq—the regime in Grenada has not been constituted as an enemy of the US prior to the use of military force against it. Therefore, with no explicit provocation against the US by either Grenada or its alleged communist sponsors, many Americans did not share with the administration the view of Grenada as having something to do with the international prestige of the US that was previously damaged in Vietnam. Under these conditions, Reagan's explanation left many wondering whether, rather than protecting national interests, the invasion was actually motivated by illegitimate considerations such as Reagan's "anticommunism obsession" and the economic interest of private corporations.⁴³ One may

⁴¹ The CBS/Washington Post Poll reports that following Reagan's national address, 65% of the respondents approved of the invasion of Grenada, and that the approval rating increased to 71% in the first week of November. However, it is likely that the actual ratings were somewhat lower, as indicated by 5-6 points lower estimates provided by the Gallup/Newsweek and CBS News/New York Times polls for the same period. On what seems to be an overestimation trend in the CBS News/Washington Post poll see also the following note.

⁴² There are considerable differences between presidential job approval ratings reported by the ABC News/Washington Post Poll and other polls. The ABC News/Washington Post Poll reports that president's job approval rating was 54% before Reagan's national address on Grenada and the Beirut Barracks bombing, and that it increased to 63% afterwards. In contrast, the Gallup/Newsweek and CBS News/New York Times poll reports approval ratings of 49% before the address, and the CBS/New York Times Gallup polls report approval ratings of only 48% and 53% following the address (ABC News/Washington Post Poll, Oct, 1983; ABC News/Washington Post Poll, Nov 1983; CBS News/New York Times Poll, Oct, 1983; Gallup Poll, Oct, 1983; Gallup Poll (AIPO), Oct, 1983. Data retrieved Aug-18-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html).

In any case, based even on the higher estimates of the CBS News/Washington Post Poll, the invasion of Grenada would only be coded as a borderline-major-rally-point.

⁴³ Critical views of this sort were expressed by many letters to the press, see for example: Los Angeles Times. Oct 28. "Letters to the Times: C6 (letter by Bruce A. Clark); Los Angeles Times. Nov 4, 1983. "Letters to the Times: F6

further speculate that it was actually Reagan's anticommunist message that raised the suspicion of many Americans who remembered how a similar rhetoric had been used to justify the Vietnam War.

Furthermore, the almost instantaneous international condemnation of the invasion, including by some of the US's closest allies (recall that since 1974 Grenada has been a Commonwealth Realm), caused a great concern to individuals who believed that American leadership role should be based on an expressed commitment to the highest moral and legal international standards. In numerous letters to the press, private citizens blamed the administration for creating a "macho" image for the US, and for alienating even friendly states by breaking the international law. For example, Rollin Shelton of Los Angeles wrote: "It seems apparent that American prestige abroad shall continue at its present appalling low ebb until such time as we finally realize what others have long known. There is not one law for us and another for everyone else";⁴⁴ Joseph Koslowski of Jersey City, NJ, wrote: "Our continued support for the corrupt and deadly government of El Salvador, the C.I.A's attempts to sabotage the Nicaraguan revolution...our too costly adventure in Lebanon, and, in the great tradition of the Bay of Pigs, our invasion of Grenada have put the United States in the harshest light among all progressive-minded people";⁴⁵ and Harmon M. Gehr of Pasadena, CA, wrote: "In terms not only of world scorn but also, more sadly, of lives snuffed out, precious resources wasted, lies told and a general demeaning of human worth, there is a high moral price for the United States to pay. If we are not already bankrupt, we have scarified another installment of our obligation to lead the nations

(letter by Jim Porter); New York Times. Nov 6, 1983. "A failed 'hidden agenda' on the Americas": E20 (by Roy V. Jackson).

⁴⁴ Los Angeles Times, Nov 11, 1983. "Letters to the times":F6.

⁴⁵ New York Times, Oct 30, 1983. "Letter to the editor":E18.

morally”.⁴⁶ Therefore, whereas the administration saw the invasion as instrumental to the restoration of international superpower status, many ordinary citizens were worried that the invasion was actually causing damage to the international standing and reputation of the US.

Looking at the invasion of Grenada as an isolated event thus might offer support to the *realist* claim that the Americans consider national interests when deciding whether to rally behind presidents and their foreign policy or not. However, the comparative outlook advanced in this chapter suggests that the very definition of which interests are worth going to war for is part of the rally process itself: As we saw in the mobilization of the American public behind presidents and their decisions on military actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis and the invasions of Panama and Iraq, collective interests have been constructed around a sense of symbolic challenge to national honor and international prestige vis-à-vis pre-established enemies. The invasion of Grenada, in contrast, was launched against a foreign regime few Americans knew something about, and which was not considered a major enemy of the US. This invasion, therefore, did not turn into major rally-point, despite Reagan’s effort to sell it to the public, because attacking Grenada could not serve the purpose of reclaiming the national honor that had been previously damaged in Vietnam and during the Iran Hostage Crisis.

Against this interpretation, one may propose that the incapacity of Grenada to put up a decent fight, which resulted in a swift American victory, was the real reason for the lack of major RRTF effect. In other words, one may suggest that the American public did not count the invasion of Grenada as a “real war”. However, the fact that other events in which US forces swiftly defeated much weaker opponents did become major rally-points speaks against this argument. One example is the invasion of Panama, which has already been discussed. Another example, which will be discussed later, is the Mayaguez incident in May 1975 (as we shall see,

⁴⁶ Los Angeles Times. Nov 8, 1983. “Moral cost’ of Grenada”:C6.

in this case the selective information that the White House shared with the public led the public to believe that a swift victory was achieved with no significant resistance, although the facts on the ground were different). Therefore, the fact that Grenada was a quick and relatively easy win was not the main reason for the absence of major RRTF period, but rather the lack of established enemy and historical context that would have otherwise made the military action look like an act of reclaiming national honor.

Pathway 2

The desire to reclaim national honor has developed not only in response to international fiasco, but also following foreign attacks against American civilian targets that have been perceived as an “attack on the nation”. Two major rally-points have displayed this logic: the Iran Hostage Crisis that started on November 4, 1979, and the “September 11” attack in 2001. At first glance, the hostage situation looks quite different than 9/11 because it took place abroad and did not cost American lives. But the two events share crucial characteristics: In both events, American civilian targets were attacked and the public rallied behind presidents who used nationalist language to glorify the American spirit, sent a message of national unity and solidarity with the victims, pointed to a clear enemy that was to be blamed for the attack, and promised military reaction.⁴⁷

The importance of the president’s reaction is revealed when contrasting these two rally-points with the bombing of the World Trade Center (WTC) on February 26, 1993, in which six

⁴⁷ In the case of September 11, although the identity of the terrorist organization that was responsible for the attack was not mentioned in Bush’s first statement to the nation after the attack, already on September 12 the media reported that intelligence agencies identified Osama Bin Laden as responsible for sending the terrorists who committed the atrocity. Bush’s promise for retaliation gradually marked the target around al-Qaeda, and his job approval rating picked at about 90% following his speech to the congress on September 20, in which he explicitly accused al-Qaeda for attacking the US on September 11 and identified Afghanistan as the sanctuary from which the al-Qaeda had launched the attack.

adults and one unborn child were killed and more than 1,000 were injured, and with the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998, in which almost 300 people were killed (including a dozen Americans) and about 5,000 were wounded. In the case of the 1993 WTC bombing, Clinton treated the event as a matter of law enforcement, perhaps because it was the first terrorist attack by radical Muslims in the US and because event at this magnitude could still be contained in a “law enforcement” framework. Whatever the reasons, Clinton promised in a radio address to use “the full measure of federal law-enforcement resources” to hunt for those responsible for the blast.”⁴⁸ Framed as a law enforcement matter, and with no clear enemy in sight, no RRTF period followed this event. Similarly, when addressing the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Africa, Clinton again did not use nationalist language and could not initially point to a clear enemy either, but rather defined the attacks as abhorrent acts of terrorist violence, and promised to bring the people who were responsible for them to justice;⁴⁹ thus no RRTF period followed this event either.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ New York Times. February 28, 1993. “Impact Expanding”:34.

⁴⁹ New York Times. August 8, 1998. “Clinton pledges hunt for those responsible”:A8.

⁵⁰ Two weeks later, Clinton did use an explicit nationalist language when he announced the retaliation missile strike on suspected al-Qaeda training camps and chemical factory in Sudan and Afghanistan. He described the targets of the strike as presenting “imminent threat...to our national security.” “The radical groups affiliated with, and funded by Osama Bin Laden,” he added, “share a hatred for democracy, a fanatical glorification of violence, and a horrible distortion of their religion to justify the murder of innocents. They have made the United States their adversary precisely because of what we stand for and what we stand against.” Clinton concluded his address with strong nationalist tone: “There will be no sanctuary for terrorists. We will defend our people, our interests and our values. We will help people of all faiths, in all parts of the world, who want to live free of fear and violence. We will persist and we will prevail” (New York Times. August 21, 1998. “Clinton’s words: ‘There will be no sanctuary for terrorists’”:A12). The address was effective in mobilizing support for the strike: Whereas before the address an estimated 66% of Americans supported the strike, following the address support rating increased to 75% (Gallup Poll, Aug, 1998. Retrieved Sep-1-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html).

However, despite the nationalist message, presidential approval ratings did not change much for two reasons: First, the missile strike was a relatively limited operation that did not involve direct contact with an enemy. It is possible that sending ground troops to “clean” terrorist sanctuaries might have resulted in a stronger rally-effect, although there is no way to examine this hypothetical scenario empirically. Second, and perhaps in consequence of the previous point, about one-third of the public believed that one of the reasons for Clinton’s decision to order the strike was his wish to turn the public attention away from the Monica Lewinsky scandal (Gallup Poll, Aug, 1998; ABC News Poll, Aug, 1998; Pew News Interest Index Poll, Aug, 1998; Los Angeles Times Poll, Aug, 1998.

In contrast, presidents who used nationalist rhetoric effectively mobilized RRTF effects in the Iran Hostage Crisis and following September 11. But these rally effects did not emerge simply because of the nationalist rhetoric, but because the president's message matched a widespread feeling that the national honor had been violated and needed to be restored. To make the case for this argument, the Iran hostage crisis is of a special importance. At the onset of the crisis, the public conversation was filled with a sense of outrage, not only because of the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran and the hostage situation, but also because President Carter's reaction—using soft language and trying to solve the crisis through diplomacy behind closed doors—was widely seen as adding salt to injury. Some examples of the many letters sent by ordinary citizens to the press can give a sense of that popular mood. Samuel Intrater of Bethesda, MD, wrote: “The development in Iran, and this country's response thereto, have brought into focus a bitter historical reality: the end of our role as a world power. For if a pipsqueak country like Iran can with impunity invade the territory of our embassy, take American citizens prisoner, and thumb its nose at us, then clearly we have become a paper tiger, incapable of protecting our property, our interests and our citizenry.” Michael C. Smith of Washington DC wrote: “I am sick and tired of every other country spitting in our face. How long will Americans endure this sort of treatment?... The time has come for us to stand up and be proud to be Americans.” Similarly, Raymon Queenin of Washington DC wrote: “The handling of the crisis in Iran by the Carter administration is cowardly and disgraceful... This is the United States, not some two-bit country that has to beg for peace. Dammit, we can demand peace and we can back the demand with force.”⁵¹

Data retrieved Sep-1-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html.

⁵¹ Washington Post. November 10, 1979. “Letters to the Editor”:22.

In this emotional climate, Carter's job approval rating maintained at low levels of about 30%. Only a few weeks into the crisis, when the tone of Carter's rhetoric changed to be more nationalist and confrontational—pointing to the Iranian regime as enemy of the US, talking about American pride, courage, and honor, and expressing the US's commitment to the lives of its citizens⁵²—, a rhetoric that matched the popular desire to reclaim the national honor, did the public started to rally behind the president.⁵³ Carter's job approval rating peaked at 58% in late January 1980.⁵⁴ Though in absolute terms this rating is modest, one should keep in mind that Carter's job approval rating never reached this or higher level, except for the “honeymoon” period during his first few months in office.⁵⁵

Similarly to the Iran Hostage Crisis, following the September 11 attack too, many Americans felt that the national honor was compromised and must be restored. Thus, for example, Roland E. Cowden of Maryville, TN, wrote to the New York Times on the day of the attack:

“An act against any one American anywhere in the world is an assault upon the entire American people. Now America must wield the sword in defense of liberty, and in the very act of striking never once divest herself of that love of liberty that nurtured every son and daughter among us and is the sinew of our spirit, the pulsing of our national heart. Call upon us. Do not delay. Call upon the strength of America, and she shall do great deeds.”⁵⁶

⁵² New York Times. November 16, 1979. “Transcript of president’ speech to the A.F.L-C.I.O”:A16; New York Times. November 29, 1979. “Transcript of the President’s news conference on the crisis over the hostages in Iran”:A20.

⁵³ Harold Saunders, who at the time of the crisis was the Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, recalls that the administration felt a strong pressure from the public to pursue national honor even at the cost of putting the safety of the hostages at risk (Saunders 1985). According to Snyder and Borghard (2011), this pressure from the public pushed Carter to change the diplomatic tone of his rhetoric toward Iran and make it more belligerent.

⁵⁴ Gallup Poll data, retrieved May-25-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html.

⁵⁵ Furthermore, Carter's reluctance to reclaim national honor by actually using military force prevented his popularity to reach higher levels. From February 1980, Carter's job approval rating started sinking, because most Americans assessed that he was only talking tough with the regime in Iran but was not willing to actually play tough. In early April 1980, 71% respondents to a public opinion poll thought that the hostage crisis made the US look helpless (Snyder and Borghard 2011); at the same time, Carter's job approval rating was below 40% (Gallup Poll data, retrieved May-25-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut).

⁵⁶ New York Times. September 12, 2001. “Dispatches From a Day of Terror and Shock”:A26.

Bush did call upon the American nation. Only a few hours after the attacks, at 8:30pm(EDT) he delivered a special address to the nation, in which he called the events an attack on the American way of life and freedom, and promised retaliation. In the following days, in his visits to the sites of the attacks and in memorial services to the victims, Bush repeatedly expressed his commitment to retaliate against the terrorists who plans the attacks. Bush officially declared a “war on terror” in his address to the Congress on September 20, a declaration that was widely acclaimed by ordinary citizens and politicians from both parties.

A skeptical reader might suggest that the RRTF effect of 9/11 was a direct repose to the horrific event itself and did not depend on presidential framing of it. Unfortunately, there are no data that permit exploring this argument. Nonetheless, the fact that the Iran Hostage Crisis with no casualties at all has generated a RRTF period, suggests that in the case of 9/11 too the symbolic challenge to the nation epitomized by the attack on Americans civilians, and which was formulated and announced by Bush, was the pivot around which the RRTF effect emerged (the rally effect of September 11 is further discussed in Chapter 3).

In a stark contrast to the Iran Hostage Crisis and to the September 11 attack, none of the ten major attacks on American *military* targets has been followed by a RRTF period. For example, no rally periods have emerged from the seizure of USS Pueblo by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in January 1968, from the detention of 24 US aircrew by China on April 1, 2001, or from attacks on American military installations that claimed the lives of many servicemen such as the 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the 1983 Beirut barracks bombing, and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia.

One may argue that in a country with sharp institutional separation between military and civilians and no mandatory service, attacks on servicemen do not stimulate the popular outrage

that attacks on American civilians generate. The data at hand do not allow for making such an argument conclusively, because none of the attacks on American military targets but one has been framed by the sitting presidents with explicit nationalist language that otherwise might have triggered a RRTF effect. This in itself is an interesting finding, which raises the possibility of a reverse rally process: Perhaps, in the aftermath of attacks on American military targets the administration chooses not to play out the events that may be conceived of as an embarrassing failure to protect the U.S. military forces. In other words, whereas attacks on civilians are considered illegitimate method of war hence can be used for propagating nationalist sentiment, attacks on military installations is an expected part of any armed conflicts, thus when these attack succeed the government may choose to play them down in order to reduce public criticism. The exception is the Beirut Barracks attack on October 23, 1983, in which 241 American servicemen were killed. In his first statement about the attack, Reagan appealed to national sentiment by described the US mission in Lebanon as vital to American interests and said that “it is central to our credibility on a global scale”. He also declared that “the United States will not be intimidated by terrorists”.⁵⁷ In contrast to other attacks on American military targets, Reagan chose to play the nationalist card probably because he knew that an invasion of Grenada was about to be launched in the morning after his national address, which was therefore meant to prepare the public for military action. The nationalist tone indeed intensified three days later, in Reagan’s national address on the invasion of Grenada, in which he drew a connecting line between this invasion and the Beirut Barracks bombing: He said that the American nation “cannot and will not dishonor the soldiers who died in the attacks...”.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, no RRTF period has followed the Beirut Barracks attack, probably because Reagan could not point to a clear and

⁵⁷ New York Times. October 25, 1983. “Transcript of President Reagan’s news conference on the attack in Beirut”:A10.

⁵⁸ New York Times. October 28, 1983. “Transcript of address by President on Lebanon and Grenada”:A10.

well-established enemy—instead, he used the general terms "terrorists" and "criminals"—and did not propose a path for retaliation.

Pathway 3

The “reclaiming national honor” category contains an additional pathway, representing uniquely the Mayaguez incident of May 1975. The case of the Mayaguez is particularly interesting, because it shows how under specific historical circumstances popular desire to reclaim national honor has generated a RRTF effect even though presidential rhetoric was not explicitly nationalistic. In the following paragraphs, I argue that the *shame* of losing the Vietnam War suppressed the possibility that the president would use nationalist rhetoric; but precisely because of these dire circumstances, the relatively minor Mayaguez incident was nevertheless broadly perceived as an opportunity for the US to reclaim national honor.

The incident started on May 12, 1975, when the Khmer Rouge seized the American merchant ship SS Mayaguez in an international sea lane that Cambodia claimed as its territorial waters. In response, President Ford secretly ordered a military rescue operation, in which American forces took over the vessel and attacked the adjacent island of Koh Tang, only to find out that the Mayaguez crew was no longer in any of these locations.⁵⁹ However, on May 15, the crew was released by the Khmer Rouge, probably in order to stop the American attack on their ships and inland infrastructure. Then, in a shrewd public relations maneuver, Ford decided to go

⁵⁹ In addition, the Pueblo Incident of 1968—in which a US intelligence ship was captured by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) without putting up a fight, and was released only after the US formally admitted and apologized for spying on the DPRK—was probably on President Ford’s mind as well when he ordered the rescue operation.

Note also that other incidents of American ships that penetrated to the declared territorial waters of foreign countries have not led to the use of lethal force, including frequent incidents that have happened as part of the fishery disputes with Ecuador not so long before the Mayaguez incident; these incidents offer a counterfactual evidence that the very specific context of the Mayaguez incident was consequential for Ford’s reaction on the rescue operation.

on national television, announcing the operation and reporting that “the vessel has been recovered intact and the entire crew has been rescued”⁶⁰; he said no word about 18 American servicemen who were killed and 41 who were wounded during the rescue attempt, and did not mention that no direct rescue was actually made.

Ford’s announcement was received by the public with a surge of support for the rescue operation and a dramatic increase of his job approval rating.⁶¹ From a rational choice perspective, it may be suggested that the Mayaguez incident was popular because it was a “cheap success”. However, other short and successful military operations that cost a few or no American lives—the 1958 operation in Lebanon, the 1994 Occupation of Haiti, and the September 1996 missile strike on Iraqi forces in Kurdistan—speak against the “cheap success” argument, because they did not produce major RRTF effects. To be sure, the fact that the rescue operation was portrayed by Ford as successful was crucial.⁶² Yet, it was not the “success” *per se* that transformed the incident into a rally-point, but the historical context in which that “success” was achieved: This attack of Cambodian troops on an American civilian ship happened only a month after the US military was forced to pull out of Cambodia, and a couple of weeks after the withdrawal from South Vietnam that marked the defeat in the war in South-East Asia. The Mayaguez incident thus added to this defeat a taste of humiliation. Therefore, Ford’s decisive reaction thus provided the public with a moment of reassurance and pride.⁶³ This feeling was

⁶⁰ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4912>.

⁶¹ Available data suggest an 11 points increase in Ford’s job approval rating (from 40% to 51%) and a 10 points decline in his job disapproval rating (from 43% to 33%). However these estimations are based on data collected on May 5 and May 27. There are no data points available closer to the event. It is thus possible that the initial boost to Ford’s popularity was even greater than what available data can show, but as the enthusiasm expressed in ample “letters to the editor” suggests.

⁶² One may think of the failed rescue operation in the Iran Hostage Crisis (4.24.1980) as an example that shows that heroic rescue operations do not become rally-points when they fail.

⁶³ Survey data support this argument. For example, in a public opinion poll that was conducted from May 23 to May 27, 1975, 74% of the respondents agreed that “If President Ford had not acted the U.S would have been looked on

expressed by many “letters to the editor”. For example, Jeffery Windle of Santa Monica, Ca, wrote “our actions were symbol of our continuing strength and solidarity in spite of Vietnam, strength that should not be underrated”.⁶⁴ Vance B. Gay of Washington DC wrote “‘Hail to the chief.’ Congratulations for President Ford for his swift and forthcoming action in the recovery of our ship and its crew from Cambodia. He reassured the world that the U.S.A. still carry the ‘big stick’ and the ‘giant’ is not asleep.”⁶⁵ Putting this feeling of reassurance most concisely, Bob Nolthenius of Hacienda Heights, Ca, wrote: “Thanks Mr. President – we needed that!”⁶⁶

Among legislators, the reactions to Ford’s announcement were no different, as described by Louis Fisher:

“Although months would pass by before members of Congress had an adequate picture of what had taken place, on the very day of the recovery they rushed forward with glowing words of praise. A spirit of jingoism filled the air, and the episode became a ‘proud new chapter in our history.’ Legislators expressed pride in their country and in their President, exclaiming with youthful enthusiasm that it was ‘great to be an American.’” (Fisher 1995:137)

The Mayaguez incident is unique because it did *not* include nationalist presidential rhetoric. Indeed, under the circumstances of losing the Vietnam War and the humiliating attack on an American civilian target in the same region, President Ford could not ask Americans to boast in nationalist pride and confidence. Nonetheless, as we have seen, a popular nationalist sentiment was aroused in response to Ford’s announcement of the success of the operation to rescue the crew of the SS Mayaguez precisely because of the dire historical circumstances in which national honor had been compromised. Therefore, similar to the other events in the “reclaiming national honor” category, in the Mayaguez incident too, the sitting president enjoyed

by all our allies and the rest of the world as a country that has lost its will to resist aggression” (Harris Survey, May, 1975. Retrieved Mar-17-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html)

⁶⁴ Los Angeles Times. May 20, 1975. “Letter to The Times”:C6.

⁶⁵ Washington Post. May 19, 1975. “Letters to the Editor”:A23.

⁶⁶ Los Angeles Times. May 20, 1975. “Letter to The Times”:C6.

a RRTF period because the general public saw an opportunity to reclaim national honor and international prestige.

An alternative, realist argument might suggest that RRTF periods have emerged when the public supported the government's efforts to protect major national interests. While this argument may gain some traction in reference to some events (e.g., the Cuban Missile Crisis and the invasions of Panama and Iraq), it clearly does not help to understand the Mayaguez rally, because this relatively minor incident could not change the military results of the Vietnam War or alter the international standing of the US. The Mayaguez incident therefore offers support for the main argument, according to which RRTF periods have emerged when events were widely perceived as opportunities to reclaim national honor. The Mayaguez incident also supports my claim that this popular perception emerges from the interaction of presidential action and historical circumstances: the geographical and temporal proximity of the Mayaguez incident to the loss of the war in South-East Asia, and the manipulated information that the public received from the president, jointly evoked a nationalist interpretation of the incident.

Borderline-major RRTF events

Within the "claiming national honor" category, four events are labeled "borderline" cases, because they were followed by considerable increases in presidential job approval rating, but the sizes of these changes were not enough to code them as "major" RRTF events. Three of these events have occurred during Reagan's second term in office and were related to what the administration has referred to as the US confrontation with "international terrorism": The hijack of TWA Flight 847 in June 1985, the air raid on Libya in April 1986, and the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in December 1988. All three events were followed by 6-7 points increase in

Reagan's job approval ratings that reached solid levels of 65% in the aftermath of the hostage situation in Lebanon, 68% after the air raid on Libya, and 63% following the Lockerbie bombing. A brief discussion of each of these events can clarify what brought them to the verge of becoming major rally-points, and why they eventually did not produce major RRTF effects.

The Reagan administration came to power on the heels of the 444 days Iran Hostage Crisis, promising effective retribution against terrorism. However, this tough talk was followed by little visible substantive action. A series of events in 1983—the bombing of the US embassy in Beirut (April 18) in which 17 Americans were killed, the bombing of the US Marine barracks in Beirut (October 23) that killed 241 servicemen, and the bombing of the US embassy in Kuwait (December 12) as part of a larger coordinated attack on foreign installations in the country—made terrorism a major credibility issue for Reagan's administration in the eyes of legislators and the general public alike (Livingstone 1988:67). Throughout most of this period, up until the invasion of Grenada in October 25, Reagan's job approval rating were fairly low (41-49%).

In 1984-1985, as the administration was taking more substantive measures against terrorist organizations and their state-sponsors, the US suffered another string of terrorist attacks including the kidnapping of the CIA Chief of Station in Beirut (March 16, 1984), a second attack on the US embassy in Beirut (September 20, 1984), the murder of a Jewish-American disabled passenger during the hijack of MS *Achille Lauro* in the Mediterranean Sea (October 7, 1985), a coordinated attacks in the airports of Rome and Vienna (December 18, 1985) in which five Americans and fifteen citizens of other countries were killed, and the murder of four marines in a café in San Salvador (June 19, 1985). The hijack of TWA Flight 847 marked the peak of this wave of terrorist attacks (Livingstone 1988:70).⁶⁷

⁶⁷ The three attacks on US embassies (two in Lebanon and one in Kuwait) are not included in this study, because, for some reason or another, they have also not included in any of the previous studies on which the list of events is

The Hijack of TWA Flight 847

TWA Flight 847 was hijacked by two Shiite Lebanese on June 14, 1985, while it was en route from Athens to Rome, carrying 153 passengers and crew (sources provide different estimates of the number of Americans on board, which ranges from 82 to 135). The hijackers forced the pilot to fly first to Beirut, then to Algiers, and then back to Beirut. In Beirut's airport, the hijackers executed a US Navy diver, Robert Dean Stethem, and dumped his body on the runway. After refueling, the hijackers forced the pilot to fly the aircraft once again to Algiers and back to Beirut. In the first couple of days of the crisis, most of the hostages were released by the hijackers, but 39 Americans were held in captivity for two more weeks: 32 of them were moved to the hands of the Shiite Amal Militia, while the rest of the hostages who had Jewish-sounding names were held by more militant Shiites affiliated with Hezbollah (Cannon 1991:607). The main demand of the hijackers was that Israel would release more than 700 Shiite Lebanese it took captive during its invasion of Lebanon.⁶⁸

In reaction to the hijack, Reagan made efforts to show "business as usual" rather than declaring a state of emergency (Cannon 1991:606). But business was far from usual: Not only that a military option for releasing the hostages by force seemed to be out of reach, but on June 16 Reagan received a letter signed by thirty-two of the hostages who said "We implore you not to take any direct military action on our behalf. Please negotiate our immediate release by convincing the Israelis to release the 800 Lebanese prisoners as requested. Now."⁶⁹ The same

based. Nonetheless, the fact that none these three events has turned into rally-point is in line with the explanation develops in this chapter: In all three attacks on US embassies, Reagan's reaction was relatively mellow, did not convey a nationalist message, and did not point to a clear enemy.

⁶⁸ Other demands included "the release of two Shia Muslims held by Spanish authorities for shooting a Libyan diplomat, the release of seventeen Shia Muslim imprisoned in Kuwait for a series of six bombing attacks in December 1983, an end to Arab world oil and arms transactions with the United States, a removal of US navy ships from the Lebanese coast prior to the hostages' release, and a pledge that the United States and Israel would not retaliate once the situation was resolved." (Winkler 2006:66)

⁶⁹ New York Times. June 17, 1985. "Gunmen negotiate as hostages urge caution from U.S.":A1.

day, the Los Angeles Time published on its front page a photo of the hostage pilot with a terrorist pointing a gun to his head; the exhausted pilot said to reporters that if a rescue attempt would be made “we’d all be dead men”.⁷⁰ Under these circumstances, it was extremely difficult for Reagan to order a rescue operation that would keep his promise to put up a fight against terrorism. Fortunately (from Reagan’s perspective and the hostages’), Israel announced that, although it would not negotiate with the hijackers, it would consider a US request to free the Shiite prisoners if such a request was made.⁷¹ The hostage situation was finally brought to an end two weeks after it began, with the help of the President of Syria, Hafez Assad, and the more secret assistance of the speaker of the Iranian parliament, Hashemi Rafsanjani (Cannon 1991:607). On June 30, the hostages were driven to Syria, and from there they were carried on board of a US Air Force cargo plane to an airbase in West Germany. Over the next several weeks, Israel released more than 700 Shiite prisoners, officially maintaining that the release was not related to the hijacking.

Could this hostage situation have developed into a major RRTF period? My tentative answer to this question is positive: The hijack of an American civilian aircraft, and the other previous terrorist attacks on American targets, seemed to confirm Reagan’s declarations that the US was the target of growing international terrorism, which therefore challenged the capacity of the government to protect its citizens from the enemies of the US. The hostage situation also brought back the memories of the humiliation of the Iran Hostage Crisis. In addition to these contextual factors, Reagan chose to appeal directly to national sentiment when talking to the public. His public address on June 19, 1985, was opened with the following statement:

⁷⁰ Los Angeles Times. June 19, 1985. “‘Rescue us and we die,’ pilot warns from cockpit”:1. This incident was not reported by the New York Times and the Washington Post, perhaps because their editors did not want to be accused of assisting the terrorist to get their message through and put pressure on the American public and decision makers.

⁷¹ Ibid.

“One hour ago, the body of a young American hero, Navy diver Robert Dean Stethem, was returned to his native soil in a coffin after being beaten and shot at point-blank range. His murder and the fate of the other American hostages still being held in Beirut underscore an inescapable fact. The United States is tonight a nation being attacked by international terrorists who wantonly kill and who seize our innocent citizens as their prisoners.”⁷²

With American civilians being held hostage by terrorists and a president that uses explicit nationalist language, only one condition was missing that if present would have turned this event into a full-blown RRTF period: a proper enemy to fight. In his statement, Reagan talked about "international terrorism", but admitted that he did not know who exactly was responsible for the attack. In response to a question, Reagan confirmed that Amal's leader Nabih Berri took the hostages away from the hijackers, but because the administration was still unsure of the role Berri was playing in the crisis, and given the possibility that Berri would become the key for solving the crisis (as he later did), they refused to define him as responsible for the crisis; nor was Reagan willing to put the blame on the Government of Lebanon, in which Berri was the Minister of Justice. Subsequently, other administration officials pointed the finger to the general category of "Shiites" in Lebanon, but still did not name any specific organization as responsible for the hostage situation.⁷³ The absence of a clear enemy—and consequently the lack of a counter-attack by American forces—prevented the hostage situation from turning into a major rally-point.

The Bombing of Pan Am Flight 103

An even more devastating attack on an American civilian aircraft was launched on December 21, 1988: Pan Am Flight 103 from London to New York was bombed over Lockerbie, Scotland, causing the aircraft to disintegrate in midair. All 243 passengers (178 Americans) and

⁷² Washington Post. June 19, 1985. "Transcript of President Reagan's News Conference":A16.

⁷³ Los Angeles Times. June 19, 1985. "Reagan: No negotiations with Shia Muslim captors":1,13.

16 crew members (11 Americans) perished in the event, and 11 more people were killed on the ground. With no immediate evidence that the crash was actually caused by a bomb, and being engaged in effort to free American hostages in Lebanon (these individuals were taken hostage in Lebanon before the TWA 847 incident), the White House initially did not rush to point fingers toward suspected terrorist organizations or their sponsoring states (Simon 2001:225-227). Only about a week after the event, when British authorities confirmed that the aircraft was destroyed by a bomb, Reagan elevated his antiterrorism rhetoric and promised retaliation. However, these were Reagan's last days in office, and president-elect George H.W. Bush chose to employ a more careful rhetoric, promising that the US will "seek hard and punish firmly, decisively, those who did this *if you could ever find them*" (Simon 2001:227-228). Much like in the case of hostage situation on TWA Flight 847, in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 too all the materials for a major RRTF period were present, except for a clear enemy to be attacked and toward which popular desire for retaliation and the restorage of national honor could be channeled.

The Air Raid on Libya

In the night of April 14-15, 1986, US bombers struck Libya's airfield, the headquarter of Libya's strongman Muammar Qaddafi, and other targets near the capital Tripoli and the city of Benghazi, some of which suspected of being terrorist training camps. This event had the potential of turning into a major rally-point through *Pathway 1*, because in the background of the raid were the terrorist attacks against American targets, which have challenged the capacity of the US to protect its citizens and facilities abroad, and no less important, because the raid was launched against an already well established enemy, as we shall see.

Officially, the raid on Libya was a response to the bombing of the La Belle discotheque in Berlin, on April 5, 1986, in which three visitors were killed (including two American servicemen) and 230 were injured (including fifty American servicemen). However, the decision was actually made earlier, following the attacks in Rome and Vienna by the Abu Nidal Organization, which according to American intelligence was sponsored by Libya (Livingstone 1988:72; Piszkiwicz 2003:61).

