

**Historical Perspective on Public Support for the Draft:  
War Costs and Military Service**

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## **Historical Perspective on Public Support for the Draft: War Costs and Military Service**

### **Abstract**

The military draft was once an important element of American national security policy with widespread popular backing. The collapse in public support for it is an important historical puzzle. Public opinion about the draft also offers an arena for assessing the role of war costs, such as military casualties, in shaping attitudes toward national security policy. The costs of the draft fall on a readily identifiable segment of the population. However, surveys administered during several different historical periods provide only limited evidence that these costs affect individual opinion. Draft eligibility reduced support for conscription during peacetime but not during major wars, when the cost of being drafted was greatest. By contrast, military service had a more consistent socializing effect, with veterans and their families expressing greater support for the draft. Together, these and other individual-level processes suggest a possible explanation for the decline in aggregate support for conscription that has more to do with changing force structure and elite leadership than with public aversion to the costs of war. The results also suggest that war costs have more complicated effects on public opinion than most research on public support for war implies.

The hiatus the draft brings can have a decisive effect on one's future. Certainly it did in my case. By drawing me at the age of 22 out of the workaday world for two years, the draft gave me space to think about my life and what I wanted to do with it. But for the draft, I might, God forbid, have gone to law school simply out of the need to appear serious, and today have been a perhaps wealthier but undoubtedly less contented man.

--Joseph Epstein (2015, 87)

Conscription was once an important element of American national security policy. Some still see the military draft as a way of distributing the costs of war fairly, or, as in the passage above, helping draftees to mature. Nevertheless there is little support for it in the United States today. Its increasing irrelevance as a public policy matter has paralleled its decline as a subject of scholarly interest. Compared to the enormous body of research on public support for war, the question of public attitudes toward the military draft has received little attention. This relative neglect is unfortunate both because of the historical importance of conscription and because explaining public support for the draft offers an alternative way of assessing some of the key mechanisms thought to shape support for war and other national security policy issues. The draft carries many of the same costs that war does, but they fall most directly on a narrow and identifiable segment of the population. If one believes that war costs shape public opinion about national security policy, then attitudes toward the draft deserve our attention.

The way the armed forces are recruited is important for many other reasons. Normatively, institutional choices about whether to rely on volunteers or to draft some segment of the population, can determine just who suffers the human costs of war. This choice can influence

other political outcomes as well. Conscription is associated with more frequent involvement in international conflict (Choi and James 2003). It might also affect the conduct of war through its effects on state leaders' willingness to accept military casualties (Horowitz, Simpson, and Stam 2011; Vasquez 2005). Indeed, the effects of mass mobilization through conscription persist for a long time and extend well beyond the realm of foreign and defense policy (e.g., Scheve and Stasavage 2010).

This paper addresses several related theoretical and historical questions. Its principal theoretical concern is whether we can best understand public opinion about the draft by imagining a kind of cost-benefit analysis, or by considering alternative processes such as elite leadership and the socialization effects of military service. The postwar United States is a useful arena for testing these arguments. Polling data are relatively abundant, and both the nature of military recruitment and the likely cost of military service varied substantially over time. This changing historical context is not merely useful for theoretical purposes, however. It also sheds light on the sources of changing American attitudes toward national security policy since World War II. The questions posed in the historical surveys considered here are not always what a contemporary researcher might want, but they constitute a valuable window onto the history of American national security policy.

This evidence suggests a possible answer to the question of why aggregate public support for the draft has declined so much since World War II. Aversion to the costs associated with the draft does not explain this trend. During major wars, when the costs of being drafted were greatest, those eligible for the draft were no less likely to support it than were other Americans. The changing role of the draft in American defense policy has played a more important role. The success of the all-volunteer force since the 1980s has undermined support for the draft both

directly, because even hawkish elements of the public may view it as unnecessary, and indirectly, because American elites no longer have to mobilize public support for it in order to wage war. At the same time, the declining proportion of veterans in the population has diminished one stable source of support for conscription.

The remainder of this paper has three parts. The first reviews theoretical arguments about war costs and public opinion, and explains their relationship to attitudes about the military draft. It also considers alternatives to the implicit cost-benefit analysis that these arguments propose. The second part tests hypotheses drawn from these arguments using survey data from several different points in time. It also examines the implications of this evidence for the decline in support for the draft over the postwar era. The final section considers where this evidence leaves debates about the sources of public opinion on national security issues, and what it suggests for future research.

### **Public Opinion and the Draft**

Deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001 have greatly stretched the U.S. military, but policymakers have not come close to reinstating the draft. There is certainly little popular sentiment for its restoration. Figure 1 displays aggregate public opinion about the draft since World War II in response to a variety of survey questions.<sup>1</sup> For ease of comparison, it displays the level of public support, including the percentage saying "no" to questions about its abolition before 1973, and the percentage saying "yes" when asked about its restoration in more recent

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1 of the online appendices presents a complete list of the questions used to construct Figure 1 and the surveys from which they were drawn. Given the wide range of different questions employed, it is not possible to pool these surveys in the analysis that follows.

years. Public support for restoring the draft has rarely exceeded 30 percent during the last decade, and has usually been substantially lower. The decline in public support for the draft, like other major shifts in opinion on important public policy issues, presents a historical puzzle. The draft may be nearly unthinkable now, but it once enjoyed broad public support. The data in Figure 1 suggest that public reaction to the Vietnam War does not provide a simple explanation for this change. Similar questions about postwar abolition of the draft elicited nearly the same aggregate response in 1945, 1952, and 1969. Support for the draft dropped sharply after its abolition in 1973, but returned to the high levels it had enjoyed earlier by 1980. There is plenty of evidence that the Vietnam War undermined congressional support for the draft (e.g., Flynn 1993, 182-7). Its effect on public opinion is another matter. I will return to this issue in the course of the empirical analysis.

[Figure 1 about here.]

Understanding public opinion about the draft could also illuminate the processes that drive public support for war. Because military conflict and conscription are closely related, many of the mechanisms proposed to explain public opinion about military conflict also have testable implications about the draft.

Most research about public support for war implies that a cost-benefit calculation shapes individual attitudes, though few scholars think all costs and benefits are equally important. The most influential claim concerns the human cost of war. The argument behind the "casualties hypothesis" is straightforward. Knowledge of war deaths, whether from media coverage or personal acquaintance, underscores the cost of conflict. These costs lead those less committed to

the war goals to conclude that military action was a mistake. Increasing casualties will exceed more people's notions of acceptable cost, as well as increasing the probability of knowing someone who has been killed or wounded. This individual-level process creates a relationship between war casualties and aggregate support for the war (e.g., Gartner 2008a; Mueller 1973). Previous research has considered many variants of this argument. For example, casualties to which individuals feel a greater affinity, perhaps because of race or region, appear to weigh more heavily in their assessments of the costs of war (e.g., Gartner and Segura 2000; Gartner 2008b; Kriner and Shen 2010). There is evidence that other war costs can have similar effects (e.g., Geys 2010; Kreps and Flores-Macias 2014).

Other scholars have instead emphasized a conflict's potential policy benefits rather than its costs in driving public support. Some military operations may provide clearer benefits than others to the nation as a whole. The public may see less justification for humanitarian interventions, efforts to remake foreign governments, and other operations that do not have a clear national security rationale, and might thus be less willing to support them (e.g., Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999; Jentleson and Britton 1998; Jentleson 1992). Relatedly, Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler (2005) have argued that beliefs about whether victory is likely help determine support for war. Without a high probability of victory, even military action offering potential security benefits might not be worthwhile in terms of expected utility. Explanations of support for war stressing casualties are often contrasted with arguments about victory or security imperatives but they are not logically incompatible. Both lines of argument imply that a kind of cost-benefit calculation shapes public opinion. Few claim that individuals consciously weigh the benefits of military action against its human and financial costs. However, when scholars discuss the impact of these considerations, they generally suggest the experience of war costs, either

directly or through the media, motivates opposition to war, and awareness of its benefits moves people to support it.

The cost-benefit mechanism that drives support for war also applies to public opinion about the draft. Just as concern about casualties should affect support for war, so concern about the cost of the draft should affect support for conscription. Recent experimental research finds that the prospect of conscription reduces support for war (Horowitz and Levendusky 2011), though partisanship and concerns about equality of sacrifice may mediate this effect (Kriner and Shen 2015). The fact that not everyone is subject to the draft offers a way to test the influence of individual costs. Those who are likely to be drafted should be more sensitive to the costs of the draft and more likely to oppose it than those who do not have to serve. Evidence from the Vietnam-era draft lottery suggests that an increased prospect of being drafted not only made young men more anti-war, but may also have had broader and longer-lasting political effects (Bergan 2009; Erikson and Stoker 2011). Sensitivity to the costs of the draft extends beyond those who might actually be drafted. People with children who might be drafted should also be more likely to oppose the draft, in view of its possible costs to them.<sup>2</sup>

Examining support for the draft across a long period of time affords the opportunity to test the effects of these costs and benefits at times when they differed substantially. The negative relationship between draft eligibility and support for the draft should be especially strong in

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<sup>2</sup> In reality, the cost of being drafted varies. The economic opportunity cost of serving in the military is higher for those who could earn more in civilian life, perhaps because of their education or privileged social background. These people should arguably be more likely to oppose the draft. On the other hand, wealthier and better-educated individuals have sometimes been better able to avoid the draft, as was the case during much of the 1950s and 1960s. If so, they might instead be more likely to support the draft. Section 2 of the online appendices tests these hypotheses, finding little evidence to support either of them.



wartime because the chance of actually being drafted is greater, as is the risk of becoming a casualty.

H1. Individuals who are eligible for the draft should be more likely to oppose the draft, especially during wartime.

H2. Individuals with children who might be drafted should be more likely to oppose the draft, especially during wartime.

Arguments stressing variation in the benefits of military action also have straightforward implications for attitudes toward the draft. Just as people should be more likely to support wars where they perceive a substantial national security stake, so they should also support a military draft when they think it will serve an important purpose. In wartime, victory is the most obvious goal. In peacetime, individuals who think the use of military force will advance a foreign policy they favor should be more likely to support the draft. This relationship rests on the necessity of the draft for military success, a connection that has weakened over the postwar era. The United States fought the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan after 2001 not only without draftees, but without substantially enlarging the force at all. The impact of concern about military success should be weaker when the military performs effectively without draftees.

H3. Beliefs in the value of using military force should be positively associated with support for the draft, especially when the military relies on draftees.