Though at least three other dictators—Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and Hafez al-Assad in Syria—sponsored more deadly terrorism than Libya, it was Muammar Qaddafi that became the main target for Reagan’s anti-terrorism rhetoric (Simon 2001:196, St. John, 2002#:135). Several sources assess that the administration singled out Qaddafi because of all the terror-sponsoring states, Libya was the most convenient target for the following reasons (Livingstone 1988:66; Simon 2001: 196-197). First and foremost, Libya had the weakest military, thus attacking it was expected to have the lowest cost. Second, Libya was isolated from the Arab world, and was not as well connected to the UN Security Council as Iran was. Attacking Libya was therefore not likely to evolve into a greater diplomatic or security crisis. Finally, the Libyan dictator Qaddafi was the most visible leader, who appeared frequently on Western news channels and did not hesitate expressing his anti-American views. In addition, Qaddafi’s habit of wearing dresses and his eccentric mode of speech made him a typecast for playing the role of the “evil”. Indeed, many policymakers around the world considered Qaddafi to be a madman (Livingstone 1988:66), and Reagan himself once said that Qaddafi was “not only barbarian, [but] he’s flaky” (Simon 2001:196). With his explicit support for terrorism, and thanks to his demonization by the Reagan administration, Qaddafi became the man Americans loved to hate during the 1980s.

The air raid on Libya came at no surprise. From the beginning of 1986 onward, Reagan intensified his anti-Qaddafi rhetoric, calling him “a pariah who must be isolated from the world community” (St. John 2002:134). In addition, several actions taken against Libya have shown that the course for a military confrontation had been set: The US closed the Libyan embassy in Washington, suspended all economic ties with Libya, froze Libyan assets in the US and in American banks overseas, invalidated all authorizations to travel to Libya, and called all Americans who resided in Libya to come home. In March, the administration also stationed a flotilla of forty-five ships off the coast of Libya and sent ships accompanied by aircrafts to cross the “line of death” drawn by Qaddafi in the Gulf of Sidra, an act that resulted in a couple of incidents in which American naval forces sank two Libyan patrol ships and attacked an onshore radar installation (Livingstone 1988:72; Piskiewicz 2003:61-2; Schumacher 1986).

With Qaddafi presented as the spearhead of anti-American terrorism, and with a gradual deterioration of the relations of the US with Libya, the conditions seem to have been set for a major rally-period after a military confrontation with Libya. Indeed, when the US finally launched the raid on Libya, more than three quarters of the public supported the raid, and the approval rating of Reagan’s foreign policy jumped from 51% to 76% (Flamm 2009:125; Hinckley 1988; Simons 1993:6). Nonetheless, presidential job approval rating increased by only six points and stopped at 67%.⁷⁴ Why didn’t the air raid on Libya generate a more significant RRTF effect?

The answer, I argue, is that the raid on Libya did not meet the high expectations that had been previously raised. It was a limited military operation that, as Jeffrey Simon puts it, “almost seemed anticlimactic after all the months and years of promises of a military strike against

⁷⁴ Data were retrieved August 18, 2011, from the “American Presidency Project.” University of California, Santa Barbara:
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php?pres=40&sort=time&direct=DESC&Submit=DISPLAY>

terrorists” (Simon 2001:198). Two aspects of the event contributed to the anticlimax. First, rather than a direct military confrontation between the US and Libya, the raid was a short and limited military operation that met very little resistance. Second, although Reagan and Secretary of State Schultz denied that killing Qaddafi was one of the goals of the operation, the fact that Qaddafi’s headquarters, located very close to his private residence, were targeted, and that two of his sons were injured and his adopted baby daughter was killed in the raid, suggested otherwise.⁷⁵ Indeed, most Americans did not feel sorry for the personal loss the air raid inflicted on Qaddafi, whose own head they wanted: In a public opinion poll conducted immediately after the results of the raid were made public, no less than 81% said that the statement “I feel Colonel Kaddafi had it coming” adequately described their reaction to the raid, only 10% said that it did not.⁷⁶ Therefore, even though the administration announced that the raid was successful, and denied setting any goal to kill Qaddafi, the fact that Qaddafi himself survived the strike gave the “success” a bitter taste.

Proponents of the *rational public* approach might find in the case of the air raid on Libya some supporting, albeit ambiguous evidence for their approach. On the one hand, the dramatic increase in public approval rating of Reagan’s foreign policy may suggest that the raid marked for the public a change in Reagan’s anti-terrorism policy, which they could expect to be more decisive and effective than before the raid. On the other hand, the fact that Reagan’s popularity increased only slightly following the raid might indicate that for many Americans the sense of success of the raid was tempered by the failure to kill Qaddafi. Therefore, taking the *rational*

⁷⁵ According to Jonathan Bearman (1986:288), the claim that the raid was intended to kill Qaddafi was confirmed by sources within the administration. Moreover, according to Dennis Piszkiwicz (2003:66), “President Reagan’s address contained a few paragraphs that were never made public. They were to be read if U.S. sources could confirm that Qaddafi had been killed in the raid.”

⁷⁶ Time/Yankelovich Clancy Shulman Poll, Apr, 1986. Retrieved Aug-18-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

public perspective, one may speculate that the air raid would have developed into a major rally-point if it had brought to Qaddafi's demise or at least forced him to step down.

This possibility cannot be ruled out. However, other events—in particular, the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003—demonstrate that having an immediate success is *not* a necessary condition for the emergence of major rally effects. Rather, in these events, sending American ground forces to dethrone terror-sponsoring regimes mobilized nationalist sentiment even before the dust of war settled and success was visible. We can reasonably speculate that had similar large-scale military operation been launched against Libya, this would have resulted in a RRTF period, even with no immediate success. In short, being of limited scope and involving not much direct confrontation with the enemy, the raid on Libya did not generate enough enthusiasm and support for the president that otherwise would have turned it into a major rally-point.

II. Assuming “Leader of the Free World” Role (Pathway 4)

The relationship between popular nationalist sentiment and the perceived international status of the US is also crucial for the second group of major RRTF events. These are triggered by an effort by the United States to demonstrate its role as leader of the free world, thus reinforcing its global prestige and honor. In the period covered by this study, only the Persian Gulf War has developed into a major RRTF point through *Pathway 4*, but it is likely that other events, most notably the Second World War, would be included in this pathway if the database could be extended to pre-1950. The discussion in this part opens with contrasting the Gulf War rally with the other major military intervention of a US-lead coalition forces: the Korean War, which did not become a major RRTF point.

Both the Korean War and the first Gulf War were legitimized by UN mandates to overturn the annexation of territories of a country by its neighboring country: In Korea, the official mission was to compel the forces of North Korea to withdraw back to the 38th Parallel,⁷⁷ and in the Gulf War the mandate was to force the Iraqi military to pull out of Kuwait. Beyond these specific objectives, both wars should be understood in the larger context of the inter-bloc rivalry of the Cold War: The Korean War represented the first military confrontation between the emerging “Eastern” and “Western” blocs, and the Persian Gulf War happened during the demise of the Soviet Union, and took place in a region that had been a main wrestling site during the Cold War. Both in Korea and in the Gulf War, operating under a mandate by the UN Security Council was crucial for mobilizing public opinion in the US, because these UN authorizations conveyed a recognition of the US as international leader, thus symbolically confirming its military and moral superiority.

Interestingly, in both events presidential rhetoric did not strike a nationalist tone. It is very likely that official nationalism had to be suppressed because the presidents were commanding coalition forces in UN authorized operations. Nevertheless, as we shall see, by actively demonstrating that the US was willing to take the role of “leader of the free world” and fight “evil” forces on the world stage, the policies of both Presidents Truman and Bush successfully mobilized public support. However, for reasons that I am now turning to discuss, of the two events only the Gulf War became a major RRTF point, while the rally effect of the Korean War was more modest.

⁷⁷ Technically, Truman ordered the US air and sea forces to assist South Korea already on June 26, a day before Resolution 83 of the UN Security Council passed, recommending that member states provide military assistance to South Korea (Fisher 1995).

The Korean War

Truman's decision to intervene in Korea—first with air and naval forces only (June 27, 1950), and then with ground forces as well (June 30)—was initially received with applause and was supported by about eight out of every ten Americans (Casey 2008:35). Indeed, four years after the grand victory in the Second World War, and with an infant United Nations that lacked teeth to enforce its resolutions, many Americans felt that it was time for the US to lead the “free world”. In letters to the press, some expressed this view with an apologetic tone, like Mary Chamberlain of Broad Run, VA, who wrote: “In the absence of a statute of law against aggression and of a world police force capable of enforcing such law it became the unhappy duty of the United States Government as a signatory member, in good faith, of the U.N. Charter to act in the capacity of policeman for the U.N.”⁷⁸ Other, seemed to embrace the “international policeman” role enthusiastically. For example, Harry Daniels of Washington DC wrote: “I wish to congratulate the President on his correct and courageous stand in connection with the Korean affair...Mr. Truman may not know it, but he has made himself a hero among all democratic peoples in the world.”⁷⁹ Using a more militaristic language, Philip Randolph of New York wrote: “President Truman's entry into the Korean war with a big stick is the only language Communist Russia can understand. In the absence of such action, Stalin, like Hitler, would chloroform the work with the gasses of propaganda about peace, while thrusting the sword of war through the heart of the democratic world.”⁸⁰

Yet, despite the high levels of public support for the military intervention in Korea, its effect on Truman's popularity was modest: Following the announcement of the decision to send troops to Korea, Truman's job approval rating increased by only 9 points and peaked at 46%,

⁷⁸ Washington Post. July 9, 1950. “Letters to the Editor”:B4.

⁷⁹ Washington Post. July 4, 1950. “Letters to the Editor”:8.

⁸⁰ New York Times. July 1, 1950. “Letters to the Times”:9.

while disapproval rating, though declining by 7 points, still remained fairly high (40%). How come Truman, whose job approval rating following the triumph of the Second World War skyrocketed at about ninety percent,⁸¹ did not enjoy a similar boost of popularity when announcing the intervention in Korea even though the public generally approved of this decision?

The answer, I argue, is twofold. First, in June 1950 North Korea has not yet had a history of confrontations with the US. Although the North Korean leader Kim Il Sung often used anti-American rhetoric, no military confrontation has happened thus North Korea did not made the headlines in the US. Moreover, the fact that the Soviet Union, an ally during the Second World War and only a potential “enemy”, initially refused to stand behind the invasion of the North to the South, and that China was not yet publicly recognized as an enemy, made military intervention a hard sell: The invasion of North Korea to the South looked more like a local territorial dispute than an event within the broader context of the Cold War, which would have made North Korea a legitimate enemy of the US.

Second, at the onset of the Korean War, the Truman administration actually tried to play down the events in the Korean Peninsula and the scale of the US involvement in order not to feed the widespread concerns about a third, atomic world war that might incite a call for preemptive strike against the Soviet Union (Casey 2008:Chap.1). Thus, when asked at a news conference on June 29, 1950, whether the US was at war, Truman replied decisively that “We are not at war”, and belittled the crisis in Korea by calling it unlawful attack by “a bunch of bandits”. Then, when

⁸¹ Estimate was retrieved August 18, 2011, from the “American Presidency Project.” University of California, Santa Barbara:
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php?pres=33&sort=time&direct=DESC&Submit=DISPLAY>

asked whether it would be correct “to call [the international act in Korea] a police action under the United Nations” he responded “Yes. That is exactly what it amounts to.”⁸²

Combined together, the lack of prior constitution of North Korea as an enemy of the US, and Truman’s reluctance to explicitly assume the role of leader of the free world prevented the Korean War from becoming a major RRTF point. Surely, the heavy death toll America suffered during the Second World War and the traumatic memories that millions of veterans of this war carried with them also played an important part, causing Americans to respond with less enthusiasm to the new war (Young 2010). Yet, as we shall see in the case of the Gulf War, with the “right” enemy in sight, war traumas can be superseded by war enthusiasm.

The Persian Gulf War

The countdown for the beginning of the Persian Gulf War started with the invasion of Iraqi forces to Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Because the Cold War was over, and given the traumatic memories of Vietnam, serving as the world’s policeman was no longer a duty most Americans were likely to embrace. Nevertheless, the onset of the Persian Gulf War saw one of the most dramatic rally effects in the history of the US, with presidential approval rating of less than 60% skyrocketing to nearly 90%. In contrast to the Korean War, the onset of the Gulf War produced the kind of war enthusiasm and admiration of leadership that are typical of major RRTF event. The widespread mobilization of the American public in support of the Gulf War was expressed in the kinds of patriotic displays so typical of popular wars such as flag waving, community based rallies, and long waiting lines outside blood donation centers (Radway 2002:479). This popular mobilization emerged, despite the trauma of Vietnam, precisely because

⁸² John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13544> (Retrieved Aug-10-2011).

the two conditions that were missing in the Korean War were present in the Gulf War: A president that explicitly assumed a role of “leader of the free world” and an already established enemy.

As the crisis in the Persian Gulf unfolded, President Bush expressed a growing commitment to use American power—first diplomatic and economic, and if needed also military power—to force the government of Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait, as required by UN Security Council resolution 660, which was passed on August 3, 1990.⁸³ Why Bush was so determined to intervene in the crisis is an interesting question that other have discussed (see Gardner 2010; Kellner 1992). But determined as he was, before launching the attack on Iraqi forces, Bush had to win a battle at the home front: He had to sell his decision to intervene in the Gulf Crisis to a political elite and general public that, in the post-Vietnam era, seemed to be reluctant to support large military adventures overseas. To meet this challenge, the administration opened an information campaign using a loyal mainstream media (Kellner 1992; MacArthur 1992). The two most important, yet empirically questionable pieces of information that this campaign provided to the public were the following. First, Bush himself, other official speakers, and news reporters announced that Iraq was building a huge military force near the Saudi border as part of a plan to invade its militarily weak but oil-rich neighbor Saudi Arabia. Second, the same speakers also claimed that the US was seeking a diplomatic solution to the crisis in the Gulf but Saddam Hussein adamantly refused to negotiate. The mainstream media for its part did not bother to check the validity of these two claims that found their way to the

⁸³ Several resolutions of the Security Council followed: On August 8, 1990, resolution 661 authorized economic sanctions on Iraq. On August 25, resolution 665 authorized a naval blockade on Iraq to enforce the economic sanctions. On November 29, resolution 678 issued an ultimatum to Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait by January 15, and empowered member states to use “all necessary means” to enforce this resolution.

newspapers' headlines and became the main topic in special news reports, thus creating the impression that the war was inevitable (Kellner 1992).

Arguably, the most important effect the official propaganda generated was the construction of Saddam Hussein as a Satan that must be defeated. Prior to the crisis in the Gulf, Saddam Hussein had rarely made it to the headlines of the American press. Even when major events such as the use of chemical weapons against Iraqi Kurds and Iranian forces during the Iran-Iraq war were brought to the public's attention, Hussein's name was rarely mentioned (Lang and Lang 1994). This changed dramatically following the annexation of Kuwait. Three actors combined efforts to convince decision makers and the general American public that Saddam Hussein, and Iraq in general, was an enemy worth combating. Two of these actors were already mentioned: the Bush administration and the American media that (as in previous wars) largely propagated the worldview and policy preferences of the administration (Iyengar and Simon 1994). Official speakers, including the president himself, and news reports reminded Americans of the use of chemical gas by the Iraqi military against Iraqi Kurds and Iranian forces (but did not mention that the US chose not impose any sanction on Iraq following these atrocities, because Iraq was considered "enemy of my enemy" in its war with Iran (MacArthur 1992)). They described atrocities committed by Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait, and demonized Saddam Hussein by referring to him as a "madman", "barbarous", "beast", "monster", and ultimately the contemporary "Hitler" (Kellner 1992). Furthermore, drawing the analogy between Saddam Hussein and Adolph Hitler was part of more general effort to attribute urgency to an intervention in the Gulf Crisis, because it implied that postponing intervention in the Gulf would have

consequences similar to the delay of intervention in the Second World War (Winkler 2006:114).⁸⁴

In addition to official speakers and the media, a major if not widely acknowledged role was played by private US-based firms hired by the Government of Kuwait in order to mobilize support in the US for military intervention (Gardner 2010; Kellner 1992; MacArthur 1992). According to a report by The Center for Media and Democracy's PRWatch, the Government of Kuwait hired a couple of dozen public relations, law and lobbying firms, including the then largest PR firm in the World, Hill and Knowlton, which launched "the largest foreign-funded campaign ever aimed at manipulating American public opinion" (PRWatch). According to Douglas Kellner (1992), Hill and Knowlton spared no propaganda trick, including manipulating photos and video tapes that were presented by the media as reliable reports of atrocities committed by Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait. The campaign reached a climax on October 10 with a testimony of a weeping 15-year old girl, Nayirah, in front of the House Human Rights Caucus. She testified that as a volunteer in a hospital in Kuwait City she witnessed Iraqi soldiers taking infants out of the incubators, stealing the incubators, and leaving the babies to die on the floor. All details about Nayirah's identity except for her first name were concealed, supposedly in order to keep the safety of the girl and her family. None of the reporters who covered the testimony has tried to find out who Nayirah really was and to find evidence to corroborate her testimony; had they done so, they would have found out that Nayirah was actually the daughter of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US and member of the Kuwaiti Royal Family, and that her testimony was fabricated by Hill and Knowlton's PR experts (ibid). The "baby killing" theme was immediately picked up and recycled by Bush, as well as by other politicians and by the

⁸⁴ Years later, the analogy of Saddam Hussein to Hitler was used again, especially by neoconservative politicians, to justify the Iraq War in 2003 (Zulaika 2009).

media, who combined it with other stories of atrocities such as stories about Iraqi soldiers shooting civilians on the streets of Kuwait City and raping Kuwaiti women (Gardner 2010; Kellner 1992; Winkler 2006).

As a result of the massive information campaign, public attitudes in the US shifted gradually toward greater animosity against Saddam Hussein and more support for using military force to intervene in the Persian Gulf. For example, in mid-November, 1990, only 46% of respondents to a Gallup/Newsweek Poll thought that US forces should engage in combat if Iraq refused to leave Kuwait and restore its former government. Within three weeks, the percent increased to 56%, and by the second week of January, 1991 it was already 62%.⁸⁵ Perhaps the event that brought the crisis closer to home for Americans was the hostage crisis at the US embassy in Kuwait, which awakened bad memories of the Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979-80 and incited a desire to respond forcefully in order to avoid another humiliation (Gardner 2010:233). From late October 1990, the Administration, concerned by the lack of sufficient built up of public support for military intervention, began disseminating detailed accounts of the hostages' plight while being held in difficult conditions (Winkler 2006:104,110).

As a result of months of intensive campaign that presented Saddam Hussein as the emblematic evil that needed to be defeated, when the strike on Iraq was finally launched, most Americans saw it primarily as a war against Saddam Hussein: In a nationally representative survey conducted by the Los Angeles Times on January 17-18, one day after the air strike phase

⁸⁵ Gallup/Newsweek Polls, Nov 1990, Dec 1990, Jan, 1991. Retrieved Sep-3-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

of the Gulf War began, no less than 63% of the respondents said that they would not consider it a victory if Iraq leaves all of Kuwait, but Saddam Hussein remains in power in Iraq.⁸⁶

The Gulf War thus became popular because official rhetoric, assisted by the media and private companies, successfully presented the war as a fulfillment of the US's duty as leader of the free world, constructed Saddam Hussein as the emblematic evil, and portrayed Bush and the American forces as knights who fight the evil forces on behalf of the oppressed. An expression of this general mood of fulfilling an honorable historical mission can be found, for example, in the following two letters sent to the press. Jo Ann R. Paddock of Montgomery, AL, wrote: "History should record it as 'the war that united 28 nations against Iraq's madman Saddam Hussein [spelling error in the original text]; restored calm and confidence within the Persian Gulf; and demonstrated American military superiority and bravery under the courageous leadership of President George Herbert Walker Bush.'" ⁸⁷ Mike Greece of New York wrote: "History will judge that the U.S. fulfilled its *destiny in thwarting the dark side* [emphasis added] with orchestrated precision, humanity, technology, diplomacy, perseverance, morality and intelligence."⁸⁸

The claim that the widespread support for Bush and the Gulf War was related to enthusiasm about the possibility of claiming the "leader of the free world" status is further supported by the following piece of evidence: Since Vietnam, the ratings of public support for an "interventionist" policy were about 65%, and support rates for a more "isolationist" policy were about 30%; however, during the Gulf Crisis the rating of the interventionist position jumped to

⁸⁶ Los Angeles Times Poll, Jan, 1991. Retrieved Aug-6-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

⁸⁷ Wall Street Journal. January 19, 1991. "Letters to the Editor":A9.

⁸⁸ Wall Street Journal. January 25, 1991. "Letters to the Editor":A13.

about 80% while the popularity of the isolationist position declined to less than 15% (Holsti 1998:142).

To summarize, in sharp contrast to the Korean War, in which Truman seemed to have been taking the “leader of the free world” role reluctantly, and ambiguously presented North Korea as an enemy, Bush’s explicit commitment to the international leadership role in the Gulf Crisis and the successful campaign to construct Saddam Hussein as an evil force made the goal of “taking down Saddam” a test for the capacity of the US to performed its international leadership role and prove its might and honor in the global arena. This, in turn, triggered widespread nationalist sentiment and turned the war into a major RRTF event.⁸⁹

The Gulf War also highlights the central role of the political elite that manipulate public opinion, as emphasizes by the “opinion leadership” approach. However, as we have seen also in other events, manipulation efforts do not always succeed. Rather, presidents mobilize the public behind their leadership when circumstances allow their rhetoric to call forth popular nationalist sentiment. In the Gulf War, the international consensus against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the UN authorization of the war provided the context for Bush to mobilize public opinion behind the leadership role of the US. As a counterfactual, one can only speculate about the reaction of the public had Bush launched a military attack against Iraq without a UN authorization. Under such circumstances, it is likely that a significant portion of public opinion would have turned against the war, because rather than inciting nationalist emotions of pride, confidence, and hope, going to war for saving a foreign country would have been hunted by the memories of Vietnam.

⁸⁹ One may argue that the enthusiasm around the Gulf War was also related to the opportunity this war provided to fight the shadows of the Vietnam War, and eliminate the so-called “Vietnam-Syndrome” by winning a major international war. This kind of motivation, which in previous sections I referred to as a desire to reclaim national honor, seems to have indeed guided the attitudes of some of the more militarist parts of the American society toward the Gulf War (Kellner 1992; Shaw and Martin 1993). However, the evidence at hand do not seem to suggest that in the larger public conversation the Gulf War was seen as an opportunity to reclaim the national honor that was lost in Vietnam.

Other UN Authorized Missions

On two additional occasions the US was appointed by the UN to lead a coalition of countries to war—operation “Restore Hope” in Somalia in December 1992, and operation “Uphold Democracy” in Haiti in September 1994—but none of these triggered a significant rally effect. In contrast to both the Korean and Gulf wars, the UN mission in Somalia (given in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 794) was not to restore the international order by fighting a defiant regime, but to open and protect supply routes for international aid.⁹⁰ In his address to the nation, Bush announced a limited humanitarian mission: “to enable the starving to be fed”.⁹¹ In addition, there was no clear enemy to beat in Somalia, except for vaguely defined “armed gangs” (or “thugs” as they were often labeled in news reports) that blocked the routes for humanitarian aid. Consequently, rather than a test for the international hegemony of the US, or specifically to Bush’s “New World Order” doctrine, the invasion of Somalia was perceived by the public as it was presented to it: A use of the US military power for humanitarian purpose. As a result, while a vast majority of Americans approved of this military operation, this approval did not translate into a war enthusiasm and rally behind President Bush: In the days following Bush’s national address on Somalia, about three quarters of the American public approved of the way Bush was handling the situation in Somalia and his decision to send troops to Somalia, but only about half of the public approved of the way Bush was handling his job as a president.⁹²

⁹⁰ Whereas in the Gulf War Bush’s policy has pursued national interest in disguise of internationalist mission, in Somalia Bush’s decision for military intervention might have actually been motivated by a genuine humanitarian wish to stop the mass killing and famine (Burgess 2002; Hirsch and Oakley 1995), a concern that he could act upon only after losing the November 1992 elections (Baum 2004).

⁹¹ New York Times. December 5, 1992. “Transcript of President’s Address on Somalia”:4.

⁹² CBS News/New York Times Poll, Dec, 1992. Retrieved Mar-19-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html. For review of public opinion on the intervention in Somalia see (Klarevas 2000).

On July 31, 1994, the US was again appointed by the UN Security Council to lead an international military intervention, this time in order to force the military junta in Haiti to step down and to restore democracy in the country (United Nations Security Council Resolution 940). However, only a few hours before military operation in Haiti would began on September 19, an agreement was reached with the Haitian ruler, General Raoul Cédras, which allowed the U.S. to occupy Haiti without using force. It is impossible to know what would have happened to public opinion in the U.S. had Cédras decided to put up a fight instead of stepping down peacefully. Considering the fact that, despite a long history of US intervention in Haitian politics (Hendrickson 2002: 43-45), most of the general public knew very little about this country, we can speculate that resistance by Cédras would not have posed the kind of symbolic challenge that could generate a major RRTF effect. In addition, the intervention in Haiti came less than two years after the traumatic intervention in Somalia, which left Americans with the memory of bodies of dead American soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. For these reasons, on the eve of the invasion of Haiti, most Americans did not find Haiti a country worth spilling American blood over (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997:533; Girard 2004:3).⁹³

To recapitulate my argument about *Pathway 4*, when the US is called by the international community to restore the world order, this puts the moral and military supremacy of the US to test and offers an opportunity to increase its honor and global prestige. However, for this type of international crisis to transform into major rally periods in the U.S., an opponent that may put up

⁹³ Interestingly, however, public opinion polls show that shortly before a military operation in Haiti was suppose to begin, about 55% of Americans approved of the way President Clinton was handling the situation in Haiti. However, soon after an agreement was reached, the support rate declined by about ten percent (ABC News Poll, Sep, 1994; CBS News/New York Times Poll, Sep, 1994; Washington Post Poll, Sep, 1994; PSRA/Newsweek Poll, Sep, 1994. All data retrieved Mar-19-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html). These findings suggest that reaching an agreement that prevented the US from demonstrating its supreme military power, caused some of the public support for Clinton's policy to fade away even though the political objective of restoring democracy in Haiti was successfully achieved.

a fight needs to be present and be constructed as an “enemy” against which Americans can unite and demonstrate the power of the US.

CONCLUSION

This chapter proposed a new understanding of the processes through which crisis events transform into rally-round-the-flag periods in the United States. In contrast to existing literature, which often takes a rationalist perspective on public attitudes, sees the rally as a response to international security threats, or focuses on the nature of the information that the public processes, I argued that the desire to increase or restore the prestige of the nation vis-à-vis the international community is the driving force behind the RRTF phenomenon. This argument is based on the fundamental sociological principle of looking at individuals as members of collectivities that pursue a symbolic politics of status achievement and maintenance, as discussed in Chapter 1.

Qualitative-Comparative Analysis of data on war and security crises in the US from 1950 to 2006 detected four configurations of conditions that have turned events into major rally-points. The four configurations identified vary in the precise combinations of rally-producing conditions. All four configurations of conditions, however, are variants of a situation in which the international conflicts offer opportunities to restore or enhance the. Rather than a rational calculus of the chances to win an international confrontation, a response to threats to the state’s security, or the simple effect of a homogenous landscape of public opinion, rally periods emerge from the emotionality generated by a challenge to national honor. To further establish this argument, the next chapter uses survey data to trace the motivations of individual to support the president during two rally-around-the-flag periods.

CHAPTER 3

INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATIONS

The previous analysis has shown that when rally effect occurs, large numbers of citizens who previously opposed a sitting president or were indifferent become supporters. As a consequence, presidential approval ratings soar from the range prevailing during “normal” times to much higher levels. A proper understanding of the RRTF effect needs to explore how it is brought about at the individual level.

This chapter seeks to trace the mechanisms that transform individuals’ attitudes toward the president during rally periods. In Chapter 1, I argued that support for the sitting president during a RRTF period is driven by positive emotions—in particular, pride, confidence, and hope—that stem from increased identification with the nation. The present chapter tests this argument against the two main alternatives: The *rationalist* claim that support for the president comes from individuals who assess that military action is likely to succeed at a reasonable cost, and the *realist* argument that the rally effect is driven by perceived security threats and the negative emotions these threats trigger in individuals.

Before discussing the data analysis and findings, some elaboration on the measurement of emotions is in order. This dissertation looks at emotions from the point of view of what has been labeled “cognitive theories of emotions”. Rather than considering emotions as automatic reactions to external stimuli, the cognitive approach emphasizes the effects of *evaluation* and *judgment* on emotional experiences. Undoubtedly, emotional processes often emerge as visceral reactions to external stimuli such as threats to personal security, thus may be measured by neurological and somatic indicators (Adelmann and Zajonc 1989; Damasio 1994; LeDoux 1996; LeDoux and Phelps 2008). However, ample studies reveal that neurological and bodily

sensations of different emotions often overlap (Cacioppo et al. 2000; Matsumoto et al. 2008). Therefore, most experts would agree that what we specifically feel about an event or an actor depends to a significant degree on the *meaning* we assign to the somatic reaction we experience.

But cognitive theories take this principle one step further by pointing to a reverse causal relationship between cognition and emotion: They maintain that the meanings individuals attribute to events and actors influence their emotional reactions (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003; Lazarus 1991; Ortony, Clore and Collins 1988; Roseman and Smith 2001; Schachter and Singer 1962; Weiner 1986). For example, sadness is an emotion that is driven by perceived loss. Therefore, most people feel sad when one of their loved ones dies, but many individuals may also feel saddened by the birth of their new child, because they evaluate this situation as a loss of personal freedom, loss of intimacy with their spouse, etc. (Roseman and Smith 2001:4).

Furthermore, having an emotion is itself a *subjective* experience: Individuals use culturally-induced tacit knowledge of emotions in order to assign labels to their feelings. Because of this subjectivity, Ortony, Clore and Collins (1988) argue that individuals are in the best position to identify their own emotions. Put it in other words, they argue that emotions *are* what individuals identify as their own emotions. The authors therefore recommend the use of self-reports for measuring emotions. Other scholars in the cognitive approach might disagree with this recommendation, arguing that self-reports do not address important properties of emotions such as physical arousal and action tendency (e.g., Frijda 1986; Scherer 2005). Nevertheless, political psychologists often use self-reports to measure emotions, because it has been established theoretically and empirically that what individuals *tell* themselves about their emotional reaction to a political issue or an actor shapes their opinion about the issue or the actor (Brady and Sniderman 1991; Conover and Feldman 1986; Kuklinski et al. 1991; Lodge and

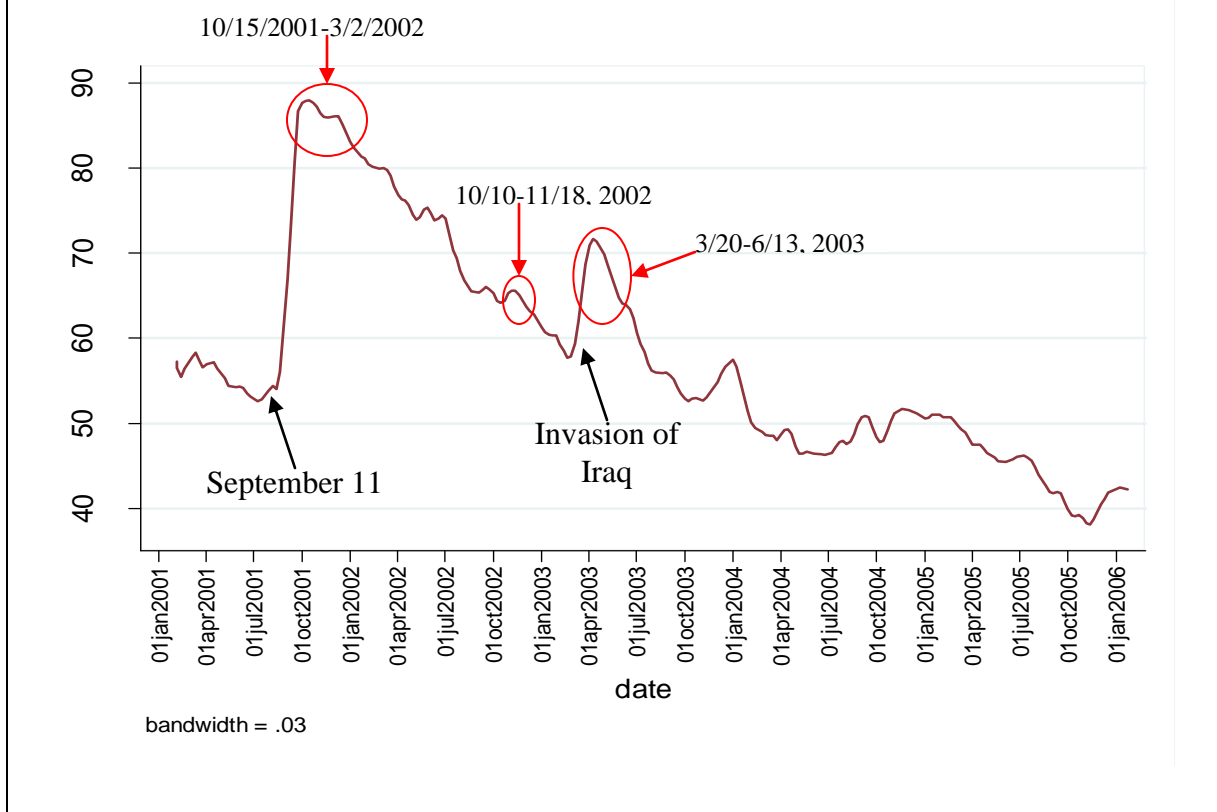
Taber 2000; Marcus 2000; Marcus 1995; Wyner and Ottai 1993; Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991b).

The focus on the *evaluative* aspect of emotions is also central to my approach to the RRTF phenomenon, which highlights the meaning assigned to wars and security crises as the cause of the emotional reactions that motivate individuals to support the president. Therefore, in this chapter, and in the following one, emotions are measured through self-reports.

DATA AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter makes use of survey data collected during a period when Americans rallied behind President George W. Bush's leadership. The most significant phase of rallying behind Bush occurred in the aftermath of 9/11 and the onset of the Afghanistan War, when his approval rating skyrocketed to nearly 90%. Although a decline followed this peak, President Bush and his "war on terror" policy enjoyed the support of a solid majority throughout a period of two years, which included a second, more modest RRTF effect following the invasion of Iraq on March 2003. Figure 3.1 shows the trend line of the president's job approval ratings from Bush's inauguration in January 2001 to the beginning of 2006. The three periods during which data for this study were collected are circled.

Figure 3.1. President George W. Bush’s Job Approval Rates since First Inauguration (smoothed trend line)*



*Data based on Eichenberg et al. 2006.

Testing my interpretation of the rally as a consequence of nationalist emotions poses a considerable challenge because conventional polls almost never ask directly about emotions. Fortunately, two nationally representative data sources on public attitudes during the long rally period that followed 9/11 contain questions about emotions: a Gallup poll conducted a couple of days after the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, and the National Threat and Terrorism Survey (NTTS) conducted in three periods – in the aftermath of 9/11, in October and November of 2002, and in the first trimester of the Iraq War. The Gallup poll and the first round of NTTS (henceforth “Wave 1”) resemble ordinary public opinion polls because they contain only a few questions about individuals’ emotions. In the first stage of the analysis, these two data sets are

analyzed using logistic regression. Then, in a second stage, structural equation modeling is used in order to analyze the second and third rounds of the NTTS (henceforth “Wave 2” and “Wave 3”), which contain entire batteries of questions about emotions thus allowing for a robust estimation of their effects that is out of reach with more limited questionnaires. Finally, in the third stage of the analysis, the longitudinal portion of the NTTS is used for modeling the decline in Bush’s popularity over time. The findings of this chapter suggest that public attitudes in recent rally periods were motivated by positive emotions evoked by nationalism rather than by rational decision-making or through negative emotions stemming from the perception of threat.

Hypotheses

Data analysis in this chapter seeks to trace the *motivations* of individuals who rally behind the president. It does not examine, however, whether these motivations emerged as a direct response to events or were manipulated by the elite (this issue was discussed in the previous chapter). With the focus on individuals’ motivation, the various approaches to the RRTF phenomenon can be boiled down to three hypotheses. First, the two *realist* approaches—the “security-concerned public” and the “manipulation of threat” argument—lead us to expect individuals who experience more security threat during conflict to be more likely to approve of the president’s work than individuals who experience lower levels of threat or see no threat at all (Hypothesis 1). Second, *rationalist* approaches suggest that individuals will be more likely to approve of the president’s work if they anticipate that a military action would succeed, and especially if they expect it to be short and to cost only a few American lives (Hypothesis 2). Finally, my approach suggests that individuals will be more likely to approve of the president’s work if they experience positive emotions—in particular, pride, confidence, and hope—about a

military action by the US and about the institutions that are in charge of executing war policies: the government and the military (Hypothesis 3). The following data analysis was aimed to adjudicate between these three hypotheses.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Shortly after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a Gallup poll about the war asked a set of questions concerning emotional reactions. As can be seen in Table 3.1, at the beginning of the Iraq War about three out of every four Americans supported the president and the war. The table also shows that most Americans thought that more terrorist attacks in the U.S. were likely, but were not too worried about being themselves a victim of terrorism—an indication of the limits of the “security-concerned public” and “manipulation of threat” arguments outlined in Chapter 1. An overwhelming majority thought that the war was going well for the US. Most respondents reported that the war made them feel proud and confident, but also sad, while only half of the respondents said that they were worried because of the war, and relatively few said that they were afraid.

Table 3.1. Binary Distributions of Categorical Variables from a Gallup Poll, March 22- 23, 2003, U.S. Adults Citizens (percents refer to valid responses)

	Yes	No
Approve the way the presidents is handling his job	72.8%	24.2%
Favor war	73.8	23.5
Worried about being victim of terrorism*	38.3	61.8
Perceived likelihood of more terrorism*	74.4	24.9
War going well*	91.4	7.0
U.S. is winning*	84.3	14.1
Proud because of the war in Iraq	62.3	36.4
Confident because of the war in Iraq	76.9	20.6
Afraid because of the war in Iraq	25.3	74.3
Worried because of the war in Iraq	49.4	50.0
Sad because of the war in Iraq	71.4	28.2

Note: 986<=N<=1020

*Binary distribution was obtained by collapsing the ordinal variable with 3-4 categories.

What accounts for the high presidential job approval rating? Was it the prevalent perception of threat as some political psychological theories discussed in Chapter 1 suggest? Or maybe it was people's positive assessment of the chances for victory, as assumed by theories of the *rational public*? Or could variation in support for war be associated with positive emotions such as pride and confidence, as I am arguing? In order to adjudicate between these different explanations, the survey data were analyzed using logistic regressions with the president's job approval as a binary outcome. The analytical strategy proceeded in three steps. First, various control variables were tested, and those found to be statistically significant were kept as a baseline model. Next, independent variables were grouped based on their affinity to one of the three theoretical approaches. Each group of variables was tested in a separate model that also included the baseline control variables. In a third step, all statistically significant independent variables were combined into an "all-in-one" model. Table 3.2 summarizes the findings.¹

¹ An additional analysis in which support for the war in Iraq served as the outcome of interest reveals that similar mechanisms affected both individuals' attitudes toward the president and toward the war (results not shown).

Table 3.2. Coefficients from Logistic Regression Models of President Job Approval, US Adult Citizens, Gallup Poll, March 22-23, 2003 (robust standard errors in parentheses)

Explanatory variables	Model 1 Threat perception	Model 2 Rational Public	Model 3 Nationalist sentiment	Model 4 All-in-one
Worry about being victim of terrorism	-.0936 (.155)			
Expect more terrorism soon	-.234 (.171)			
Winning		1.452*** (.379)		1.003** (.368)
Success (how war is going for us)		.412 (.212)		.208 (.188)
Expected duration of war		.0393 (.125)		
Expected number of U.S. casualties		-.190 (.151)		
War pessimism scale		-.983 (.853)		
Proud because of the war in Iraq			2.365*** (.342)	2.424*** (.343)
Confident because of the war in Iraq			1.593*** (.347)	1.383*** (.359)
Afraid because of the war in Iraq			-.677 (.362)	
Worried because of the war in Iraq			-.437 (.360)	
Sad because of the war in Iraq			-.250 (.436)	
How closely follow news about the war	.599** (.180)	.348 (.204)	.356 (.230)	.203 (.235)
Party affiliation scale	-.634*** (.0801)	-.703*** (.101)	-.719*** (.0976)	-.754*** (.0938)
Level of liberalism	-.596*** (.0982)	-.570*** (.110)	-.719*** (.0976)	1.385*** (.433)
Age 50-64	-.556* (.266)	-.592 (.325)	-.775* (.330)	-.917** (.336)
Income \$30k-less than \$50k	1.606*** (.353)	1.601*** (.462)	1.469*** (.417)	1.385** (.433)
Income \$50k and above	.579* (.292)	.379 (.366)	.242 (.363)	.0365 (.385)
College graduate	-.723** (.247)	-.466 (.302)	.148 (.342)	.321 (.351)
Hispanic	.686 (.827)	1.284 (.695)	1.764* (.783)	1.519 (.776)

	Model 1 Threat perception	Model 2 Rational Public	Model 3 Nationalist sentiment	Model 4 All-in-one
Black	-2.184*** (.409)	-1.839** (.564)	-1.670*** (.413)	-1.506*** (.425)
Constant	4.069*** (.923)	2.426 (1.301)	2.302* (1.014)	.754 (1.098)
Observations	853	797	825	822
Chi-Square	189 (11)***	212(14)***	222(14)***	221(13)***
McKelvey and Zavoina's R ²	.579	.660	.760	.746
BIC	-312	-326	-467	-448

*P<0.05, **P<0.01, *** p<0.001 (two-tailed tests).

Note: “<\$30k” and “white, Asian, or other” are the omitted categories of income and race.

The “perception of threat” thesis is not supported by the data, as can be seen in Model 1 where both the coefficients for perceived likelihood of additional terrorist attacks and perception of personal threat are weak and not statistically significant. Model 2 offers some support to the *rational public* approach, because respondents who thought that the U.S was winning were also more likely to support the president. However, in contrast to the *rational public* argument, the expected duration of the war and the expected number of American casualties have no statistically significant associations with presidential job approval.² The variable that measures whether respondents thought that the war was successful (“success”) is marginally significant (P=.052), but it fails the significance tests in Model 4 that also includes positive emotion labels.

² One might suspect that the variables that measure the anticipated duration of the war and the number of American casualties are not statistically significant because they are correlated with other explanatory variables in Model 2, especially with the statistically highly significant “winning” variable. However, the effect of the “duration” variable is not statistically significant even when the other explanatory variables are removed from the model. It only becomes significant when all other independent variables (including the control variables) are removed.

In contrast, the effect of the “casualties” variable becomes statistically significant when the other explanatory variables are removed from the model but the control variables are kept. However, no single explanatory variable is responsible for the lack of statistical significance of the “casualties” variables in Model 2. Instead, all the explanatory variables *jointly* cause “casualties” to lose statistical significance. This suggests that if the expected number of casualties had an effect on presidential job approval, this effect was indirect and was moderated by other variables. This possibility is in line with a recent modification of the “rational public argument”, according to which the effect of casualties is moderated by individuals’ confidence and by their support of the goals of military actions (Gelpi et al. 2006). The findings, therefore, speak primarily against the traditional rationalist view of casualties as negative informational input (Gartner and Segura 2000; Lorell et al. 1985; Russett 1990:46).

Model 3 contains all five poll questions about emotional reaction to the war. This model reveals that support for the president has a strong association with positive emotions (pride and confidence), but no statistically significant association with negative emotions about the war. This model fits the data much better than the *rational public* model, as the comparison of their McKelvey and Zavoina's R-squared values and Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) values suggest.³

Model 4 contains all the explanatory variables that were found to be statistically significant in models 1-3. Among the three alternative theoretical explanations, this model most strongly supports the “positive emotions” thesis. The variable “winning”, which so far was attributed to the *rational public*, remains statistically significant as well. However, what caused individuals to believe that “our” military is winning is somewhat ambiguous. It is possible that this belief was not based on rational calculation of available information (i.e., information about the military power of the US and the power of the enemy, or news about the progress of the war), but actually reflected a high level of confidence that emerged as an *emotional* reaction to the conflict situation. The data at hand point to a very strong association between the level of confidence reported by respondents and whether they believed that the US was winning in Iraq or not: Among respondents who said that the war in Iraq made them feel confident, 91% also believed that the US was winning the war. In contrast, only 60% of the respondents who said that

³ Theoretically, the explanatory variables in Models 1 and 2 can be distinguished from the variables in Model 3 by their relative distance from the outcome. Perhaps the security concerns (Model 1) and the expected success, duration, and cost of the war in Iraq (Model 2) had *distal* effects on presidential job approval, while the effects of the feelings individuals had about the war (Model 3) were more *proximal*. In other words, it is possible that the security concerns and expectations of the war had *indirect* effects on individuals' attitudes about President Bush, which means that these variables generated approval for Bush if they were also accompanied by positive emotions about the war in Iraq. Therefore, it is possible that the results of the regression analysis in Table 3.2 highlight emotional reactions to the war in Iraq because their effects on presidential job approval were more proximal than the effects of security concerns and expectations of the war. Still, if security concerns and expectations of the war had indirect effects on presidential job approval, we would expect to obtain statistically significant coefficients for the explanatory variables in models 1 and 2 that do not factor in the effects of emotions.

they did not feel confident as a result of the war believed that the US was winning. Rationalists might embrace these findings, arguing that confidence is the product of rational assessment of success chances. But I argue that the causal relationship is in the opposite direction: Individuals believed that the US was going to win the war because they felt confident.

It may be impossible to adjudicate between the two arguments, because the disagreement outreaches the question of causal direction—i.e., whether confidence affects the belief in winning or it is the other way around. The more serious difficulty comes from the possibility that the two variables actually function as indicators of *the same latent variable*. I argue that both variables represent the underlying level of confidence that respondents felt during the invasion of Iraq, but rationalists might disagree with me and instead argue that these variables indicate individuals' rational assessment of success chances of the war. The data do not permit a decisive adjudication between these two interpretations. Nonetheless, the fact that in Model 1 several variables that are directly and explicitly related to the rationalist approach—the anticipated duration of the war, the anticipated number of casualties, and the anticipated consequences of the war (as measured by the pessimism/optimism scale)—were all found to have only weak and not statistically significant effects, speaks against this approach. In contrast, the sizable and stable effects of both confidence and pride in models 3 and 4 highlight the pivotal role of emotions about the war in Iraq in the public evaluation of President Bush.

So far, the discussion focused on variables that serve as indicators for the three alternative explanations of presidential job approval. Yet inspecting the control variables is interesting too. Some association between partisanship and presidential job approval was found. Not surprisingly, at the beginning of the Iraq war, opposition came primarily from the liberal-democratic side of the political spectrum.

Significant variation appeared along racial lines: Individuals self-identified as black were the least likely to support the war and the president. Perhaps this variation can be connected to a varying salience of national identities: Blacks have an ambivalent relationship with American nationalism because of the history of slavery, post-emancipation segregation, and enduring racial inequalities (Sidanius et al. 1997; Sidanius and Petrocik 2001; Sinclair, Sidanius and Levin 1998) and thus were the most reluctant to join the rally. In addition, throughout the analysis, the category of “Hispanic” kept bouncing in and out of the area of statistical significance. The signs of the coefficients for this variable are positive in all models, thus it is possible that Hispanics, many of whom are recently naturalized, were the most eager to express patriotism. The fact that this coefficient is unstable may be attributed to the heterogeneity of the Hispanic category, especially regarding individuals’ naturalization history (a matter for further investigation that my data do not allow).⁴

Finally, it is worth mentioning that no statistically significant associations were found between support of the war and respondent’s gender, education, exposure to news reports, type of residence (urban/suburban/rural), and area of residence. These are important findings because they point to the special character of the RRTF phenomenon: some of the variables that affect public opinion in “normal times” do not play a role during the rally period, because support for the president transcends usual dividing lines and embraces almost the entire population.

Are the findings discussed so far unique to the case of the Iraq war, or do they point toward more general features of the RRTF phenomenon? I now turn to a second survey with data on emotions that was conducted shortly after the 9/11 attack. It is a nationally representative

⁴ The model also contains statistically significant coefficients for a category of income and a category of age. These findings are not discussed for two reasons. First, I do not have a theoretical explanation for them. Second, each of these coefficients is influenced by a few cases, as post-estimation coefficient-sensitivity check reveals. The two variables were kept in the model in order to capture some of the variation in the outcome not captured otherwise; thus they contribute to my confidence in the robustness of other, more meaningful variables.

survey conducted by Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc., and the Stony Brook University Center for Social Research during the heyday of the rally behind President George W. Bush and his “war on terror”.⁵ In this National Threat and Terrorism Security Survey (NTTS) of 1549 adult Americans, taken from October 15, 2001, to March 2, 2002, no less than 87.4% of respondents said that they approved of the way the president was handling his job.

Looking at the univariate distributions of the main explanatory variables in Table 3.3, we can see that at the time of the survey, Americans were on average concerned by both the general risk of future terrorist attacks and the more specific possibility of attacks with chemical or biological weapons, though they were less concerned about their own personal safety; they reported a high level of national pride, and were angry at people who criticized the U.S.; they expressed high confidence in the government’s capacity to win the war against terrorism, but were somewhat less confident about its capacity to protect U.S. citizens from future terrorism; and when asked to endorse labels that described specific emotions, the average respondent scored high on the positive emotions “secure” and “confident,” and medium to low on negative emotions such as fear and anxiety.

⁵ The author is grateful to Leonie Huddy for sharing the data set.

Table 3.3. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Variables, US Adult Citizens, “Public Reactions to the Events of September 11,” Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc and Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research, 10/15/2001-3/2/2002

	Mean	SD	Range
Proud being American	3.55	.65	1-4
Trust the government to do what’s right	2.66	.69	1-4
Confident government can protect from terrorism	2.88	.74	1-4
Confident government can win war on terrorism	3.25	.79	1-4
Angry at people who criticize the US	3.42	1.21	1-5
Concerned use of WMD in US	3.32	.78	1-4
Concerned by future terrorism in the US	3.34	.78	1-4
Concerned that will be victim of terrorist attack	2.86	.96	1-4
Attacks shaken sense of personal safety	2.5	1.03	1-4
Felt depressed because of the attacks	2.07	1.00	1-4
Felt anxious because of the attacks	2.38	.95	1-4
Felt scared because of the attacks	2.03	.96	1-4
Felt secure because of the attacks	3.23	.87	1-4
Felt worried because of the attacks	2.43	.96	1-4
Felt frightened because of the attacks	1.97	.93	1-4
Felt confident because of the attacks	3.29	.82	1-4
Level of Liberalism	3.54	2.09	1-4

Did Americans close ranks behind President Bush because 9/11 produced a strong perception of threat, as several scholars have argued? Alternatively, was the RRTF effect motivated by positive emotions of national pride, confidence, and hope, as I argue? To answer these questions, the survey data were reexamined, using logistic regressions with president’s job approval as a binary dependent variable. A summary of the findings is shown in Table 3.4. Note that the *rational public* approach is not addressed in this part, because no questions that could be used as indicators for how individuals evaluated the chances of success of the war on terror were included in the survey. However, the survey contains questions that permit a preliminary test of one of my main arguments, according to which the emotions that affect presidential approval rating during RRTF periods are those directed specifically toward the nation and the institutions that represent it. This argument could not be submitted to an empirical assessment in the previous analysis for a lack of relevant survey questions. Fortunately, the NTTS contains a set of

questions that ask specifically about national pride and about confidence and trust in the government. The data analysis was approached in the same way as for the March 2003 Gallup poll.

Table 3.4. Coefficients from Logistic Regression Models of President Job Approval, US Adult Citizens, “Public Reactions to the Events of September 11,” Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc and Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research, 10/15/2001-3/2/2002 (standard errors in parentheses).

Explanatory variables	Model 1 Threat Perception	Model 2 Emotions	Model 3 Nationalism & Trust in govt.	Model 4 All-in-one
Concerned by future terrorism in the US	.141 (.159)			
Concerned by terrorism use of WMD in US	.342* (.157)			.123 (.141)
Concerned that will be victim of future attack?	-.129 (.137)			
Attacks shaken sense of personal safety	-.0697 (.123)			
Felt depressed because of the attacks		-.061 (.120)		
Felt anxious because of the attacks		-.043 (.151)		
Felt scared because of the attacks		.0281 (.172)		
Felt secure because of the attacks		-.002 (.143)		
Felt worried because of the attacks		.164 (.161)		
Felt frightened because of the attacks		-.197 (.177)		
Felt confident because of the attacks		.383** (.141)		.057 (.135)
Proud being an American			.396* (.160)	.416** (.154)
Trust the government to do what’s right			.857*** (.213)	.868*** (.214)
Confident that govt. can protect from terrorism			.406** (.157)	.363* (.158)
Confident that govt. can win war on terrorism			.555*** (.150)	.584*** (.152)
Angry at people who criticize the US			.127 (.106)	
How closely follow news about the attacks	.316* (.154)	.238 (.159)	.138 (.173)	.091 (.174)
Days in past week read about events in newspaper	.129** (.042)	.139*** (.044)	.078 (.048)	.074 (.048)

	Model 1 Threat Perception	Model 2 Emotions	Model 3 Nationalism & Trust in govt.	Model 4 All-in-one
Level of liberalism	-.191*** (.054)	-.215*** (.055)	-.067 (.064)	-.071 (.063)
Democrat or leaning Democrat	-1.595*** (.249)	-1.580*** (.258)	-1.608*** (.291)	-1.647*** (.293)
You/friends/relatives know a victim	-.378 (.218)	-.267 (.226)	-.193 (.249)	-.268 (.247)
Constant	1.403* (.639)	1.682** (.731)	-3.758*** (.882)	-3.768*** (1.005)
Observations	1294	1256	1223	1227
Chi-Square	138.2(9)***	139.5(12)** *	248.9(10)***	235.1(11)* **
McKelvey and Zavoina's R ²	.304	.321	.472	.460
BIC	-74	-54	-178	-157

*P<0.05, **P<0.01, *** p<0.001 (two-tailed tests).

Model 1 tests the “perception of threat” thesis. It reveals that despite the fact that 87% of respondents said that they were either somewhat or very concerned by the possibility of another terrorist attacks on U.S. soil, they were not more likely to support the president than individuals who reported lower levels of perception of threat, nor was concern about personal safety associated with the president’s job approval. Of all the variables in this model, only concerns about terrorists’ use of chemical or biological weapons against the U.S. have a statistically significant (positive) association with support of the president. However, this variable loses statistical significance when positive emotions are introduced in Model 4.

Model 2 tests variables related to emotional state. Only “confidence” has a statistically significant (positive) coefficient. None of the negative emotions is even close to statistical significance. Model 3 further explores the effects of positive emotions, as well as the degree of national identification and confidence in the government. This model fits the data much better than models 1 and 2, and contains four highly significant coefficients: proud to be American, trust in the government to do what’s right, and confidence in the government’s capacity to protect its citizens and win the war against terrorism. Model 4 combines all statistically

significant covariates from the first three models. As it turns out, only the variables from Model 3 remain statistically significant.

Based on the results presented above, I conclude that the RRTF period following the 9/11 attack was motivated primarily by widespread emotions of nationalistic pride and confidence in the government.⁶ No robust evidence was found to support the “perception of threat” thesis. Unfortunately, the data did not permit a direct test of the *rational public* argument.

Against this conclusion, one may argue that the two “confidence” variables that were tested in Models 3 and 4—confidence in the capacity of the government to win the war on terror and confidence in its capacity to protect the US citizens—actually provide evidence in support of the rationalist argument: Individuals supported the government because they rationally assessed that its anti-terrorism actions will succeed. Although the survey data cannot rule out the possibility that the rally effect of the September 11 attacks was driven by rational calculus, there are at least three reasons for being skeptical about this interpretation of the findings.

First, the shift of public attitudes toward Bush after September 11 was abrupt and extreme. Even the most prominent advocates of the *rational public* approach, Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, admit that it is difficult to use this approach to explain abrupt shifts in public opinion, because it generally assumes that public opinion has stable and predictable patterns (Page and Shapiro 1992:173). Instead, Page and Shapiro attribute abrupt shifts of opinion to the monopoly the elite has over the information the public receives through the media about foreign affairs. However, even if the rally-effect of September 11 was generated by a manipulative use

⁶ Coefficient sensitivity diagnostics reveals that the *partial* effects of both nationalist pride and confidence about the antiterrorism policy are influenced by about a dozen respondents who reported low levels on the variable. This suggests that the observed effects of nationalist pride and confidence about the antiterrorism policy on attitudes toward the president, over and above the effects of other covariates, was through people who strongly deviated from the overall norm of being very patriotic and confident. However, the zero-order correlation of each of these variables with the outcome variable does not depend on a few cases.

of the media by the political elite, it is unlikely that the shift in public opinion happened through rational information processing, because in the first few months following the attacks the White House and the security establishment could not have yet presented evidence of success of the war against terror. It is therefore very unlikely that Americans rallied behind Bush because the information they received convinced them (rationally) that the war on terror was going to be successful. The data support this argument: Among respondents who said that they were *not* confident about the government's capacity to win the war on terror (about 15% of the sample), two-thirds nonetheless approved of the war on terror and the way Bush was handling his job as a president. Furthermore, respondents who said that they were only *somewhat* confident in the government's capacity to win the war against terror were almost as likely to approve of the war and Bush's work as respondents who said that they were *very* confident: Among the those who reported being "somewhat confident", 92% said that they approved Bush's work as a president and 94% approved of Bush's antiterrorism policy; among those who reported being "very confident" the approval ratings were 97% in both questions.

Second, the increase in American's confidence and trust in the government following the September 11 attacks was not limited to security issues, but encompassed other issues as well (Rasinski et al. 2002; Smith, Rasinski and Toce 2001). Most notably, approval ratings of the way Bush was handling the *economy* increased from less than 50% before September 11 to more than 60% in the first week following the attacks, and further increased to over 70% in the next few weeks.⁷ If support for Bush had been driven by a rational assessment of his "war on terror"

⁷ CBS News Poll, Aug, 2001. ABC News/Washington Post Poll, Sep, 2001. American Research Group Poll, Sep, 2001. Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, Oct, 2001. Data retrieved Nov-11-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

The invasion of Iraq had a similar effect on the approval rating for Bush's economic policy: From approval ratings of about 40% before the invasion, the ratings increased by at least ten points immediately after the invasion started. (American Research Group Poll, Mar, 2003. CBS News Poll, Mar, 2003. Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll,

policy, then it should not have affected the approval rating of his economic policy. Instead of a rational assessment of governmental policies, it seems more likely that the nationalist emotions, which were activated by September 11 and by Bush's subsequent declaration of "war on terror", spilled over and had a general effect on public opinion.

Third, as reported in Chapter 2, the period that followed the September 11 attack saw a significant increase of nationalist pride and "ultranationalism" in the US (Bonikowski Manuscript submitted for review; Smith and Kim 2006). It is more plausible that the confidence Americans had in the "war on terror" was related to this transition to "hot" nationalism than to rational calculation of success chances (especially if we again consider the fact that at the time of data collection Americans had very little information about the actual progress of the "war on terror").

In addition to evidence that support the "positive emotions" argument, the analysis also points to the effect of partisanship: Disapproval of President Bush came primarily from Democrats and people who were leaning towards the Democratic Party. Finally, most control variables that were tested – e.g., exposure to news reports, gender, age, education, and race – were found to be not statistically significant, revealing again the special character of the RRTE effect, which cuts across standard societal cleavages that otherwise structure public opinion.

The data suggest that support for Bush following the September 11 attack was motivated by widespread positive emotions about Bush and his reaction to the crisis. However, one may wonder whether a reverse causal relationship exists between emotions and support for the president, proposing that the desire to support the president motivated people to express positive emotions about his foreign policy. This seems unlikely for three reasons. First, if the desire to

Mar, 2003. CBS News/New York Times Poll, Mar, 2003. Data retrieved Nov-11-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html).

support the president were the cause of the rally, then presidential policies in different areas (e.g., foreign affairs, economy, etc.) would have enjoyed equal boost in approval ratings. However, in the aftermath of 9/11, the public approval ratings for the president's foreign policy were significantly higher than the rates for economic and domestic (non-security) policies. For example, whereas a few days after the attack nearly 90% of Americans approved of the way Bush was handling the terrorist attacks against the US, only slightly more than 60% approved the way he was handling the economy.⁸ Second, survey data show that the increase in Bush's job approval rating following 9/11 was gradual: it started with a 17 points increase in the first day, climbed an additional 18 points toward the end of the first week, and reached a peak following the Bush's declaration of war on terror in his speech to the congress on September 20.⁹ Such a development is consistent with my argument that support for Bush increased as the "war on terror" framework was taking roots, causing people to transition from the initial negative emotions to positive nationalist emotions. Third, as Gary Jacobson (2007) notes, the increase in Bush's popularity happened almost entirely among Democrats and independent voters, as did the later decline of popularity analyzed below; Among Republicans, Bush's approval ratings were very high throughout his presidency. Therefore, the RRTF effect of 9/11 was not based on some general desire to support President Bush. Instead, it specifically expressed the support of citizens, across the political spectrum, for the commander-in-chief of a nation at war, a war that was felt justifiable and even desirable once nationalist frames had triggered widespread emotions of pride, confidence, and hope.

⁸ American Research Group Poll, Sep. 2001; CBS News/New York Times Poll, Sep. 2001. All data retrieved May-25-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html.

⁹ CBS News Poll, Sep. 2001; Gallup Poll, Sep. 2001; Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, Sep 2001 – All data retrieved May-25-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html.

The data do not allow for systematically testing my argument about the *transition* from negative to positive emotions (this requires longitudinal data that are not available). However, in a public opinion poll that was conducted a few hours after the attack on September 11, 2001, only 45% of respondents said that they were “very confident” in President Bush's ability to handle the crisis and 33% said that they were “somewhat confident” (18% said that they were “not too confident” or “not confident at all”).¹⁰ Data collected a week later, show that the level of confidence in the president’s capacity to handle the crisis increased significantly, with 66% saying that they had “a lot of confidence” and 24% saying that they had “some” confidence (only 9% said that they were “a little confident” or “not at all confident”).¹¹ These findings, though certainly incomplete, may indicate a gradual emotional transition from the agony and anxiety that many individual felt in the first hours of 9/11 to the positive and optimistic emotions that signify the rally behind President Bush.

The findings presented thus far suffer from a major limitation: Because individuals often use somewhat different words to describe similar emotions, the measurement of emotions through single questions might result in large measurement errors. In the following part, I use structural equation modeling (SEM) to reduce measurement errors. In SEM, emotions can be treated as latent variables that are measured by sets of observed indicators (the answers to specific questions). In addition, the next part will test whether the rally effect is motivated by *anger* rather than fear, an argument that was recently made by political psychologists (Huddy, Feldman and Cassese 2007; Skitka et al. 2006). The data used in the regressions part did not

¹⁰ Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, Sep 2001. Retrieved May-25-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

¹¹ CBS News/New York Times Poll, Sep. 2001. Retrieved May-25-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html.

permit to test this argument in the necessary detail because only very few questions about emotions were asked in the two surveys analyzed. Using more reliable questionnaires and the SEM method will allow me to show that rally periods are indeed motivated by positive nationalist emotions rather than by threat-related negative emotions such as anger or fear.

Part 2: Using SEM to Differentiate the Effects of Positive and Negative Emotions

Data for this second part are taken from Wave 2 and Wave 3 of the NTTS. In Wave 2, 1079 respondents were interviewed between October 10 and November 18, 2002, a period in which the US Government identified Saddam Hussein's regime as a prime enemy in the "war on terror" that was worthy of an extreme response, including military action if necessary. Data in Wave 3 were collected in 2003 during two periods: immediately after the invasion of Iraq between March 20 and April 9 (354 respondents), and in the aftermath of the fall of Baghdad between May 21 and June 13 (375 respondents). All 729 respondents of Wave 3 also participated in Wave 2. Both Wave 2 and Wave 3 have, on average, very similar rates on all measures of public support for the president. The two waves were analyzed separately, in order to have each individual represented only once in the data, and also in order to leave open the possibility that the mechanisms that affected public attitudes were partly different before and after the invasion of Iraq.

Data analysis in this part was conducted in two steps. First, factor analysis via Stata checked if the anticipated latent factors were supported by the data. This stage confirmed most of my expectations about the latent factors and their indicators. It showed that attitudes about the way the president handled different aspects of his job—the way he handled the war in Iraq, the way he handled the economy, and the way he handled his job in general—shared a single latent

factor. Factor analysis also showed that fear of the terrorists who planned the September 11 attack could be empirically differentiated from the anger felt toward these terrorists, and that this anger could be further distinguished from the anger felt toward the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein. In addition, the analysis showed that the level of confidence respondents had in Bush's antiterrorism policy could be analytically distinguished from their emotional reaction to the invasion of Iraq. However, factor analysis also suggested that specific positive emotions about the war in Iraq might not be differentiable. The reason for this is that the survey includes only one question about each positive emotion, rather than having multiple questions that could be used for measuring each emotion as a distinct latent factor.

Next, structural equations were estimated via EQS in order to test the positive emotions and the negative emotions arguments one against the other. All but three of the variables used in this part take the conventional form of public opinion scales with four levels. These variables were treated as ordinal variables in both the factor analysis and SEM stages by using a method of estimation based on a polychoric correlation matrix rather than the simple correlation matrix appropriate for continuous variables. Three variables that measure respondents' evaluation of the way the president was handling his job, the economy, and the situation in Iraq, are binary variables coded 1 for "approve" and 0 for "disapprove". These variables serve as indicators of the "support for the president" dependent latent variable. Constructing a composite measurement using these three questions has an important advantage over the use of a single outcome variable (either Bush's general job approval, or specifically approval of the way he was handling the war in Iraq). The composite measurement is more sensitive to variation in the degree of individuals' enthusiasm about Bush: The most enthusiastic individuals expressed approval of Bush in all three dimensions of the measurement. In contrast, less enthusiastic individuals disapproved of

Bush's work in at least one dimension. In other words, the composite measurement increases the variability of the outcome variable relative to each one of its individual indicators. Table 3.5 presents the univariate distributions of all variables used to analyze Wave 3.

Table 3.5. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Variables included in SEM analysis of Wave3 of NTTS

	Mean	SD	Range
Approve of the way the President is handling his job	.69	.46	0-1
Approve of the way the President is handling the economy	.51	.50	0-1
Approve of the way the President is handling the situation in Iraq	.71	.45	0-1
Nervous because of terrorism	2.86	.96	1-4
Scared because of terrorism	2.49	1.01	1-4
Afraid because of terrorism	2.44	1.01	1-4
Angry at terrorists	3.35	.92	1-4
Hostile to terrorists	2.74	1.11	1-4
Disgusted by terrorists	3.45	.87	1-4
Think that the govt. can win war on terrorism	2.98	.86	1-4
Think that the govt. can protect from terrorism	2.75	.78	1-4
Angry at Saddam Hussein	3.02	1.11	1-4
Hostile to Saddam Hussein	2.50	1.19	1-4
Disgusted by Saddam Hussein	3.32	1.00	1-4
Feel hopeful about the war	2.79	.97	1-4
Proud of the war	2.79	1.14	1-4
Enthusiastic about the war	2.32	1.02	1-4

Because observed variables in the model are ordinal, model estimation was done with Arbitrary Distribution Generalized Least Squares (AGLS) method, using the Lee-Poon-Bentler technique of estimating correlations among ordinal variables (Lee, Poon and Bentler 1995).¹² The data set contains some missing values; none of the variables has more than 10% missing observations, and the majority of them have much less than 10%. Because list-wise deletion would have resulted in the loss of about half of the cases, pair-wise deletion method was used in order to deal with missing values. All models were also re-estimated using Maximum-Likelihood

¹² Bentler (2006) recommends two methods of estimating models containing ordinal variables: AGLS using Lee-Poon-Bentler two-stage method, and Maximum Likelihood (ML) method with robust standard errors. I chose the AGLS method for two reasons. First, AGLS does not make the assumption that data are multivariate-normally distributed, which in this study would have been violated. Second, the Lee-Poon-Bentler method treats variables as ordinal, thus preventing the potential bias associated with other methods' treatment of ordinal variables as continuous. In order to make sure that results are not biased by the method of estimation, the final models were re-estimated using the ML method. Fortunately, the results were very similar in both methods.