Not all scholars agree that focusing on war's costs and benefits offers a useful way to understand public support and opposition to it. Berinsky (2009) argues that claims about the impact of military casualties, developments on the battlefield, war goals, and other facts assume an unrealistically high level of information among the general public. Most people do not know enough to make the judgments these "event-driven" theories require. Berinsky (2009, 62) suggests instead that group attachments and elite leadership drive public opinion. Individuals' feelings about relevant groups, such as German and Japanese immigrants in his analysis of World War II, contribute to a stable baseline attitude toward a particular war. Changing elite opinion, particularly that of party leaders, help explain variation in public support for war over time. Public opinion might appear to respond rationally to events, but it will do so only to the extent that these events influence elite discourse.

Similar mechanisms that do not rest on a cost-benefit analysis could affect support for the draft. Military service can create group loyalties similar to those Berinsky stresses in his account of public support for war. This experience can have important and lasting effects. Even skeptical accounts of the impact of military service on individual opinion find that it has enduring positive effects on attitudes toward the military (e.g., Schreiber 1979). If veterans retrospectively view their military service in a positive light, they should be more likely to support the draft for later groups of young people. They might do so because they believe that the draft contributes to national defense, or because they think military service has other benefits, like those noted in the quotation that opened this paper. Veterans might also pass these attitudes along to their families.

H4: Veterans should be more likely to support conscription.

H5: The families of veterans should be more likely to support conscription.

These socialization effects are especially interesting because they cut against the negative impact that war costs are supposed to have in cost-benefit accounts of public opinion. Veterans have actually paid these costs, yet we do not think them especially likely to oppose the draft. This apparent anomaly may run even deeper, affecting evaluations of war as well as the draft. Lau, Brown, and Sears (1978) found that family members of those serving in the Vietnam War tended to have relatively positive attitudes about the war. More recently, using a 2010 survey, Krueger and Pedraza (2012) found that veterans and their families were more supportive of war and the use of force in general than other respondents. This evidence rests uneasily alongside the casualties hypothesis, as well as the negative effects that a prospective draft has had on support for war in an experimental setting (e.g., Horowitz and Levendusky 2011) and during the Vietnam War draft lottery (Erikson and Stoker 2011). These claims about the draft appear contradictory, but they actually consider somewhat different effects. One evaluates the effect of prospective costs, such as possible future military service, while the other considers costs that respondents have already paid in the form of actual military service. I will return to this issue in the conclusion, in light of the evidence concerning hypotheses 4 and 5.

While group affiliation provides a stable baseline attitude toward a particular war in Berinsky's account, elite leadership helps account for change over time. Unlike the general public, elites possess the information needed to respond to events. While highly relevant in principle, the role of elite leadership in shaping attitudes toward the draft in the postwar United States is limited. The parties had clear positions on the draft only through the early Cold War era. Democratic presidents proposed both the World War II and Cold War draft laws, with the Truman administration seeking a more extensive system of universal military training than the

one ultimately adopted. Republicans were the most prominent congressional critics of the draft during the 1940s (Flynn 1993, 51, 127; Friedberg 2000, 167). The two parties' positions became muddled after the Korean War. The Cold War peacetime draft enjoyed bipartisan support, albeit with occasional criticism from members of both parties (Flynn 1993, 121). The two parties' positions on the issue remained unclear during the Vietnam War. There were Republicans and Democrats on both sides of the debate over ending the draft. Richard Nixon campaigned on a promise to put a stop to it, but repeatedly asked for its extension as president. Similarly, Ronald Reagan criticized Jimmy Carter's decision to restore draft registration during his 1980 presidential campaign, but then decided to continue registration after he became president. There has been little serious discussion of the draft since the early 1980s, though the House of Representatives almost unanimously voted down a Democratic proposal to restore it in October of 2004. Few political figures in either party support the draft, but the issue is discussed so rarely that their positions are probably unknown to most people. The elite leadership hypothesis thus applies only to the early postwar years, when party positions were clear.<sup>3</sup>

H6: Through the Korean War, those who identify with the Democratic Party should be more likely to support the draft.

### **Research Design**

The empirical analysis focuses on surveys from Roper Center's Public Opinion Archive administered at eight points during the postwar era: 1945, 1952, 1969, 1980, 1981, 1985, 2003,

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<sup>3</sup> Section 3 of the online appendix examines the effect of party and ideology in later surveys.

and 2011. The main purpose of the analysis is to test the six hypotheses enumerated in the last section in both war and peace, and with and without ongoing conscription. The hypotheses about the costs of the draft apply with greater force in periods when these costs are highest: when there is ongoing conscription, and during wartime. The hypotheses about elite leadership apply only to periods when the parties had clear positions on the draft, through the Truman administration.

The data used here offer the opportunity to answer some important questions. However, like all historical evidence, they come with important limitations. Not every survey permits the testing of every hypothesis set out in the last section. I selected the surveys considered here to permit as many such tests as possible. I will also take advantage of the available data to test closely related arguments where possible. For instance, the 1985 survey is useful for assessing the specific impact of the Vietnam War, an event closely associated with the end of conscription. What these data lack in ideally worded questions, they make up for in historical interest.

All of the questions analyzed here simply asked respondents whether they supported the draft or not, and did not probe the intensity of their position. The exact wording varied, and is provided below. For the sake of simplicity, I will treat "don't know" responses as missing, and use a binary dependent variable in which the higher value indicates support for the draft. In order to permit a persuasive test of the hypotheses about eligibility for the draft and veteran status, each of the models tested here includes variables indicating the age and sex of the respondent. Both veterans and those eligible for the draft were overwhelmingly male in these surveys. Because previous research has found that men tend to support military action more than women (e.g., Conover and Sapiro 1993), it is necessary to control for gender in order to estimate the effect of being draft-eligible or a veteran. Similarly, those eligible for the draft were younger

than most respondents, and veterans were typically older. Including age in the model should avoid confounding its effects with those I wish to estimate.

A final research design issue concerns the possibility that some of the independent variables used here are not entirely exogenous to respondents' views about the draft. Draft eligibility, having children, and the presence of a veteran in one's household are all causally prior to individual opinions about the draft. On the other hand, because people could volunteer for military service even during most of the draft era, veteran status is not always exogenous. Draftees formed 59.6 percent of those who served in World War I, and 61.3 percent of those who served during World II (Carter, et al. 2006, Tables Ed1-5 and Ed 82-119). Voluntary enlistment was suspended in late 1942 to avoid recruiting those holding war-related jobs, so all who entered service after that time were drafted (Flynn 1993, 54). By contrast, only 27.1 percent of those who served in Korea, and 20.1 percent of those who served in Vietnam were drafted, though the imminent prospect of being drafted motivated many apparently voluntary enlistments (Flynn 1993, 172). If favorable attitudes toward the military caused some survey respondents both to volunteer for military service and to support the draft as veterans, then the model will overstate the effect of being a veteran. Unfortunately, the available surveys do not distinguish between veterans who were drafted and those who volunteered. Instead, one can examine the effect of veteran status among groups who served at times when draftees comprised very different proportions of the force. Section 4 of the online appendices presents the results of this analysis, which finds few significant differences among veterans from World War II, the Cold War draft, and the all-volunteer force. As one might expect, these results suggest that the impact of military service on individual views about the draft is probably more important than the views individuals held before they joined the military.

The endogeneity problem is even thornier when it comes to variables indicating other attitudes, including party identification or support for the use of force. There is no way to guarantee that one attitude is exogenous to another when both are simply responses to questions on the same survey. Causation might run in either direction, or some more fundamental consideration might cause both, producing a spurious correlation between them (Fordham and Kleinberg 2012). Most scholars believe that individuals form their party identification relatively early in life, and that it can thus be treated as exogenous in analyses like those presented here. While this line of argument makes sense, it is still possible that respondents with weak party identification but strong views on the draft might say they prefer the party whose position they support on the issue. If so, the model will overestimate the causal effect of party identification on support for the draft. This problem is more serious for the questions indicating support for war. In this case, it is possible that the respondent's underlying militarism (anti-militarism) might lead them to support (oppose) both the war and the draft. As with party, to the extent that this is the case, the model will overestimate the size of the causal effect. In the analysis presented in the rest of this section, I will present results both with and without the potentially endogenous independent variables.

### **Empirical Analysis**

The empirical analysis considers three sets of surveys: (1) wartime surveys conducted in 1945, 1952, and 1969; (2) peacetime surveys conducted in the 1980s; and (3) post-9/11 wartime surveys conducted in 2003 and 2011. After examining each of these surveys, I will summarize patterns of support for each hypothesis across time, and consider what these patterns imply about the decline in aggregate support for the draft.

***Wartime Support for a Postwar Draft: 1945, 1952, and 1969.*** The available surveys did not ask about support for an ongoing draft in wartime. However, they did ask whether respondents favored a peacetime draft once the war ended. Even during the Vietnam War, support for continuing the draft was strong. Indeed, 69 percent of respondents supported a peacetime draft in both 1969 and 1945. Support in 1952 was 60 percent.

The World War II draft was both more extensive and riskier for draftees than was conscription in any subsequent American war. It is thus a strong case for claims about the effect of war costs. Table 1 presents four models of support for a postwar draft using data from a Gallup survey administered January 19-24, 1945.<sup>4</sup> Respondents were asked one of two somewhat different questions about a peacetime draft after the war:

Form K. After this war is over, do you think every able-bodied young man should be required to serve one year in the army or navy?

Form T. After this war is over, do you think every able-bodied young man should be required to take military or naval training for one year?

These questions anticipated the postwar debate about Universal Military Training (UMT) for all young men. Congress ultimately rejected this proposal in favor of "Selective Service," under which the military drafted only those needed to fill the ranks at any given time (Friedberg 2000,

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<sup>4</sup> The analysis of this survey employed the weights provided by Adam Berinsky and Eric Schickler to compensate for the shortcomings of the sampling technique it employed (Berinsky and Schickler 2011; Berinsky 2006; Berinsky et al. 2011).



154–78; Hogan 1998, 119–58). In spite of the important differences between these conscription schemes, they elicited essentially the same level of public support, with 66 percent and 69 percent, respectively. Given most survey respondents' low level of knowledge, the broad principle of drafting young men probably boded larger than the details of the actual policy.

The 1945 survey contained no questions about veteran status, children, or support for the war, so I could not test these hypotheses here. However, it did contain a question that permitted an additional test of whether the cost of military service affected their opinion about the draft. Respondents were asked "[h]ave you had to make any real sacrifice for the war?" Those who responded affirmatively were asked to explain. Roughly 20 percent of the sample said that either they, a relative, or a close friend had served in the military or was still doing so. If concerns about war costs influence opinion about the draft, these respondents should be less likely to support it.

Table 1 presents logit results using the 1945 data. Figure 2 presents marginal effects from these models. The results support only the hypothesis about party identification. Those who said they had voted Republican in 1944 were substantially more likely to oppose a postwar draft. By contrast, neither draft eligibility nor the ongoing cost of the war to the respondent and his or her family affected support for the postwar draft. The final year of World War II was clearly an unusual time in American life. The high level of mobilization might well have obscured considerations that would have influenced assessments of the draft in calmer times. Nevertheless, there is no support for the impact of war costs in 1945, even though they were higher than in any other survey considered here.