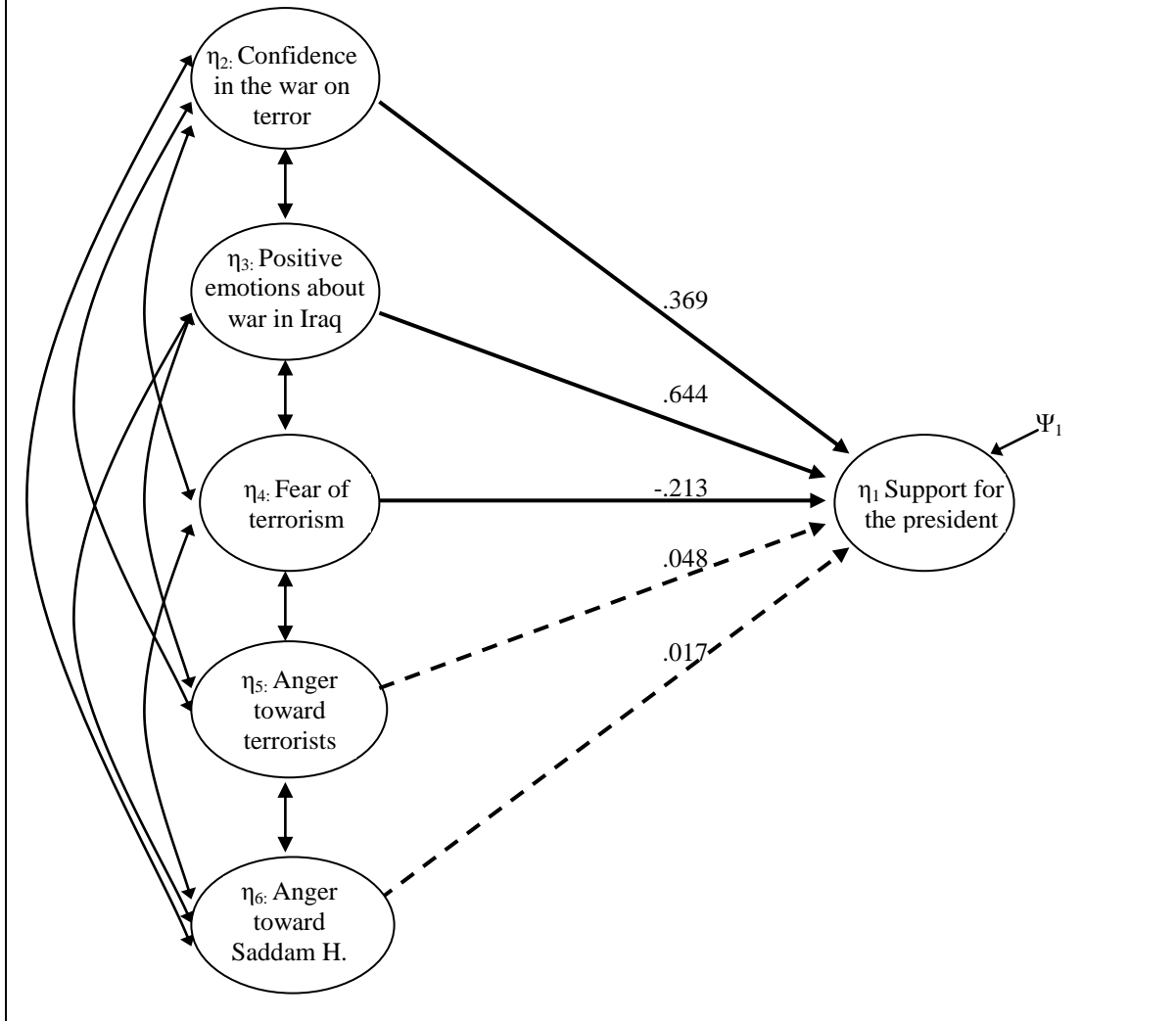
method, in which missing values were dealt with using Jamshidian-Bentler EM-type missing data procedure.¹³ The differences in the parameter estimates produced by the two methods are minimal, thus I am confident that the results are not driven by the methods used for model estimation and for dealing with missing values.

Figure 3.2 presents a model that estimates the additive direct effects of latent variables that measure emotions on the latent variable that measures support for the president, while controlling for covariance among the explanatory latent variables. In the figure, latent variables are represented by oval shapes. All the coefficients in the model are presented in standardized form. Coefficients that are statistically significant at the 0.05 level are marked with a solid arrow, and coefficients that are not statistically significant are marked with a dashed arrow. The model contains six latent variables: *confidence in the government's capacity to fight terrorism*, *positive emotions about the war in Iraq*,¹⁴ *fear of terrorism*, *anger toward terrorists*, and *anger toward Saddam Hussein*; *support for the president* serves as the outcome in the model. Each latent variable is associated with two or three survey questions. Note that in order to keep the graphical presentation as simple and clear as possible, the variables that represent these questions are not presented (see Appendix 6 for the complete list of survey questions and their coefficients in this model).

¹³ Compared to alternatives that require the assumption of Missing Completely at Random (MCAR), this method works under the relatively weaker assumption that data are Missing at Random (MAR) but are multivariate normally distributed (Ibid).

¹⁴ Positive emotion labels are grouped in a “positive emotions” category. Unfortunately, the survey did not contain multiple questions that would allow for differentiating positive emotional factors. Grouping positive emotion labels does not create any theoretical problem; on the contrary, I argue that these emotions are driven by the same mechanism: nationalist frames that determine attitudes toward both the war and the commander-in-chief. Consequently, discrete positive emotions tend to emerge *simultaneously*, and it makes sense to treat them as a conglomerate of emotions. In chapter 4, the emotions of pride and confidence are effectively differentiated using a data set that was designed specifically for this purpose.

Figure 3.2. SEM of Emotions as Predictors of Support for the President (NTTS, Wave 3)



The variables that measure confidence about the government’s war on terror and positive emotions about the war in Iraq are strong and statistically significant predictors of support for the president. In contrast to the “negative emotions” argument, fear of terrorism has a *negative* effect on support for the president. This relatively weak, but nonetheless statistically significant effect, may suggest, as Huddy and coauthors argue (Huddy, Feldman and Cassese 2007; Huddy et al. 2005), that anxiety makes individuals less likely to support a war, and in turn also less likely to

support the president.¹⁵ Finally, the associations of the two “anger” variables with support for the president are weak and not statistically significant. These two variables were used to measure separately the anger felt toward President Hussein and anger felt toward the terrorists who attacked the U.S. in 9/11, because at the time of the survey significant portions of the public and the media were focusing much of their anger on al-Qaeda and not on the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein. Nonetheless, no evidence was found for a direct effect of anger on support for President Bush.¹⁶

To sum up, SEM reveals that confidence about the war on terror and positive emotions about the war in Iraq were the main predictors of support for President Bush following the invasion of Iraq. These findings thus support my argument that during RRTF periods individuals rally behind the sitting president because they experience positive emotions about the use of military force against enemies of the nation. The analysis of Wave 2 of the NTTS (results not shown) further shows that these emotions also shaped public support for the president *prior* to the invasion. Furthermore, in contrast to established explanations, negative emotions about the enemy seem to offer a poor explanation of public support for President Bush in this period as well. Because of the similarity of the results from analyzing waves 2 and 3 of the NTTS, only one set of result is presented in this chapter. The only remarkable difference between the two periods is the following: In Wave 2, no statistically significant effect was found for fear of terrorism, which may suggest that the partial negative effect of fear found in Wave 3 emerged

¹⁵ Measurements of model fit have ambiguous results. Two fit indices suggest that the model fits the data well: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.97, and Standardized Root Mean-Square Residual (SRMR) of 0.076. In contrast, two other indices suggest a poor fit: the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.157, and the Yuan-Bentler’s Corrected AGLS Test Statistics with a probability value $P < .0001$. Simpler models that contain only positive emotions, thereby reducing the overall variability of the data, successfully passed all significant tests.

¹⁶ Because of data limitation, the effect of anger on support for the president immediately after 9/11 could not be assessed. Thus, I cannot rule out the possibility that the RRTF effect of 9/11 was initially motivated by a combination of anger with pride, confidence, and hope.

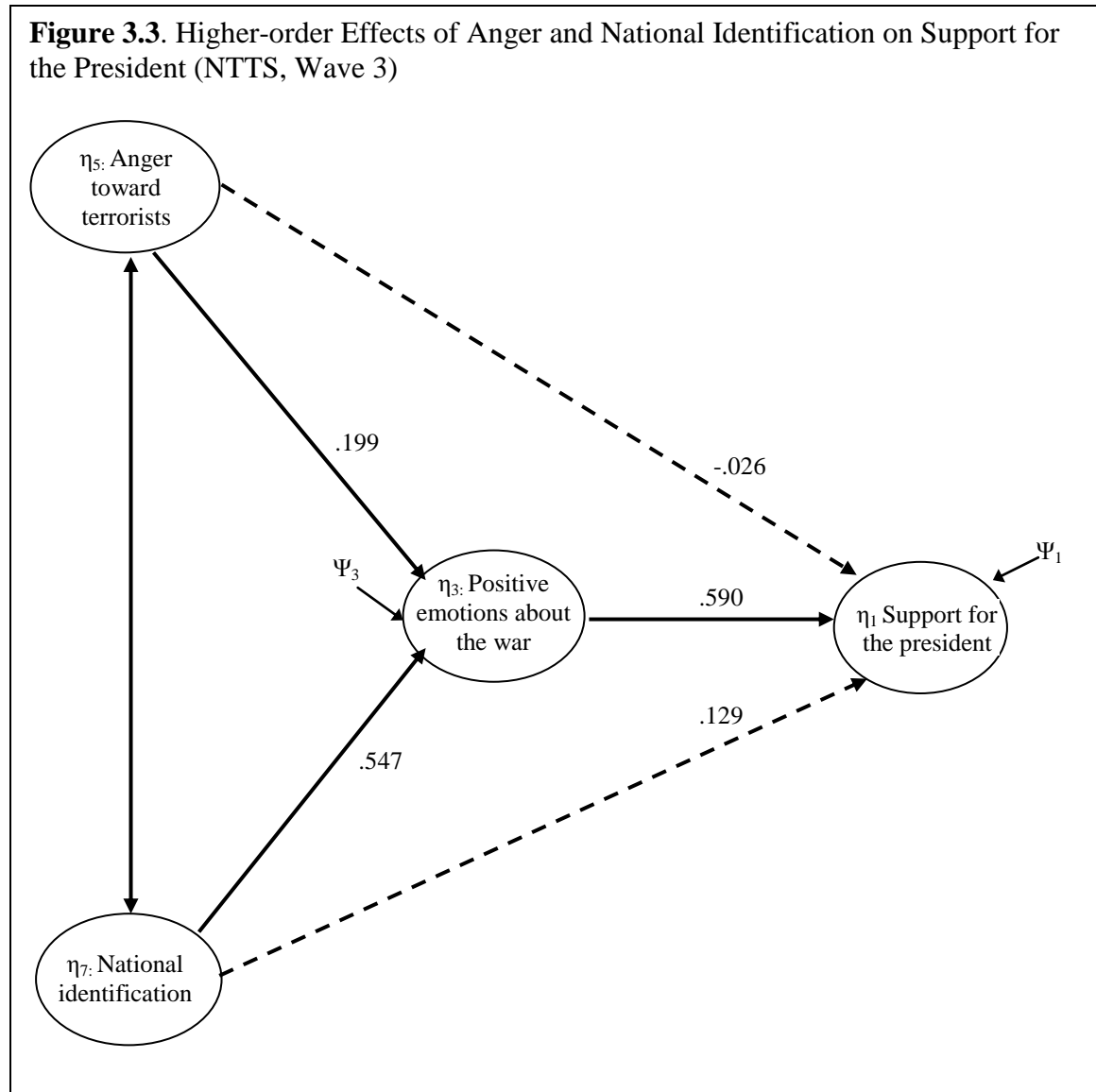
only after the invasion of Iraq, because some people became concerned by the possibility of terrorist retaliation.

Because anger is arguably an important motivation for political behavior during inter-group conflicts (Huddy, Feldman and Cassese 2007), it is worth exploring the possibility that anger had an *indirect* effect on support for President Bush after the invasion of Iraq: Perhaps Americans rallied behind Bush because the anger they felt toward the terrorists who attacked the US on September 11 activated positive emotions about the war in Iraq (a “righteous anger” mechanism of a sort). This proposition is in line with my argument that the nationalist sentiment is activated against perceived enemies. Nevertheless, my approach emphasizes that the positive emotions that individuals experience during RRTF periods stem from increase of the salience of their national identity. Therefore, I expect positive emotions about the war to be driven primarily from identification with the nation, and to a lesser degree to depend on ill feelings about the enemy.

Figure 3.3 presents a structural equation model that tests direct and indirect effects of national identification and anger felt toward the terrorists who attacked the U.S. on September 11, 2001, on support for the president (see Appendix 6 for the complete list of survey questions and their coefficients in this model).¹⁷ There is no statistically significant evidence for direct effects of either anger or national identification, yet the model suggests that both variables affected support for the president *indirectly* through their associations with positive emotions about the war in Iraq. Notably, the size of the coefficient of national identification is almost three times larger than that of anger toward terrorists. These positive emotions about the war thus

¹⁷ Fit indices show that this model fits the data quite well with CFI of 0.97, SRMR of 0.031, RMSEA of 0.104, and the Yuan-Bentler’s Corrected AGLS Test Statistics with a probability value $P < .49$. Dozens of other possible model specifications were tested before I decided to present this mode, all provided very similar findings.

stemmed primarily from identification with the nation, and to a much lesser degree from anger felt toward the nation’s enemies.



One may propose that by the time of the invasion of Iraq Americans rallied behind Bush because the anger they originally felt toward al-Qaeda was already redirected toward the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein. Subsequent analysis tested this proposition by replacing the “anger toward terrorists” variable in the model in Figure 3.3 with “anger toward Saddam Hussein”. The

substantive findings are similar to the above: Positive emotions about the invasion of Iraq are strongly associated with nationalist identification and have a weaker (but statistically significant) relationship with feeling angry at Saddam Hussein (see Appendix 7).

SEM thus supports my argument that the RRTF phenomenon is driven by positive emotions evoked by national identification. During the invasion of Iraq, approval of Bush's work as a president came primarily from individuals who experienced positive emotions about the war in Iraq, who felt confident in the government's ability to defeat terrorism, and who were not afraid of possible terrorist retaliation. Furthermore, identification with the American nation, and to some degree also being angry at the enemies of the nation, made individuals more likely to experience positive emotions about the war in Iraq.

While positive emotions about the foreign policy may motivate individuals to support the president in peacetime too, members of the opposition party and independent voters are unlikely to experience these emotions outside of the rally period. Therefore, the RRTF effect happens when positive emotions about the president and his foreign policy cross party lines because of a widespread increase in national identification. The following section supports this argument: By contrasting public opinion at three different points of time, the analysis shows that the RRTF effect declines when nationalism loses potency and is replaced by the partisanship that shapes public opinion in non-rally periods so effectively.

Part 3: The Decline of a Rally-Round-The-Flag Effect

So far, the evidence presented in this chapter shows that emotions of pride, confidence, and hope made large segments of the American population rally behind President George W. Bush and his "war on terror". I further argued that this set of positive emotions emerged because national identities and frames of interpretation became more salient: Based on *identity theory* of

emotions, Chapter 1 proposed that when Americans transition from “banal” to “hot” identification with the nation, they are prone to feel proud, confidence, and hope. Specifically, the propensity to feel proud and confident about the nation and its leadership in moments of “hot” nationalism stems both from the socially-acquired belief in the special *virtue* of the nation, which especially in great-powers such as the US may involve a belief in the superiority of the nation, and from the internalization of a social expectation to have these emotions about the nation and the state. In addition, identification with the nation and “its” state make people more likely to feel hopeful about an ongoing or pending military action, because through identification one can consider the expected outcomes of military action as relevant to herself. In summary, I argue that in the US, RRTF periods emerge when national identity becomes more salient in large parts of the society, which in turn activates the emotions of pride, confidence, and hope through the sentiment of superiority and social expectation that individual had internalized as part of their socialization.

Because of data limitations, it is difficult to trace the salience of nationalism before and during rally periods. However, available data allow to investigate the decline of the RRTF effect of 9/11 and to show that lower levels of national identification—a gradual shift from “hot” to “banal” nationalism—brought about a decline of the rally effect.

The following analysis compares data from Wave 1 of the NTTS with waves 2 and 3 separately. It is important to remember that in the second and third waves public support rates for the president were still high (around 70%); thus the investigation focuses on *differences* between this relatively modest phase of the rally and the more dramatic phase immediately after 9/11. It is also worth mentioning that only a few relevant questions asked in Wave 1 were also asked in the later waves—retaining the same format and wording that allow for reliable comparison across

waves—therefore, the evidence offered in this part is rather partial. But it still allows to investigate what caused about 20% of the public who supported President Bush after 9/11 to *stop* supporting him in the following months. Table 3.6 presents the results of estimating models for the change in public support for the president from the first wave of the NTTS to the second and third waves.

Table 3.6. Coefficients from Logistic Regression Models of Change in President Job Approval, based on NTTS (standard errors in parentheses).

	<u>Wave1-to- Wave2</u>	<u>Wave1-to- Wave3</u>
Change in how much confidence in ability of govt. to win war on terrorism	-.361*** (.089)	-.336** (.099)
Change in how angry feels when someone criticizes the US	-.114 (.094)	-.220* (.109)
Change in how good feels when you see the American flag flying	.221 (.156)	-.491** (.171)
Republican	-2.282*** (.331)	-2.320*** (.390)
Education	.187** (.057)	.197** (.069)
Age	.018* (.007)	.01 (.008)
Constant	-3.726*** (.711)	-3.421*** (.839)
Observations	690	505
Chi-Square	105.2(6)***	95.03(6)***

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001 (two-tailed tests)

The outcome variable in Table 6 is the change in individual support for the president. It is coded “1” if the respondent moved from supporting the president to opposition, and “0” otherwise.¹⁸ Independent variables measure the change in response to questions, except for demographic variables that represent questions that were asked at the beginning of the survey (Wave 1) only. Models were estimated using logistic regression. The coefficients in the table therefore represent the estimated log odds of moving from support to opposition as a function of

¹⁸ Only about 1% of respondents moved from disapproving to approving the way Bush was handling his job as a president.

the independent variables.

In both sets of contrasts no statistically significant effects were found for changes in any of the following domains: exposure to the media, sense of personal safety, and perceived capacity of the government to protect against terrorism (these variables were dropped from the models in order to reduce a problem of values missing from the data set, but their inclusion in the analysis does not change the findings. For the same reason, two control variables—income and gender—that were found to have no statistically significant effects were dropped from the model as well). The public thus stopped supporting the president neither because it lost interest in media reports nor because initial fears of terrorism were overcome, as one would expect if the RRTF effect was produced by a sense of security threat.

Instead, the analysis suggests that the likelihood that an individual who supported President Bush after 9/11 would stop supporting him in the later phases of data collection is negatively associated with the change in confidence about the government's capacity to win the war on terror. In other words, loss of confidence about the war on terror made individuals more likely to stop supporting the president. This may suggest that after the initial euphoria that followed 9/11, parts of the public lost their optimism about the prospect of the "war on terror" and/or that the "war on terror" framework lost some of its potency as the main principal framework within which public opinion formed. The "Wave1-to-Wave2" model suggests that many Americans lost confidence even before the war in Iraq started. Was this loss of confidence the result of rational reassessment of the chances for success in the war on terror, perhaps because of the futile hunt for Bin Laden?

Considering the fact that decline in support for the war and the president was not evident among Republicans (Jacobson 2007; Jacobson 2010), this rationalist argument makes little sense.

The strong negative effect of the variable “Republican” in the model above indicates that the decline in the popularity of the president happened not because across the political spectrum people started to rationally reassess the likelihood of success of the war on terror, but because the nation was replaced by the party as the main group of reference in people’s perception of politics. Indeed, while support for Bush and the war in Iraq among Democrats and independent voters gradually declined, the vast majority of Republicans continued to support the war and Bush throughout Bush’s second term in office. Jacobson (2010) uses a cognitive dissonance/self-justification argument to explain this difference in trends, suggesting that Republicans suppressed information about the real premises of the war in Iraq because the president was a Republican, while for the very same reason Democrats were eager to absorb negative information about the war and forget their previously held beliefs about the war. This cogent argument and the data that Jacobson presents support my argument that the decline in the popularity of President George W. Bush happened not because Americans regained their temporarily lost rationality, but because the nation was replaced by the party as the main group of reference in people’s perception of political issues.

The model that contrast waves 1 and 3 provides further support for this argument, because it contains two statistically significant coefficients that are directly related to national identification. Respondents who reported feeling less angry at people who criticized the US in Wave 3 than in Wave 1, or reported feeling less enthusiastic when seeing the national flag, were also more likely to stop supporting the president. In fact, the decline in individuals’ scores on these variables started already before the invasion of Iraq, but their effects on support for the president became strong enough to pass the significance test only after the invasion, perhaps because the weapons of mass destruction that could link the war in Iraq to the threat of terrorism,

and thus corroborate Bush's claim that Iraq was an enemy of the US, were not found. In other words, these effects represent a greater polarization of public opinion: For some Americans, the military confrontation fueled the nationalist sentiment. But for others, failing to find evidence that would corroborate Bush's claims about the "enemy" status of Iraq resulted in a reduction of nationalist sentiment and the positive emotions these individuals previously felt about the war. Indeed, following the invasion, the levels of national pride reported by about a quarter of the sample were lower than the levels they reported prior to the invasion, while for at least one in every ten respondents the level of pride increased after the invasion.

To sum up, the evidence at hand suggests that the RRTF effect of 9/11 dissipated when the initial thrust in nationalist identification that followed the attack waned and the "war on terror" lost much of its potency as an interpretative framework that unified the nation. When nationalism went from "hot" to "banal", partisanship became the main framework within which public opinion formed. This process did not happen overnight, as indicated by the support of a solid majority for George W. Bush that lasted until 2004. Instead, the decline of the RRTF effect was a gradual process, during which individuals shifted from nationalism to partisanship as a main frame of political identification. Conformingly, individuals not affiliated with the ruling Republican Party became disenchanted with the "war on terror", and stopped supporting the commander-in-chief.

These findings are certainly tentative, since it is impossible to show that this shift away from nationalist frameworks was causally responsible for the decline of support for the president—rather than the other way around. It is also possible that a more specific explanation would point to the development of the Iraq campaign itself and the lack of evidence for a weapons of mass destruction program (but it would still need to explain why the shift of public

opinion against the war only took place among Democrats and independent voters but not among Republicans). Still, the available data are consistent with my argument, while they represent major challenges for alternative explanations of the rally-round-the-flag phenomenon.¹⁹ Data analysis shows that the individuals who shifted from approving to disapproving of Bush's work as a president were mostly Democrats and independent voters whose nationalist emotions of pride and confidence were strong in the period following the September 11, but declined thereafter.²⁰

CONCLUSION

The analysis in this chapter first focused on two surveys—one taken in the aftermath of the September 11 attack, and the other following the invasion of Iraq—allowed to evaluate competing explanation of the rally effect. It found no evidence to support the “perception of threat and negative emotions” thesis, and very little (and ambiguous) evidence in favor of the *rational public* argument: Individuals who believed that the US was winning the war in Iraq were more likely to approve of Bush's work as a president (but as discussed above, this belief probably was not the outcome of a rational assessment of available information, but actually reflected the high level of confidence Americans felt during the invasion of Iraq). The data supported the alternative perspective, derived from the sociology of nationalism and identity

¹⁹ A potential criticism of my use of change models might suggest that the transition from Wave 1 to the later waves represents not the decline of the effect of 9/11, but two separate phases of public opinion. However, the overall trend line of President Bush's approval rating from September 2001 onwards (figure 3.1) seems to tell a different story, because it has a clear decay form. Therefore, even though the invasion of Iraq sparked its own RRTF period, the modest magnitude of this effect should be understood in light of the overall trend. Furthermore, compared to the onset of the war in Afghanistan in October 2001, which was supported by about 90% of Americans who saw it as the spearhead of the “war on terror”, the invasion of Iraq was more controversial, precisely because a significant portion of the population was no longer excited by Bush's “war on terror” policy and rhetoric.

²⁰ For lack of sufficient data, the possibility that the decline of Bush's popularity was related not only to the decline of pride and confidence, but also to a decline in the hope Americans initially felt about the “war on terror” policy, could not be tested.

theory, at the core of this dissertation: The RRTF effect emerges when a nationalist framework is invoked that generates the positive emotions of pride, confidence, and hope. More fine-grained analysis of public attitudes before and after the invasion of Iraq further supported this approach by showing that support for the president is best predicted by positive emotions about the war and a sense of confidence about the capacity of the government to win the war. Finally, the change in individuals' attitudes toward the president between 9/11 and two later periods was modeled. This analysis showed how the transition from "hot" to "banal" nationalism helps to understand why the RRTF effect of September 11 gradually dissipated.

Though the analysis of survey-data generally supports the idea that nationalist sentiment drives the RRTF phenomenon, it is difficult to establish that nationalist sentiment is indeed causing positive emotions that then produce a shift in public opinion. Experiments are more apt to directly establish causal relationships. The next chapter presents the results of such an experiment.

CHAPTER 4

NATIONALIST FRAMING, EMOTIONS, AND SUPPORT FOR WAR: SOME EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE

In the previous chapter, positive emotions were found to have had a pivotal role in motivating individuals to support the president during recent RRTF periods. The findings further suggested, albeit more tentatively, that these emotions were associated with varying degrees in which individuals identified with the nation. In Chapter 1, I argued that identification with the American nation often involves a sentiment of superiority that is associated with certain emotional dispositions. The present chapter focuses on two of these emotional dispositions that are relevant to RRTF periods: It will show that individuals are inclined to feel proud and confident about the nation and the use of its military power when nationalist sentiment is activated.¹

Studying emotional dispositions empirically poses a considerable challenge, because dispositions are obscure and only reveal themselves in situ, as the following quote from Bourdieu reminds us:

“Dispositions do not lead in a determinate way to a determinate action; they are revealed and fulfilled only in appropriate circumstances and in the relationship with a situation. They may therefore always remain in a virtual state, like a soldier’s courage in the absence of war”. (Bourdieu 2000:149)²

In order to allow some of the emotional dispositions that are embedded in the nationalist outlook on the world to come to light, an experiment was designed. Popular nationalist sentiment

¹ Notice that this chapter does not address the emotion of hope for two reasons. First, the data did not allow to effectively differentiate hope from pride. Second, as explained in the chapter 1, hope (in contrast to pride and confidence) is not driven by the sentiment of superiority that this chapter emphasizes. Instead, it stems from more general identification with the nation. As we shall see, the manipulation used in this experiment triggered only the sentiment of superiority and did not have significant effect on general national identification, which may explain why it also did not detect a unique “hope” mechanism.

² I thank Zeynep Ozgen for calling my attention to Bourdieu’s “soldier” metaphor.

and the corresponding emotional dispositions were activated by official nationalist rhetoric announcing a plan to use military power against Iran. Based on the theory outlined in Chapter 1, the experiment tested three central hypotheses. First, official nationalist rhetoric will result in a greater sense of superiority of the US vis-à-vis other countries (Hypothesis 1). Second, this greater sense of superiority will be associated with higher levels of pride about the use of military force and confidence about its chances to succeed (Hypothesis 2). Third, stronger emotions of pride and confidence about a military operation will result in greater support for the operation (Hypothesis 3). In addition to testing these general propositions, this chapter will further explore the empirical variation in nationalist sentiment by gender and race. To this variation I now turn.

Gender and Racial “Gaps”

Nationalist sentiment is not distributed evenly across all social categories. The feminist-constructivist literature reminds us that nationalist ideologies have historically emerged in the West in affinity to the ideals of *masculinity* (Mosse 1985; Mosse 1996; Sluga 1998). Nationalist ideologies thus have adopted and glorified masculine values such as sacrifice, bravery, willpower, discipline, and dignity. In the US, as in other Western societies, the masculine character of nationalism has historically been associated with a gender division of labor, in which men played the heroic role of fighting enemies, defending the homeland, and taking care of national interests in the diplomatic arena, while women were assigned to supporting roles such as reproduction, caregiving, and education, and also served as the symbol of the nation’s purity that must be protected (Enloe 1990; Nagel 1998; Nagel 2003; Yuval-Davis 1993; Yuval-Davis,

Anthias and Campling 1989). Considering this historical relationship between nationalism and masculinity, Joane Nagel makes the following observation about mobilization of men for war:

“Once a war is widely defined as a matter of ‘duty’, ‘honour’, ‘patriotism’, a defence of ‘freedom’ and ‘the American way of life’, etc., then resistance for many men (and women) becomes a matter of cowardice and dishonour. For men confronted with this unpalatable threat of public humiliation (why isn’t he at the front?), there are added some sweeteners: the allure of adventure, the promise of masculine camaraderie, the opportunity to test and prove oneself, the chance to participate in a historic, larger-than-life, generation-defining event. Given this stick and these carrots, for many men the attraction of war becomes as irresistible as it is deadly.” (Nagel 1998:259)

For women, Nagel further argues, the genderized division of labor and the masculine values associated with war have made nationalist ideologies less appealing. “The intimate link between masculinity and nationalism[...],” she explains, “shapes not only the feelings and thinking of men, it has left its stamp on the hearts and minds of women as well” (ibid:261). Taking a similar point of view, Sylvia Walby (1997:185) argues that women have lesser commitment than men to the nation and to nationalism.

One may choose to be skeptical about these propositions, as Anthony Smith does:

“Against this view, we have seen plenty of evidence of women’s political and even military involvement in national liberation struggles, even if the reasons are as much instrumental as expressive. This suggests that there are times, at least, when the national struggle supersedes or subsumes all other struggles, including those of class and gender. This does not mean that ‘nationalism’ as a discourse is not oriented primarily to the needs of men and for this reason possesses a ‘masculine’ symbolic content.” (Smith 1998:208)

But the main question is not whether women are involved in nationalist projects or not (everyone seems to agree that often they are involved), but whether women are as likely as men to express chauvinist and militant attitudes in the name of nationalism. It is this side of nationalist identification that feminist-constructivist scholars ascribe mostly to men. It is of course possible that this gender gap is related not only to differences in socialization of girls and boys, but also to a biologically-determined tendency of males to be more aggressive, competitive, and dominance-oriented (Brizendine 2006:29; Lovell-Badge 2008; Maccoby and

Jacklin 1974; Sidanius and Pratto 1993:178). Evolutionary theory attributes this tendency to the adaptation of males to an environment that required them to fight predators, hunt animals, and (perhaps most importantly) compete with other males over the women (Buss 2005).

The evolutionary-biological explanation may also be seen as complementing the feminist-constructivist argument, and together they lead us to the following hypotheses: If nationalist sentiment of superiority is stimulated by official rhetoric, this sentiment will be greater for men than for women (Hypothesis 4). Consequently, men are also expected to report stronger emotions of pride and confidence about the use of military power against a foreign country (Hypothesis 5), and in turn, to be more supportive of this kind of foreign policy (Hypothesis 6).

Similar variation in nationalist orientation may be found between racial/ethnic categories. In the US, the “racial gap” is the widest between “whites” and “blacks”. African-Americans have an ambivalent relationship with American nationalism because of the history of slavery, post-emancipation segregation, and enduring racial inequalities (Sidanius et al. 1997; Sidanius and Petrocik 2001; Sinclair, Sidanius and Levin 1998). Therefore, individuals self-identified as black are expected to express, on average, a weaker nationalist sentiment than individuals self-identified as whites (Hypothesis 7). Consequently, blacks are also expected to report weaker emotions of pride and confidence about the use of military power against a foreign country (Hypothesis 8), and to be less supportive of this kind of foreign policy (Hypothesis 9).

As in the previous chapter, in this chapter too my approach to individuals’ support for the use of military power against other countries, which centers on nationalist sentiment and positive emotions, will be tested against the two alternative approaches. On the one hand, the *rationalist* approach leads us to expect support for an air strike in Iran to be positively associated with

individuals' anticipation of a quick operation that would not claim many American lives (Hypothesis 10). On the other hand, in light of the *realist* approach we should expect individuals who experience *fear* or *anger*, because they perceive Iran as posing a security threat to the US, to be the most supportive of taking military action against Iran (Hypothesis 11).

METHOD

Besides exploring such variation in nationalist sentiment across gender and racial groups, the aim of this study is to test the hypothesized *causal* effects of nationalist official rhetoric on attitudes and emotions of ordinary citizens. I use a survey-based experiment specifically designed to test the causal relationship between presidential rhetoric and the emotions and attitudes of individuals. Before discussing the details of the experimental design, some elaboration on the methodology of survey-based experiments is in order.