[Table 1 and Figure 2 about here]

Similar polls taken during the wars in Korea and Vietnam allow tests of the hypotheses about children, veteran status, and support for the ongoing war. While the chances of being drafted and of becoming a casualty were less during these wars than during World War II, they were much greater than they would be in peacetime. Two survey questions asked in 1952 and 1969 assess support for a postwar draft:

Gallup, February 28-March 5, 1952: Would you favor or oppose requiring every able-bodied young man in this country, when he reaches age 18, to serve 6 months in military training and then join the reserves?

Gallup, January 1-6, 1969: Turning to a new topic...After the Vietnam War is over, do you think the U.S. should do away with the draft and depend upon a professional military force made up of volunteers, or do you think the draft should be continued?

Table 2 presents the logit results, and Figure 3 shows the marginal effects. One must compare these results cautiously because the questions are quite different, with the 1952 item focusing on UMT, and the 1969 item on a postwar draft. Nevertheless, the results of the World War II survey suggest that the details of the conscription system do not influence responses very much.

[Table 2 and Figure 3 about here]

The results from these surveys offer only slightly more support for the cost hypotheses than did the 1945 survey. Analysis of the 1952 survey once again finds no relationship between draft eligibility and support for the draft. In the 1969 survey, draft eligibility narrowly misses the threshold for statistical significance, though it has the correct sign. Having children was statistically significant but had a substantively very small marginal effect in the 1969 study. (Neither the 1945 nor the 1952 surveys collected the data necessary to test this hypothesis.) Overall, the cost hypotheses fare quite poorly in all three wartime surveys, in spite of the relatively high potential cost of being drafted.

The hypothesis that support for war increases support for the draft finds more support. Both surveys included questions useful for testing this hypothesis. The 1952 survey asked respondents "do you think the United States made a mistake in going into the war in Korea, or not?" Roughly 37 percent thought the war was not a mistake. The 1969 survey asked "if a situation like Vietnam were to develop in another part of the world, do you think the U.S. should or should not send troops?" About 25 percent said that it should. These responses were strongly associated with greater support for the draft in both cases. As the marginal effects presented in Figure 3 indicate, support for the war had a larger effect than any other independent variable. Even though the questions were quite different, the marginal effects associated with them were nearly the same in 1952 and 1969.

Party identification had little effect on support for the draft in either the 1952 or the 1969 survey. This variable was not statistically significant in either model of the 1952 survey. Though not strictly applicable given the muddled position of the two parties at the time, Democrats were slightly more likely to support the draft than were Republicans in 1969. The inclusion of the variable indicating support for future wars decreases the estimate for party identification in the

fourth model of Table 2. However, even when this variable is excluded, the effect remains too small to have much substantive importance.

The hypothesis about veteran status received strong support from the 1952 study, the only wartime survey on which it could be tested. The survey asked respondents whether they had served in one of the world wars. As the marginal effects in Figure 3 indicate, these veterans were much more likely to support continued conscription in peacetime. The effects were nearly as large as those associated with support for the use of military force. In accounting for high aggregate support for the draft, the presence of these veterans of mass mobilization made a difference: 16 percent of the sample reported serving in World War II, and six percent in World War I.

Overall, these three wartime surveys provide greater support for hypotheses about the effect of military service and beliefs about the value of the ongoing war than for those about elite leadership or the potential cost of being drafted. In view of the potentially high costs of being drafted in wartime, it is particularly surprising that the hypotheses about costs received so little support. Draft eligibility was only marginally significant in one of the three surveys. Having children was statistically significant but substantively unimportant. By contrast, belief in the value of ongoing and future conflicts was associated with support for the draft in both instances where the questions needed to test this hypothesis were asked, in 1952 and 1969. Similarly, although the hypothesis concerning veteran status could only be tested using the 1952 survey, the results were both statistically significant and substantively large.

***Support for Restoring the Peacetime Draft in the 1980s.*** As Figure 1 indicates, aggregate public support for the draft fell sharply during the last decade of the Cold War. From a

high of around 60 percent in 1980 and 1981, support for restoring the draft dropped below 30 percent in several polls by the middle of the decade even though the questions asked were nearly identical. This decline in support is interesting both for historical reasons and for what it might reveal about the sources of support for war as well as conscription. I will examine three polls from the 1980s: two taken in 1980 and 1981 when aggregate support for returning to the draft was still strong, and one taken in 1985, when it had weakened substantially.

Table 3 presents a logit analysis of the two survey items from the early 1980s. Figure 4 presents the marginal effects. The questions were as follows:

Roper, February 9-23, 1980: In late 1978 for the first time since the draft ended, all four armed services failed to meet their recruiting targets. Furthermore, the Pentagon reports there is a critical shortage of people in the Army Reserves. Some people say the only way to meet the needs of the nation's armed forces is to restore the peacetime draft. Others say the problem can be solved by offering more incentives for people to volunteer for military service. How do you feel--are you in favor of or opposed to restoring the draft?

NBC News/Associated Press, January 21-23, 1981: Do you favor or oppose the reinstatement of the draft for the armed forces?

Although the NBC/AP question was far less leading than the one that the Roper Organization had posed a year earlier, the NBC/AP question actually elicited somewhat stronger support for the draft. Of respondents to the 1981 question, 65 percent supported a return to the draft, compared to 60 percent in response to the 1980 question.

[Table 3 and Figure 4 about here.]

In contrast to the wartime surveys just considered, and in spite of the much lower risk associated with the draft during this period, both polls from the early 1980s offer strong support for the hypothesis that those eligible for the draft will be more likely to oppose it. As Figure 4 indicates, the two polls found large and nearly identical effects for draft eligibility.<sup>5</sup> The fact that these effects are so strong, and show up in analyses of very different questions, suggests that draft eligibility was genuinely important for shaping attitudes in the early 1980s. The Carter administration's decision to resume draft registration is not responsible for this effect. The 1980 Roper poll was taken several months before the new policy was announced.

The 1980 poll included questions tapping beliefs about the value of potential military action. The first asked respondents to characterize "Russia's primary objective in world affairs." I created a variable indicating those who agreed with the most extreme statement offered: "Russia seeks global domination and will risk a major war to achieve that domination if it can't be achieved by other means." In 1980, this was the modal response. None of the other responses suggested that military conflict might be likely.<sup>6</sup> The second question presented respondents with seven scenarios in which U.S. troops might be used, and asked them if they approved of doing so

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<sup>5</sup> Curiously, men in general were less likely to support the draft than women, the reverse of relationship found in the earlier wartime surveys just considered. These changing gender effects are beyond the scope of this paper, but are interesting nonetheless.

<sup>6</sup> From mildest to most severe, the other responses were: (1) Russia seeks only to protect itself against the possibility of attack by other countries; (2) Russia seeks to compete with the U.S. for more influence in other parts of the world; and (3) Russia seeks global domination, but not at the expense of starting a major war.

in each case. I counted the number of scenarios in which respondents approved of using troops, taking it as an indicator of the potential value of maintaining a sizeable ground force.<sup>7</sup> These two questions are useful for discerning whether support for the draft was linked to beliefs about the usefulness of military manpower, or just broad perceptions of threat.

The results in the second column of Table 3 and the marginal effects in Figure 4 point to two conclusions. First, perhaps surprisingly, perceiving a fairly serious Soviet threat was not associated with support for the draft. This result holds even if the variable indicating the number of scenarios in which the use of force would be appropriate is excluded from the model. Respondents might have believed that other measures, such as the maintenance of a large nuclear arsenal, were enough to prevent the Soviets from launching a major war. Second, respondents who envisioned many scenarios in which troops might be used tended to favor the draft. This relationship was quite strong. Beliefs about the usefulness of military force and support for the draft went together in 1980, though a dire view of the Soviet threat did not. Support for the draft was not simply a function of support for the Cold War. These results are more consistent with the argument that respondents were only more likely to support the draft if they thought the use of ground troops was necessary.

Table 4 presents several models of support for the draft from an ABC New/Washington Post survey administered March 21-25, 1985. Figure 5 presents marginal effects from the third model. The survey asked "[d]o you think we should return to the military draft at this time, or

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<sup>7</sup> The seven scenarios were worded as follows: (1) if the Soviet Union invaded West Berlin; (2) if Arab forces invaded Israel; (3) if Soviet troops invaded Western Europe; (4) if Soviet troops invaded Yugoslavia; (5) if the Arabs cut off oils shipments to the US, and we could obtain oil only by taking over Arab oil fields; (6) if Soviet troops invaded Iran; (7) if Soviet troops invaded Pakistan.

not?" Though this question was very similar to those asked in the 1980 and 1981 polls, only 24 percent of respondents expressed support, a large decline from the high level of support found earlier in the decade.

[Table 4 and Figure 5 about here]

The 1985 data only permit a test of one hypothesis from the cost-benefit framework, that concerning draft eligibility. (The survey contained no questions about having children or the usefulness of military force.) As it did in the 1980 and 1981 surveys, the draft eligibility hypothesis finds strong support across all three models in Table 4. Those eligible for the draft tended to oppose its restoration. As Figure 5 indicates, this effect was roughly the same size as that estimated for the 1980 and 1981 surveys.

The 1985 data also allow tests of the hypotheses about veterans and their families. Being a veteran had a large effect, as it did in the 1952 survey. Indeed, no other independent variable had an effect as great. The data also support the hypothesis about veterans' households. The effect was smaller than being a veteran, but still substantively important.

Because the 1985 survey was conducted near the 10th anniversary of the fall of Saigon, it included a range of questions about the Vietnam War. The end of conscription is closely associated with the Vietnam War, so it is worth asking whether experiences related to the war reduced support for the draft at the individual level. Many assessments of the war and the draft stress these effects. For example, one such study comments that the wartime draft contributed to "a generation-wide catastrophe" (Baski and Strauss 1978, xv). The theoretical claim is that the Vietnam War undermined support for the draft by revealing its true costs. The fact that the draft



was abolished in 1973 adds plausibility to this line of argument, which is essentially a historically specific variant of broader claims about the negative impact of war costs, especially casualties.

Did costly experiences during the Vietnam War really have this negative effect on support for the draft? The 1985 survey suggests that they did not. Instead, the findings more closely align with research indicating that ties to the armed forces contribute to pro-military and pro-war attitudes (e.g., Krueger and Pedraza 2012; Lau, Brown, and Sears 1978; Schreiber 1979). Respondents who had the most intense and costly war experiences were more likely to support the draft a decade after the war ended. The second model in Table 4 examines the overall impact of the Vietnam War on attitudes toward the draft. Respondents were asked "[h]ow much would you say the Vietnam War affected your everyday life?" Those who said the war had had a large effect were much more likely to support restoration of the draft. A typical respondent who reported that the war had no effect on her everyday life had a 0.17 probability of supporting the draft. This probability rose to 0.26 for an otherwise identical respondent who reported that it had a "great deal" of effect. This effect was even larger when coupled with veteran status, as it often was. A 35-year-old veteran who reported that the war had had a great deal of effect on his everyday life had a 0.40 probability of supporting the draft. An otherwise identical non-veteran who reported that it had had no effect had a 0.18 probability of holding this opinion. An intense experience of the Vietnam War indeed influenced views of the draft, but not in a way that helps explain the collapse in support for conscription.

The third model in Table 4 examines the effect of several other Vietnam-era experiences. Even if the overall impact of the war had a positive effect on support for the draft, some of these experiences might still have undermined support for it. The survey asked respondents if they had

"participate[d] in some kind of anti-war activity," "know someone who avoided the draft, say by leaving the country or other means," "know someone who was killed in the Vietnam War," and, among veterans, "[d]id you serve in Vietnam?"<sup>8</sup> Of these experiences, only knowing someone who was killed in Vietnam had a statistically significant effect on support for the draft. However, as the marginal effects in Figure 5 indicate, knowing someone who was killed *increased* the probability of supporting the draft by roughly the same amount as living in a household with a veteran. Participating in "some kind of anti-war activity" was apparently not a sufficiently salient experience to influence attitudes many years later. Knowing a draft evader might plausibly have either increased or decreased support for the draft, depending on the circumstances. The insignificance of serving in Vietnam simply indicates that these individuals did not differ from other veterans in this respect. All were more likely to support the draft.

The results concerning the Vietnam War cast doubt on any explanation for the abolition of the draft that rests on public reaction to that conflict. Wartime experiences that had lasting effects on individual opinions about the draft tended to increase support for it. These included costly experiences such as serving in the military and knowing someone who was killed in the war. Rather than turning people against the draft, these life events appear to have mobilized them, prompting them instead to support it, even a decade after the end of the war. Elite response to the Vietnam War certainly played a role in ending the draft. However, intense war experiences did not turn the general public against the draft but rather increased support for it. Like being a

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<sup>8</sup> Less than half the sample reported each of these experiences. Their frequencies were as follows:

Knowing someone who was killed in the war:	39%
Knowing someone who had evaded the draft:	20%
Participating in an anti-war activity:	8%
Serving in Vietnam:	4%

veteran, the mobilizing effect of other war experiences also suggests a potentially important caveat to many common claims about the impact of war costs in general, an issue to which I will return in the conclusion.

*Support for Returning to the Draft after 2001.* Survey researchers asked few questions about the possibility of returning to the draft during the 1990s. Though there was some concern about the social gulf between the military and the rest of American society (Ricks 1997; Feaver and Kohn 2001), restoring the draft received little serious consideration. The strains that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan placed on the armed forces changed things, leading a few observers to call for resumption of the draft. As Figure 1 indicates, polls taken since 2003 have rarely found more than 30 percent of the public willing to endorse this course of action, a pattern that contrasts with more supportive public attitudes during most of the Cold War.

Table 5 and Figure 6 present analyses of two questions about returning to the draft asked in 2003 and 2011:

Gallup, October 24-6, 2003: Do you think the United States should return to the military draft at this time, or not?

Pew Research Center, September 1-15, 2011: Do you think the United States should return to the military draft at this time, or not?

The 2003 poll found 19 percent support for returning to the draft; the 2011 poll found 20 percent.

[Table 5 and Figure 6 about here.]

Hypotheses drawn from the cost-benefit framework do not find much support in these two surveys. First, unlike the surveys from the 1980s, neither contains evidence that respondents who were eligible for the draft were more likely to oppose it. Similarly, respondents with children under the age of 18 were no less likely to support conscription in the 2011 study than anyone else. This may reflect the same wartime absence of a self-interest effect found in the 1945, 1952, and 1969 surveys. However, it is also possible that, after 30 or more years without conscription, respondents did not take the possibility of a new draft seriously enough to have it influence their opinions, even with the reminder that draft registration still provides to young men.

Second, support for ongoing wars was not as strongly related to support for the draft as it was during the wars in Korea or Vietnam. Because the all-volunteer force fought both these wars, a weaker linkage between support for the draft and support for war makes sense. Even supporters of the wars might well think a draft unnecessary. Respondents to the 2003 survey were asked "do you favor or oppose the war with Iraq?" Those who favored the war were somewhat more likely to support the draft. As Figure 6 indicate, this effect was substantively significant, but not as large as those associated with support for war or the use of force in the 1952, 1969, and 1980 surveys where this hypothesis was also tested. The 2011 survey asked respondents "all in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war in Afghanistan has been worth fighting, or not?" Responses to this question were not statistically significantly related to support for the draft at all. Because endogeneity should inflate the estimated size of these relationships, their weakness in these surveys is telling.

The hypothesis about veteran status finds support in one of the two surveys. By holding respondents to the same age for the sake of comparison, Figure 6 somewhat understates the effect of being a veteran in the 2003 study. The average veteran in the 2003 study was 57 years old, and this relatively advanced age added a significant and positive increment to the marginal effect. The marginal effect of being a veteran was 0.11 among people this age. Veteran status was not statistically significant in the 2011 study, the only one of the five considered here in which this was the case.<sup>9</sup>

*Patterns Across Time.* Table 6 summarizes the major hypothesis tests conducted using the surveys reviewed here. Several important patterns emerge from this evidence. Together, they raise serious questions about the way previous research has understood the role of war costs in shaping public opinion.

[Table 6 about here.]

First, although draft eligibility indeed reduced support for the draft in three of the eight surveys as hypothesis 1 suggested, it did not do so when the cost of being drafted was greatest. Draft eligibility made a difference only in the three polls taken in the 1980s, when the likelihood of becoming a casualty was smallest. It made no difference during World War II, or during the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This is surprising in light of the substantial body

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<sup>9</sup> Section 4 of the online appendix contains a more extensive analysis of this result. There is evidence that declining support for the draft among veterans of the all-volunteer force, and their increasing representation in the veteran population, may explain it.

of research identifying military casualties as a major influence on public opinion, prompting people to reconsider whether a particular war was worthwhile. These human costs should be especially salient to those most likely to bear them. It is possible that draft-eligible young men viewed peacetime and wartime military service differently. They may have seen the former as an inconvenience but the latter as an opportunity for valuable and prestigious service to the country. Perhaps they just feared seeming cowardly during wartime. Even if these sentiments were not universal, they might have affected enough young men during wartime to offset the impact of self-interest on attitudes toward the draft. Whatever the reason, concerns about becoming a casualty did not drive individual opinion about the draft during wartime, even though they made a difference when the country was at peace during the 1980s.

Second, support for hypotheses 4 and 5 concerning military veterans and their families poses related problems for accounts of public opinion that stress the importance of war costs. Most of the veterans in the surveys reviewed here served during large-scale mobilizations for the World Wars and the Vietnam War. These people were more acutely aware of the costs of war and military service than the rest of the population, yet they were more likely to support the draft. The 1985 survey suggests that these veterans passed this outlook along to members of their family. Respondents who knew someone killed in the Vietnam War were also more likely to support the draft. At first glance, these results appear to contradict research indicating that men with birthdays that made being drafted into the Vietnam War a strong possibility had lasting antiwar views as a result, or that the prospect of a draft reduces support for war in general (Bergan 2009; Erikson and Stoker 2011; Horowitz and Levendusky 2011). As I noted earlier, though, prospective war costs, such as worry about being drafted, might well have different effects than actual war costs like serving in the military or knowing someone who was killed.

This possibility, too, suggests that common ideas about the impact of war costs on individual opinion may need qualification.

Third, the benefit side of the cost-benefit perspective, as represented in hypothesis 3, received somewhat stronger support from the data reviewed here, but it too requires qualification. The linkage between support for war and support for the draft appears to rest on the military necessity of the draft. Those who supported the Korean and Vietnam Wars were indeed more likely to support the draft, but those who supported the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were at most only slightly more likely to do so. The use of draftees in the first two wars justified the belief that the draft was necessary. The use of the all-volunteer force in the latter two wars provided a much weaker basis for this belief. The 1980 survey provides further support for the idea that hawkish survey respondents only supported the draft when they believed it was necessary for military success. In this survey, belief in the need to use ground troops was associated with support for the draft, but a dire view of Soviet intentions was not.

*Why has aggregate support for the draft declined?* These patterns, particularly the declining linkage between the draft and military success, suggest a possible solution to the puzzle of declining support for the draft with which this paper began. Public support declined in the mid-1980s, when the military moved out of the doldrums associated with the early years of the all-volunteer force. The Reagan administration conducted a series of military operations--in Lebanon, Grenada, and Libya, for instance--in which the absence of the draft was not an issue. Unlike supporters of earlier wars, people who backed a hawkish foreign policy in the 1980s could do so without believing they also had to endorse the draft.

The decline of the linkage between military success and the draft was also a critical factor in the absence of elite support for the draft. The two parties' overall positions on the draft were

muddled after the early Cold War era, but hawks in both parties were constrained to support it because it was an important part of American defense policy. At a minimum, the United States would have had to fight the Korean and Vietnam Wars quite differently without conscription. After the draft was abolished in 1973, and especially after the Reagan administration declined to restore it during the military buildup of the 1980s, American force structure changed in ways that would have made a return to the draft expensive. As Figure 7 suggests, the force became more capital-intensive, relying on high-tech equipment to supplement a smaller number of military personnel. The new force structure meant that expanding the military would have been much more expensive than it had been during the first half of the Cold War. The financial cost accompanying each additional soldier was much greater than before.

[Figure 7 about here.]

By 2004, when the strains on the military associated with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan became apparent, enlarging the force would have been far more expensive than it had been during the first half of the Cold War. It would have meant either spending far more than political and military leaders thought realistic or reversing the trend toward a more capital-intensive military force. As a 2004 *New York Times* editorial put it:

Simply expanding the Army to the point where it could easily handle current demands would be neither practical nor wise. It would require having more than 50 combat brigades, as the Army did at the end of the cold war. Such a buildup would take at least two years to complete and would cost tens of billions a year at a time of record and unsustainable deficits. Reinstating the draft, which almost no military professional favors, would not shorten this timetable or substantially reduce the cost ("Military Arithmetic," 2004).



This logic meant there was no elite effort to mobilize support for the draft because even the professional military and civilian political leaders who favored the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan thought that enlarging the force was either unnecessary or impractical. This absence of elite support is another reason that public opinion about the draft remains negative.

While the perceived linkage between the draft and military success declined among both American elites and the general public, the proportion of veterans in the U.S. population also fell. As Figure 8 indicates, this presence of veterans in the population has declined by nearly half since 1980, and will continue to decrease for the foreseeable future. This pattern, too, is a result of the decision to maintain a relatively small military force relative to both the Cold War era and the growing U.S. population. Because veterans and, to a lesser extent, their families, provided a stable source of support for the draft, their disappearance from the population also helps explain declining support.