Much like conventional surveys and public opinion polls, survey-based experiments too ask respondents to complete a questionnaire. However, survey-based experiments also include one or more experimental “treatments”. Usually, the experimental element is introduced by administering different vignettes: Based on their assignment to control and test groups, participants in the study are provided with different information about a topic they are subsequently asked about. The goal is thus to test whether differences in the information received by participants result in differences in the (mostly attitudinal) outcome measured by the questionnaire.

Previous studies have used this method to investigate how information shapes public attitudes regarding a variety of topics such as immigration to the US (Brader and Valentino 2007; Sniderman, Hagendoorn and Prior 2004), class inequalities (Evans 1997), racial residential

segregation (Krysan et al. 2009; Schuman and Bobo 1988), racial stereotyping (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Peffley, Jon and Sniderman 1997), racial discrimination in the job market (Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991a:chap.13; Sniderman and Piazza 1993:chap.3), affirmative action (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sniderman and Carmines 1997), and a variety of other social policy topics (Gilens 2001; Mutz 1998). In addition, survey-based experiments have been used to assess the effects of political campaigns by manipulating their content (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Horiuchi, Imai and Taniguchi 2007; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Tomz and Van Houweling 2009).

Generally, much as in laboratory experiments, researchers are interested to know whether administering a “treatment” to participants in a test group changes the outcome compared to a control group that did not receive the treatment. However, whereas social science laboratory experiments usually use convenient samples (often composed of undergraduate students) that might not be representative of the general population, survey-based experiments use *probability samples* that allow to infer from the sample to the general population. Thus, by using survey-based experiments, researchers can assess whether the causal processes found to be at work in their sample are likely to take place in the general population under the same conditions. Employing a more formal language, we can say that survey-based experiments provide both the *internal validity* required for testing causal statements and greater degree of *external validity* of findings than offered by laboratory experiments.

The Setting

The external validity of experiments depends not only on having a representative sample, however, but also on creating a *realistic setting* – that is, a setting in which the behavior of

participants can be considered an instance of their behavior in the “real world” (Druckman et al. 2006; Gaines, Kuklinski and Quirk 2007; Zelditch 2007). In experiments that investigate the formation of political attitudes, the situations to which participants are asked to respond to should not only be plausible, but they must also be perceived by the participants as *real* (Brader 2006).

This need for “realism” is one of the major challenges in the study of public attitudes about crisis situations. Some past studies have accepted this as a limitation, and instead of asking respondents about real situations prompted them to *imagine* certain situations (e.g., Brooks and Valentino 2011; Gallego 2011; Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Schuman and Bobo 1988). Though producing interesting results, studies that make use of imagined situations might lead to invalid conclusions, because even if the situation is plausible, the reactions of participants might be influenced by their awareness of the fact that the situation is not really happening.

Seeking to present a more realistic situation for participants, the present study has faced a major challenge: It is interested in how individuals react to presidential rhetoric during major security crises such as the outbreak of war or a major terrorist attack, but obviously it could not produce a real crisis situation. To meet this challenge, the study investigated how individuals react to information about an ongoing major international crisis that had the *potential* of deterioration into a military confrontation: the international crisis related to the nuclear program of Iran. While by the time of the study no military attack has been launched on the nuclear facilities in Iran, such an attack was a realistic scenario. This volatile situation allowed for investigating mechanisms affecting public attitudes by manipulating information about the current state of the crisis (more on this in the following section).

In the scenario created for the experiment, Iran serves as the target of an impending air strike. I chose Iran because of the history of diplomatic crises between the Ayatollah regime and the US government, which climaxed during the 444 days of the Iran Hostage Crisis, and because in recent years the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has frequently expressed his contempt for America and its allies. The scenario of military attack against Iran thus comes as close as possible to the conditions that Chapter 2 found to be crucial for the emergence of the rally effect: Having a well-established enemy with a well-known history of embarrassing the US in the international arena. A military attack against Iran is therefore more likely to trigger the popular nationalist sentiment that underlies the rally-effect than an attack on some other country that does not come with a similar historical baggage (for instance, an attack against Yemen, which currently serves as a sanctuary for terrorist organizations, is less likely to trigger nationalist sentiment, because Yemen has no significant history of military or diplomatic confrontation with the US).

The realistic scenario of an air strike against Iran that this study presented to participants, and the fact that most participants were convinced that a strike was actually going to be launched, contribute tremendously to the external validity of the findings of this study. However, other shortcomings might still threaten the external validity of survey-based experiments (Druckman et al. 2006; Gaines, Kuklinski and Quirk 2007): Most survey-based experiments take complex multi-causal phenomena and reduce them to simple (usually mono-causal) hypotheses; they use cross-sectional data that point to effects that in reality might not last long; and they often do not account for contextual factors that intervene in the processes they seek to explain. For instance, “framing experiments” test how information is being interpreted by individuals, but do not account for the fact that information processing is often done in interaction with other

individuals. A responsible reading of the findings of the present study thus should consider these general limitations of survey-based experiments.

To put it simply, this study does *not* seek to simulate processes of public opinion formation in times of crisis, because such processes are much more complex and dynamic than one survey snapshot can capture. Instead, the study has a more modest objective: It was designed to test a set of hypotheses regarding how nationalist sentiment is linked to emotional and attitudinal dispositions. A preliminary exploration of this linkage through survey-data analysis was already included in Chapter 3, which also presented evidence for the role of these sentiment and emotions in shaping public opinion during two RRTF periods. The present chapter tests a different part of my argument: Experimental data allow me to show that the nationalist sentiment and its correlated positive emotions are indeed triggered by nationalist framing of militarized conflict, as I argued in chapters 1 and 2. But rather than looking at how individuals react to imaginary conflict situations (as several previous experiments have done), the experiment in this chapter traces sentiment, emotions, and attitudes as they emerge *in situ* of an actual, ongoing crisis.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The experiment involved two steps. First, respondents who were assigned to one of two test groups were asked to listen to a recorded reading. This reading was presented to them as a transcript of a forthcoming policy statement on Iran by President Obama, which was leaked to the press. Respondents in the control group were only told briefly about the forthcoming presidential policy statement and were provided with only minimal information about its content. Then, respondents in both test and control conditions were asked to complete a questionnaire that

inquired about their emotions and attitudes toward the Government of Iran, the possibility of an air strike in Iran, president Obama, as well as about their general attitudes toward the US and its international relations. Other questions gathered supplemental information on the demographic characteristics of respondents and their exposure to news reports.

The Manipulation

The test groups (two thirds of the sample) were exposed to presidential rhetoric that explained why the U.S. should use its airpower to attack Iran if its government did not comply with a one-month ultimatum to halt its nuclear program. According to the hypotheses outlined above, nationalist presidential rhetoric should activate nationalist sentiment of superiority that will in turn trigger the emotions of pride and confidence and lead to increased support of the military operation. To test this expectation, two versions of the policy statement on Iran were created. The first version justified military operation in Iran in nationalist terms: The speaker maintained that the Government of Iran was controlled by Islamic extremists who hate the US and its values, stressed that the Iranian nuclear program poses a threat to the US, and called the American people to unite behind an ultimatum issued by the president to Iran and support an expected air strike by the US Air Force. In contrast, the second version of the statement presented an internationalist framework: The speaker announced that an ultimatum to Iran was issued by the UN Security Council, to be followed by a coalition air strike in Iran. Accordingly, the expected military involvement of the US was presented as meeting the US's obligation as member of the Security Council and as fulfilling the US's commitment to protect human rights and advance world peace (for the full transcripts of the two versions of the statement, see

Appendix 8).³ In order to further maximize the nationalism/internationalism contrast, participants in the “nationalist framing” condition were told that the president would deliver the statement at the White House’s Rose Garden and were shown a photo of President Obama in one of his previous national addresses in the garden; participants in the “internationalist framing” condition were told that the president will deliver the statement at the UN and were shown a photo of President Obama delivering a speech there.

Note that it is not impossible for a UN-authorized military action to generate the RRTF effect, even if the mission is defined in internationalist rather than nationalist terms. As we saw in Chapter 2, the Gulf War generated a significant rally effect even though Bush’s rhetoric was generally internationalist (suggesting the goal of the military operation was to restore Kuwait’s independence), because the Gulf War allowed the US to claim national honor by assuming the role of “leader of the free world”. However, it is important to remember that the Gulf War did not generate the rally effect simply because of Bush’s internationalist rhetoric. Rather, more crucial were the prior constitution of Saddam Hussein as the main challenger of the international prestige of the US, and the strong commitment to fighting Iraq that Bush showed by sending a massive force to the Persian Gulf. In contrast, by the time of the experiment, Iran had not yet become the main enemy that the US needed to defeat in order to maintain or enhance its international leadership status, and the White House had not yet shown any strong commitment to fighting Iran. Therefore, I do not expect an internationalist framing of an air strike against Iran to activate the nationalist sentiment that a more nationalist framing is expected to trigger. Put it simply, Americans generally do not get excited about fighting other peoples’ wars. Rather, to

³ In the process of creating the transcripts for the policy statement, I borrowed fragments from three presidential addresses that were modified for the present context: George H. W. Bush’s national address on the first Invasion of Iraq (1/16/1991), George W. Bush’s “war on terrorism” speech (9/21/2001), and Barack Obama’s declaration of new policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan (3/27/2009). The speaker in the recording is a public relations professional and the recording was done in a professional studio.

strike a chord with the American public, a war needs to be perceived as “our” war, even if official rhetoric presents it in internationalist terms.

Because it is possible that an official announcement of a new foreign policy will have an impact on public attitudes regardless of its content, one-third of the sample was assigned to a “no framing” control group. In this group, participants were told that the president was about to announce a one-month ultimatum to Iran to stop its nuclear program, and that if Iran failed to comply with the ultimatum an air strike would be launched on its nuclear sites. However, except for this basic information, participants in the control group were not offered any information as to whether the ultimatum was issued by the US unilaterally or by the UN, whether the reason for the ultimatum was the need to protect the nation from an aggressor or was driven by a more internationalist agenda, and whether the expected air strike would be launched by the US Air Force alone or by a coalition air force.

The Questionnaire

Following the announcement of the new policy on Iran, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire containing about a hundred questions.^{4,5} All but a few questions were answered on a Likert scale with six levels. The bulk of these questions was organized in six batteries.⁶ The first five batteries asked respondents about their emotions. The order of these batteries was constantly randomized during data collection in order to ensure that results would

⁴ No pre-test was administered, because this could reveal the intentions of the study. Instead, following a standard practice in large-N experiments, the control group serves as a proxy for pre-test scores.

⁵ A lengthy questionnaire can be problematic if the effect of the manipulation fades away as participants fill out the questionnaire. Three measures were taken in order to reduce this potential problem. First, I dropped as many questions as I could without putting the reliability of composite measurements at risk and without creating a bias in the questionnaire (e.g., because of uneven number of positive/negative options). Second, about one quarter of the questions that were not related to the hypotheses (e.g., demographic questions) were placed in the last part of the questionnaire. Third, the order of the batteries that measured attitudes and emotions was constantly randomized. This allowed each topic to appear, for some of the participant, close to the manipulation.

⁶ The order of items within each battery was randomized once before data collection started.

not be biased by the order of topics in the questionnaire. The sixth battery of questions measured the orientation of participants toward the US and its relationship with other countries. First introduced by Kosterman and Feshbach (1989), this set of questions allows for differentiating *nationalist* sentiment (perceived superiority of the nation) from both *patriotism* (love of the country) and *internationalist* sentiment (caring for the needs of other peoples). All questions used in this battery were adopted from Kosterman and Feshbach's influential study, but the content of a few questions was modified to be relevant to the Iranian crisis. This battery was placed last in order to avoid a situation in which some of its more loaded items would prime responses to other parts of the survey.

Measuring Attitudes and Emotions

The hypotheses tested in this study center on sentiments, emotions, and attitudes. Measuring this type of variables in a survey is especially challenging for two reasons. First, individuals might have different interpretations to survey questions and to the list of answers they are asked to choose from. For example, two individuals might feel similar levels of confidence, but whereas one respondent might state feeling "very confident" another respondent might report feeling only "confident". Second, when reporting their emotions, individuals might use somewhat different vocabulary despite similarity in the actual emotional experience. For example, some respondents might say that the government makes them feel "confident", while other might prefer other terms such as "secure". For these two reasons, measuring sentiments, emotions, and attitudes through survey questions is susceptible to large measurement errors.

In order to reduce measurement errors, this study treats political attitudes, sentiments, and emotions as *latent* variables that can be detected as the underlying factors shared by sets of items

in the questionnaire. For example, the questionnaire measures the levels of security concerns by Iran's nuclear program by asking respondents how much thinking about the nuclear program of Iran makes them feel "scared", worried", and "anxious".

More generally, the questionnaire developed for this study was designed specifically for the task of differentiating among discrete emotions, attitudes, and sentiments. In the process of developing the questionnaire, three pilot studies were conducted on convenience samples in order to validate the measurement of latent variables. Then, after obtaining the data from the survey-based experiment, factor analysis was conducted in order to verify the existence of the expected underlying factors in the sample and to drop items that did not load high on any of the factors.

DATA AND FINDINGS

The experiment was administered by YouGov, an internet-based polling firm. YouGov interviewed 550 respondents who were randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups. The three groups were then matched down to a sample of 500 to produce the final data set. The respondents were matched on gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political interest. YouGov then weighted the matched survey respondents to a set of known marginals for the general population of the United States from the American Community Survey (see the demographic characteristics of the sample in Appendix 9).⁷ The experiment took place from June 24 to June 30, 2011.

⁷ The current YouGov matching frame uses the 2005-2007 American Community Survey's 3-year estimates for gender, age, race, Hispanic origin, education level, family income, marital status, number of children under 18, employment status, citizenship, state, and metropolitan area. YouGov employed a 5-way stratified selection from the panel, matching panel respondents state x age x race x gender x education strata. For variables such as party identification, ideology and news interest, the target sample was the Pew Religious Landscape Survey, 2007. The variables that were matched on in this study were party identification, ideology, news interest, religion, born again or evangelical, and church attendance.

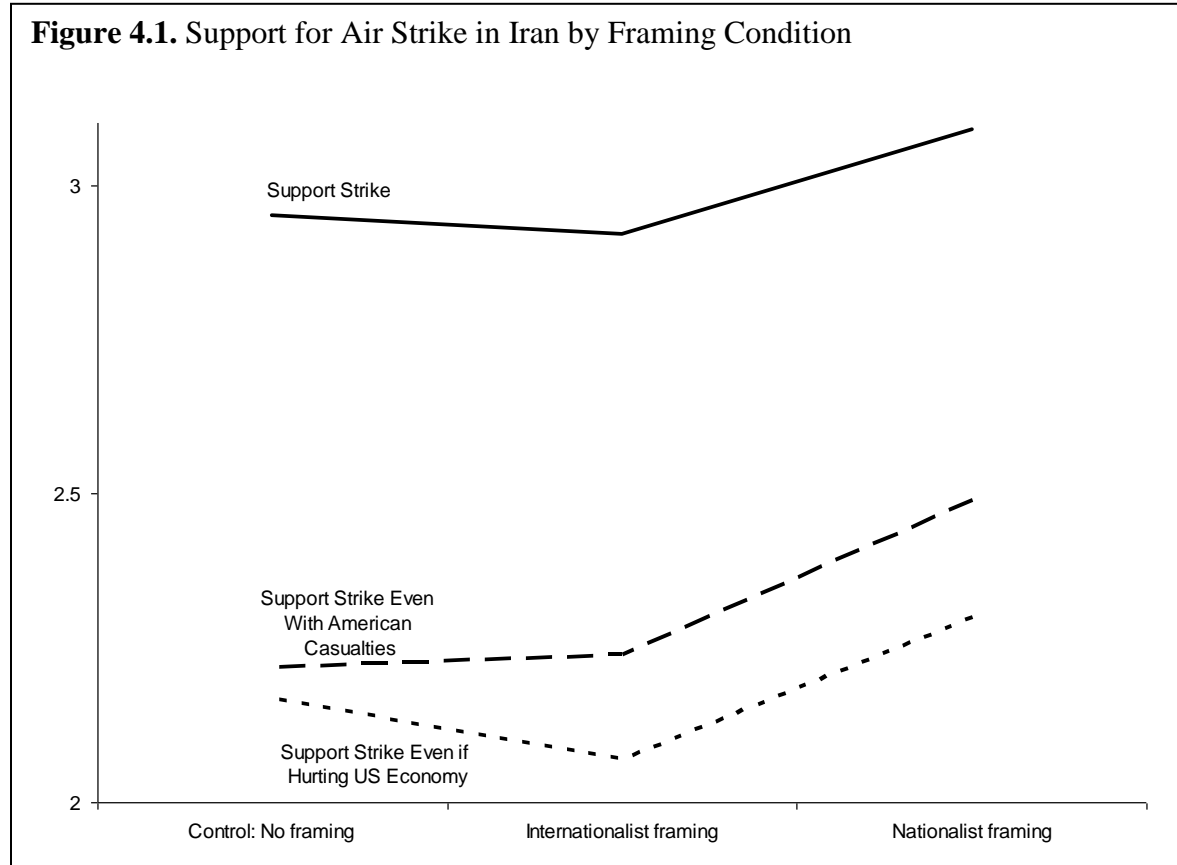
Data analysis was conducted in two steps. First, factor analysis via Stata was used to determine which items from the questionnaire should be included in the next steps of model estimation based on their factor loading. Second, hypothesis testing was conducted with structural equation modeling via EQS. Because most of the questions in this survey are ordinal, model estimation was done using the Arbitrary Distribution Generalized Least Squares (AGLS) method, based on the Lee-Poon-Bentler technique of estimating correlations among ordinal variables (Lee, Poon and Bentler 1995).⁸ The data set contains few missing values. None of the variables has more than 4% missing observations, and the majority of them have much less than that. Because list-wise deletion would have resulted in the loss of about one-third of the cases, pair-wise deletion method was used in order to deal with missing values. All models were also re-estimated using Maximum-Likelihood method, in which missing values were dealt with using the procedure of Jamshidian-Bentler.⁹ The differences in the parameters estimates produced by the two methods are minimal, thus I am confident that the results are not driven by the methods used for model estimation and for dealing with missing values.

The graph in Figure 4.1 compares the average responses of participants in the two test groups and in the control group to three questions about their support for an air strike in Iran: In the first question, respondents were asked if they supported an air strike in Iran; in the second question, they were asked if they supported an air strike in Iran even if the U.S. air force might suffered a substantial number of casualties; and in the third question respondents were asked if they supported an air strike in Iran even if it hurt the American economy. As can be seen, while the average scores of participants exposed to the internationalist framing and those in the control group are similar, the nationalist framing condition produced higher scores for all three

⁸ See Chapter 3, note 12.

⁹ See Chapter 3, note 13.

questions. In fact, compared to the control and the internationalist framing group respectively, assigning a participant to the nationalist framing group resulted in an average increase of 9% and 7.5% in the average scores on these questions.¹⁰



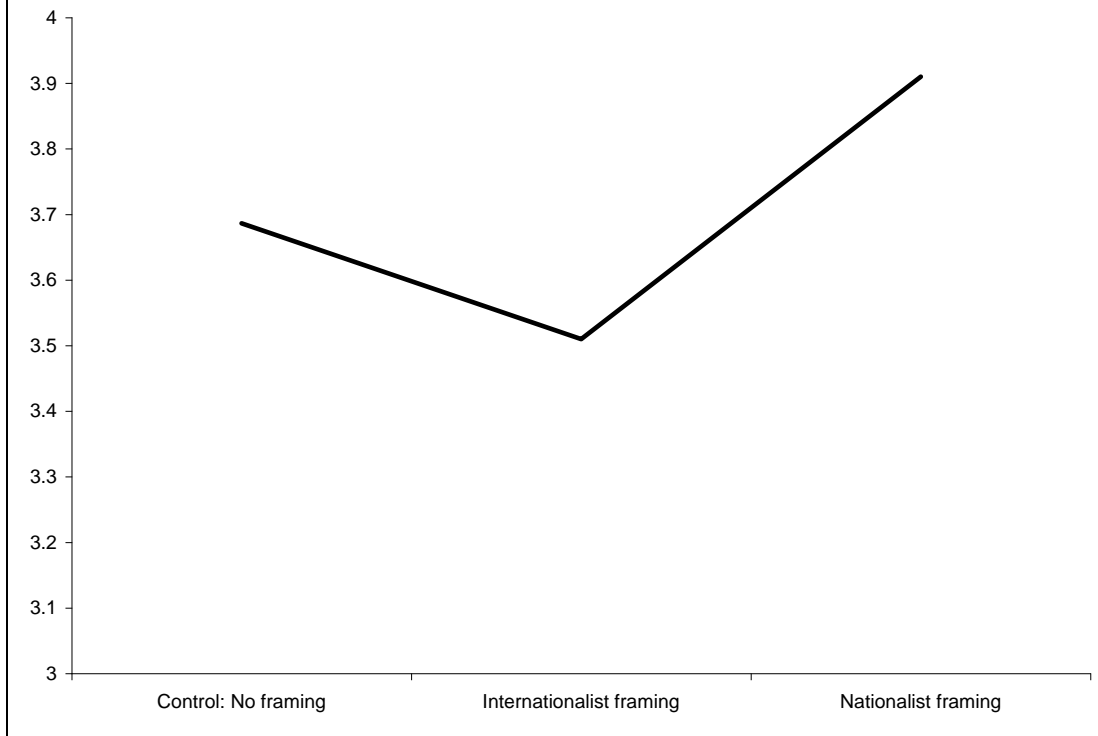
By itself, the observed effect of nationalist rhetoric on support for the air strike is not sufficient for establishing my argument, because it may have different explanations. For

¹⁰ These differences do not pass a standard statistical significance test. The reason for this, I argue, is that the effect of the framing treatment on attitudes about the air strike in Iran was *indirect*. In contrast, attitudes about the strike were directly affected by participants' levels of nationalist sentiment and by the emotions of pride and confidence (see figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.11). Because, these proximal effects depended not only on the treatment, but also on external factors such as gender, age education, and so forth, there was a considerable variation in attitudes about the air strike *within* each test and control group. Consequently, to pass a significance test, the framing treatment needed to generate a much stronger effect on support for the strike than it actually generated. Nonetheless, as we shall see, the framing treatment did have a statistically significant effect on the level of nationalist sentiment experienced by participants, thereby *indirectly affecting their opinion about the plan to strike in Iran*. Furthermore, the fact that participants in the nationalist framing group *consistently* scored higher on all three measures of support for the air strike is yet another evidence for the effect of the framing on attitudes about the strike, even if it cannot pass the statistical significance test when treated as a direct effect.

instance, it is possible that the presidential rhetoric in the nationalist framing condition mobilized support for an air strike in Iran because it somehow led people to rationally assess that the goals of the strike were feasible, or because it incited a sense of security threat, as *rationalist* and *realist* approaches might argue respectively. In contrast, I suggest that the higher level of support for an air strike in Iran should be attributed to the activation of a nationalist sentiment in response to the nationalist framing of the conflict. A preliminary test of this argument should therefore check whether the average level of nationalist sentiment was indeed higher in the nationalist framing group than in the other two groups.

Figure 4.2 shows the differences in the average scores of the three framing conditions on a scale measuring nationalist sentiment. First proposed by Kosterman and Feshbach (1989), the following three questions that compose this scale are conventionally used by political psychologists to measure nationalist attitudes: (1) “In view of America's moral and military superiority, it is only right that we should have the biggest say in international policies.” (2) “Other countries should try to make their governments as much like ours as possible.” (3) “The most important thing for any foreign policy program of our government is to see to it that the interests of the U.S. are served.” As in other studies, these questions load high on a shared factor and have high internal consistency score (Cronbach’s $\alpha=0.74$).

Figure 4.2. Nationalism (mean of 3 items) by Framing Condition



Evidently, participants who were exposed to the nationalist framing scored, on average, higher on the nationalism scale than participants in the other groups.¹¹ Random assignment of participants to framing conditions makes the possibility of biased results unlikely. Nonetheless, in the structural equation modeling part of the analysis, that possibility was tested by controlling for various potential confounding variables, as well as by applying more advance techniques for matching control and test groups.

Notice, however, that the difference in the average nationalism score is somewhat larger between the nationalist and internationalist framing groups and smaller between the nationalist framing group and the control group. Perhaps because participants in the control group were not

¹¹ The difference between the scores of the nationalist and internationalist framing groups is significant at the 0.01 level; the difference between the scores of the nationalist framing and the control groups is only marginally significant at the 0.05 level ($P=0.068$).

offered any explanation of the plan to attack Iran, some of them spontaneously applied a nationalist framework, thus responding similarly to participants in the nationalist framing group. However, the fact that participants in the control group were only half as likely to believe that an ultimatum was about to be issued to Iran (~40%) than participants in the two test groups (~80%) might have prevented the control group from reaching the same average level of nationalism as in the nationalist framing group. Put it simply, it is likely that a nationalist framework was more likely to be activated spontaneously by participants who believed that an American air strike in Iran was pending. Indeed, on average, participants who believed that the US would launch an air strike on Iran scored about 4% higher on all items measuring nationalism than participants who either believed that a coalition attack was pending or thought that the US would continue with its economic sanctions policy and will not use military power against Iran.

The descriptive findings discussed above suggest that the nationalist framing manipulation had a positive effect on both participants' level of nationalist sentiment and on their support for an air strike in Iran. The following section explores the main theoretical propositions of the nationalist sentiment argument: It tests hypotheses 1-3, which suggest that nationalist framing of an imminent military operation would increase the level of nationalist sentiment, that this will in turn boost emotions of pride and confidence about the military initiative, and that as a result support for the policy will increase as well.

Modeling Framing Effect on Nationalism, Emotions, and Support for an Air Strike

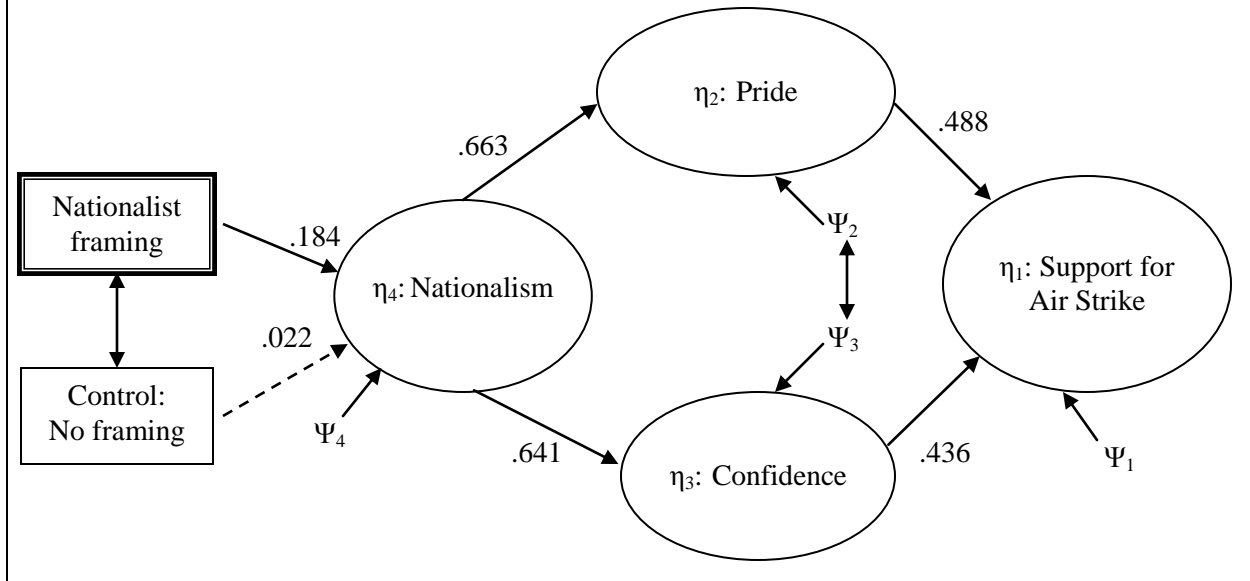
The following structural equation models summarize the main findings of the data analysis conducted for this chapter. Using conventional notation as in the previous chapter, observed variables are represented by rectangle shapes and latent variables are represented by

oval shapes. Each latent variable was estimated via a system of regression equations connecting it to 3-5 survey questions. Note that in order to keep the graphical presentation as simple and clear as possible, the observed indicators of latent variables are not presented (see Appendix 10 for the complete list of survey questions and their coefficients in the structural equation models). The models also assign an error term to each dependent variable, representing the part of its variation that remains unexplained. All coefficients in the models are presented in their standardized format. Solid arrows mark statistically significant associations at the 0.05 level or less, and the dashed arrows represent non-statistically significant associations. Double-headed arrows mark covariance of two variables or two error terms.

The first model tests hypotheses 1-3 by modeling the process through which the nationalist framing affected support for air strike in Iran. In order to estimate the effects of the framing condition on nationalist sentiment, two binary variables serve as predictors of nationalism: One variable is coded “1” for membership in the nationalist framing group, and the other variable is coded “1” for membership in the control group. The coefficients of these two variables are relative to the omitted internationalist framing group.¹² This type of modeling is often called MIMIC model (model with multiple indicators and multiple causes, see Jöreskog and Goldberger 1975).

¹² Throughout the analysis the internationalist framing group serves as the omitted category. I decided to omit this category and not the control group for the following reason. A remarkable effect of the exposure to a framing treatment (either nationalist or internationalist) was the attribution of greater credibility to the announcement of an ultimatum to Iran: Whereas about 80% of participants in these test groups believed that the new policy was real, the credibility rating in the control group was only about 40%. Therefore, contrasting the nationalist framing group directly with the internationalist framing group provides a more reliable estimate of the effect of framing than contrasting with the control group. It should also be noted that the estimates for the control group generally show minimal differences from the internationalist framing group. This also justifies using the latter as the omitted category.

Figure 4.3. The Emotional Links between Nationalism and Support for Military Action



This model shows that the nationalist framing treatment increased the average level of nationalist sentiment relative both to the internationalist framing and control groups. In turn, higher levels of nationalist sentiment increased support for air strike in Iran by triggering emotions of pride and confidence about the strike—exactly in line with the hypotheses. Multiple indices of fitness determine that this model, which successfully explains 77% of the variation in respondents’ level of support for an air strike in Iran, fits the data very well.¹³ Most of the variation in nationalist sentiment (97%) can be attributed to exogenous factors such as personality, education, ethnicity, gender, and partisanship, as well as to the exposure of respondents to information about the crisis with Iran prior to the experiment (or information about any other issue that might affected attitudes about the Iranian question). Nonetheless, the effect of the exposure to nationalist framing is statistically significant.

¹³ Yuan-Bentler Corrected AGLS Test Statistics for a Chi-Square score of 95.6 with 78 degrees of freedom has a probability value of .085; Comparative Fit Index=.960; Standardized Root Mean-Square Residual=.052; Root Mean-Square of Approximation=.034.

Indeed, this finding is far from being trivial, especially given the limitation of a study of this sort, which can only generate an effect that is much weaker than the larger phenomenon this effect is supposed to represent. Furthermore, the modest but statistically significant effect of the nationalist framing on nationalist sentiment should be understood in connection to the findings of other parts of the investigation that were discussed in the previous chapters. A summary of the connection is this: The experimental findings of this chapter show that nationalist frame of interpretation of a militarized conflict triggers nationalist sentiment and associated positive emotions, and that these emotions increase individuals' support for the use of military force. The two previous chapters establish the relevance of this finding to the larger RRTF phenomenon: Chapter 2 showed that nationalist frames of interpretation have indeed been crucial for turning events into rally-points, and Chapter 3 demonstrated that widespread positive emotions about the use of military force have driven public support of the president during RRTF periods.

Due to the random assignment of participants to test and control groups, the possibility that other exogenous variables biased the effect of the nationalist framing treatment is very unlikely. Nevertheless, in subsequent analysis a set of demographic control variables pertaining to individual characteristics such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income, political orientation, ideology, religion, level of religiosity, and immigration history, was added to the model. The effect of the framing treatment was found to be robust to all the potential confounding variables that were tested (result not shown, but see model 1 in Appendix 12 for similar findings).

To further examine the causal effect of nationalist framing on nationalist sentiment, I reanalyzed the data using two techniques for matching treatment and control groups. First, I used the Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM) method recommended by Blackwell and coauthors (2009)

to match the three groups on gender, race, and education, and then re-estimated the model in Figure 4.3.¹⁴ The findings (not shown) were nearly identical to those presented in Figure 4.3. Second, I applied the Propensity Score Matching (PSM) technique to match participants in the nationalist framing group to participants in the other groups by their individual characteristics of gender, age, education, race, religion, level of religiosity, ideology, and a scale measuring identification with political party.¹⁵ PSM provides the most rigorous test of causality, because the treatment effect is estimated as the average difference *within* pairs of matched participants. The results of PSM showed clearly that participants in the nationalist framing group scored, on average, about 6% higher on the nationalist sentiment variable than their matched counterpart in the control and internationalist groups, and that this difference is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (for the precise estimates produced by different matching functions see Appendix 11).¹⁶ To summarize, no evidence was found by either CEM or PSM to suggest that the higher level of nationalist sentiment in the nationalist framing group derives from unbalanced assignment of participants to the treatment and control groups. We should therefore conclude that the exposure of participants to nationalist framing *caused* an increase in their level of nationalist sentiment.¹⁷

¹⁴ In CEM, exact matching is applied on data that were temporarily coarsened. Data analysis is then conducted using the uncoarsened matched data. Put it simply, this technique matches the weighted multivariate distributions of key variables in the treatment and control groups. By doing so, CEM minimizes the possibility of spurious treatment effect because of imbalanced group compositions.