[Figure 8 about here.]

These reasons for the decline in support for the draft raise broader normative issues. The end of the connection between the draft and military success in the minds of both American elites and the general public, as well as the decline in the number of veterans in the population, suggest a decreasing public appreciation of the human costs of conflict. Americans who favor the use of force have no reason to think that they or other Americans will be required to serve in the military if the country adopts the policies they favor. American elites no longer seek to mobilize support for this form of wartime sacrifice. Indeed, the wars of the last two decades have been accompanied by tax cuts, so even financial sacrifice might appear unnecessary to those who

favor an aggressive foreign policy. There are fewer veterans around to remind Americans that things were not always this way. However one regards the draft, it is difficult to view the increasing irrelevance of war costs to the politics of national security policy as an unmixed blessing. The horrors of war have not disappeared just because Americans have lost touch with them.

### **Conclusion**

This evidence about support for the draft suggests some important conclusions the complexity of the public's response to war costs. First, war appears to mute the effect of these costs on public opinion. Draft eligibility made a big difference in individual attitudes during the 1980s, but had no discernible effect at the times when the draft was actually most costly. This pattern makes sense in light of other observations about politics during wartime. Opinions that might be acceptable at other times are out of bounds during periods of national mobilization. War frees national leaders to take many actions that would have produced a public outcry in times of peace. The response to casualties might still influence public support for war. The fact that the public tolerates higher costs during wartime does not mean that its tolerance is limitless. However, to the extent that public opinion is influential, this pattern suggests that it may have its largest effects before the fighting actually begins, or during postwar demobilization when individuals no longer set aside war costs. In U.S. history, the extensive controversy about intervention in World War II, which ended abruptly after Pearl Harbor, and the Democratic Party's loss of both the House and Senate in the 1946 elections may provide examples.

Second, the mobilization effect of military service appears to be more important in shaping subsequent attitudes than the cost it imposes on those who serve. On its face, being

drafted into the military imposes considerable costs on the draftee, especially in wartime. Beyond the obvious risk to life and limb, conscription separates draftees from their families, delays their education, and usually pays them less than they would have earned in civilian life. (The food and accommodations also receive generally poor reviews.) Paradoxically, though, the evidence examined here suggests that many of those who actually paid these costs take a different view, and are more likely to favor the draft than those who never served. A cynic might wonder if these opinions stem from the spiteful wish that everyone else be forced to suffer what the veteran did. Evidence that veterans are more pro-military than the rest of the population contradicts this conjecture, however. Like the veteran quoted at the beginning of this paper, most do not recall their experience as a bad one. Military service does not merely impose costs on draftees, but also shapes their preferences in lasting ways, including increasing their support for the draft. The evidence reviewed here about the Vietnam War underscores this point. Though that war is widely associated with the abolition of the draft, those whose wartime experiences were most intense were actually more likely to support the draft later on.

Military service is not the only costly war experience that could shape individual preferences in this way. For example, the bombing of cities imposes large costs on the target population, but it might also mobilize its victims to hate their enemy more intensely, or to identify more strongly with their fellow citizens who have also been targeted. The German bombing of British cities during World War II is widely supposed to have had this effect. As research on the American response to 9/11 suggests, response to such attacks is not a simple phenomenon. Depending on their circumstances and individual psychology, people react differently to international threats and hardships (e.g., Huddy et al. 2005). However, the

assumption that war costs simply generate public opposition is misleading, something that theories about public support for war need to consider.

Future research might usefully explore the differences between prospective or hypothetical war costs and those that are actually experienced. The effects of these costs may differ for at least two reasons. First, costly war-related experiences might have positive elements that prospective or hypothetical war costs do not. Anxiety about being drafted, like that an individual with a low draft number might have experienced immediately following the first draft lottery in 1969, is bound to be unpleasant. By contrast, actual military service is a more complicated experience with positive as well as negative elements. Under some circumstances, the positive elements could outweigh the negative. Compared with other military forces, the United States has historically employed more of its soldiers in logistical and other roles that did not expose them to combat on a regular basis. Moreover, American casualties have been far less than those of other belligerents in most conflicts since the Civil War. It is possible that comradeship, attachment to the cause, Epstein's "space to think about my life," or just being young, outweighed the dangers and hardships, at least in retrospect. Veterans of military forces that had very different war experiences might have held different views of war and military service later in life. For instance, if the data exist, it would be useful to know if World War II veterans from Germany or Japan held positive views about the draft and military service after the war, as American veterans did.

A second possibility is that mobilization changes the way people evaluate war costs. Rather than being outweighed by positive elements of the war experience, wartime mobilization might lead people to reinterpret costly and traumatic experiences as necessary and justified sacrifices. In this sense, they may not really be "costs." Lau, Brown, and Sears (1978, 466-7)

discuss this possibility in terms of the drive for cognitive consistency when faced with the extreme consequences of one's choices. Mobilization can affect civilians as well as those in uniform. For instance, during World War II, the U.S. government promoted popular participation in scrap drives and a range of other activities to support the war effort. This mobilization effort might also help explain persistently high levels of public support, even in the face of human and material costs much greater than those the country suffered in later, less popular wars. Similarly, this process might help explain why those eligible for the draft were no more likely to oppose it during wartime, when it was most costly and dangerous. Those mobilized to support a war might experience military casualties as well as the prospect of being drafted differently than those who have not been mobilized.

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**Table 1.**  
**Logit Models of Support for a Postwar Draft in January, 1945**

	Form K.		Form T.	
	Military service		Military training	
Eligible for the draft	0.18 (0.16)	0.15 (0.17)	0.25 (0.25)	0.22 (0.24)
Member of family currently serving in military	-0.12 (0.13)	-0.11 (0.13)	0.10 (0.18)	0.05 (0.18)
Voted Democratic for president in 1944		0.01 (0.14)		-0.05 (0.18)
Voted Republican for president in 1944		-0.59* (0.17)		-0.75* (0.25)
Male	-0.28* (0.13)	-0.28* (0.13)	-0.35 (0.18)	-0.34 (0.17)
Age	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.005 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.85 (0.25)	0.96* (0.28)	1.04* (0.29)	1.21* (0.33)
n	1,343	1,332	1,229	1,220

Note: These data are from the Roper Center's Public Opinion Archive, survey USAIPO1945-0339. Asterisk indicates significance at  $p < 0.05$  level in a one-tailed test. Standard errors in parentheses. Question wording in text.

**Table 2.**  
**Logit Models of Support for the Draft during the Korean and Vietnam Wars**

	1952 Survey		1969 Survey	
Eligible for the draft	-0.16 (0.20)	-0.18 (0.20)	-0.40 (0.22)	-0.35 (0.20)
Respondent has children			-0.14* (0.04)	-0.13* (0.04)
Veteran of World War I or World War II	0.47* (0.15)	0.44* (0.15)		
Democrat		0.18 (0.12)		0.12* (0.04)
Republican		-0.01 (0.13)		-0.10 (0.18)
Korean War not a mistake		0.76* (0.11)		
U.S. should intervene in future situations like Vietnam				0.73* (0.11)
Male	-0.18 (0.12)	-0.27* (0.12)	-0.06 (0.08)	-0.10 (0.08)
Age	-0.01* (0.004)	-0.01* (0.004)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)
Constant	1.07* (0.20)	0.63* (0.22)	1.80* (0.28)	1.46* (0.24)
n	1,771	1,767	1,345	1,345

Note: These data are from the Roper Center's Public Opinion Archive, surveys USAIPO1952-0487 and USAIPO1969-0773. Asterisk indicates significance at  $p < 0.05$  level in a one-tailed test. Standard errors in parentheses. Question wording in text.

**Table 3.**  
**Logit Models of Support for Resumption of the Draft in the Early 1980s**

	1980 Survey		1981 Survey
Eligible for the draft	-0.72*	-0.66*	-0.57*
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.20)
Respondent has children	0.07	-0.01	0.28
	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.10)
Russia will risk war for world domination		0.20	
		(0.11)	
Scenarios in which troops should be used (0-7)		0.21*	
		(0.05)	
Male	0.64*	0.50*	0.61*
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.10)
Age	0.08*	0.10*	0.24*
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.04)
Constant	-0.04*	-0.72*	-0.27
	(0.004)	(0.03)	(0.15)
n	1,754	1,733	2,202

Note: These data are from the Roper Center's Public Opinion Archive, surveys USRPRR1980-03 and USNBCAP1981-JAN. Asterisk indicates significance at  $p < 0.05$  level in a one-tailed test. Standard errors in parentheses. Question wording in text.

**Table 4.**  
**Logit Models of Support for Resumption of the Draft in 1985**

Eligible for the draft	-0.70*	-0.61*	-0.66*
	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.24)
Veteran	0.61*	0.55*	0.55*
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.21)
Non-veteran with veteran living in household	0.26*	0.24*	0.24*
	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.09)
Vietnam War affected R's everyday life (4-point scale)		0.18*	
		(0.06)	
Participated in antiwar activities during Vietnam War			-0.22
			(0.22)
Knows someone who evaded the draft during the Vietnam War			-0.08
			(0.18)
Knows someone who was killed in the Vietnam War			0.31*
			(0.07)
Served in Vietnam			0.001
			(0.32)
Male	0.17	0.18	0.17
	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.15)
Age	0.007	0.007	0.007
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Constant	-1.61*	-2.09*	-1.70*
	(0.27)	(0.24)	(0.26)
n	2,202	1,430	1,440