¹⁵ PSM was conducted via the *psmatch2* command in Stata (E. Leuven and B. Sianesi. 2003. "PSMATCH2: Stata module to perform full Mahalanobis and propensity score matching, common support graphing, and covariate imbalance testing". <http://ideas.repec.org/c/boc/bocode/s432001.html>. Version 4.0.4.)

¹⁶ I used repeated the analysis with four matching functions: *nearest neighbor*, *radius*, *kernel*, and *Mahalanobis distance*. In addition, I used bootstrapping to evaluate the consistency of the treatment effect estimated by each one of the matching functions. The estimated treatment effect was consistent and similar in all matching functions (see Appendix 11).

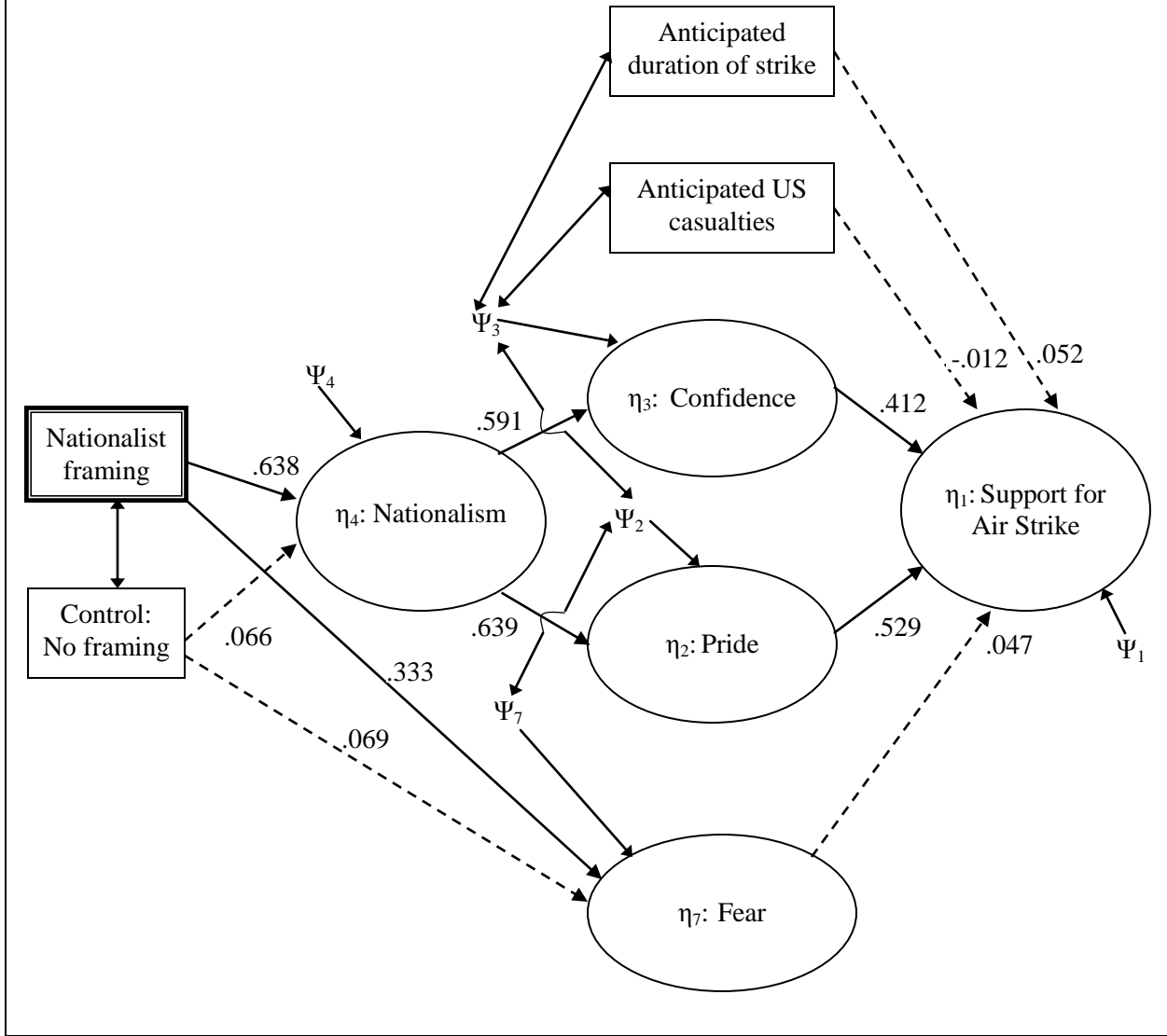
¹⁷ In addition, I used PSM to test whether the assignment of participants to framing and control groups resulted in different levels of support for air strike in Iran. The results (not shown) suggest that, depending on which matching function was used, respondents in the nationalist framing group scored on average between 13 to 26 percent higher than matched participants in the control group on a scale measuring support for the air strike. Because of the modest sample size, these differences are only significant at the 0.1 level. The average difference between participants in the nationalist framing group and matched participants in the internationalist framing group was somewhat lower (between 8 to 19 percent) and statistically significant only when the radius matching function was used ($P=.04$). It is likely that some participants in the internationalist framing group found the internationalist framing of the air strike

So far, the data seem to support my approach to individuals' support for military action. However, to establish its validity, we need to test my approach against the main alternatives. The model in Figure 4.4 thus adds two prominent explanations of public support for the use of military force, which might serve as alternative arguments to the one advocated here. On the one hand, two questions measure the anticipated duration of an air strike in Iran and the expected number of American casualties. Adding these questions serves to test a rational-public argument, according to which individuals support military initiatives that are expected to be quick and not to cost many American lives (Eichenberg, Stoll and Lebo 2006; Eichenberg 2005; Gartner and Segura 2000; Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2006; Larson 1996; Larson and Savych 2005; Voeten and Brewer 2006). On the other hand, the "fear" latent variable measures the degree of individuals' security concerns with regard to the Iranian nuclear program, thus adding to the model the *realist* idea that people tend to support military initiatives when they sense a security threat (Lambert et al. 2010; Perrin and Smolek 2009; Schildkraut 2002).¹⁸ (See Appendix 10 for the complete list of survey questions and their coefficients in this model.)

in Iran compelling, which in turn reduced the overall difference between this groups and the nationalist framing group. In any case, propensity score matching seems to be pointing to a casual effect of exposure to nationalist framing on the level of support for air strike both relative to the control group and to the nationalist framing group.

¹⁸ Note that this variable measures general security concerns not concerns for personal security. For example, individuals who scored high on this latent variable often did not score high on a question asking how much they felt that their own family was at risk because of Iran's nuclear program.

Figure 4.4. The Nationalist Emotions Argument vs. Rationalist and Realist Alternatives



The results suggest that the nationalist framing of the crisis with Iran triggered not only nationalist sentiment, but also security concerns.^{19,20} However, these security concerns did not increase the level of support for an air strike in Iran, as we can learn from the weak and not

¹⁹ Nonetheless, the effect of the nationalist framing on the “fear” variable is sensitive to the method of estimation: It does not appear as statistically significant when the model is estimated by the robust ML method.

²⁰ An additional analysis found no evidence for effects of the nationalist framing condition on the anticipated duration of the air strike and number of American casualties. These coefficients were removed from the model to avoid a problem of model convergence.

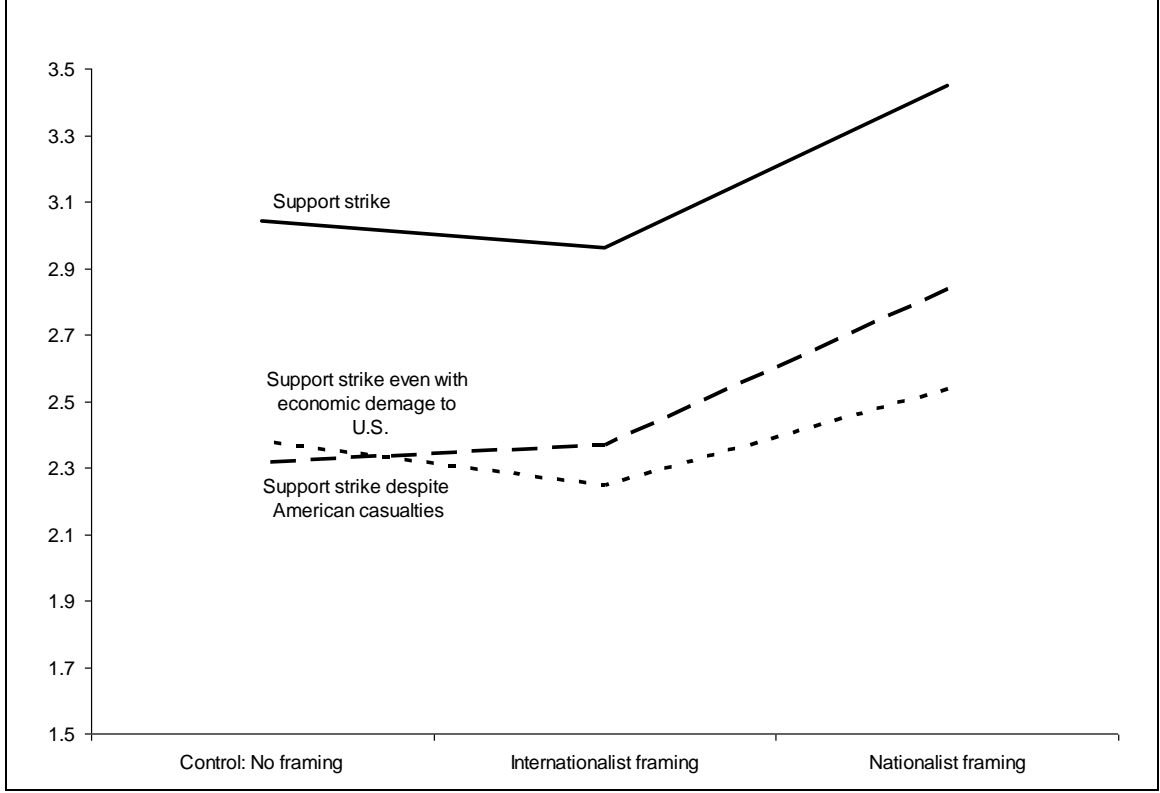
statistically significant effect of the “fear” variable.²¹ The anticipated duration and number of American casualties, which serve as indicators of the *rational public* approach, have weak and not statistically significant effects on support for an air strike in Iran. In contrast, the variables associated with the *nationalist sentiment* argument retain sizable and statistically significant effects. In subsequent analysis, I replaced the fear variable with anger, in order to test the argument that support for the president during international crises is driven by anger rather than by fear (Huddy, Feldman and Cassese 2007; Skitka et al. 2006). The findings (see Appendix 13) lead to the same conclusion: The nationalist framing increased the average level of support for an air strike in Iran through pride and confidence that were associated with nationalist sentiment. In contrast, though the nationalist framing did cause participants to express more anger about Iran’s nuclear program, this did not make them more supportive of launching an air strike against Iran.

Breaking Down the Results by Gender

I now turn to an exploration of the personal characteristics that influenced the reaction of individuals to the experimental manipulation. Strikingly, the effect of the nationalist framing on support for military action is almost entirely limited to men. As shown in Figure 4.5, in all measures of support for the strike, males in the nationalist framing condition scored, on average, higher than males in the other conditions.

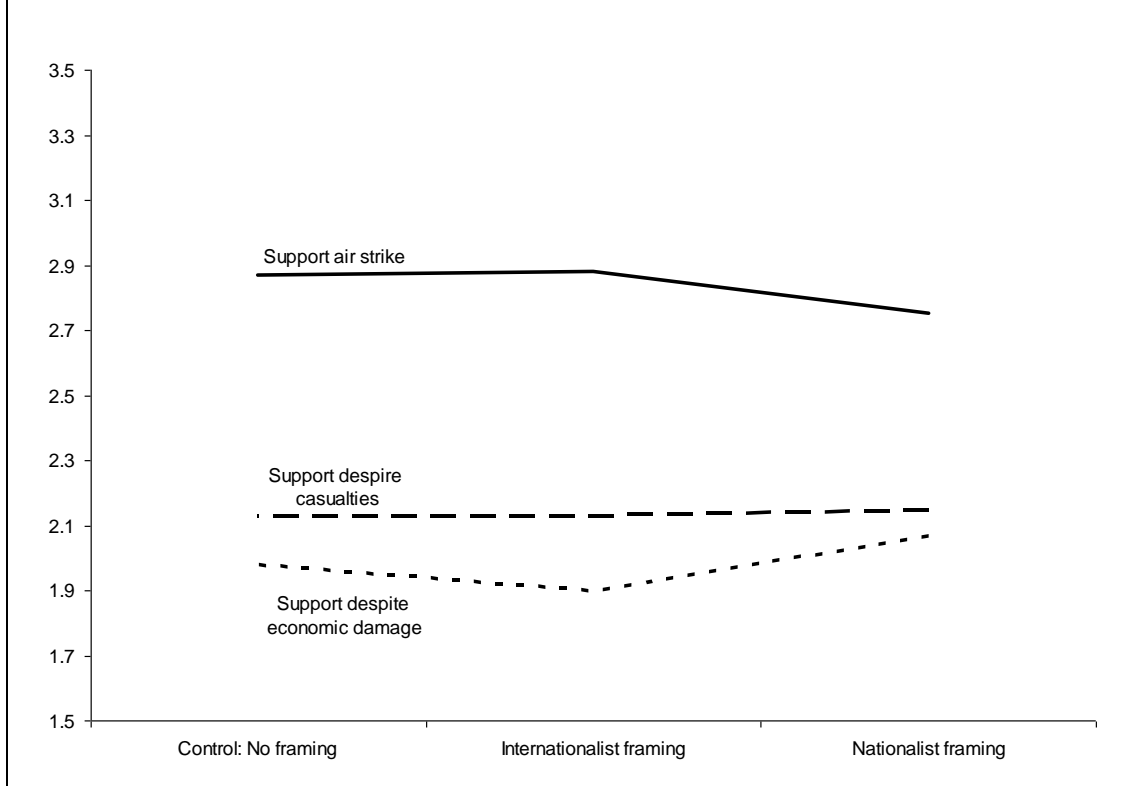
²¹ The effect of the “fear” on support for an air strike in Iran becomes statistically significant when the associations of this variable with the framing conditions are removed from the model or when the entire model is estimated through the robust ML method. Nonetheless, the size of this effect remains miniscule.

Figure 4.5. Support for Air Strike In Iran by Framing Conditions: Males



In contrast, Figure 4.6 shows that in two of the three questions—about general support for the air strike, and about support for the strike even at the cost of American casualties—nationalist framing had no effect on the average attitudes of females. Only in one question, asking respondents if they would support a strike despite economic damage to the US, nationalist framing had a weak effect for females as for males.

Figure 4.6. Support for Air Strike In Iran by Framing Conditions: Females



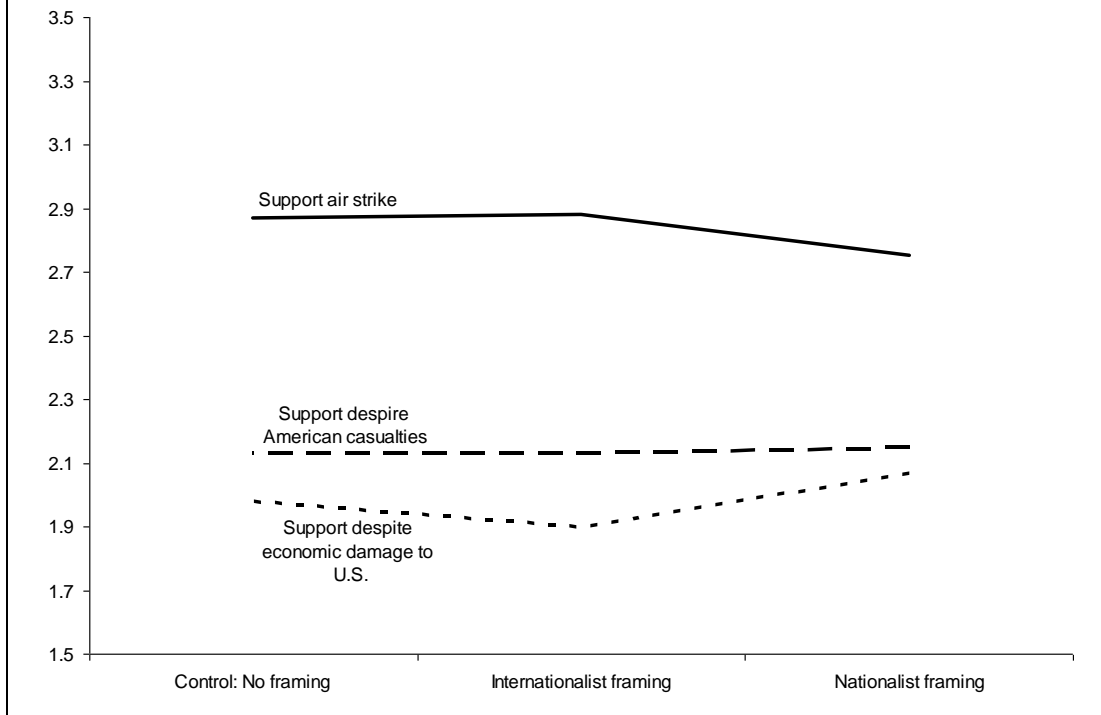
These results are consistent with previous studies that have shown that American women are less likely than men to approve of the use of military force against other countries (Burriss 2008; Conover and Sapiro 1993; Gilens 1988; Huddy et al. 2005; Schubert 1998). This is of course not to suggest that official nationalist rhetoric would never have a strong impact on women (say, in the case of a real presidential announcement of a military action against Iran). Instead, it suggests that the manipulation used in this experiment operated more strongly on men than on women, implying that the nationalist sentiment may have, on average, a lower activation threshold for men than for women.

Figure 4.7 (below) provides strong evidence in support of this argument. As can be seen, the baseline level of nationalism in the control group is about the same for males and females.

For both sexes, the internationalist framing has a negative effect on the level of nationalism (this effect is somewhat stronger for males). But the nationalist framing had a much stronger effect on the average level of nationalism of males than on the level of nationalism of females: Males in the nationalist framing group are, on average, much more nationalist than males in the internationalist framing group, yet no similar dramatic effect appears for females. To be precise, the average nationalism score of males in the nationalist framing group was 17.2% greater than the score of males in the internationalist framing group. For females, the difference was only 6.2%. Moreover, while male and female levels of nationalism are about the same in the control group and somewhat lower for males in the internationalist framing group, in the nationalist framing group the level of nationalism is considerably higher for males than it is for females (the difference is about 7.14%).²² This difference is statistically significant at the .05 level, one-tailed test).

²² Seemingly, the negative effect of exposure to the internationalist framing was stronger for males than for females. However, this difference is not statistically significant. In addition, a closer investigation reveals that the effect of gender might be an artifact of the type of inverse probability weights used for creating Figure 6, in which each group was weighted separately from the other groups. When alternative weights were used that were calculated for the entire sample (rather than for each group separately), no gender difference was found in the internationalist framing group. All other findings were similar with both types of weights.

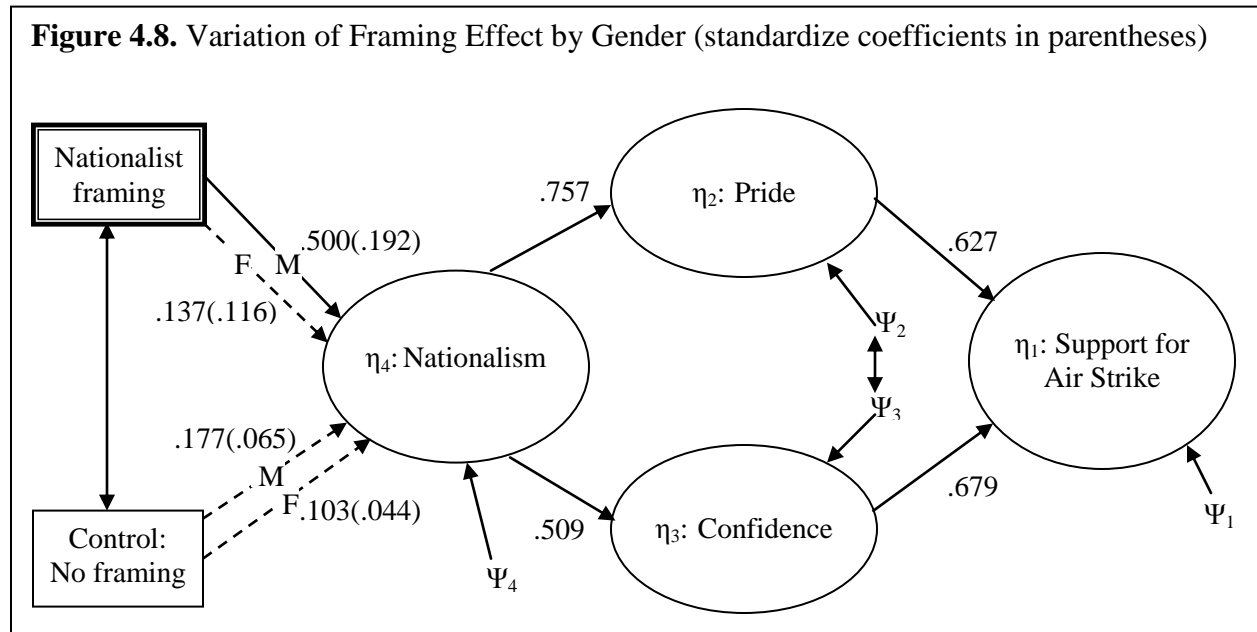
Figure 4.7. Nationalism Scores (mean of three items) by Framing Condition and Gender



To further test this “gender-gap”, additional structural equations were estimated simultaneously for male and female participants. In this model, which is presented in Figure 4.8, all parameters are constrained to be equal for the two gender categories, with the exception of the framing effects that are free to vary by gender. Essentially, this model assumes that males and females experience, on average, similar emotional reactions when nationalist sentiment is activated, and that the effects of these emotions on support for military action do not vary by gender either. In contrast, the model examines whether the two genders vary in the propensity of individuals to experience nationalist sentiment in response to nationalist presidential rhetoric. Multiple fit indices suggest that this model fits the data very well.²³ Nonetheless, I also tested a model in which all parameters were free (results not shown). In that unconstrained model the only statistically significant variation by gender was in the effects of the nationalist framing on

²³ CFI=.987, SRMR=.076, RMSEA=.034, Yuan-Bentler Residual-Based F-Statistics=1.093 (d.f.=166,331; P=.247)

the level of nationalist sentiment reported by respondents. No significant variation by gender was found in other parts of the model. Figure 4.8 thus presents the constrained model. The coefficients in the model are presented in their raw metric form, but standardized coefficients for the effects of framing conditions are given in parentheses (see Appendix 10 for the complete list of survey questions and their coefficients in this model).



From comparing the coefficients of the framing conditions, we can see that the nationalist framing had a stronger impact on males than on females: the standardized coefficient of this variable for males is 66% larger than the coefficient for females. Moreover, the effect of nationalist framing is statistically significant only for males. In contrast, the difference between the control and internationalist framing groups are small and not statistically significant for both males and females. The results remained similar when a set of confounds—pertaining to individual’s characteristics of education, religion, religiosity, race/ethnicity, and partisanship—

was added to the model (results not shown).²⁴ These findings further support my conclusion that the nationalist framing of the plan to strike in Iran stimulated nationalist sentiment among men, while its effect on women was much more modest.

To summarize, the model in Figure 4.8 is important, because it suggests that a “gender gap” in attitudes toward the use of military force emerges because men are more prone than women to experience nationalist sentiment in response to presidential address of international conflicts. In contrast, a gender gap might *not* exist in the *effects of* nationalist sentiment. In other words, the emotions and attitudes that are triggered by nationalist sentiment are the same for men and women, but to incite the nationalist sentiment in women requires a stronger stimulus than to incite this sentiment in men.

With regard to the RRTF phenomenon, this finding suggests that the size of the gender gap may depend on the magnitude of the rally effect. The strongest rally effects emerge when historical circumstances and presidential actions trigger nationalist sentiment in men as well as in women, thereby causing the gender gap to diminish temporarily. For example, following the September 11 attack women were as likely as men to rally behind President Bush and the “war

²⁴ In contrast, when self-reported ideology was added to the model, the gender-gap disappeared. Therefore, an additional analysis was conducted in order to check whether the effect of the nationalist framing was the result of unbalanced assignment of participants to test and control groups. Breaking the average levels of nationalist sentiment by both framing condition and self-reported ideology (see Appendix 14) shows that the framing effect was moderated by ideology, but this issue is beyond the scope of this discussion. Two specific findings lead me to conclude that the gender gap in the response to the nationalist framing treatment was real. First, in all ideological categories (conservative/very conservative, moderate, liberal/very liberal), males who were exposed to the nationalist framing scored 6-10% higher on the nationalist sentiment scale than females who were exposed to the same framing. In contrast, the results in the internationalist framing and control groups were mixed: Both the size of the gender gap and its direction (males more than females or females more than males) depend on the ideology variable. Second, the effect of the exposure to nationalist framing relative to the exposure to internationalist framing or to being assigned to the control group was stronger for males than for females in all ideological categories. There was only one exception: Nationalist framing had a stronger effect on liberal females than on liberal males when the scores of nationalist framing group were compared to those of the internationalist framing (but not when compared to the control group). However, this finding has less to do with the nationalist framing itself. Rather, it reflects the fact that liberal males were the only sub-set of the sample in which the internationalist framing was sufficient to triggered nationalist sentiment, thereby minimizing the contrast between nationalism and internationalism contrast for this sub-set of the sample.

on terror”: To be precise, Bush’s job approval rating and the approval rating for his antiterrorism policy were both about 90% for males as well as for females.²⁵ In that period, the gender gap was completely absent because the September 11 attack and Bush’s subsequent declaration of “war on terror” jointly functioned as stimulus strong enough to incite nationalist sentiment not only in men but also in women. In contrast, when the rally effect is weaker, the gender gap may still be observed, because fewer women than men experience a strong nationalist sentiment. For instance, a modest gender gap could be observed during the invasion of Iraq: At the beginning of the invasion, support for Bush and the invasion was about 80% among men, but only about 70% among women.²⁶ To sum up, the gender gap has an inverse relationship with the RRTF effect: The most extreme rallies embrace nearly the entire population and thus completely eliminate the gender gap. Weaker rally effects, however, may still have a residual of the gender gap, because they leave more women than men unaffected or perhaps even create some antagonism of women toward a foreign policy that they consider masculine and motivated by the aggression of men. The next section explores the possibility that, in addition to the gender gap, the propensity of Americans to display a nationalist sentiment varies by racial categories.

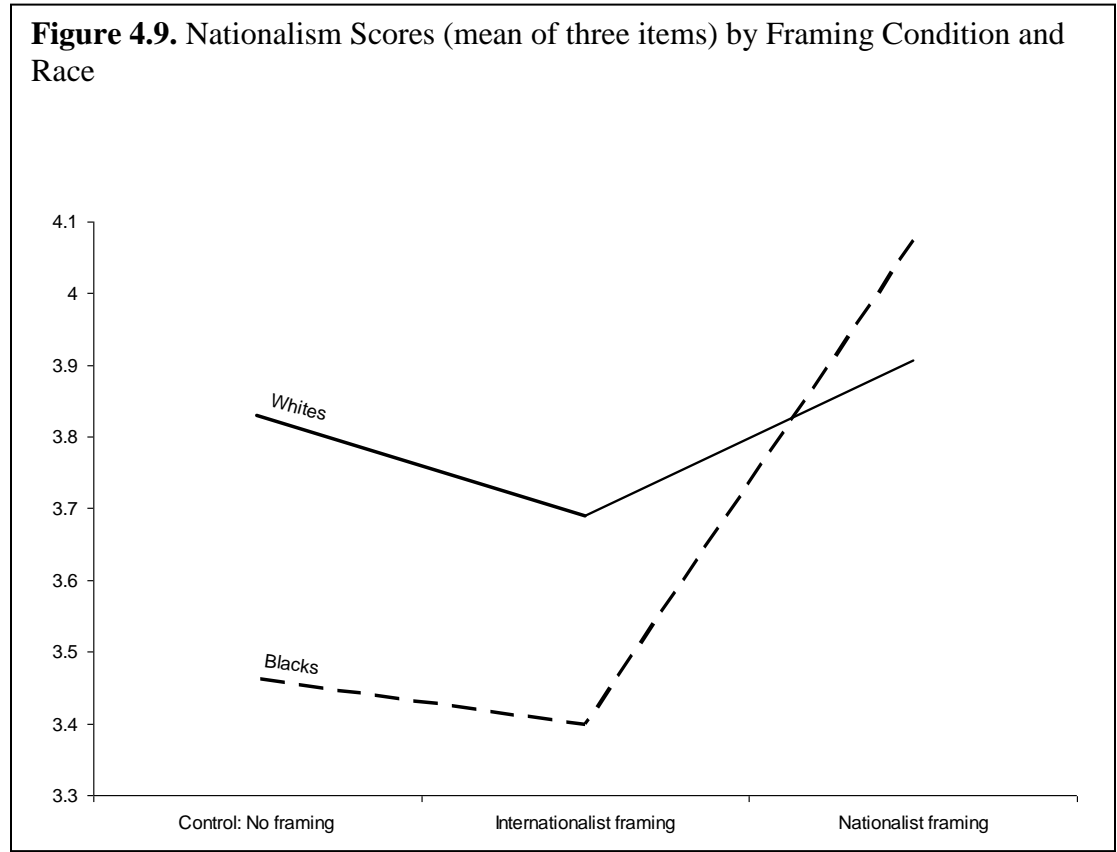
Breaking Down the Results by Racial Categories

Figure 4.9 compares the average scores of individuals self-identified as “white” and “black” in questions measuring nationalist sentiment of superiority. As expected, in both the control and internationalist framing groups, the level of nationalist sentiment reported by blacks is, on average, lower than the level of sentiment reported by whites. However, the exposure of

²⁵ Estimates based on National Threat and Terrorism Survey analyzed in chapter 2.

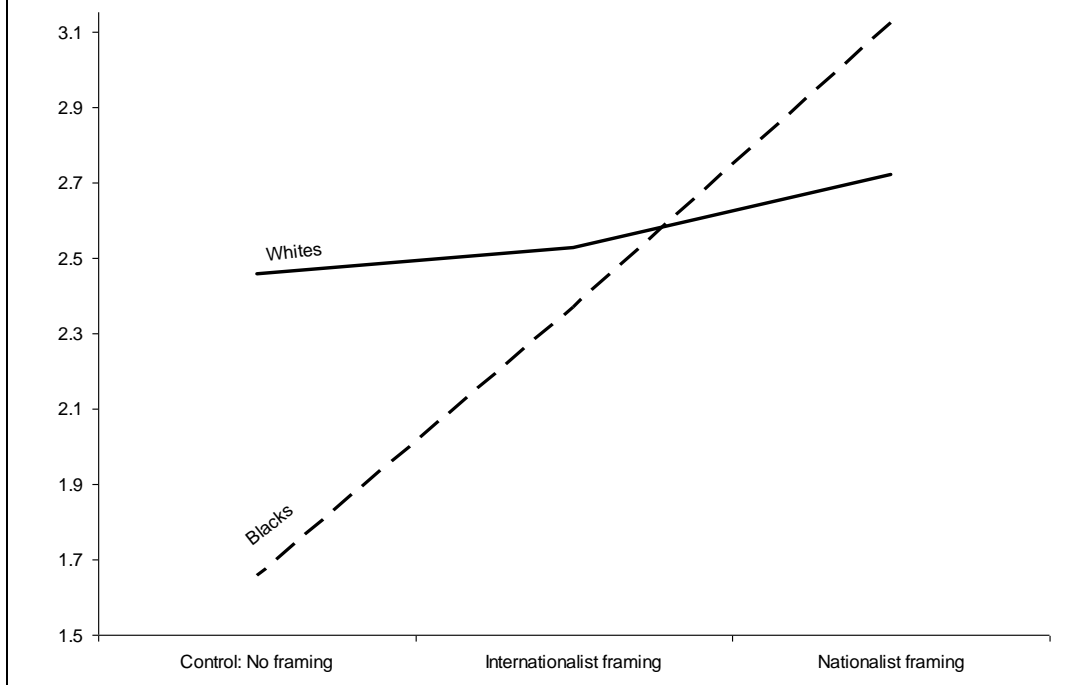
²⁶ Estimates based on Gallup Poll, March 22-23, 2003. However, as data analysis in chapter 3 showed, the net effect of the gender variable on Bush’s popularity was weak and did not retain statistical significance when other variables such as identification with political party and education, were held constant.

participants to the nationalist framing treatment yielded an intriguing finding: The increase in the average level of nationalist sentiment as a result of the nationalist framing was greater for blacks than for whites.



In addition, Figure 4.10 (below) shows that the average increase in support for an air strike against Iran as a result of the exposure to the nationalist framing, was greater for blacks than for whites.

Figure 4.10. Support for Air Strike (mean of three items) by Framing Condition and Race



The findings that are reported in figures 4.9 and 4.10, it should be noted, are tentative: Because the number of participants self-identified as “black” is small (47 in the whole sample), the data do not provide enough statistical power for the findings to pass a statistical significance test. Nevertheless, cautiously assuming these findings are not a product of some random sampling error, we may propose two explanations. First, when blacks are actively embraced as part of the nation— through a nationalist rhetoric that emphasizes common American values and shared enemies—their distanced relationship to the nation is reversed and transformed into more identification. This in turn allows the level of nationalism of blacks to climb and reach the level of nationalism among whites, and in this experiment even to surpass it. Second, it is possible that the differences are the result of the special context in which the survey was conducted: Having the first black president might have moderated the effect of the nationalist framing condition

through the pride many blacks feel about President Obama and the resentment some segments of the white category feel toward him. This may explain why the levels of nationalism and support for military action against Iran in the nationalist framing group were higher for blacks than for whites. Unfortunately, the data do not allow to adjudicate between these two explanations.²⁷

It is also possible to combine the two explanations. Perhaps having a black president increased the appeal of the nationalist rhetoric to black audience, and thus encouraged them to cross the boundaries and openly express nationalist sentiment. Put it differently, if the sitting president were white, and especially a Republican, it is likely that the nationalist framing would not have caused the racial gap to diminish. Recall that racial gaps could be observed in the two RRTF periods during the presidency of George W. Bush. During the invasion of Iraq, the invasion of Iraq the overall public approval ratings for the war and for Bush were about 75%, but only about 30% among blacks (this difference does not only reflect the fact that blacks are overwhelmingly identified with the Democratic party, because even among Democrats a solid majority of whites supported Bush).²⁸ Even after September 11 and the invasion of Afghanistan, Bush's job approval rating among blacks (about 75%) was lower than the national rating (about 90%).²⁹ This suggests that while the nationalist message may appeal to many blacks, it may take a black president to elevate the American nationalist sentiment of blacks and bring it to the level of nationalist sentiment experienced by whites. Admittedly, having a black president was an

²⁷ For participants self-categorized as "Hispanic", administering the "nationalist framing" treatment resulted in an increase in the average nationalist sentiment compared to the internationalism framing condition. Surprisingly, however, when support for the war was measured, Hispanics in the control group scored higher than respondents in the other conditions (in fact, they scored higher than the other racial categories in all three conditions). A closer inspection of the data reveals that the reason for this aberration is a sampling error: Hispanics in the control group were on average more religious, and included more Republicans and males than in the other framing conditions. All these variables are associated with support for attack on Iran. Nonetheless, because Hispanics constitute a relatively small subset of the sample (11.6%), this sampling error did significantly biased the estimated effects of the framing conditions on the sample as a whole, except for causing some reduction in the estimated differences between the nationalist framing and control groups.

²⁸ Estimates are based on Gallup Poll, March 22-23, 2003.

²⁹ Estimates are based on data from the National Threat and Terrorism Survey.

incidental condition of the experiment, and the effects of this condition on the results of the experiment can only be speculated about.

In addition to testing the “gender gap” and “racial gap” hypotheses, I also examined whether the effect of the nationalist framing varied by other core demographic variables. Because these potential moderation effects were not part of my theoretical discussion and hypotheses, I only present these findings here briefly (see Appendix 12 for the full presentation of the findings). I did not find any significant variation of the framing effect by age, income, religion, and education. A more substantial variation appeared along ethnic lines: Individuals self-identified as “Hispanic” were affected most strongly by the nationalist framing. As I suggested in Chapter 3, when discussing similar findings in the context of the rally-effect of September 11, perhaps Hispanic, many of whom are recently naturalized, are the most eager to express loyalty to the American nation during conflicts. But this issue deserves a separate investigation that will look at different ethnic groups and generations of immigration within the “Hispanic” very heterogeneous category.

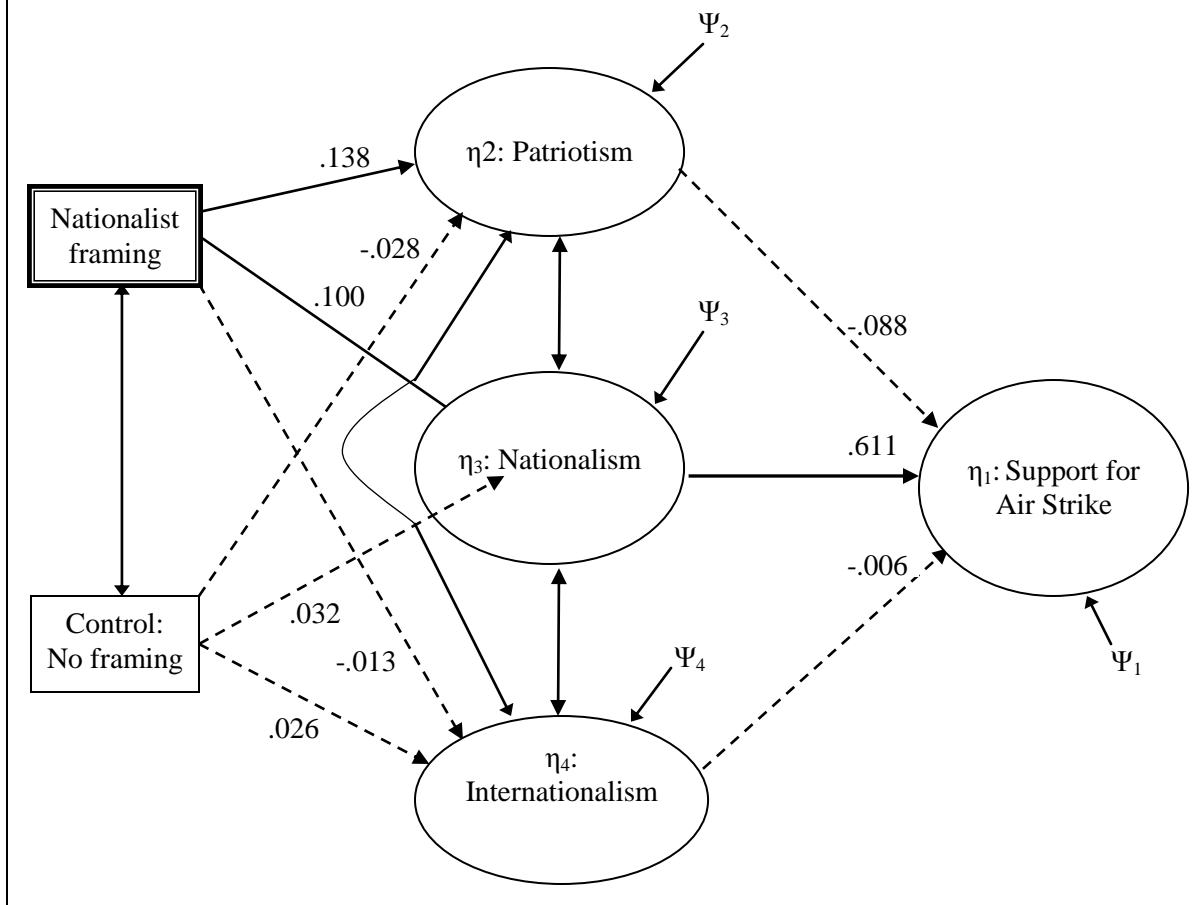
Was it Actually Nationalism?

A skeptical reader might suggest that because the focus of the investigation was on nationalist sentiment, it might have missed other, perhaps more important sentiments such as patriotism and internationalism. Regarding patriotism, one might suspect that given the positive association with nationalism, perhaps it was patriotism—love of the country—and not nationalism—which involves a sense of superiority to other countries—that increased the level of support for a strike against Iran when prompted by nationalist framing. Alternatively, one might suggest that neither nationalism nor patriotism motivated individuals to support an air

strike against Iran: Instead, the internationalist sentiment of individuals who think that the US should help solving major problems around the world led some of the participants to support an air strike against Iran.³⁰ While the possibility that the exposure to nationalist framing somehow triggered internationalist sentiment is in contrast to my expectation and will be difficult to explain, this possibility should nonetheless be tested. A proper investigation requires that patriotism and internationalism would be directly contrasted with nationalism. Therefore, a final structural equation model was estimated in order to adjudicate between these three alternative arguments. The model, which is presented in Figure 4.11, estimates the effects of the framing conditions on levels of nationalist, internationalist, and patriotic sentiments, and then estimates the effects of these three variables on support for an air strike in Iran (see Appendix 10 for the complete list of survey questions and their coefficients in this model).

³⁰ This kind of process is typical of individuals who believe that the US should play a central role in world politics (Brewer et al. 2004; Herrmann, Tetlock and Visser 1999; Holsti 1992; Wittkopf 1990) and/or tend to empathize with oppressed peoples (Crowson 2009; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989). These arguments are not included as hypotheses in this study, because they refer to specific sub-sets of the population rather than representing a general process.

Figure 4.11. Nationalism vs. Patriotism and Internationalism



The findings are quite unequivocal. Whereas the nationalist framing increased the average levels of both patriotism and nationalism (but not of internationalism), it was only the nationalist sentiment that affected participants' level of support for a strike in Iran. This finding supports the argument that what mobilizes Americans to support wars is the activation of nationalistic sentiment of superiority and its associated positive emotions. However, it is possible that this mechanism affected only specific subsets of the sample that was specifically receptive to the nationalist message. If this is indeed the case, then the findings might not represent a more general effect that operates across sub-sets of society during RRTF periods. While we cannot

rule out this possibility, it worth reminding the reader that the positive emotions that were detected in the experiment, were also found in Chapter 3 to have motivated individuals to support the president during actual rally-round-the-flag periods. Unlike in the experiment, in the RRTF periods discussed in Chapter 3, positive emotions and support for military action were not limited to a small subset of the American population but actually encompassed large parts of the society.

Furthermore, the investigation in Chapter 3 also revealed an association between positive emotions and identification with the American nation. Unfortunately, the survey data used in Chapter 3 could only point to an association between positive emotions about the use of military force and identification with the nation, but did not permit the investigation of my argument that positive emotions are triggered specifically by nationalist sentiment of superiority. Therefore, the experiment in this chapter was designed for the specific purpose of searching for evidence for this relationship; and it did found compelling evidence. Still, because of the limitation of the experimental setting that can only produce effects that are much weaker than a full-blown rally-effect, and given that the nationalist framing treatment affected sub-sets of the sample differently (as evident most remarkably in the “gender gap” discussed above), the “nationalist sentiment of superiority” part of my argument should be taken with a grain of salt: In order to confirm that this mechanism actually operates during RRTF periods across sub-sets of society, future research would need to collect survey-data during actual RRTF period specifically for the purpose of testing this argument.

CONCLUSION

The experiment described in this chapter demonstrates that when nationalist sentiment of superiority is activated through nationalist framing of military action, it triggers emotions of pride and confidence in the policy, the government, and the military, which in turn lead to increase in individuals' support of the foreign policy. The results of the experiment also challenge alternative arguments. Support for a military action in Iran was not influenced by whether participants foresaw a quick and cheap success, or by whether participants felt that Iran was posing a security threat. Instead, support for the strike came mostly from those who expressed nationalist sentiment of superiority and reported being proud and confident about the plan to attack Iran.

It may be useful to remind at this point, that the aim of the experiment was not to artificially generate a RRTF period (this seems to be an impossible task for standard experiment). Rather, the experiment was designed to test whether causal links exist between nationalist official rhetoric, nationalist sentiment, and emotions and attitudes toward the foreign policy. The task of showing that RRTF effects are motivated by nationalist emotions was carried by Chapter 3 that used survey-data collected during RRTF periods.

Finally, the experiment was not able to manipulate presidential job approval rating, which by the time the experiment was conducted was influenced by issues that Americans felt more connected to than to the international turmoil around Iran's nuclear program: The economic crisis in the US, the high gas prices, and most importantly for the present context, Obama's decision to start withdrawing forces from Afghanistan, which he announced on June 22, 2011, a couple of days before data collection for this study started.

CONCLUSION

TOWARD A SOCIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF NATIONALIST EMOTIONS IN MASS POLITICS

This dissertation sought to provide a more sociological explanation of the rally-round-the-flag phenomenon, which has thus far been studied exclusively by political scientists. The existing literature takes a rationalist perspective on public attitudes, emphasizes the realist nature of the rally as a response to international security threats, or focuses on the nature of the information that the public receives and processes. This dissertation, in contrast, highlighted the desire to protect or restore the status of the national group vis-à-vis the international community as the driving force behind the RRTF phenomenon. This argument is grounded in a sociological understanding of individuals as members of collectivities that pursue a symbolic politics of status achievement and maintenance. While previous scholarship has either ignored the role of emotions or focused on negative emotions, the explanation advocated here suggests that individuals rally behind the president because of *positive* emotions such pride, confidence, and hope about the course of history, emotions that are triggered when popular nationalist sentiment is activated.¹

The causal argument that this dissertation makes about the emergence of RRTF periods shares with “opinion leadership” approaches the emphasis on the role of politicians—specifically the sitting president—and the media that mobilize public opinion during international conflicts and security crises. However, the argument advocated here differs from existing opinion

¹ As mentioned in chapter 1, a recent study by Sean Aday has pointed as well to the role of positive emotions that motivate individuals to support military actions and the presidents who order them (Aday 2010). However, the argument made in this dissertation is different inasmuch it goes beyond an individualistic view of emotions, and applies a more sociological perspective that highlights the emotional dispositions that stem from membership in groups.

leadership approaches in two important aspects. First, it claims that sitting presidents and loyal media mobilize public opinion during RRTF periods, not because they incite security concerns or provide information that lead individuals to rationally assess that a cheap success can be achieved, but because they call forth a widespread nationalist sentiment.

Second, this dissertation emphasized that presidents cannot mobilize public opinion at will. Rather, as discussed in Chapter 2, major RRTF effects emerged when the historical context created a widespread desire to reclaim or enhance the prestige of the nation, allowing presidential rhetoric to fall on a fertile soil. In contrast, in other events the historical context did not support the president's efforts to mobilize public opinion, thus even when presidents used nationalist rhetoric no RRTF effects emerged. Therefore, while this dissertation agrees with opinion leadership approach that sitting presidents and the mainstream media are the main agents of public opinion during RRTF periods (but does not agree with the "elite consensus" argument that centers on the role of elected officials other than the president), it nonetheless claimed (and indeed showed empirically) that the RRTF effect emerges out of the interaction of presidential rhetoric about wars and security crises and the historical context of these events.

Going beyond the regression methodology that had been used almost exclusively in past research, this dissertation utilized a mix-method approach to get a better insight into the RRTF phenomenon. Chapter 2 applied the principles of comparative-history via the qualitative comparative analysis technique, in order to detect processes of transition of events into rally-points, using a database that was compiled specifically for this investigation and includes over fifty major war events and security crises. The findings show that events turned into major rally-points when circumstances such as attack on American civilians or previous international fiasco allowed the sitting presidents to present military actions (or reaction) as opportunities to reclaim

or enhance the international prestige of the US. In Chapter 3, survey-data collected during the presidency of George W. Bush were analyzed and provided compelling evidence for the role of the nationalist emotions of pride, confidence, and hope in motivating individuals to support Bush during two RRTF periods. Finally, in Chapter 4, the main causal elements of the proposed explanation were tested: Using a survey-based experiment, this chapter revealed how nationalist sentiment of superiority triggered emotions of pride and confidence, which led individuals to support going to war. Taken together, the chapters demonstrate that major RRTF periods emerge in the US from emotions that perceived challenges to the national honor and opportunities to reclaim honor generate.

To be sure, no single evidence that this dissertation presented (or could present) is sufficient for firmly rejecting the alternative approaches to the RRTF phenomenon. Nor could this dissertation establish my own argument in a way that would leave no room for challenge. As Andrew Bennett (2010:211) notes, research in social science can rarely produce “hard” evidence, therefore the best we can do in order to adjudicate between competing arguments is to put them to multiple tests (see also Collier 2011). By applying three distinct investigation strategies, this dissertation was able to achieve a significant leverage for my approach while casting serious doubt on alternative approaches.

This research also has its limitations, which call for future research to improve on its findings and seek to generalize them across contexts. First, the explanation developed in this dissertation does not account for the considerable variation in the magnitude and the duration of RRTF effects in the US. Future work might go beyond what has been achieved here and offer a more nuanced explanation of why some RRTF effects have been stronger or have lasted longer than others.

Second, while this dissertation provided compelling evidence to support its central theoretical claims, the scope condition of these arguments might be restricted to the periods that were investigated. More empirical work needs to be done in order to define the conditions under which the hypothesized links between national identification, positive emotions, and the rally effect actually operate, as well as the conditions in which other possible mechanisms might be more effective. For example, for several decades the average American has not been directly involved in military activity, and the military supremacy of the U.S. has made most potential threats to ordinary citizens very unlikely. Therefore, because the US's wars are fought abroad and there is no mandatory conscription, mobilization of Americans behind these wars may resemble the behavior of sports fans who cheer their favorite team while seated on comfortable and safe seats far away from the battlefield (Mann 1987). This may explain why the perception of threat did not play a major role in explaining the RRTF effect. Looking closely at rally periods in times of mandatory conscription should add an important layer to our understanding of the RRTF phenomenon in the US.

Third, this study opens the door for subsequent investigation to improve on its findings and their generalizability beyond the American case. While the bulk of research on the RRTF phenomenon has focused on the US, there is sufficient evidence for RRTF periods in other countries as well, for example in Britain during the Falkland and Gulf wars (Lai and Reiter 2005; Lanoue and Headrick 1998; Norpoth 1987), or in Israel during wars against neighboring states (Barzilai and Russett 1990:14; Russett 1990:35; Stone, Guttman, and Levy 1982:121-122). The fundamental mechanisms discussed in this dissertation—that rallies respond to a symbolic challenge to national honor—might well be at work in other cases as well. At the same time, the precise conditions that create such challenges to national honor may well vary by country and

time. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, at least two attacks against American civilian targets—the Iran Hostage Crisis and September 11—generated widespread feeling that the national honor was violated, thus RRTF periods followed. However, since Pearl Harbor, none of the attacks against American *military* targets has generated the rally effect, perhaps because of the growing institutional separation between military and society. In contrast, in Israel, attacks against Israeli military targets may be more likely to be perceived as a challenge to national honor, because every citizen is or has been a soldier, and the military is seen as the backbone of the nation and as embodying the nation's best qualities (Ben-Eliezer 1997; Ben-Eliezer 1998; Kimmerling 1993). What constitutes a challenge to national honor might therefore vary by country. Future study will benefit from systematically examining such variation across countries or larger periods of time.

Furthermore, it is also possible that the analysis of the American case relates specifically to a sub-set of countries with strong and prevalent nationalism and militarism, such as France, Britain, and Japan in the past, or Israel in the present. In these countries, the use of military power is or has been a widely accepted way of reclaiming a highly valued national honor. In less nationalistic and militaristic countries, however, the rally effect may operate through other mechanisms.

In addition to increasing the scholarly understanding of the rally-round-the-flag-phenomenon, and despite its limitations, this dissertation makes several broader contributions. First and foremost, it highlights the need to overcome the cognitive bent in the sociological understanding of collective identities in general, and in the study of ethnicity and nationhood in particular. Emotions function as the link between identification with a group and individual's preferences and choices. Therefore, it is important to investigate which emotional dispositions

are attached to particular identities, which processes activate these emotional dispositions, and what the consequences of experiencing these emotions are. This dissertation benefited from more than two decades of social-psychological interest in these questions (see Yzerbyt and Demolin 2010 for review). Specifically, I used *identity theory* of emotions as a bridge between the two main strands in the study of nationalism: Similar to the *constructivist* strand, the theoretical framework of this dissertation sees national identity as a psychological construct with degrees of salience that vary by context. But in line with *ethno-symbolic* strand, it also claims that national identities contain detectable intrinsic emotional disposition. These emotional dispositions are activated when nationalism turns from “banal” to “hot” and in turn affect preferences and choices. The RRTF phenomenon in the US provided a case for making this point: The empirical investigation showed that nationalist emotions of pride, confidence, and hope about the course of history, which in normal times may be suppressed by individuals’ other loyalties (especially to political parties) or simply by disinterestedness or political numbness, become politically significant when an “enemy” seems to be challenging the honor of the nation and the nationalist self-understanding of being superior to other nations.

On the most general level, this dissertation shows how emotional mechanisms can be integrated into sociological analysis of large-scale political phenomena beyond the study of social movements and the collective effervescence during “rituals of solidarity” (Collins 1981; Collins 2004). The findings of this dissertation further illustrate the promise of a sociological perspective – as opposed to an individualistic, psychological approach to emotions – that situates emotional mechanisms in the *shared meaning* people attach to specific historical events and the collective identities that these events make salient. Indeed, moving from the individual to the ‘social’ is the *raison d’être* of sociology (Hedström and Bearman 2009), and it is precisely the

capacity of sociology to make this upward transition from the micro to the macro level that makes a sociological approach to emotions promising. The investigation of the rally-round-the-flag phenomenon showed that this intellectual enterprise can indeed bear fruits.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Table A1. Variables and Data Sources for Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Variable	Data source
1. US military attack	Author's coding
2. Military invasion	Author's coding
3. War escalation	Author's coding
4. Attack on US target	Author's coding
5. Attack on American civilian target	Author's coding
6. Goal: Restrain foreign aggressor	Author's coding based on secondary literature (various sources)
7. Goal: Political intervention	Author's coding based on secondary literature (various sources)
8. Humanitarian mission	Author's coding based on secondary literature (various sources)
9. Clear American success	Author's coding based on secondary literature (various sources)
10. Number of US fatalities	Author's coding based on secondary literature (various sources)
11. Prior fiasco	Author's coding based on secondary literature (various sources)
12. National address on the event	Historical news papers (New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post); The American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara (www.presidency.ucsb.edu)
13. Nationalist framing	Author's coding based on transcripts published in historical news paper and/or on the American Presidency Project's website.
14. Threat mentioned	Author's coding based on transcripts published in historical news paper and/or on the American Presidency Project's website.
15. Enemy defined	Author's coding based on transcripts published in historical news paper and/or on the American Presidency Project's website.
16. Prior enemy construction	Author's coding based on secondary literature (various sources)
17. UN authorization	Author's coding based on secondary literature (various sources)
18. Bipartisan passive support	Historical news papers (New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post); Brody 1991
19. Bipartisan active support	Historical news papers (New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post); Brody 1991
20. President's party	Author's coding
21. Majority party in Congress	Office of the U.S. House of Representatives (http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/partyDiv.html)
22. Majority party in Senate	U.S. Senate (http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/history/one_item_and_teasers/partydiv.htm)
23. Divided/undivided government	Author's coding based on V20-V22
24. President's time in office	Author's coding
25. Time to next election	Author's coding
26. Term in office	Author's coding
27. Presidential job approval rating before the event	Public opinion polls. Data were obtained from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut (http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html) and from the American Presidency Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara (www.presidency.ucsb.edu).

28. Presidential job disapproval rating before the event	Public opinion polls. Data were obtained from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut (http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html) and from the American Presidency Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara (www.presidency.ucsb.edu).
29. Popular/unpopular president	Author's coding based on V27 and V28
30. Consumer Sentiment Index: Current	Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan Survey of Consumers': http://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/documents.php?c=tr
31. Consumer Sentiment Index: Expected	Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan Survey of Consumers': http://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/documents.php?c=tr
32. Inflation rate	inflationdata.com
33. Unemployment rate	Bureau of Labor Statistics: http://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet?data_tool=latest_numbers&series_id=LNS14000000
34. Misery index	Author's calculation based on V32 and V33
35. Other ongoing wars	Author's coding based on various sources
36. Number of American ground troops	Dockrill 1996; Hastedt 2004; Leckie 1962
37. Rally coding	Public opinion polls. Data were obtained from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut (http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html) and from the American Presidency Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara (www.presidency.ucsb.edu).

APPENDIX 2

Table A2. List of Events and RRTF Coding

Event	Date	President	RRTF
North Korea attacks South Korea	6.25.1950	Harry S. Truman	Borderline-major
Soviets attack US plane off Siberia	3.15.1953 (reported first on 3.18)	Dwight D. Eisenhower	No sufficient data
Soviets shoot down U.S. spy plane	6.22.1955 (reported first 6.25.1955)	Dwight D. Eisenhower	No
Eisenhower sends Marines to Lebanon	7.15.1958	Dwight D. Eisenhower	Minor
U-2 incident	5.1.1960	Dwight D. Eisenhower	No
Bay of Pigs invasion	4/15-20/1961	John F. Kennedy	Ambiguous
Berlin Wall crisis	6.4-11.9.1961	John F. Kennedy	No
Second Berlin Wall crisis	10.22-28.1961	John F. Kennedy	No
Cuban Missile Crisis	10.22.1962	John F. Kennedy	Major
Gulf of Tonkin incidents	8.2-4.1964	Lyndon B. Johnson	No sufficient data
Johnson sends Marines to the Dominican Republic	4.28.1965	Lyndon B. Johnson	Minor
Vietnam draft doubled	7.28.1965	Lyndon B. Johnson	No
Pueblo incident	1.23.1968	Lyndon B. Johnson	No
Tet offensive	1.31.1968 (start)	Lyndon B. Johnson	No
Cambodia invasion	5.1-6.30.1970	Richard Nixon	No
Laos invasion	2.8.1971 (ground assault)	Richard Nixon	No
Increase in war bombing	4.10.1972	Richard Nixon	No
Cambodia falls	4.12.1975	Gerald Ford	No
Mayaguez incident	5.12-15.1975	Gerald Ford	Major
Iran hostage crisis	11.4.1979- 1.20.1981	Jimmy Carter	Major
Helicopter rescue plan fails	4.24.1980	Jimmy Carter	Minor
Libyan jet shot down	8.19.1981	Ronald Reagan	No
Attack on American troops in Lebanon	10.23.1983	Ronald Reagan	Not major, but not enough data to determine if minor
Grenada invasion	10.25- 12.15.1983	Ronald Reagan	Minor
Hostage incident: TWA 847	6.14-30.1985	Ronald Reagan	Borderline-major
Air raid on Libya	4.15.1986	Ronald Reagan	Borderline-major

USS Stark attacked in Persian Gulf	5.17.1987	Ronald Reagan	No sufficient data
US downs Iranian airbus	7.3.1988	Ronald Reagan	No
Pan Am 103 plane bombed over Lockerbie, Scotland	12.21.1988	Ronald Reagan	Borderline-major
US navy downs Libyan fighters	4.1.1989	George H. W. Bush	No sufficient data
Bush sends troops to Panama & Noriega surrenders	12.20.1989-1.31.1990	George H. W. Bush	Major
Gulf War	1.16.1991	George H. W. Bush	Major
Operation Restore Hope in Somalia begins	12.9.1992	George H. W. Bush	No
Navy launches missiles on Iraq	1.17.1993	George H. W. Bush	No sufficient data
World Trade Center bombing	2.26.1993	William J. Clinton	No
Occupation of Haiti	9.19.1994	William J. Clinton	Minor
Cuba shoot down two American civilian planes	2.24.1996	William J. Clinton	No
Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia	6.25.1996	William J. Clinton	No
Bomb at Olympics in Atlanta	7.27.1996	William J. Clinton	No
US missile strike at Iraqi military sites	9.3.1996	William J. Clinton	No
US embassies in Kenya & Tanzania bombed	8.7.1998	William J. Clinton	No
Attacks on suspected bin Laden training camps & chemical factory	8.20.1998	William J. Clinton	No
Operation Desert Fox in Iraq	12.16-19.1998	William J. Clinton	Ambiguous
Kosovo Air Campaign	3.24.1999	William J. Clinton	No
USS Cole attacked	10.12.2000	William J. Clinton	Minor
US & UK planes attack Iraq	2.16.2001	George W. Bush	Minor
US spy plane collides with Chinese fighter jet, crew detained and later released	4.1.2001	George W. Bush	Minor
9/11	9.11.2001	George W. Bush	Major
War in Afghanistan	10.7.2001	George W. Bush	Ambiguous
Capital of Afghanistan falls to Northern Alliance	11.13.2001	George W. Bush	No
Taliban defeated in Afghanistan	12.17.2001	George W. Bush	No
US & allies attack Iraq	3.20.2003	George W. Bush	Major
Baghdad falls	4.7-9.2003	George W. Bush	No
Saddam Hussein captured	12.14.2003	George W. Bush	Borderline-major

APPENDIX 3

Table A3. Truth Table (N=46)

Military invasion	War escalation	US civilian target	Prior fiasco	Enemy identified	Enemy construction	UN authori- zation	Nationalist rhetoric	Major RRTF	Number of events
0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	2
0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	2
0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1

APPENDIX 4

Table A4. Results of QCA with Borderline Cases Coded “Major RRTF Event” (N=46)

Pathway	Military invasion	War escalation	American civilian target	Prior fiasco	Enemy identified	Enemy construction	UN authorization	Nationalist rhetoric	Number of events
1	+	<i>or</i> +		+	+	+		+	4
2			+					+	3
3			+	+	+	+			1
4	+				+		+		2

Note: solution coverage = 0.833, solution consistency = 1.000

This model contains all variables that were used in Chapter 2 for testing my explanation of major RRTF periods. However, in addition to the seven major RRTF events, in this analysis five “borderline” cases were recoded as major rally events as well: The Korean War, The 1986 air raid on Libya, the hijack of TWA Flight 847, the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, and the capture of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in December 2003. Out the twelve rally events, this model explains ten.

The model integrates the 1986 air raid on Libya into *Pathway 1* that also includes the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the invasions of Panama and Iraq. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the air raid on Libya had all the necessary conditions for becoming a major rally-point, but the relatively small size of the operation prevented the development of significant RRTF effect. The hijack of TWA Flight 847 is integrated into *Pathway 2* that also contains the Iran Hostage Crisis and 9/11. However, in contrast to the model presented in Chapter 2, here the definition of an enemy is not a necessary condition for the emergence of the RRTF effect. This model thus suggests that nationalist rhetoric in response to attack on American civilians is sufficient for generating a considerable increase in presidential job approval rating. However, it takes also a definition of an enemy to generate a *major* rally period. The Korean War joins the Gulf War in *Pathway 4*, but having a pre-established enemy drops from the list of necessary conditions. Once again, the

presence of a well-defined enemy makes the difference between major rally-points and borderline events. *Pathway 3* remains unchanged.

Two borderline events remain unexplained by this model. The bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 on November 21, 1988, was followed by a few points increase in Reagan's job approval rating. It is possible, however, that this increase was not a response to the Lockerbie bombing itself, but reflected a general tendency of the American public to be generous when assessing presidents in their last weeks in office. Indeed, similar increases of popularity were recorded for all presidents since Lyndon Johnson, with the exception of Jimmy Carter and George Bush who were also the most unpopular presidents when leaving office. Because of insufficient data, it is impossible to say conclusively whether the increase in Reagan's popularity following the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 should be attributed to this event or to the more general trend mentioned above. Available data do suggest, however, that Reagan's job approval ratings have started to increase already in November of 1988 (before the Lockerbie bombing), thereby offering some support to the "end of presidency" hypothesis.

The capture of the former Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, on December 14, 2003, generated a modest increase of 4-6 points in Bush's job approval rating. In this case, it is likely that the rally effect emerged because for many Americans this event marked the defeat of a most hated enemy, a perception that was encouraged by Bush's "we got him" speech. However, the capture of Hussein did not produce a major RRTF effect, because it happened at a time when opposition to the war in Iraq was already about 40%, doubling its level at the onset of the war.¹

¹ Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, Dec, 2003; Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, Mar, 2003. Retrieved Oct-11-2011 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html

Eight years later, the American public would respond in a remarkably similar way to the killing of Osama Bin Laden (May 2, 2011). In this case too, the personal defeat of a hated enemy leader was celebrated by many Americans and presidential job approval increased by a few points. Nonetheless, in 2011 the war on terror and the

APPENDIX 5

Using QCA to Test Rationalist, Realist, and Elite Consensus Arguments

The first table tests the two rationalist arguments, the first argument attributes popular support for military operations to their stated *policy objectives*, while the second argument attributes support to the *success* of military operations. As can be seen, the solution produced by QCA covers only four of the seven major RRTF events (the events that remain unexplained are the Iran hostage crisis, September 11, and the Iraq War). Furthermore, only one event (the invasion of Panama) is covered by both rationalist arguments, while two other events are split between the “policy objective” and “success” arguments. In addition, one pathway (the last on the list) does not relate to the rationalist arguments at all, because neither a goal of restraining foreign aggressor nor a clear success are necessary conditions for the emergence of RRTF periods through this pathway.

Table A5-1. Testing Rationalist Arguments

US military attack	Military invasion	War escalation	Attack on American target	American civilian target	Goal to restrain foreign aggressor	Goal of political intervention	Goal of humanitarian mission	Clear success	Number of events
—	—	+	—	—	+	—			1
+	—	—	+	+		—		+	1
+	+	—	—	—	+			+	1
+	+	—	—	—	—	—	—		1

Notes: solution coverage = 0.571, solution consistency = 1.000
 “+” = Condition present; “—” = Condition absent

The second table examines whether communication of threats to national security can explain the emergence of major RRTF periods. The solution produced by QCA has a poor

hunt for Bin Laden were no longer the main concern of public opinion in the US. Instead, Obama’s job approval rating was greatly affected by the ongoing economic crisis that primed public opinion at that time.

coverage. According to this solution, the communication of threat argument may only explain two major RRTF periods: The Cuban Missile Crisis, and September 11.

Table A5-2. Testing the *Communication of Threat* Argument

US military attack	Military invasion	War escalation	Attack on American target	American civilian target	President mentioned threat to US security interests	Number of events
+	—	—	+	+		1
	—	—	+	+	+	1
—	—	+	—	—	+	1

Notes: solution coverage = 0.429, solution consistency = 1.000
 “+” = Condition present; “—” = Condition absent

The third and fourth tables test the *elite consensus* argument. Both tables show that—whether we use a narrow definition of bipartisanship that counts only active support for the president’s foreign policy by the leadership of the opposition party, or apply a broader definition that also considers passive support—most of the RRTF periods remain unexplained. The Gulf and Iraq wars are two examples of events that saw major rally-periods emerging despite a significant opposition to the presidents’ foreign policy represented in the media.