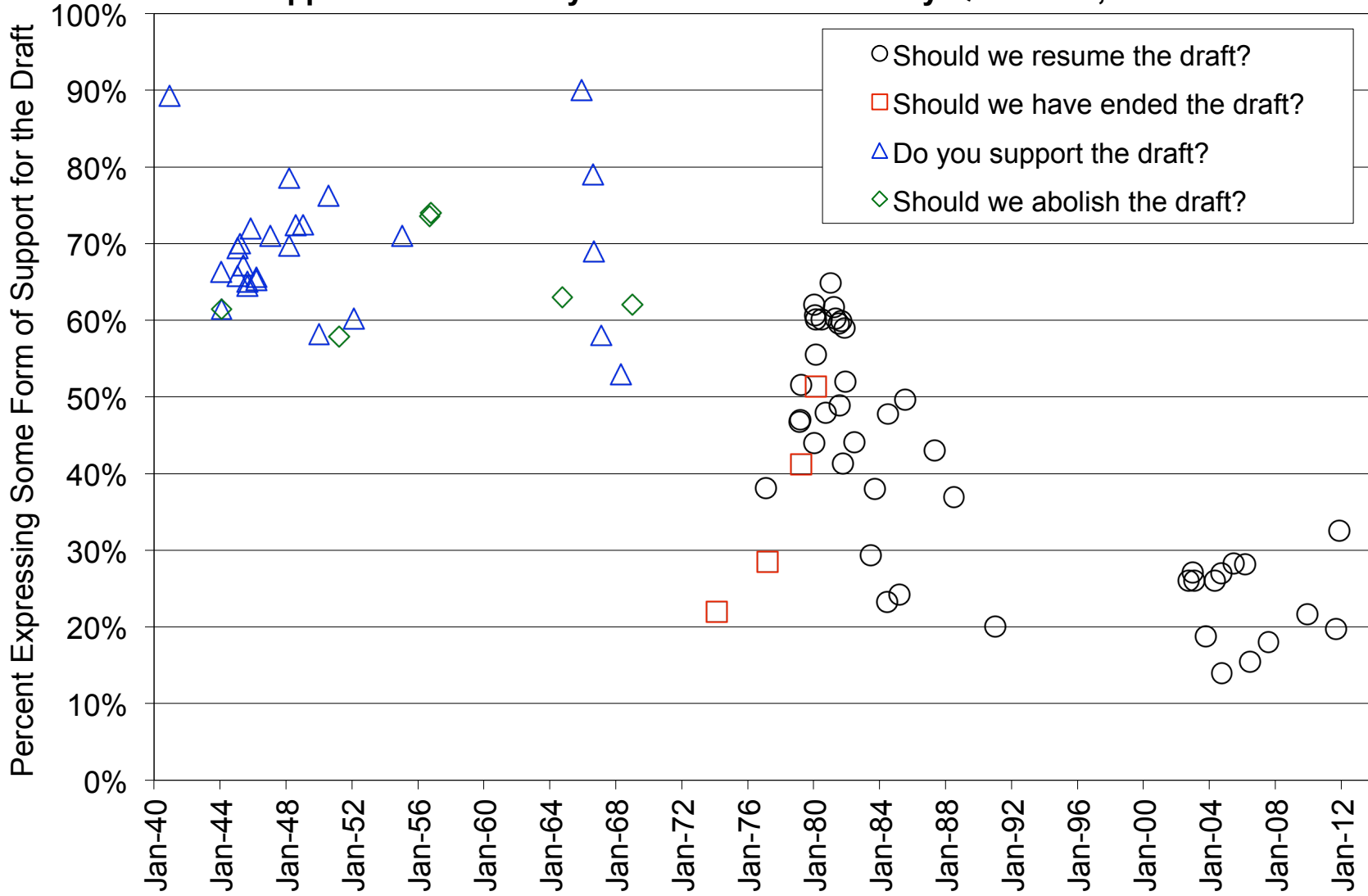
Note: These data are from the Roper Center's Public Opinion Archive, survey USABCWASH1985-8890. Asterisk indicates significance at  $p < 0.05$  level in a one-tailed test. Standard errors in parentheses. Question wording in text.

**Table 5.**  
**Logit Models of Support for Resumption of the Draft after 2001**

	2003 Survey		2011 Survey	
Eligible for the draft	0.38 (0.47)	0.46 (0.46)	0.12 (0.28)	0.18 (0.29)
Respondent has children under 18			-0.12 (0.18)	-0.09 (0.19)
Military veteran	0.54* (0.24)	0.47* (0.23)	0.23 (0.16)	0.24 (0.17)
Favors Iraq War		0.54* (0.15)		
War in Afghanistan was worth fighting				0.12 (0.12)
Male	0.08 (0.21)	0.04 (0.20)	0.45* (0.14)	0.48* (0.14)
Age	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.02* (0.005)	0.02* (0.005)
Constant	-3.07* (0.32)	-3.43* (0.33)	-2.53* (0.29)	-2.69* (0.31)
n	976	976	1,851	1,742

Note: These data are from the Roper Center's Public Opinion Archive, surveys USAIPOCNUS2003-47 and USPEW2011-SDT09. Asterisk indicates significance at  $p < 0.05$  level in a one-tailed test. Standard errors in parentheses. Question wording in text.

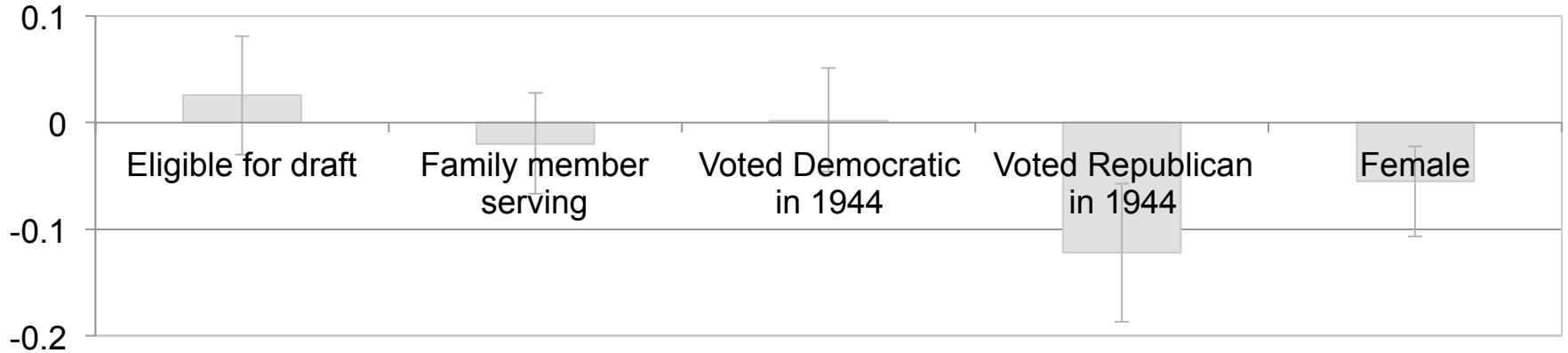
**Figure 1.**  
**Support for the Military Draft on Various Survey Questions, 1940-2011**