Table A5-3. Testing the *Elite Consensus* Argument (passive support by the leadership of the opposition party)

US military attack	Military invasion	War escalation	Attack on American target	American civilian target	Bipartisan support	Number of events
	—	—	+	+	+	3
—	—	+	—	—	+	1

Notes: solution coverage = 0.571, solution consistency = 1.000
 “+” = Condition present; “—” = Condition absent

Table A5-4. Testing the *Elite Consensus* Argument (active support by the leadership of the opposition party)

US military attack	Military invasion	War escalation	Attack on American target	American civilian target	Bipartisan support	Number of events
—	—	+	—	—	+	1
+	—	—	+	+	+	1

Notes: solution coverage = 0.29, solution consistency = 1.000
 “+” = Condition present; “—” = Condition absent

The fifth table combines all three arguments that the previous tables examined separately. The coverage of this solution is maximal. However, this solution is too eclectic and does not tell a coherent theoretical story. For example, the first pathway in the list contradicts *all* three explanations. In contrast to the *elite consensus* argument, the RRTF periods that this pathway covers emerged despite the *absence* of bipartisan support for the presidential foreign policies. This pathway also contradicts the *communication of threat* argument, because it shows that RRTF periods emerged whether or not presidents communicated security threats. Finally, the first pathway does not support the two rationalist arguments either, because it shows that neither being a clear success nor having a goal of restraining foreign aggressor are necessary conditions for the transition of military invasions into rally-points.

The second pathway seems to support the *elite consensus* argument, but this argument is not validated by the third pathway that supports the *rational public* argument. The last pathway in the list contains elements from all three approaches, but it covers only one RRTF period (the Cuban Missile Crisis).

Table A5-5. Combining Alternative Explanations

Military invasion	War escalation	American civilian target	Goal to restrain foreign aggressor	Goal of political intervention	Clear success	Bipartisan support (passive)	President mentioned threat to security interests	Number of events
+	—	—		—		—		2
—	—	+		—		+		3
+	—	—	+		+	—		1
—	+	—	+	—		+	+	1

Notes: solution coverage = 1.000, solution consistency = 1.000

“+” = Condition present; “—” = Condition absent

APPENDIX 6

Table A6. Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients for Structural Equation Models in Chapter 3 (Yuan-Bentler corrected standard errors in parentheses; N=729)

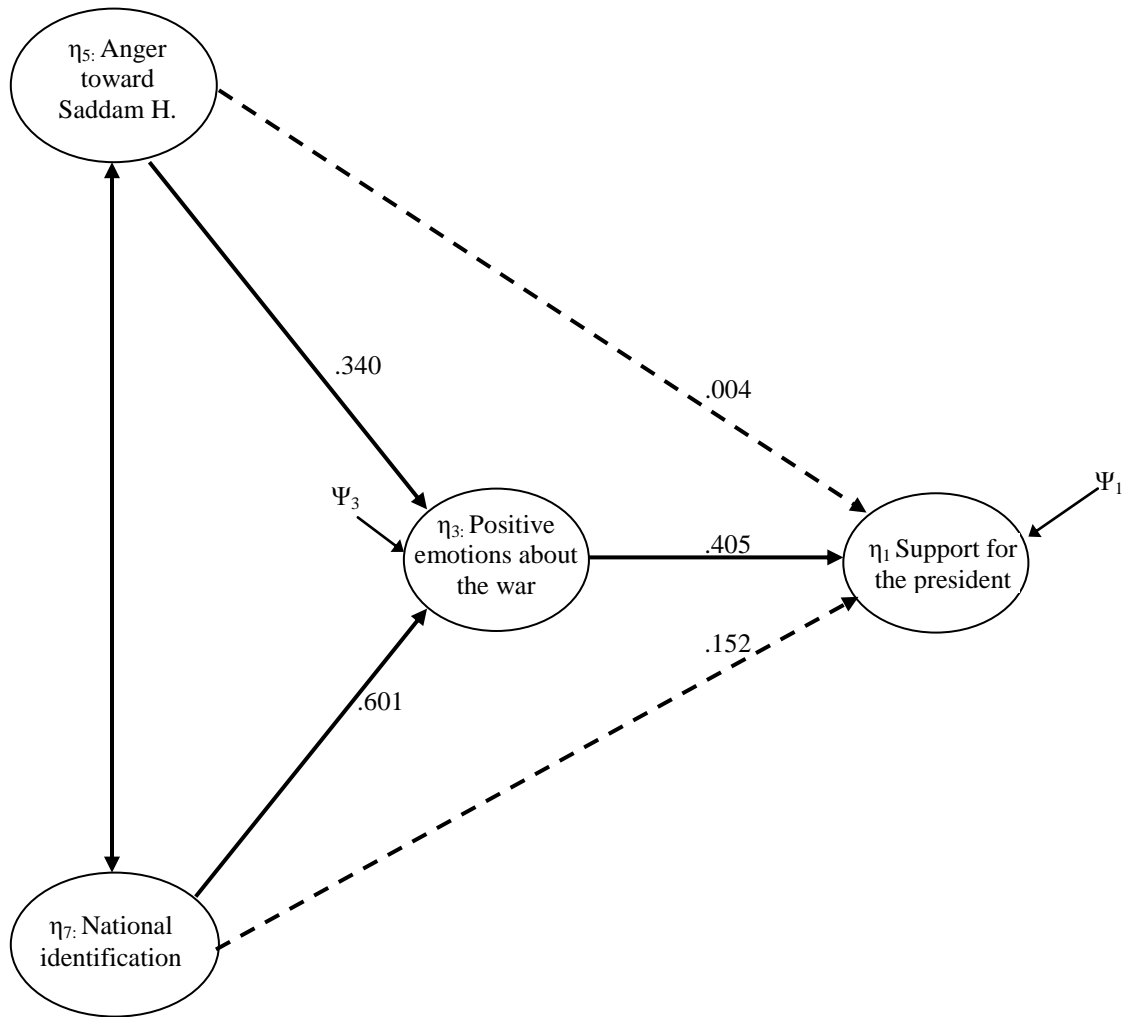
Latent Variable	Survey Question	Figure 3.2		Figure 3.3	
		U	S	U	S
Support for the president	Approve of the way the President is handling his job	1	.631	1	.899
	Approve of the way the President is handling the economy	.805 (.043)	.507	.801 (.036)	.720
	Approve of the way the President is handling the situation in Iraq	1.117 (.052)	.704	.772 (.063)	.694
Confidence in the war on terror	Think that the government can win war on terrorism	1	1.002		
	Think that the government can protect the American people from terrorism	.738 (.123)	.739		
Positive emotions about the war in Iraq	Feel hopeful about the war	1	.714	1	.786
	Proud of the war	1.188 (.035)	.849	1.129 (.036)	.887
	Enthusiastic about the war	1.325 (.041)	.947	1.170 (.058)	.919
Fear of terrorism	Nervous because of terrorism	1	.865		
	Scared because of terrorism	1.137 (.042)	.983		
	Afraid because of terrorism	1.035 (.047)	.896		
Anger toward terrorists	Angry at terrorists	1	.874	1	.978
	Hostile to terrorists	1.015 (.052)	.887	.718 (.108)	.702
	Disgusted by terrorists	.941 (.109)	.823	.897 (.141)	.878
Anger toward Saddam Hussein	Angry at Saddam Hussein	1	.862		
	Hostile to Saddam Hussein	1.065 (.025)	.918		
	Disgusted by Saddam Hussein	.904 (.028)	.779		
National identification	Proud to be American			1	.830
	Feel good when see the American flag flying			1.068 (.071)	.887

Notes: U=Unstandardized; S=Standardized

All coefficients are statistically significant (P<.0001).

APPENDIX 7

Figure A1. Higher-order Effects of Anger toward Saddam Hussein and National Identification on Support for the President (NTTS, Wave 3)



APPENDIX 8

Transcripts of Presidential Statements (Chapter 4)

Nationalist statement

“In the last five years, the United States has tried to bring Iran’s nuclear project to a halt. However, seemingly endless diplomatic efforts and economic sanctions have proven useless and nuclear reactors are being built in Iran as we speak. New evidence acquired by the CIA proves that Iran is on the verge of building a nuclear arsenal.

Iran is controlled by Islamic extremists who hate America because of the values our country represents: freedom and equal opportunities for men and women, and for people of all religions.

For years, Iran has funded and trained terrorist groups who operate against the United States. American intelligence agencies have warned that Iran still sponsors al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, including Hamas and Hezbollah, that are actively planning attacks on American targets. A nuclear Iran will be a threat to the United States.

Because diplomacy and economic sanctions have failed to put an end to Iran’s nuclear ambitions, America will have no choice but to use its military power unless the regime immediately dismantles its nuclear program and allows verification by American inspectors.

Today, I am giving an ultimatum to the Iranian government: stop the construction of nuclear facilities immediately or face military consequences. We will allow Iran one month: if by the end of this term our demand is not met, we *will* use US airpower to destroy all nuclear facilities in Iran.

To the American people I say this: We are not choosing this confrontation with Iran. Rather, it has been imposed upon us by Iran's adversarial behavior. America cannot be blackmailed or outmaneuvered by deception and threat. Standing together firmly and faithful to our principles, we will prevail.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.”

Internationalist statement

“In the last five years, the international community has tried to bring Iran’s nuclear project to a halt. However, seemingly endless diplomatic efforts and economic sanctions have proven useless and nuclear reactors are being built in Iran as we speak. New evidence acquired by the International Atomic Energy Agency proves that Iran is on the verge of building a nuclear arsenal.

Nuclear Iran will be a threat to its neighbors and to world peace. In Iran itself we see the vision the Iranian regime has for the entire region: Iranians suffer brutal governance, a paralyzed economy, and the denial of basic human rights. That is the future the Iranian regime is offering to the people of the Middle East. A nuclear Iran will not hesitate before attacking its neighbors in order to impose this dark vision upon them.

Because diplomacy and economic sanctions have failed to put an end to Iran’s nuclear ambitions, the United Nations Security Council has no choice but to authorize a coalition air strike to stop the construction of nuclear facilities in Iran, unless the regime immediately dismantles its nuclear program and allows verification by UN inspectors.

Today, the United Nations Security Council is giving an ultimatum to the Iranian government: stop the construction of nuclear facilities or face military consequences. The Security Council will allow Iran one more month, if by the end of this term the Council’s demand is not met, a coalition air strike *will* be launched in order to destroy all nuclear facilities in Iran, to enforce an international resolution, and to bring a better democratic future to the Middle East. As a loyal member of the United Nations Security Council, the United States will be part of a coalition air strike in Iran.”

APPENDIX 9

Table A7. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample, Chapter 4 (N=500)

	Unweighed	Weighted
Age		
Mean	49.84	47.33
SD	16.31	16.80
Range	18-90	19-90
Income (\$1000)^a		
25 th percentile	25-29.999	25-29.999
50 th percentile	40-49.999	40-49.999
75 th percentile	70-79.999	70-79.999
Gender		
Male	46.40%	48.19%
Female	53.60%	51.81%
Race		
White	73.00%	69.99%
Black	9.40%	11.00%
Hispanic	11.6%	12.81%
Asian	1.0%	1.10%
Native American	0.60%	0.52%
Mixed	2.80%	2.97%
Other	1.60%	1.61%
Education		
No high school	2.20%	2.70%
High school graduate	36.40%	43.70%
Some college	26.60%	23.11%
2-year college degree	6.00%	5.49%
4-year college degree	18.40%	16.20%
Post-graduate degree	10.40%	8.8%
Marital status		
Married	51.20%	49.08%
Separated	1.40%	1.49%
Divorced	11.20%	10.25%
Widowed	5.40%	4.39%
Single	27.40%	31.12%
Domestic partnership	3.40%	3.66%

^aN=439

	Unweighed	Weighted
Employment status		
Full-time	34.80%	35.91%
Part-time	11.20%	11.41%
Temporarily laid-off	0.80%	0.84%
Unemployed	8.20%	9.09%
Retired	21.60%	17.74%
Permanently disabled	8.20%	8.53%
Homemaker	6.00%	6.32%
Student	6.60%	7.50%
Other	2.60%	2.66%
Party identification		
Strong Democrat	21.80%	21.30%
Not very strong Democrat	12.80%	13.30%
Lean Democrat	9.20%	9.86%
Independent	17.20%	17.91%
Lean Republican	10.40%	10.21%
Not very strong Republican	6.80%	7.04%
Strong Republican	18.60%	17.01%
Not sure	3.20%	3.37%
Ideology (self-reported)		
Very liberal	9.00%	8.76%
Liberal	15.20%	15.58%
Moderate	31.00%	32.29%
Conservative	23.00%	21.6%
Very Conservative	14.80%	13.88%
Not sure	7.00%	7.89%

APPENDIX 10

Table A8. Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients for Structural Equation Models in Chapter 4 (Yuan-Bentler corrected standard errors in parentheses; N=500)

Latent variable	Survey Question	Figure 4.3		Figure 4.4		Figure 4.8		Figure 4.11		
		U	S	U	S	U	S (m)	S (f)	U	S
Support of Strike in Iran	I support an air strike in Iran.	1		1	.967	1	1	.994	1	.931
	I support an air strike in Iran even if it means that U.S. air force might suffer a substantial number of casualties.	.868 (.023)	.888	.929 (.039)	.972	.756 (.036)	.877	.886	1.002 (.024)	.933
	I support an air strike in Iran even if this might hurt the American economy.	.881 (.023)	.901	.817 (.038)	.894	.751 (.034)	.915	.875	.940 (.024)	.875
Pride of Strike in Iran	Thinking about an air strike in Iran makes me feel hopeful.	1	.934	1	.934	1	.935	.902		
	Thinking about an air strike in Iran makes me feel proud.	.993 (.018)	.927	.945 (.036)	.902	1.008 (.033)	.927	.890		
	If the president decides to launch an air strike on Iran's nuclear sites, this decision will make me feel proud.	1.037 (.015)	.969	1.092 (.035)	.976	1.102 (.033)	.973	.926		
Confidence in Strike in Iran	As far as I can tell, an air strike in Iran is likely to succeed.	1	.772	1	.705	1	.744	.752		
	I believe that an air strike in Iran is likely to fail.	-.927 (.04)	-.716	-.901 (.055)	-.655	-.886 (.046)	-.677	-.724		
	I believe that an air strike in Iran will achieve its goals.	1.115 (.04)	.816	1.1 (.056)	.801	1.131 (.049)	.893	.849		
	I feel confident that an air strike in Iran will achieve its goals.	1.219 (.043)	.941	1.561 (.089)	.898	1.394 (.061)	.916	.935		
Fear of Iran	Thinking about the nuclear program of Iran scares me.			1	.846					
	Thinking about the nuclear program of Iran makes me feel worried.			1.078 (.036)	.962					
	Thinking about the nuclear program of Iran makes me feel anxious.			1.017 (.035)	.888					

Notes: U=Unstandardized; S=Standardized; f=female; m=male
 All coefficients are statistically highly significant (P<.0001).

Latent Variable	Survey Question	Figure 4.3		Figure 4.4		Figure 4.8			Figure 4.11	
		U	S	U	S	U	S (m)	S (f)	U	S
Nationalism	In view of America's moral and military superiority, it is only right that we should have the biggest say in international policies.	1	.842	1	.771	1	.770	.756	1	.838
	Other countries should try to make their governments as much like ours as possible.	.847 (.051)	.713	.631 (.056)	.561	.857 (.069)	.746	.727	.831 (.042)	.697
	The most important thing for any foreign policy program of our government is to see to it that the interests of the U.S. are served.	.742 (.054)	.624	.633 (.063)	.549	.737 (.071)	.630	.600	.847 (.042)	.710
Patriotism	I am proud to be an American.								1	.879
	I love the United States.								1.012 (.020)	.889
	The fact that I am an American is an important part of my identity.								.971 (.021)	.854
Inter-nationalism	I feel great when I see the American flag flying.								1.059 (.018)	.930
	America should be more willing to use its power and wealth to help other suffering nations, even if it doesn't necessarily coincide with our political interests.								1	.692
	The position a U.S. citizen takes on an international issue should depend on how much good it does for how many people in the world, regardless of their nation.								.883 (.060)	.611
	Improving the living conditions of people in other countries is their problem, not ours.								-1.038 (.064)	-.718
	I would be willing to increase the federal tax on my income in order to fund humanitarian aid to other countries.								1.068 (.063)	.739

Note: All coefficients are statistically highly significant ($P < .0001$).

APPENDIX 11

Table A9. Propensity Score Matching Estimates of the Average Treatment Effect of Nationalist Framing on Nationalist Sentiment (standard errors in parentheses)

Matching function	Average treatment effect	% change due to treatment
Nearest neighbor	.312 (.132)	7.316498
Radius	.247 (.087)	5.829596
Kernel	.225 (.098)	5.310361
Mahalanobis distance	.225 (.098)	6.18362

Notes: All coefficients in the table are statistically significant at the .05 level.

The outcome is a latent variable that was estimated through structural equations via Stata (using the same three questions that were used to estimate nationalist sentiment in Chapter 4); it ranges from -2.234 to 2.004. Similar coefficients were estimated when the outcome was measured as a scale that averaged the scores of the three questions.

APPENDIX 12

Table A10. Coefficients from OLS Regression Models of Level of Nationalist Sentiment (robust standard errors in parentheses)

	Interactions			No interactions			Significant only			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
	Whole sample	Male	Female	Whole sample	Whole sample	Male	Female	Whole sample	Male	Female
C: Control:	.128	.120	.165	.053	.076	.034	.174			
No framing	(.105)	(.177)	(.127)	(.108)	(.099)	(.165)	(.126)			
N: Nationalist framing	.315**	.420*	.266*	.445	.482	1.049	.075	.220*	.302*	.152
	(.105)	(.186)	(.120)	(.455)	(.418)	(.797)	(.418)	(.087)	(.140)	(.110)
CT : Catholic	.217	.290	.101	.239	.217	.394	-.103		.351*	
	(.118)	(.176)	(.144)	(.149)	(.138)	(.200)	(.164)		(.155)	
CL: College or graduate degree	-.223*	-.107	-.325*	-.147	-.205	-.192	-.263			
	(.108)	(.172)	(.134)	(.134)	(.122)	(.198)	(.159)			
SC: Some college	-.168	-.130	-.150	-.137	-.143	.017	-.289*			
	(.107)	(.188)	(.121)	(.136)	(.128)	(.230)	(.135)			
A: Age	.009**	.009	.010**	.014***	.012***	.012*	.012***	.009***		.009**
	(.003)	(.005)	(.003)	(.004)	(.003)	(.006)	(.003)	(.003)		(.003)
M: Male	.042			-.017	-.064					
	(.089)			(.121)	(.109)					
B: Black	.100	.101	.074	-.226	-.078	-.079	-.169			
	(.163)	(.262)	(.184)	(.192)	(.183)	(.296)	(.193)			
H: Hispanic	-.058	-.055	-.034	-.042	-.016	-.066	.057			
	(.124)	(.198)	(.156)	(.095)	(.087)	(.144)	(.115)			
P: Party (7-point scale)	-.021	-.021	-.018	-.048	-.039	-.008	-.045			
	(.027)	(.049)	(.029)	(.031)	(.029)	(.060)	(.032)			
ID: Ideology (5-point scale)	-.304***	-.240*	-.369***	-.222***	-.233***	-.173	-.335***	-.293***	-.228***	-.371***
	(.056)	(.097)	(.056)	(.067)	(.062)	(.111)	(.068)	(.041)	(.064)	(.047)
IN: Income (14-points scale)				-.033*						
				(.017)						
N*M				.082	.224					
				(.195)	(.181)					
N*CT				-.061	.087	-.186	.528			
				(.220)	(.217)	(.354)	(.272)			
N*A				-.014*	-.010	-.010	-.008			
				(.006)	(.005)	(.009)	(.006)			
N*B				.596	.484	.215	.752			
				(.344)	(.348)	(.589)	(.393)			
N*H				.778***	.739***	.884***	.636***	.762***	.843***	.707***
				(.070)	(.058)	(.098)	(.088)	(.047)	(.067)	(.074)
N*SC				.070	.064	-.259	.324			
				(.207)	(.198)	(.355)	(.246)			

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
N*CL				-.076 (.236)	-.010 (.215)	.193 (.320)	-.234 (.286)			
N*P				.091 (.055)	.036 (.058)	.034 (.099)	.004 (.064)			
N*ID				-.127 (.119)	-.040 (.122)	-.114 (.215)	.109 (.123)			
N*IN				.045 (.027)						
Constant	.424 (.222)	.193 (.472)	.598** (.211)	.441 (.286)	.230 (.253)	-.208 (.518)	.588* (.247)	.336 (.193)	.500* (.209)	.559** (.193)
Observations	500	232	268	439	500	232	268	500	232	268
Adjusted R-squared	.217	.168	.286	.317	.286	.248	.372	.258	.225	.312
BIC**	-55.9	9.7	-36	-37.8	-47.9	28.3	-26.9	-125.8	-38.40	-78.70

*** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05

Notes: The outcome is a latent variable that was estimated through structural equation via Stata (using the same three questions that were used to estimate nationalist sentiment in Chapter 4); it ranges from - 2.234 to 2.004. Omitted categories are “internationalist framing” for the framing groups, “High school or less” for education, and “White or other” for race.

Interpretation: Models 1 to 3 estimate the effects of demographic variables on the level of nationalist sentiment expressed by participants. Model 1 estimates these effects on the entire sample, while models 2 and 3 repeat the analysis separately for males and females. The results show that the effect of nationalist framing (relative to the internationalist framing) is positive and statistically significant for the entire sample and for males and females separately. However, the effect is stronger for males than for females. This finding further supports the “gender gap” argument made in Chapter 4.

Education seems to have a negative effect on nationalist sentiment (more educated individuals are, on average, less nationalistic), but this effect is much stronger and statistically significant only for females. Age has a positive association with nationalism in the entire sample as well as for both sexes separately (for males it is marginally significant at the .05 level, two-tailed). Race does not have statistically significant effect on nationalist sentiment.

Models 4-7 add interaction terms that check whether the effect of nationalist framing was moderated by the demographic characteristics of participants. Both models 4 and 5 are estimated on the entire sample, but model 4 adds a variable that measures income, which was excluded from the other models because of a missing data problem. In both models 4 and 5, the only statistically significant coefficients are those of ideology (more conservatives are more nationalist), age (positive), and the interaction between nationalist framing and self-identification as “Hispanic”.

Models 6 and 7 once again reveal interesting gender differences: the effect of having “some college” education and the effect of ideology are only statistically significant for females: Conservative females are more nationalist than liberal females, and females with some college education are less nationalist than females with lower levels of education. All other estimates are either statistically not significant or they are significant but similar for both males and females.

Models 8-10 re-analyze models 5-7 after dropping all variables that did not have statistically significant coefficients (with the exception of the nationalist framing dummy variable that is kept in the models).² As can be seen, ideology and the interaction of the nationalist framing with self-identification as “Hispanic” appear in all models. In contrast, the positive effect of being Catholic only appears in the model for males, and the positive effect of age only appears in the models for the whole sample and for females only. Finally, the coefficient of the variable “nationalist framing” is statistically significant only in model 7 and 8 that analyzed the entire sample and the male sub-sample. However, the statistical significance of the effect of nationalist framing cannot be assessed by this variable alone, but its interaction

² We initially kept variables that were statistically significant at the 0.1 level, but then dropped them if they did not reach the 0.05 significance level when other variables were dropped from the models. In this process, only the effect of being Catholic on males survived.

effects with other independent variables must be considered as well. The two variables that refer to the nationalist framing are jointly statistically significant for both sexes.

Taken together, the interaction models suggest that the effect of the nationalist framing was stronger for males than for females. They also suggest that this effect was moderated to some degree by other demographic variables. However, only the interaction of nationalist framing with Hispanic identity stands out as statistically significant for the entire sample, as well as for each of the gender categories separately. Because this finding was already discussed in Chapter 4, it shall not be elaborated upon here (briefly, I suggested that recent naturalization might cause many Hispanics to be eager to express their support for national leaders during international conflicts).

Finally, age was found to have a positive association with nationalist sentiment in all models. There are two possible explanations for this interesting, and somewhat counterintuitive finding. It is possible that this finding indicates a generational gap in nationalism in the US. However, if that were the case, one would expect to find a similar gap in the survey data that were analyzed in Chapter 3, but such a gap was not found. Therefore, perhaps the generational gap only applies to the specific issue of Iran. It is possible that the memories that older Americans have from the humiliation of the Iran Hostage Crisis made them more likely to see Iran as an enemy of the US. Younger Americans, in contrast, grew up thinking of Iraq as the prime enemy of America and might not remember, or even know about the Iran Hostage crisis. Given this interpretation, it is somewhat surprising that the nationalist framing had a *weaker* effect on older respondents. While a specific solution for this puzzle is beyond the reach of the current investigation, we may speculate that older respondents, who have experienced more wars, might be less likely to get excited when the president beats the war drums. Therefore, the

announcement in the nationalist framing of a plan to attack Iran unilaterally had a negative effect on older respondents.

APPENDIX 13

Figure A2. The Nationalist Emotions Argument vs. Rationalist and Anger-Centered Alternatives

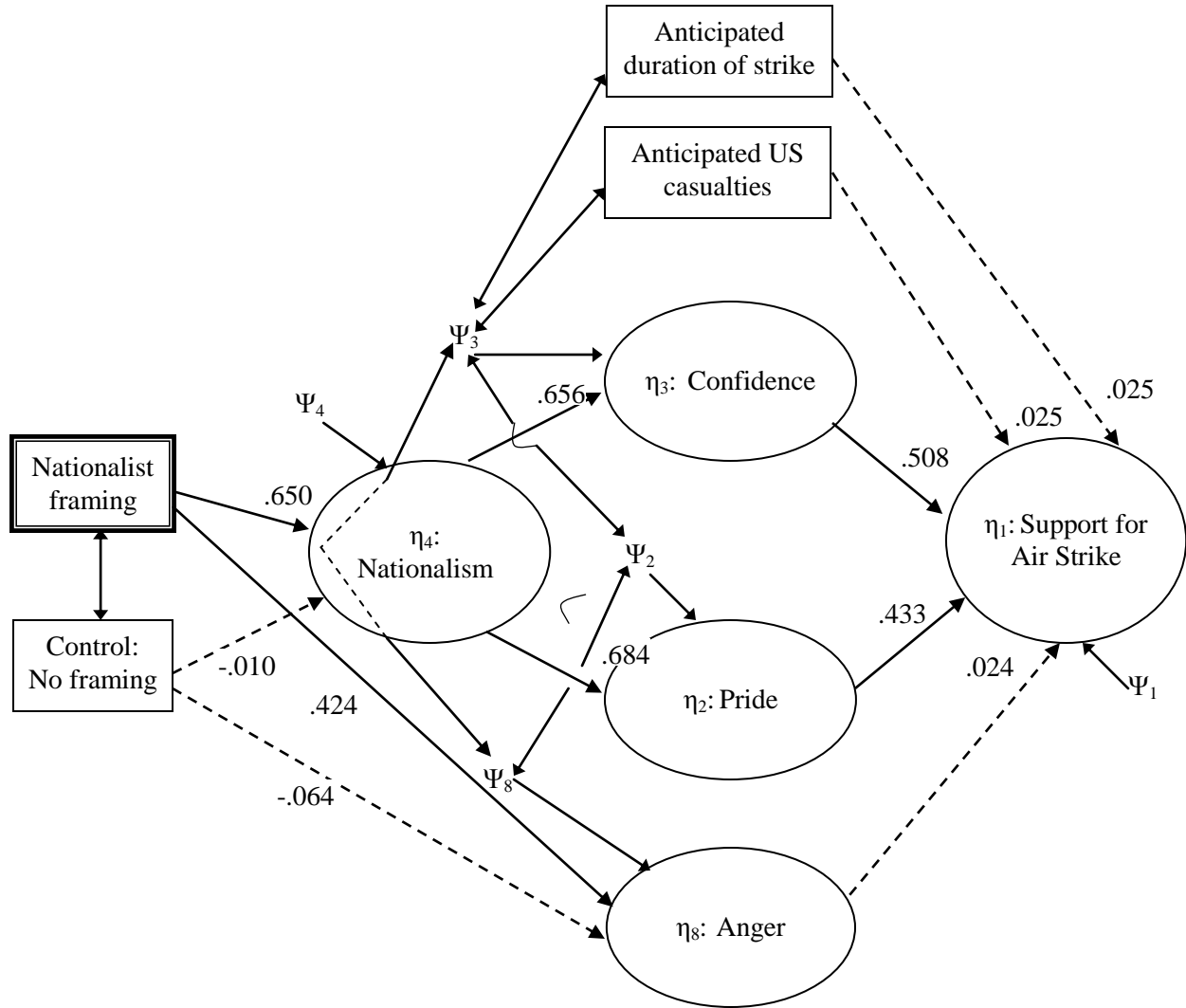


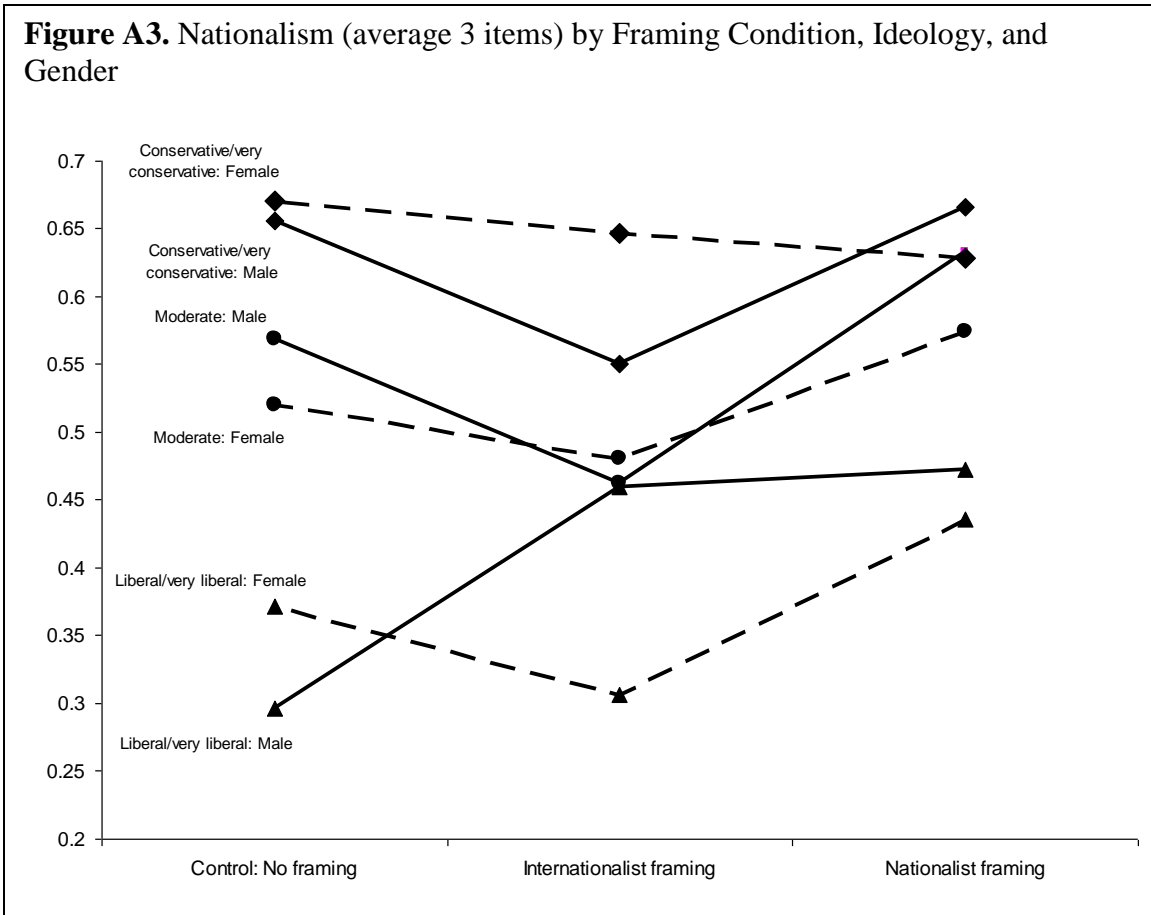
Table A11. Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients for the Structural Equation Model above (Yuan-Bentler corrected standard errors in parentheses; N=500)

Latent variable	Survey Question	Unstandardized	Standardized
Support of Strike in Iran	I support an air strike in Iran.	1	.972
	I support an air strike in Iran even if it means that U.S. air force might suffer a substantial number of casualties.	.895 (.034)	.952
	I support an air strike in Iran even if this might hurt the American economy.	.827 (.034)	.911
Pride of Strike in Iran	Thinking about an air strike in Iran makes me feel hopeful.	1	.946
	Thinking about an air strike in Iran makes me feel proud.	.975 (.033)	.928
	If the president decides to launch an air strike on Iran's nuclear sites, this decision will make me feel proud.	1.076 (.033)	.978
Confidence in Strike in Iran	As far as I can tell, an air strike in Iran is likely to succeed.	1	.769
	I believe that an air strike in Iran is likely to fail.	-.896 (.046)	-.733
	I believe that an air strike in Iran will achieve its goals.	1.083 (.046)	.842
	I feel confident that an air strike in Iran will achieve its goals.	1.440 (.070)	.906
Anger toward Iran's Government	Thinking about the Government of Iran makes me feel angry.	1	1
	Thinking about the Iranian Government makes me feel irritated.	.861 (.066)	.845
	I feel annoyed by the Iranian Government.	.767 (.064)	.751
Nationalism	When thinking about the Iranian Government I feel disgusted.	.909 (.062)	.828
	In view of America's moral and military superiority, it is only right that we should have the biggest say in international policies.	1	.760
	Other countries should try to make their governments as much like ours as possible.	.760 (.058)	.629
	The most important thing for any foreign policy program of our government is to see to it that the interests of the U.S. are served.	.624 (.059)	.546

Notes: U=Unstandardized; S=Standardized; f=female; m=male
 All coefficients are statistically highly significant (P<.0001).

APPENDIX 14

Figure A3. Nationalism (average 3 items) by Framing Condition, Ideology, and Gender



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