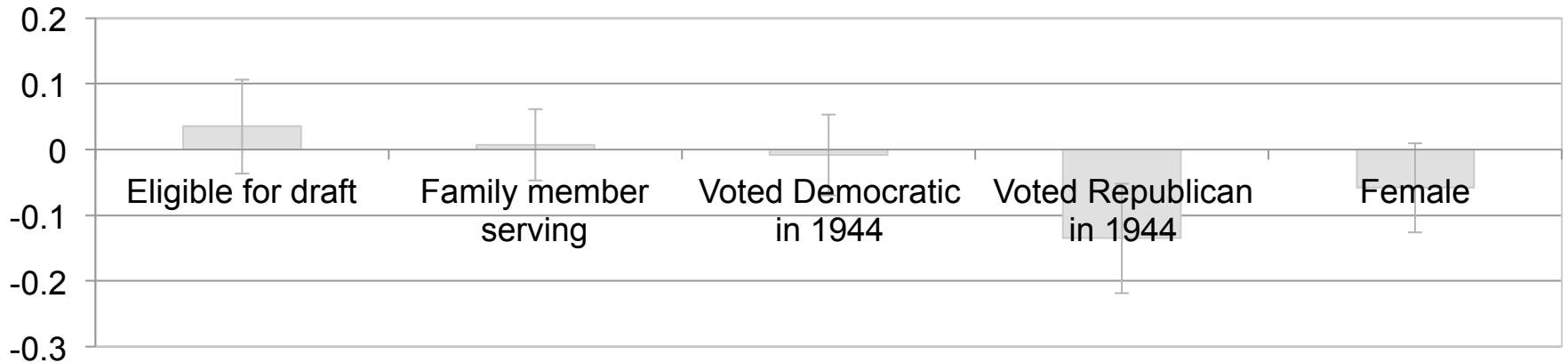


**Figure 2.**  
**Marginal Effects on Support for a Postwar Draft in January 1945**

**Require one year of military service**

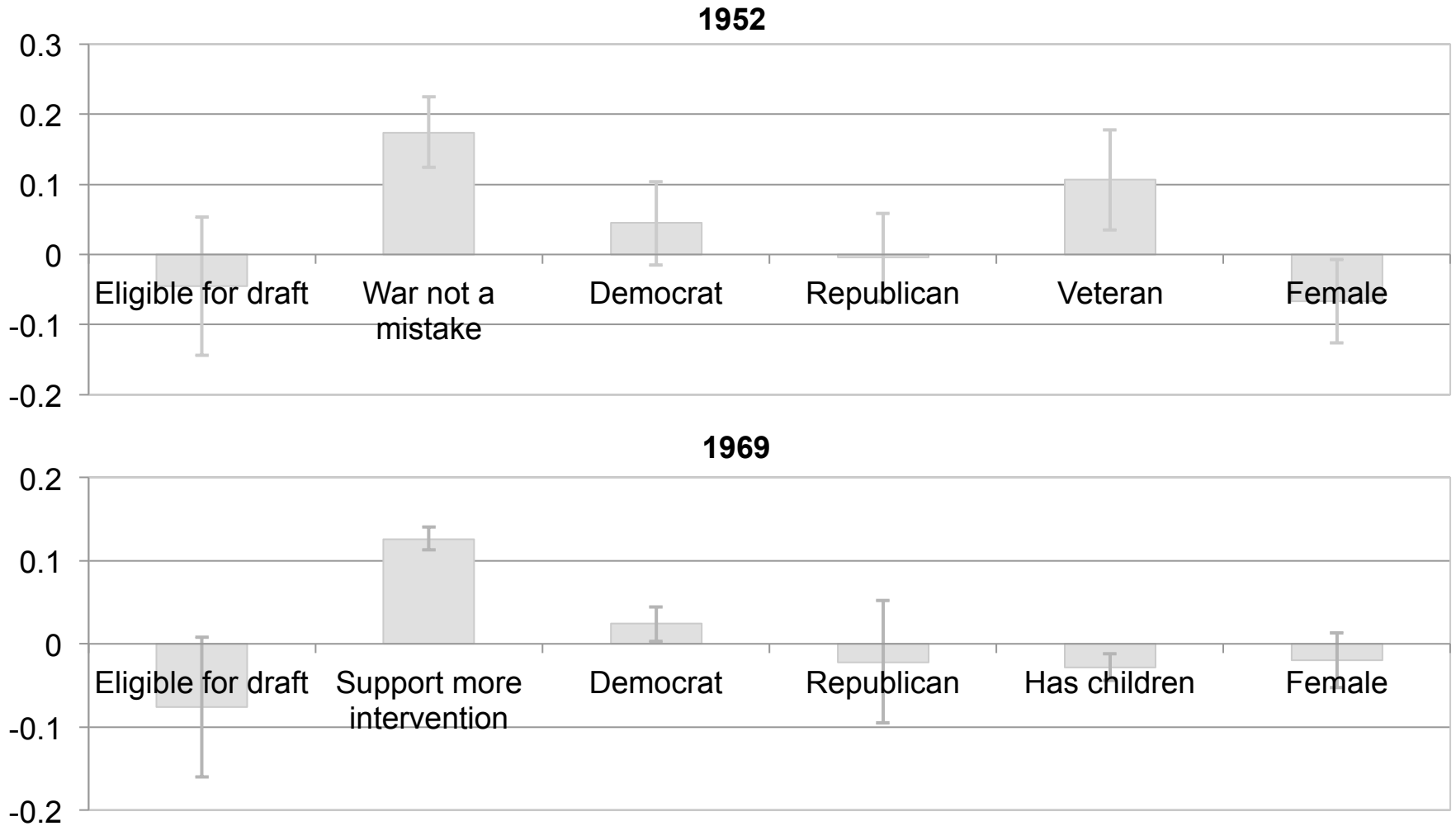


**Require one year of military training**



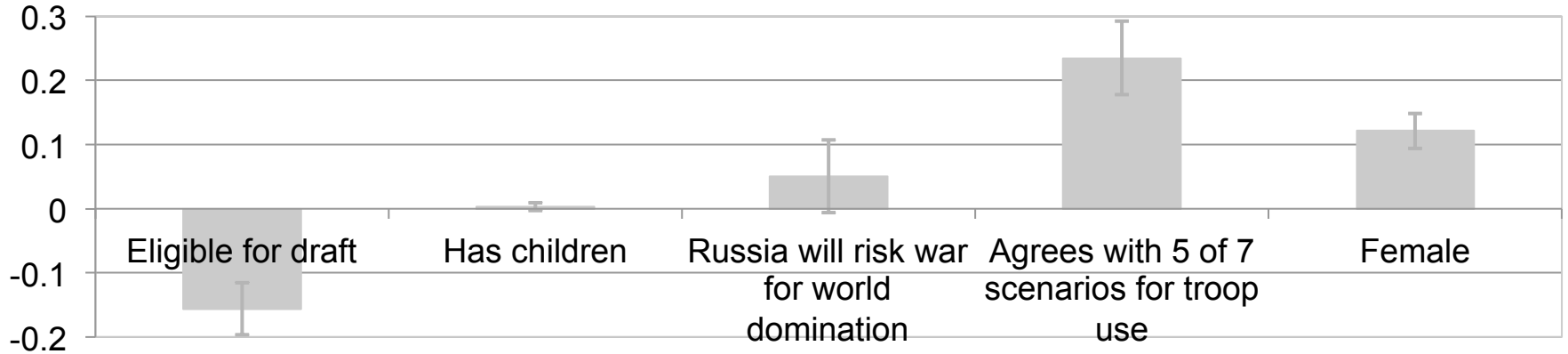
The baseline is 27-year old male, not eligible for the draft, no family member serving, who did not vote for either major party in 1944. Such a person had a 0.71 probability of supporting military service, and a 0.74 probability of supporting military training.

**Figure 3.**  
**Marginal Effects on Support for the Draft during the Wars in Korea and Vietnam**

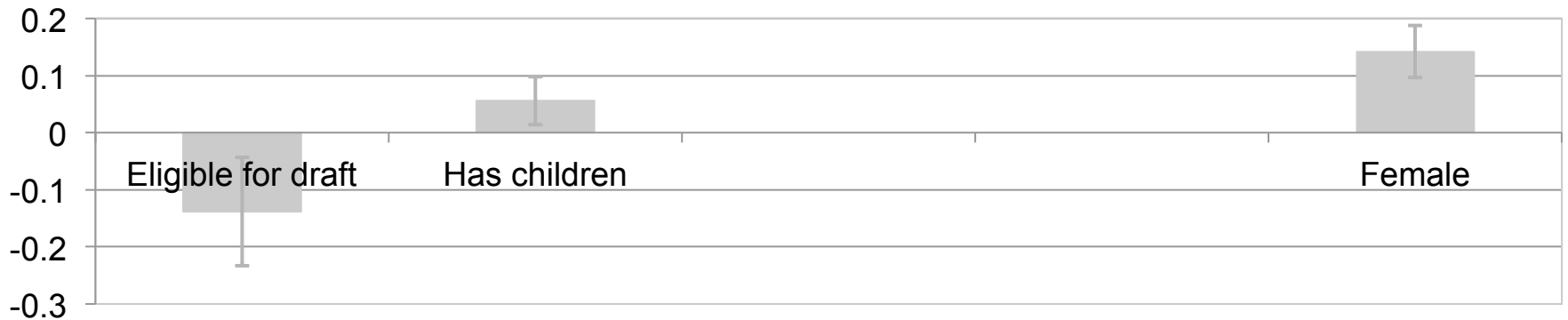


The baseline is 27-year old male, not eligible for the draft, not a veteran, with no party identification. Such a person had a 0.57 probability of supporting the draft in 1952, and a 0.71 probability of supporting the draft in 1969.

**Figure 4.**  
**Marginal Effects on Support for Restoration of the Draft in the Early 1980s**  
**1980**

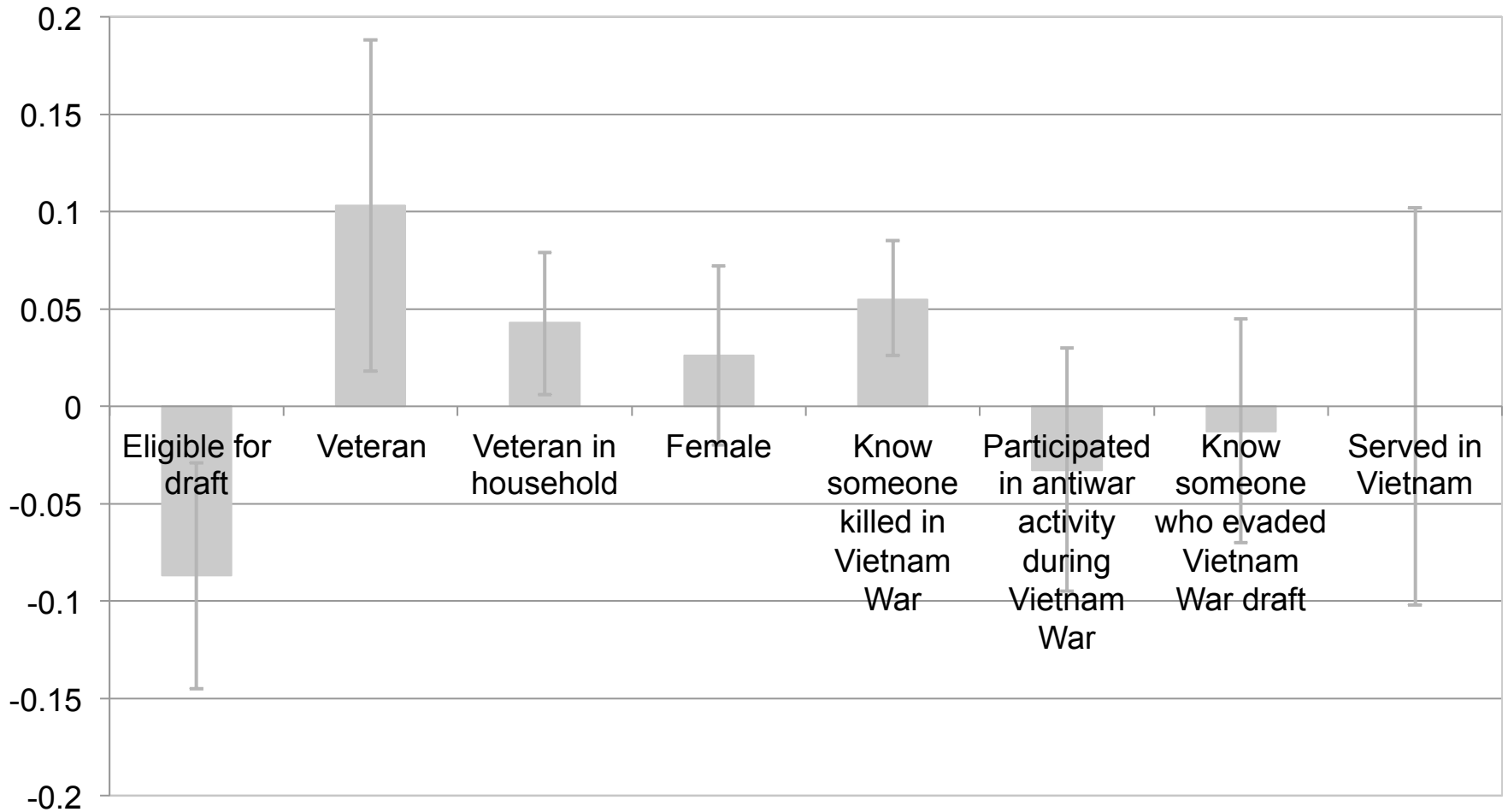


**1981**



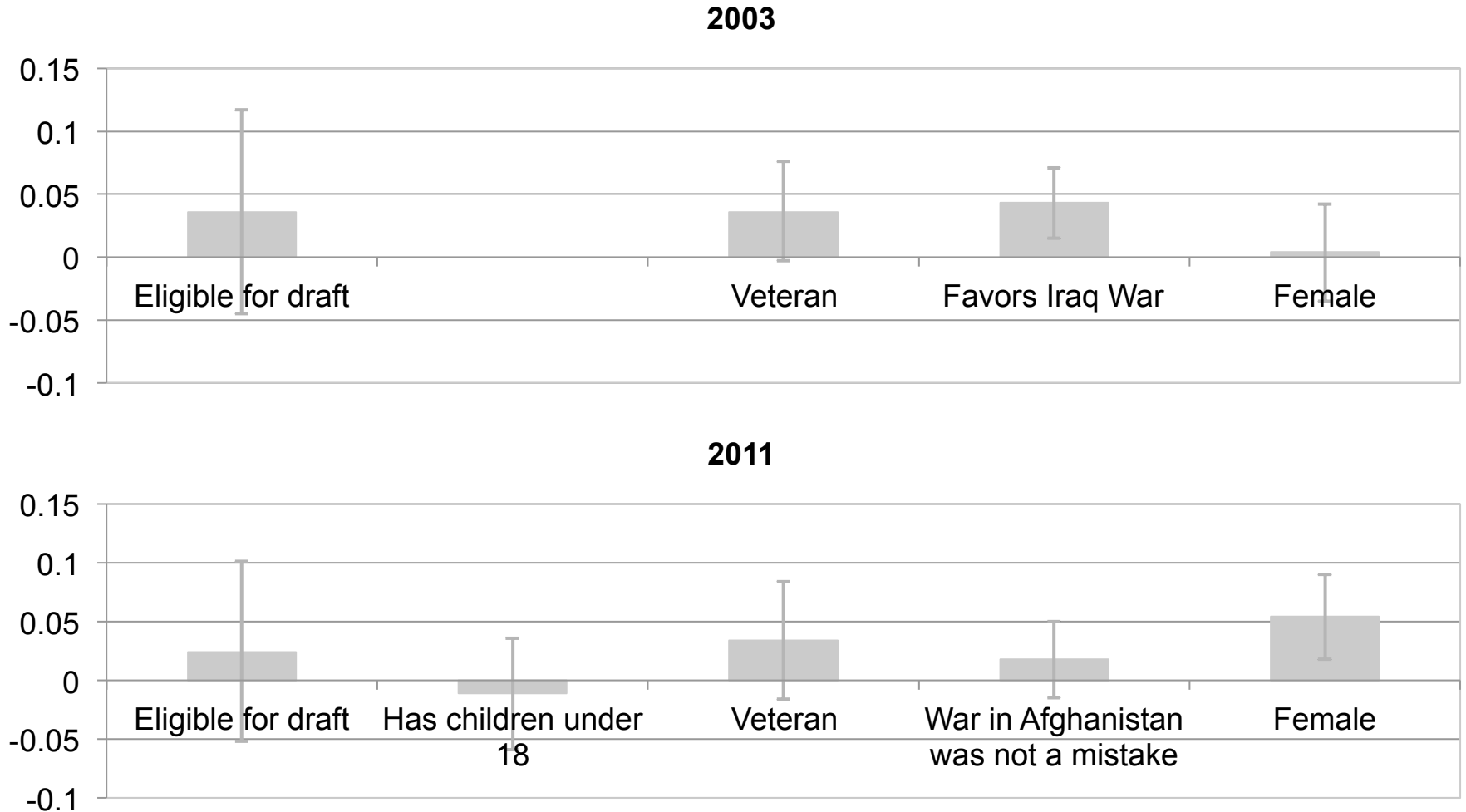
The baseline is 22-24-year old male with no children, not eligible for the draft. In the 1980 survey, the baseline respondent does not agree that the Soviet Union will risk war for world domination and accepts none of the 7 proposed scenarios for using troops. Such a person had a 0.49 probability of supporting the restoration of the draft in 1980 and a 0.69 probability in 1981.

**Figure 5.**  
**Marginal Effects on Support for Restoration of the Draft in 1985**



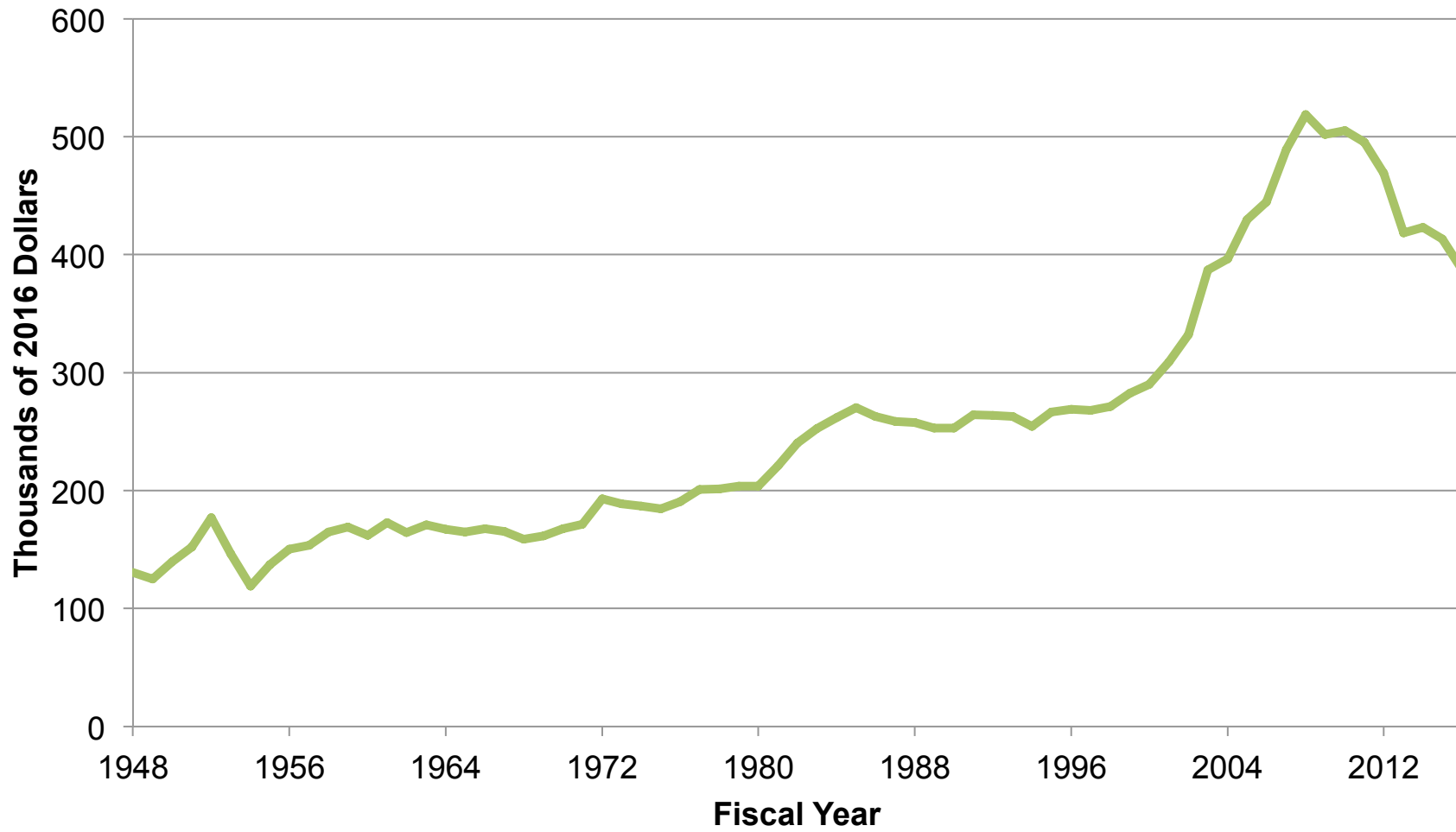
The baseline is 27-year old male non-veteran with no veteran in the household, not eligible for the draft, and with none of the Vietnam experiences listed in the survey. Such a respondent had a 0.21 probability of supporting the draft.

**Figure 6.**  
**Marginal Effects on Support for Restoration of the Draft after 9/11**



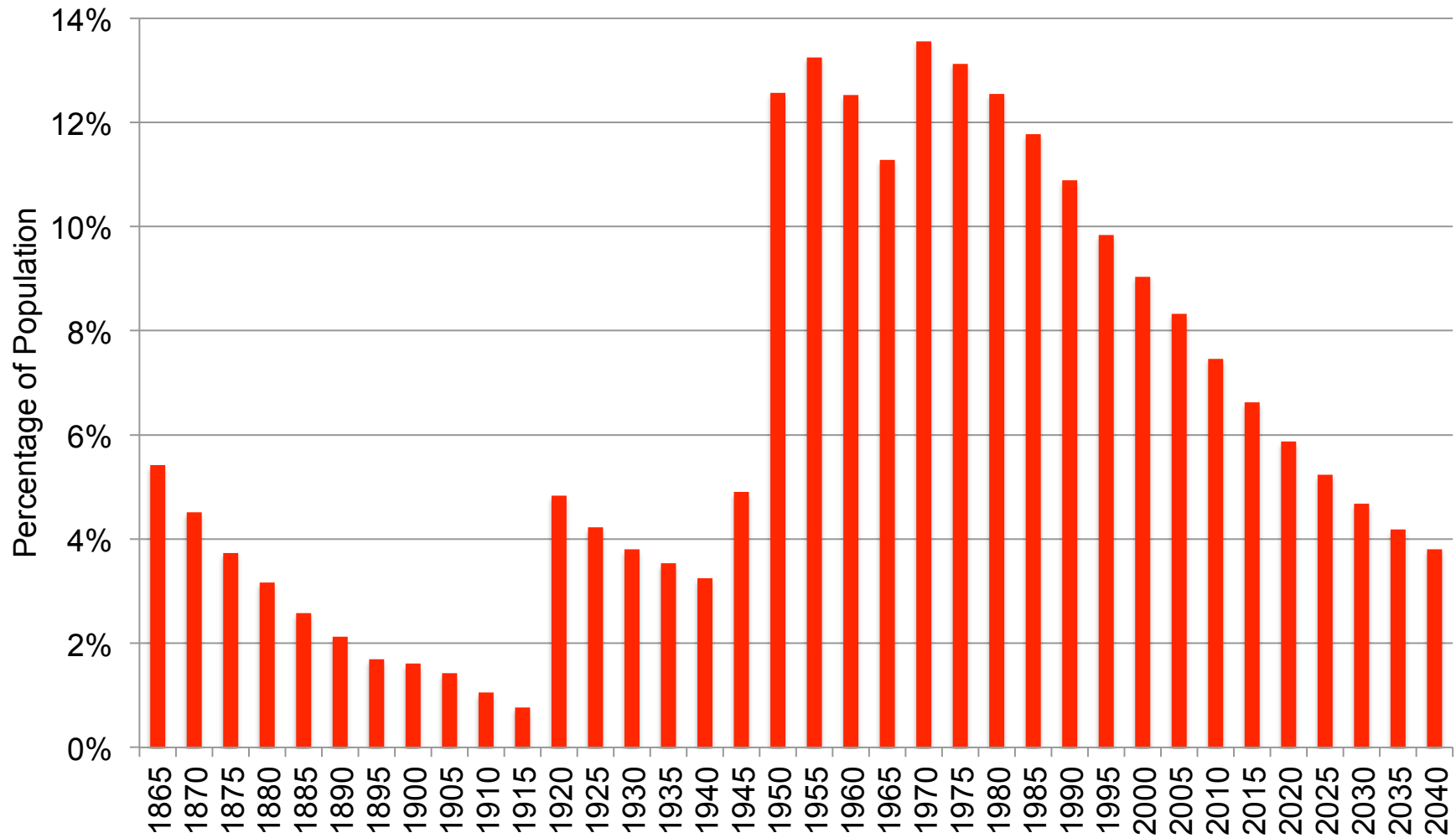
The baseline is 27-year old male non-veteran with no children, not eligible for the draft. The baseline attitude is opposition to the Iraq War and belief that the war in Afghanistan was a mistake. Such a respondent had a 0.07 probability of supporting the draft in 2003 and 0.16 in 2011.

**Figure 7.**  
**Military Budget/Personnel Size of Armed Forces**



**Source: U.S. Department of Defense**

**Figure 8.**  
**Veterans in the U.S. Population, 1865-2040 (Projected)**



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs