War Time Military Service Can Affect Partisan Preferences

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Abstract

Does war-time military service affect partisan preferences? We argue that military service increases the salience and potential costs of war. Therefore, soldiers who serve during mismanaged wars will associate the ruling party with incompetence and be less likely to support the ruling party in the future. To test our argument, we analyze almost 50 years of Israel National Election Surveys. Employing a regression discontinuity design, we show that compared with respondents who were too young to serve in the Yom Kippur war, respondents just old enough to serve report lower support for the Labor party well after the war ended. This effect is likely driven by soldiers' unwillingness to support a party they associate with security incompetence. We further show that the negative effect of military service does not materialize in well-managed wars, contributing to the literature on the political consequences of war and attitude formation.

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Does war-time military service affect soldiers' support for the incumbent? A robust literature in political science considers the general effects of wars and their costs on public support for incumbents (Gartner and Segura 1998; Baker and O'neal 2001; Boettcher and Cobb 2009; Karol and Miguel 2007; Berinsky 2007). Other studies document how military service, specifically combat experiences, can shape political participation and conflict-related preferences (MacLean and Elder 2007; Blattman 2009; Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015; Bauer et al. 2016; Littman 2018; Costalli and Ruggeri 2019). Recent advances that consider the partisan consequences of military experience, and particularly participation in war, yield mixed results, with studies showing that military experience can have positive (Norpoth 2020), negative (Barreto and Leal 2007), or limited long-term effects on soldiers' support for incumbents and officers overseeing a war effort (Erickson and Stoker 2011; Green, Davenport and Hanson 2019).

Identifying whether military service at times of war affects individual-level partisan preferences is important for several reasons. First, answers to this question can inform our understanding of war's political consequences. This is especially the case in Israel, as well as 60 other countries (Grewal and Cebul Forthcoming), where some form of conscription is mandated by law, and political backlash informs leaders' willingness to use force (Tomz et al. 2020). Second, evidence regarding the effects of wartime military service on partisan preferences, contributes to the literature on stability and change in partisanship and other political attitudes, providing insight about the conditions under which voters translate personal experiences, oftentimes obtained during impressionable years, into information that shapes their long-term political preferences (Krosnick and Alwin 1989; Sears and Valentino 1997; Osborne, Sears and Valentino 2011; Aguilar, Balcells and Cebolla-Boado 2011; Margalit 2013; Aksoy, Eichengreen and Saka 2020; Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2020; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2020; Lupton 2022).

Previous studies suggest that conflict experiences can increase nationalistic preferences (Baker and O'neal 2001; Lesschaeve 2020), augment hawkish attitudes (Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015), and reinforce in-group identification (Littman 2018) among individuals exposed to violence. In line with these advances, studies show that war experience can lead veterans to support lead-

ers overseeing a war effort (Norpoth 2020). Other studies that focus on self-interest mechanisms suggest that war experience might reduce support for the incumbent party overseeing a war effort, at least in the short-term period after a war (Barreto and Leal 2007; Erickson and Stoker 2011). Finally, more general findings on war and domestic accountability suggest that the effect of war might vary conditional on war dynamics (Gartner 2008a), costs (Karol and Miguel 2007), and leader performance (Croco 2011). It follows that the effects of military service during wars may cut both ways and increase or decrease support for the war-time incumbents. Thus, theory and evidence are needed to determine whether, how, and under what conditions military service during interstate wars affects soldiers' partisan preferences and support for the party who oversaw the war effort.

To address this gap, we develop a framework that explains how, why, and under what conditions serving in the military at times of war leads soldiers to withdraw their support from the incumbent. Building on previous literature that links personal experiences with political preferences (Sears and Valentino 1997; Erickson and Stoker 2011; Margalit 2013; Carreri and Teso 2016), we argue that military service increases the salience of war and its potential costs for soldiers more so than for civilians who are not directly involved in the war effort. The higher salience of war leads soldiers to pay close attention to war dynamics. In turn, soldiers use wars as a learning experience to inform their inferences regarding the ruling party's valence and competence.

Theoretically, we distinguish between *successful wars* and *blunder wars*. The former are wars managed competently, involving appropriate levels of preparedness and achieving their goals at acceptable costs given the threats and the military challenges. The latter are wars that involve either a loss or a military victory at a very high cost due to incompetent management of the war effort. Based on this distinction, we argue that if a ruling party mismanages a war effort, soldiers serving in the military at times of war–for whom the war and its costs are extremely salient–gain salient and novel information about the ruling party's security incompetence and are less likely to support the party in the post-war period.

To test the observable implications of our theory, we turn to the Israeli case and focus on the

political effects of military service in the Yom Kippur war–a paradigmatic blunder war (Eriksson 2013). We leverage the fact that military service is mandatory in Israel, as well as the fact that age determines eligibility for mandatory military service, and employ a regression discontinuity design (RDD) to analyze almost 50 years of the Israel National Election Survey (INES) (Israel National Election Studies 1977-2019). Following recent age-based RDD applications in political science (Cavaille and Marshall 2019; Bove, Di Leo and Giani Forthcoming), we compare the partisan preferences of survey respondents who were just too young to participate in the Yom Kippur war (i.e., below the age of 18 in 1973) with the political preferences of survey respondents just old enough to participate in the war (i.e., above the age of 18 in 1973).

We demonstrate that those survey respondents that likely served as soldiers during the 1973 Yom Kippur war report over a tenth of a standard deviation decrease in support for the Labor party (the war-time incumbent) in seventeen waves of the INES from 1977-2019. We argue and provide evidence that our empirical approach, which relies on an age-based discontinuity without measuring military service directly, likely yields a lower-bound estimate of the effects of wartime military service on support for the Labor party. To further establish the mechanism of our main effect, we examine a series of recurring survey items from the INES. Through these analyses, we rule out mechanisms relating to respondents' ideological or economic changes. Instead, we provide suggestive evidence in line with our theoretical expectation, which suggests that wars serve as a learning experience influencing soldiers' perceptions of party security competence and valance. Indeed, we demonstrate that respondents old enough to participate in the Yom Kippur war are less likely to perceive the Labor party as a party that is competent in addressing security issues, and more likely to support policies that assure military preparedness. Finally, we replicate our empirical design by focusing on participation in the 1967 Six Day War — A war that is widely considered to be a successful operation. In line with our theoretical argument, we further show that military service during the 1967 war, where leader incompetence was far less prevalent, did not affect support for the Labor party.

We make three contributions to existing literature. First, we contribute to studies of domestic

accountability by demonstrating that beyond the general effects of wars on support for incumbents amongst civilians (Karol and Miguel 2007; Getmansky and Weiss 2022), they have additional long-term effects on soldiers' partisan preferences. This finding reinforces results from previous studies regarding the effects of war participation on soldiers' partisan preferences (Erickson and Stoker 2011; Barreto and Leal 2007; Norpoth 2020), but emphasizes that not all wars shape soldiers' political preferences. Indeed, we suggest that wars will reduce support for the incumbent overseeing a war effort only if the war reveals a substantial degree of incumbent incompetence.

Second, we contribute to the literature on legacies of combat (MacLean and Elder 2007; Blattman 2009; Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015; Bauer et al. 2016; Littman 2018; Costalli and Ruggeri 2019), by offering an explanation for why soldiers might punish war-time incumbents, even if wars end with a military victory. We argue that military service during war increases the salience and the potential costs of war for soldiers more so than for civilians. In turn, wars serve as a highly salient and personal learning experience for soldiers, and when incumbent parties reveal incompetence, soldiers draw inferences from their personal war experience about the quality and valence of the party overseeing a war effort. In that sense, we argue that the negative relationship between blunder-war experiences and support for incumbents is not related to ideological change or changes in soldiers' well-being. Instead, the effects of participation in blunder wars are driven by a learning mechanism.

Finally, we contribute to the literature on attitude formation and change in response to personal lived experiences (Krosnick and Alwin 1989; Sears and Valentino 1997; Erickson and Stoker 2011; Osborne, Sears and Valentino 2011; Margalit 2013; Aksoy, Eichengreen and Saka 2020). Early theoretical frameworks (Krosnick and Alwin 1989; Sears and Valentino 1997), and recent studies on the effects of exposure to adverse experiences, suggest that personal events can shape short (Margalit 2013; Erickson and Stoker 2011), and long-term attitudes and policy preferences (Carreri and Teso 2016; Hong and Kang 2017; Rozenas, Schutte and Zhukov 2017; Chiou and Hong 2021), especially during impressionable years. We build on these studies and demonstrate that military service at times of war can affect soldiers' partisan preferences if a war is mismanaged.

What Do We Know about the Effects of Wars on Attitudes and Behavior?

The Effects of War on Political Attitudes of the General Public

A rich literature investigates how wars shape the political attitudes of the general population. Some studies suggest that wars increase public support for incumbents during extreme crises (Baker and O'neal 2001). Other studies emphasize that as wars become more costly, citizens are more likely to support their leaders and the war effort to redeem the resources that had already been invested in a given war (Boettcher and Cobb 2009; Renshon 2015). In line with these theories, some evidence points to a positive relationship between military casualties and incumbent vote-share (Koch 2011).

In contrast, another strand of research suggests that citizens are sensitive to the high costs of war and tend to withdraw support from incumbents who get involved in costly wars (Gartner, Segura and Wilkening 1997; Gartner and Segura 1998; Kriner and Shen 2007; Getmansky and Weiss 2022). In line with these theories, there is evidence to suggest that exposure to the costs of violence (Hintson and Vaishnav 2021) and military casualties–especially if they are on the rise (Gartner and Segura 1998; Gartner 2008*b*)–has a negative effect on support for incumbents. Similarly, studies show that local casualties have a substantial effect on local-level support for incumbent leaders and parties (Hong and Kang 2017; Karol and Miguel 2007; Kriner and Shen 2007; Getmansky and Weiss 2022). In line with these findings, other work shows that the effects of costly wars may extend beyond the ballot box, leading to violent and irregular regime change in the post-war period (Bueno de Mesquita, Siverson and Woller 1992; Goemans 2008).

Lastly, some studies emphasize that the effects of war on public support for incumbents are conditional on contextual features. For example, elite discourse shapes domestic support for war (Berinsky 2007). Other studies emphasize that a war's eventual outcome determines mass responses to conflict (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2006; Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson 1995; Croco 2011), and that voters' support for incumbents is conditional on the success of a given military operation.

The Effects of War on Soldiers

For the most part, the literature identifying the effects of war and conflict on political preferences and behaviors has focused on the general public (Berrebi and Klor 2008; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014; Rozenas, Schutte and Zhukov 2017). However, a growing literature considers how personal exposure to violence and specifically participation in conflict and war shapes individual attitudes and behaviors of soldiers (Erickson and Stoker 2011; Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015; Littman 2018; Lesschaeve 2020; Norpoth 2020; Lupton 2022). The literature on individual-level participation in violence demonstrates that participation in conflict (operationalized in various ways) has an additional effect on individual attitudes and behaviors beyond the effect that conflict has on the general population.

Focusing on economic and social outcomes, multiple studies show that participation in the Vietnam war significantly decreased veterans' earnings (Angrist 1990) and increased their propensity to engage in violence (Beckham, Moore and Reynolds 2000) years after the war ended. Other studies suggest that conscription reduces support for war due to self-interest in avoiding the costs of war (Horowitz and Levendusky 2011). Likewise, the threat of recruitment to military service in the U.S. during the Vietnam war led draft-eligible men to adopt liberal and anti-war positions (Erickson and Stoker 2011). However, more recent studies suggest that these effects did not endure in the long term (Green, Davenport and Hanson 2019).

In contrast to the pacifying effects of *potential* combat exposure in the U.S. context, analyses identifying the effects of *actual* combat experiences around the world reveal strikingly different patterns. Indeed, across a wide range of contexts, there is evidence that past participation in combat hardens attitudes against the out-group, decreases support for negotiation and compromise, and makes ex-combatants more likely to identify with their in-group, and vote for more hawkish parties (Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015; Littman 2018; Lesschaeve 2020). More so, there is evidence to suggest that individuals who were involved in combat and witnessed violence first-hand, exhibit more active involvement in politics in the post-combat period (Teigen 2006; Blattman 2009). In addition, at the group level, combat experience has been shown to increase or-

ganizational skills and the ability to make credible threats regarding the use of future violence (Jha and Wilkinson 2012). In line with these findings, analyses that focus on elite behavior suggest that the experience of serving during the Vietnam war increased U.S. Congress members' long-term support for military spending and the use of force (Lupton 2022).[1]

Taken together, these studies suggest that the threat of recruitment to war, and actual participation in combat, might affect individual attitudes and behavior. These effects are thought to be driven by multiple mechanisms relating to self-interest (Erickson and Stoker 2011; Horowitz and Levendusky 2011), as well as the traumatic experience of witnessing violence, and engaging in socialization within armed forces (Blattman 2009; Horowitz and Stam 2014; Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015; Norpoth 2020; Lesschaeve 2020; Lupton 2022). However, despite advances in the literature, it remains unclear whether, why, and under what conditions the experience of military service at times of war affects soldiers' partisan preferences in the long run. Indeed, while some studies recover a short-term negative effect of war participation on support for incumbents (Erickson and Stoker 2011; Barreto and Leal 2007), other studies yield somewhat conflicting results (Lesschaeve 2020; Norpoth 2020). Therefore, to shed light on this question, and further clarify the relationship between war participation and support for incumbents, we lay out a theoretical framework that explains why, how, and under what conditions, military service during an interstate war might affect soldiers' political preferences.

Theoretical Framework and Expectations

The starting point of our theoretical framework is that military service provides an opportunity for soldiers to form their worldview and develop their basic attitudes and preferences (Krebs 2004, 90-94). Military service often begins during impressionable years around the age of 18 (CIA 2022), a period in which individual political preferences are formed (Ghitza, Gelman and Auerbach 2022). Indeed, previous research demonstrates that military service has a socializing effect that shapes individuals' attitudes on political issues and their views of other groups (Samii 2013; Grossman,

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[1] Horowitz and Stam (2014) further suggest that the effects of military service may be conditional on the type of service. In contrast to non-combat military service, direct combat experience is shown to have a restraining effect on leaders' tendency to engage in conflict.

Manekin and Miodownik 2015; Littman 2018; Lesschaeve 2020; Lupton 2022).

We posit that the experience of serving in the military during an interstate war has an additional effect on individuals' basic attitudes beyond the general effects of conscription and recruitment into the army. Being a soldier during an interstate war increases the salience of war and emphasizes the tangible costs of conflict. By placing soldiers in the forefront of military confrontations (Braumoeller 2019; Min 2021), interstate wars increase the likelihood of deaths for soldiers beyond what they experience in other types of conflict and emphasize the importance of military preparedness and astute foreign policy decisions. In that sense the experiences of soldiers that serve in wartime are substantially different when compared with the experiences of soldiers that serve during times of peace. The former group of soldiers is exposed to high risk and directly experiences the consequences of their country's foreign policy decisions.

We argue that as a war progresses, and especially when the dust of battle settles, soldiers–having been exposed to the costs of war directly–begin to consider, based on their salient personal experiences, whether the incumbent managed the war well and whether the costs of war were justifiable. Soldiers are not the only ones trying to determine whether the war was managed well. Civilians are also exposed to cues and information about war management–such as whether the war ends with a military victory or a defeat–and they also decide whether to reward or punish the incumbent based on the information they have (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2006; Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson 1995; Croco 2011). However, civilians often lack sufficient information about the incumbent's role in achieving the observable outcome. In particular, civilians do not always know whether the outcome was achieved *because of* or *despite* the incumbent's decision-making or other factors (Downs and Rocke 1994).

Unlike civilians, soldiers are better–though not perfectly–informed about the preparation, execution, and outcomes of military policies during wartime. For example, soldiers can observe logistic shortages and to what extent the leadership responds to such difficulties. Moreover, soldiers are not only more informed about such shortages, but they may very well also associate them with personal traumatic experiences. Indeed, building on recent studies regarding the effects of

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direct and vicarious exposure to violence and aggression (Duprè, Dawe and Barling 2014; Finklestein et al. 2015), we argue that in contrast to civilians who are usually indirectly exposed to the costs of interstate wars, soldiers are more likely to be influenced by war dynamics. In short, due to their personal experiences, soldiers are in a better position to infer whether a war's outcome can be attributed to the incumbent, and they are more likely to directly experience the tangible costs of war mismanagement and failure.

Importantly, when theorizing about the effects of participation in wars, we distinguish between *successful wars* and *blunder wars* and develop our main theoretical expectations around the latter type of war. Successful wars are those that end with a victory that is perceived to be achieved at a reasonable cost. In contrast, we conceptualize blunder wars as unsuccessful wars that either do not end with a clear military victory or end in a victory that is achieved at a high cost due to policy failures. Since blunder wars often entail a lack of preparedness, inadequate investment in the military, and poor execution of military plans, they provide soldiers with salient negative information regarding the valence and competence of the military leadership and, more importantly, the ruling political elites. While citizens may be aware of a blunder, policy failures are likely more accessible and salient for soldiers serving in the war effort.

Accordingly, the main observable implication of our theory is that military service during a blunder war will reduce soldiers' support for the party associated with the war effort. Reduced support for incumbents might be driven by multiple mechanisms. However, we theorize that this main effect will be driven by soldiers re-evaluating the party's security-related competence and their increased preferences to avoid future blunder wars by voting the incumbent out of office. Therefore, a second observable implication of our theory is that military service during a blunder war decreases soldiers' beliefs that the incumbent is qualified to deal with security issues and increases their support for policies that increase preparedness for future wars.

These implications of our theory are also grounded in studies in social psychology and behavioral economics that demonstrate that exposure to risky environments–such as interstate wars–contributes to risk-averse attitudes and behaviors (Kim and Lee 2014; Zhang, Brennan and Lo

2014; He and Hong 2018). In line with these studies, we expect soldiers who serve in the military during blunder wars to use the information they gain during the war as a learning opportunity, informing their general beliefs about the leading political party. We further maintain that even if the information about the incumbents' incompetence during the war becomes public knowledge, the experience of participating in a blunder war will still affect soldiers' preferences because of their experience-based learning that makes the information they acquired personally formative and salient.

However, as we noted above we do not expect all types of wars to have similar effects. Indeed, we expect that participation in successful wars will not reduce soldiers' support for the party managing the war effort – since such wars do not provide negative information regarding the party in question. We are agnostic as to whether such wars have positive or null effects. This is since on the one hand successful wars may provide soldiers with positive information regarding the party's competence and valence, and this information may increase support for an incumbent. However, other war experiences, such as exposure to human loss, may have negative effects which counterbalance the effects of positive information regarding incumbent competence. In such a case, the overall effect of participating in a successful war may be null.

Finally, we expect that the effects of participation in blunder wars will influence soldiers' support for incumbent parties well after a war is over and will not be limited to the immediate period after the war. This expectation is rooted in studies regarding the long-term effects of personal experiences during impressionable years (Ghitza, Gelman and Auerbach 2022; Krosnick and Alwin 1989; Sears and Valentino 1997). That said, we do not have clear priors regarding whether and how the effects of participation in war decay over time. Theoretically, one might expect that personal experiences in one's impressionable years will lead to steady and cemented attitudes and preferences that do not change over time (Kustov, Laaker and Reller 2021). However, other studies suggest that the effects of personal experiences might become smaller and even decay over time (Erickson and Stoker 2011; Green, Davenport and Hanson 2019). Since the empirical setup we now turn to describe does not allow us to fully and credibly adjudicate between these two theoreti-

cal possibilities, we remain agnostic about how the effects of participation in war change over time and return to discuss this topic in our conclusion.

Research Design

Case Selection

To test our theoretical expectations, we turn to Israel and focus on the effects of serving in the military during the Yom Kippur war–a paradigmatic blunder war (Eriksson 2013). The Yom Kippur war began with a surprise Egyptian-Syrian attack against Israel on October 6, 1973, during the Jewish day of atonement. Israeli leadership fully realized the threat of war only eleven hours before its onset (Kam 1988, 23). Accordingly, there were no preparations for combat up until a few hours before the Syrian and Egyptian attacks (Betts 1982, 77-78). However, on the morning of October 6, when the threat of war was fully-apparent, the army revised its assessment and began preparing for war with full mobilization of Israeli reserves (Mintz and Schneiderman 2018; McDermott and Bar-Joseph 2017).

The Israeli military paid a high price for the government's incompetence and lack of preparedness. In the first 36 hours, largely fought by soldiers in mandatory conscription service, Israel sustained heavy losses, including the death of 724 soldiers. Reservists joined the fight after this initial stage as they were called into service as the war broke out (Bar-Joseph 2005, 225). Ultimately, Israel succeeded in pushing the Egyptian and Syrian forces back.

At the end of the war, Israel controlled more territory than it did before the war's outbreak. Nonetheless, the military victory came at a heavy cost: the Israeli side sustained over 2,200 fatalities among its military forces, and 7,251 soldiers were injured. The surprise attack, alongside the high losses in the initial stages of the war, traumatized many Israelis, undermining their confidence in the invincibility of the Israeli army (Eriksson 2013, 29). In Israel, the government's and the army's failure to anticipate the attack and to prepare for it is often referred to as "the blunder" (*ha-mehdal*) (Bar-Joseph 2005, 6).

In the first post-war election in December 1973, the incumbent Labor party's vote shares

dropped by over 6 percentage points, and its number of seats decreased from 57 to 51 out of the 120 total seats (Arian 1975). Part of this electoral loss is directly attributed to the general dissatisfaction with the government's performance during the war (Getmansky and Weiss 2022). Despite this, the Labor party formed the government again, with the wartime prime minister and defense minister remaining in their posts. The lack of personal accountability resulted in mass protests against the new government. These protests were led by soldiers who participated in the war as reservists–both in combat and non-combat positions–and who witnessed first-hand the consequences of the blunder.[2]

Our focus on the political consequences of participation in the Yom Kippur war is motivated by three reasons. First, despite Israel's eventual victory, the war effort was plagued with mismanagement. Indeed, politicians' incompetence manifested in their unwillingness to allow early mobilization, resulting in high battlefield costs (Bar-Joseph 2005). It follows that the Yom Kippur war is a suitable case for our theory, which focuses on wars that can reveal the ruling party's incompetence.

Second, unlike many military campaigns that span long periods and involve multiple incumbent governments, the Yom Kippur war was short and directly associated with a single ruling party – the Israeli Labor party. This attribute of the war allows us to consider how military service during the war shaped attitudes towards a single ruling party years after the war was concluded. Lastly, the short nature of the Yom Kippur war, combined with widespread age-based mandatory conscription in Israel, serves as the base for our identification strategy, which we now turn to describe.

Identification Strategy

Identifying the effects of military service on political attitudes is challenging since political attitudes may motivate selection into the military rather than emerge as a consequence of military

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[2]A case in point is Captin (reserve) Motti Ashkenazi, who served as a reservist at the Budapest outpost in Sinai and led the public protests in the aftermath of the war. He claimed that his unit suffered from widespread neglect, lack of ammunition, and basic supplies on the eve of the war, which directly contributed to the initial setback that Israel experienced, resulting in such heavy losses. He demanded the political leadership take responsibility for the blunder (Rabinovich 2004).

experiences. To sidestep this challenge, we focus on Israel, where a mandatory draft requires men over eighteen to enlist in the military (Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015). As we further discuss in Section D of our appendix, almost 70% of all men born in 1955, who turned eighteen in 1973, were enlisted in the military. Therefore, we adopt a regression discontinuity design leveraging a sharp age cutoff, which determined Israeli citizens' probability of serving in the army during the Yom Kippur war.[3]

As shown in Equation 1, any Israeli younger than eighteen in 1973 did not serve in the military during the war. In contrast, Israelis older than 18 in 1973 were eligible to serve in the military during the war, either as part of their mandatory service or as part of reserve duties (for further discussion, see Section D in the appendix). More so, men over the age of eighteen were very likely to participate in the war due to the mass-mobilization of reserve forces (Bar-Joseph 2005).

$$Eligibility\,to\,Participate\,in\,War = \begin{cases} \text{Yes if age in 1973} \geq 18 \\ \text{No if age in 1973} < 18 \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

We leverage the discontinuity described in Equation 1 in order to compare Israelis who are similar in many regards but different in their eligibility to serve in the military in 1973 during the Yom Kippur war. Specifically, employing data from seventeen waves of the INES, we test whether respondents who were just old enough to serve in the military during the war report lower levels of support for the Labor party when compared with respondents who were too young to serve in the military during the war.

Data

Our data includes responses to seventeen waves of the INES. We leverage a series of recurring survey items from these surveys, constituting our variables for all empirical analyses. Specifically, our main outcome of interest is respondents' self-reported vote choice. We further leverage questions regarding party evaluation, policy preferences, ideology, and personal economic standings

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[3]Age-based regression discontinuity designs have been used in the past to recover the effects of national reforms on attitudes and other personal outcomes (Brunello, Fort and Weber 2009; Cavaille and Marshall 2019).

to provide evidence in support of our theorized mechanism and rule out alternative explanations. A detailed description of the surveys we use and the coding of variables is provided in Section A of the appendix. Descriptive statistics of all variables employed in our analyses are reported in Table A2 of the appendix.

Identifying Assumptions

Our central identifying assumption relates to the continuity of the conditional expectation of counterfactual outcomes in the running variable (McCrary 2008). This assumption would be violated in an instance where survey respondents would sort themselves endogenously around the discontinuity threshold (Cattaneo, Idrobo and Titiunik 2019), by manipulating their age to select into or out-of-military service. Sorting around the age discontinuity, in this case, is highly unlikely. Indeed, survey respondents participating in INES from the years 1977-2019 have no reason to manipulate their reported age in a way that would result in endogenous sorting around our discontinuity. We support this identifying assumption with a McCray test, reported in Figure A2 of our appendix. This figure demonstrates that our running variable (age in 1973) is continuous around our discontinuity (age 18 in 1973) (McCrary 2008).

To further probe the validity of our design, we implement a placebo test demonstrating that alternative age cutoffs around the discontinuity yield relatively small and imprecise estimates (Figure A3).[4] More so, though not a necessary condition for our identification strategy (De la Cuesta and Imai 2016), we show that several demographic variables are continuous around the discontinuity (Table A3). These diagnostics which we report in the Appendix, increase our confidence in our RDD approach and its underlying assumptions.[5]

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[4]Though, as we explain in our Robustness Checks Section, there exists a positive and precisely estimated effect of the discontinuity at age 22, suggesting that respondents just old enough to finish their military service are *more likely* to support the Labor party, providing further evidence to support our argument that military service has a negative effect on support for Labor.

[5]A final concern for our approach is selective attrition as a consequence of battle deaths if deaths correlate with partisanship. However, like Green, Davenport and Hanson (2019), we do not expect this to be consequential for our inference, given the small share of battle deaths to eligible soldiers.

Estimation Strategy

Our main specification identifies the local average treatment effect of military service during the Yom Kippur war, by estimating the model in Equation 2. In this model, y_{it} is a survey response from respondent i at time t, f is a linear function of our running variable – respondents' age in 1973. This function, which is a local linear regression estimated with a triangular kernal and the optimal bandwith selection method proposed by Cattaneo, Idrobo and Titiunik (2019), allows us to identify the parameter β – representing the effect of being just older than 18 in 1973, and thus being likely to participate in the Yom Kippur war.

$$y_{it} = \beta D_i + f(X_i) + e_{it} \tag{2}$$

One limitation of our data and empirical approach is that we do not measure participation in the Yom Kippur war directly. We believe this to be a reasonable approach given the fact that conscription to the military in Israel is mandatory. Indeed, as we discuss in Section D of our appendix, recruitment to the military amongst the 1955 cohort, which turned 18 in 1973, was very high, and mobilization of eligible adults during the Yom Kippur war as part of mandatory and reserve service was widespread (Bar-Joseph 2005).

However, our analytical approach raises two concerns. The first concern relates to measurement error in our treatment since not all respondents over the age of 18 in 1973, which we consider as part of treatment group, served in the military during the Yom Kippur war. The second concern relates to cohort-based confounders, which may serve as alternative explanations for our main theorized effect. In our robustness checks, we alleviate both concerns with a series of additional analyses.

Results

In Table 1 we report the local average treatment effect of eligibility to serve in the military during the Yom Kippur war on four outcomes: support for the Labor and Likud parties, self-reported undecided vote choice, and self-reported intention not to vote. In line with our theoretical ex-

pectation, we demonstrate that military service during the Yom Kippur war reduced support for the Labor party amongst respondents surveyed up to 46 years after the war was concluded. Interestingly, in our main specification, reduced support for the Labor party does not translate into increased support for the main competing party – the Likud, nor does it translate into decreases in turnout. Instead, it appears that eligibility to serve in the military during the Yom Kippur war increased Israelis' probability of reporting uncertainty regarding their preferred party. It follows that soldiers who served in the army during the Yom-Kippur war developed "less stable" political preferences, becoming undecided voters who can potentially be persuaded to vote for a host of different political parties in any given election.

Table 1: RD Estimates – The Effects of Participation in 1973 War

	Labor	Likud	Undecided	No Vote
	-0.057	0.031	0.055	0.005
	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.022)	(0.012)
Bandwidth	10	9	8	9
Obs.	16962	16962	16962	16962

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal, bandwidths and a triangular kernal. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

We visualize the main effect of military service on support for the Labor party in Figure 1. Our local average treatment effect is slightly larger than a tenth of a standard deviation, an effect that is more modest than other recent studies which employ RD designs to study voting preferences (Valentim 2021). As we further discuss below, this smaller magnitude may be driven at least in part by measurement error in our main treatment, and by the fact that for many respondents the time separating between treatment and outcome measurement is relatively long.

Since our main estimates pool over 17 waves of the INES, one may wonder whether our results are driven by respondents surveyed immediately after the war. Alternatively, the negative effect we identify might resemble a more durable form of preference change that is stable even years after the war was concluded. Since our data is constructed of repeated cross-sectional surveys rather than a panel survey, and since any given cross-sectional survey alone is underpowered to identify
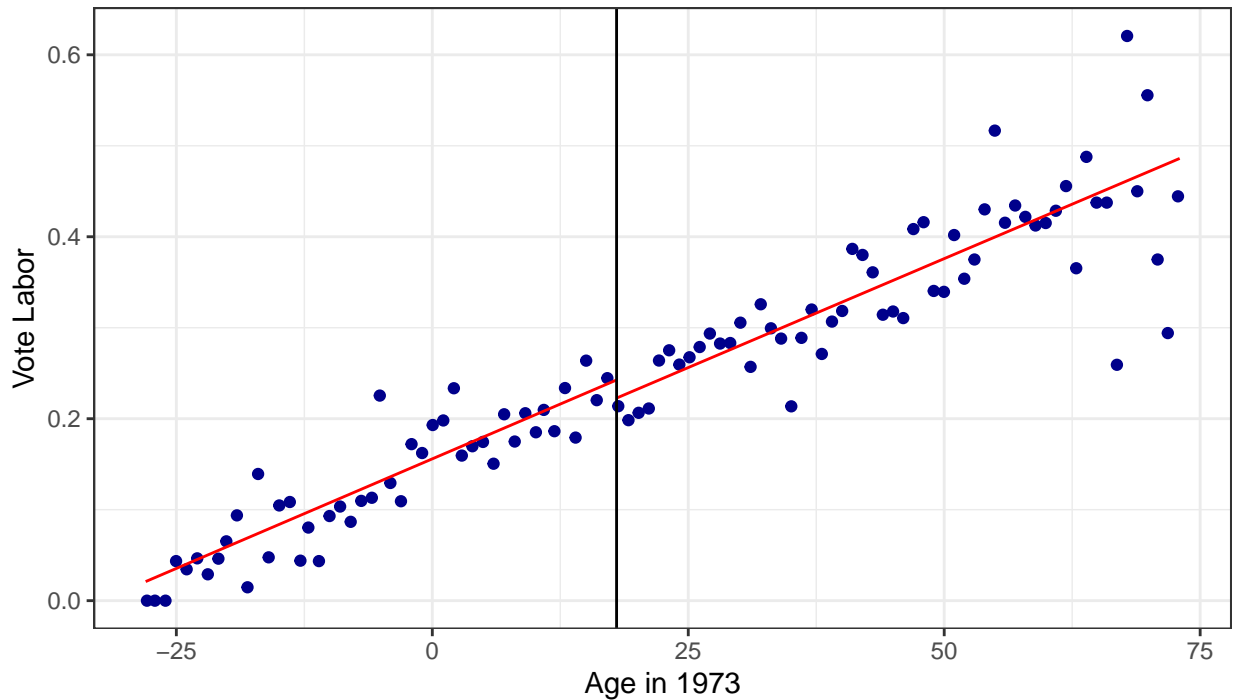
Figure 1: **Regression Discontinuity Plot** - Negative local average treatment effect of eligibility to participate in Yom Kippur war on support for Labor party.

our main estimates (Stommes, Aronow and Sävje 2021), we are not ideally set up to fully address the question of effect durability.

That said, we provide suggestive evidence regarding the temporal dimensions of our effects in Figure 2. To do so, we estimate our original regression but gradually omit survey waves one year at a time.[6] In other words, in the left-hand region of Figure 2, we report estimates of our original regression on the full sample of respondents participating in the INES between 1977-2019. Then, we estimate the same model omitting the 1977 wave, and go on to estimate that model omitting 1977-1981 waves, and continue distancing the time frame of our sample from the war one wave at a time. Notably, omitting waves reduces our statistical power, and increases the uncertainty of our estimate, when compared to the pooled full sample model. However, doing so, and examining the magnitude of point estimates provides some insight into the durability of the effects we identify, and the extent to which they may manifest amongst survey respondents years after the war was

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[6]We stop omitting surveys in the year 2013 due to sample size considerations.
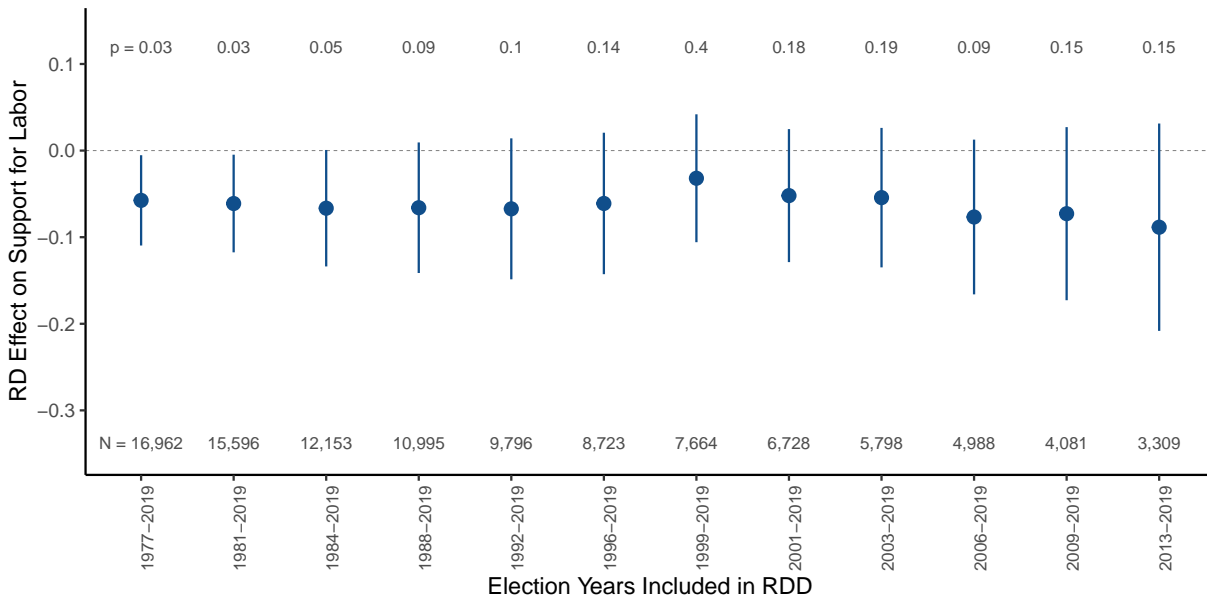
concluded.

Figure 2: **Point estimates from 14 RDD regressions in which we gradually narrow the temporal scope of our sample, and estimate the effects of participation in the Yom Kippur war on support for the Labor party.** In these models we gradually omit survey waves, in order to consider the long-term effects of war participation on our main outcome – Support for Labor.

The results in Figure 2 show that point estimates of our additional models remain rather consistent when omitting survey waves, and gradually distancing our sample from the war. However, as expected the standard errors of estimates based on fewer observations are indeed wider – limiting our ability in some instances to reject null hypotheses at conventional levels of statistical significance. However, we cautiously interpret the rather stable negative point estimates across models in Figure 2, and the *p* values which in many models approach conventional levels of statistical significance, to suggest that participation in the Yom Kippur war likely had a durable negative effect on Israeli soldiers' support for the Labor party. In Appendix C.3 we report a similar exercise gradually omitting survey waves farther from (rather than to) the war. In those additional analyses, the pattern of results is similar to the pattern reported in Figure 2, and point estimates are rather stable across different subsets of the full sample.

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Robustness Checks

A central concern regarding the analyses reported in Table 1 relates to the fact that we do not measure respondents' participation in the war directly. Instead, we rely on an age cutoff to differentiate between survey respondents who likely served or did not serve in the military during the Yom Kippur war. Doing so introduces measurement error in our treatment, which should bias our point estimates towards zero. In Section C.1 of the appendix, we substantiate this argument by demonstrating that our main effects are driven by native male survey respondents — the demographic most likely to serve in the military during the Yom Kippur war. In contrast, models focusing on females or immigrants who moved to Israel post-1973 yield smaller and imprecisely estimated coefficients (see Table A4). We further substantiate this intuition by demonstrating that filtering from our sample respondents over the age of 54, which were exempt from military reserve service in 1973, but are considered to be treated in our main specification, increases the magnitude and precision of our point estimates (see Table A5).[7]

These additional results address concerns regarding measurement error. More specifically, results from Table A4 where we estimate our models focusing on male, female and immigrant subsamples, further reduce concerns regarding alternative cohort effects, which may confound our main estimate. In other words, if cohort effects such as high-school graduation or eligibility to vote in national elections were driving our main estimates, then all models focusing on male, female, and immigrant survey respondents should yield precisely estimated effects in a similar magnitude to our main effect from Table 1. However, the fact that our effects are driven by male respondents—those most likely to serve in the military in 1973 conditional on being over 18—enhances our confidence that our effects reported in Table 1 are driven by military service per se.

To provide further evidence that military service is generating our main effect, in Figure A3 we estimate 21 models with different age cutoffs ranging between 8-28. Notably, there are only

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[7]We include respondents over the age of 54 in our main sample because a minority of citizens over the age of 54 may have served in the war despite exemptions.

two cutoffs which yield precisely estimated effects. The first, as reported in Table 1, is age 18, suggesting that respondents just old enough to serve in the military are less likely to support the Labor party. However, we also find a *positive* and precisely estimated effect at the age 22 cutoff, suggesting that respondents just old enough to complete their mandatory military service before the war erupted, are *more* likely to support the Labor party, when compared with respondents who were still committed to mandatory military service.

Finally, we leverage another age discontinuity relating to Men's exemption from reserve military service, which at the time was set at age 54 (Security Service Law, Amendemtn 7 1971). In Figure A4, we further estimate 10 models with different age cutoffs ranging between ages 50-60. The only precisely estimated effect we find is around age 54, suggesting that respondents just old enough to be exempt from reserve military service are more likely to vote for Labor. We construe the patterns reported in Figures A3-A4, as further evidence that our main negative effect is driven by soldiers conscripted in military service during the Yom Kippur war. In light of the war and their military service, such soldiers are less likely to support the Labor party.

In addition to the analyses above, we further consider the sensitivity of our results to alternative modeling specifications. First, in Table A6, we adopt a second order polynomial function. Second, in Table A7, we estimate our models with alternative kernel functions used to construct the local-polynomial estimator. Third, in Figure A5 we consider the robustness of our results to alternative bandwidth selection methods. Fourth, in Table A8 we estimate our model extracting one survey wave at a time. Fifth, in Table A9 we report additional models which include cycle fixed-effects and cluster errors at the cycle level.[8] Lastly, in Table A10, we estimate additional models controlling for pre-treatment variables, including: age, education, ethnicity, and religiosity. Across all additional models, our main results remain consistent.

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[8]Cycle Fixed effects are dummy indicators accounting for the election cycle survey wave a respondent participated in.

Mechanism

The evidence reported in Table 1, confirms our main theoretical expectation that the experience of military service during a blunder war reduces support for the political party overseeing the war effort. However, this finding might be explained by multiple mechanisms. We argue that long-term decreased support for the ruling party is driven by soldiers' associating the ruling party with incompetence in security affairs, and internalizing the costs of lack of preparation for interstate war. As a test of this mechanism, we consider two recurring questions from the INES, which ask respondents to: i) evaluate parties in terms of their competence to address security affairs, and ii) express whether they believe Israel should prepare for war or engage in peace negotiations, to ensure its citizens' safety.

Based on our theoretical framework, we expect that military service during the Yom Kippur war will lead respondents' to: i) update and adapt less-favorable views regarding Labor security competence and valence with regards to security affairs, and ii) prefer military preparedness over peace negotiations, to ensure Israel's safety. These preferences would address the negative consequences of the Yom Kippur war, which resulted from lack of preparation and the Labor party's unwillingness to mobilize forces at an earlier stage before the Egyptian-Syrian surprise attack.

The first two columns in Table 2 are in line with our theoretical expectation. First, in column 1, we demonstrate that respondents who were just old enough to serve as soldiers during the Yom Kippur war, are less likely to agree that the Labor party is the most suited party to address Israel's security affairs. We visualize these effects in Figure 3. Second, we show that respondents who were just old enough to serve in the war, are more likely to prefer perpetration for war, rather than engagement in peace negotiations, as a means to assure Israeli security (see column 2 of Table 2, as well as Figure 4). Together, these results emphasize that respondents who likely served as soldiers during the Yom Kippur war, have internalized the costs of military unpreparedness, and associate the Labor party which was unprepared for the Yom Kippur war, as less competent to deal with security issues.

In Table 2, we further rule out two alternative mechanisms relating to ideological change, and

Table 2: RD Estimates – Potential Mechanisms

	Labor Security	Prepare War	Ideology	Right	Left	Spending	HH Rooms	HH Members
	-0.072	0.118	-0.175	0.019	-0.041	-0.04	0.126	-0.136
	(0.039)	(0.055)	(0.124)	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.088)	(0.077)	(0.112)
Band	8	7	8	10	8	12	11	9
Obs.	12557	6879	13890	14957	13890	9932	15542	15693

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal bandwidths, and a triangular kernal. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
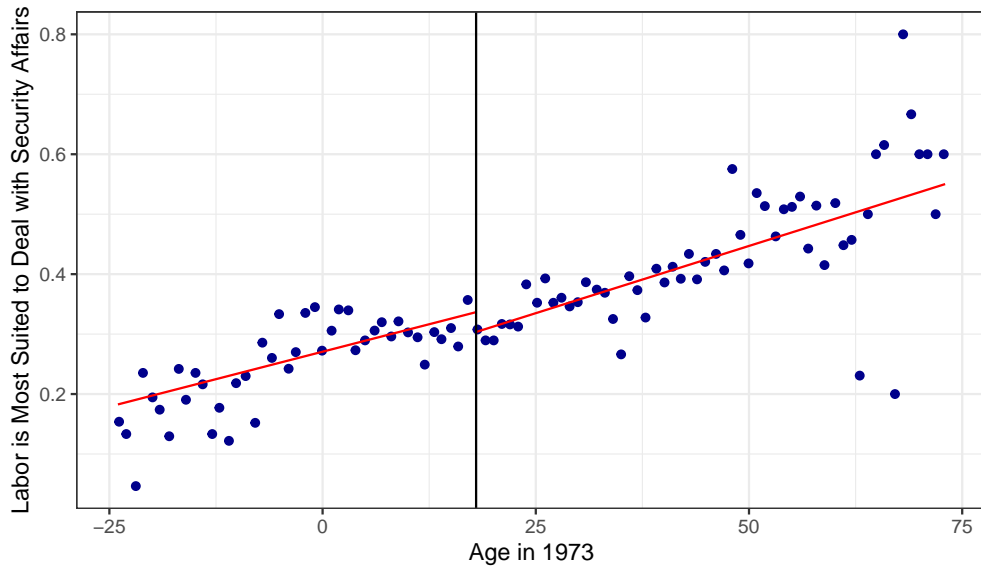

Figure 3: **Regression Discontinuity Plot** - Negative local average treatment effect of eligibility to participate in war on belief that Labor is most competent to address security affairs.

self-interest, which could potentially explain why serving in the military during a blunder war might lead to reduced long-term support for the Labor party. In the second, third, and fourth columns of Table 2, we demonstrate that participating in the 1973 war did not impact Israelis' ideological standings (measured through a 7 point ideology scale), or tendency to identify as right-(left-) wing partisans. Similarly, in the final three columns of Table 2, we demonstrate that participating in the war did not impact respondents' economic well-being, measured by household spending, number of rooms in respondents' household, or number of people in respondents' household. These additional analyses lend further credibility to our main theoretical argument by which decreased support for incumbents is a result of soldiers' updated perceptions regarding the Labor
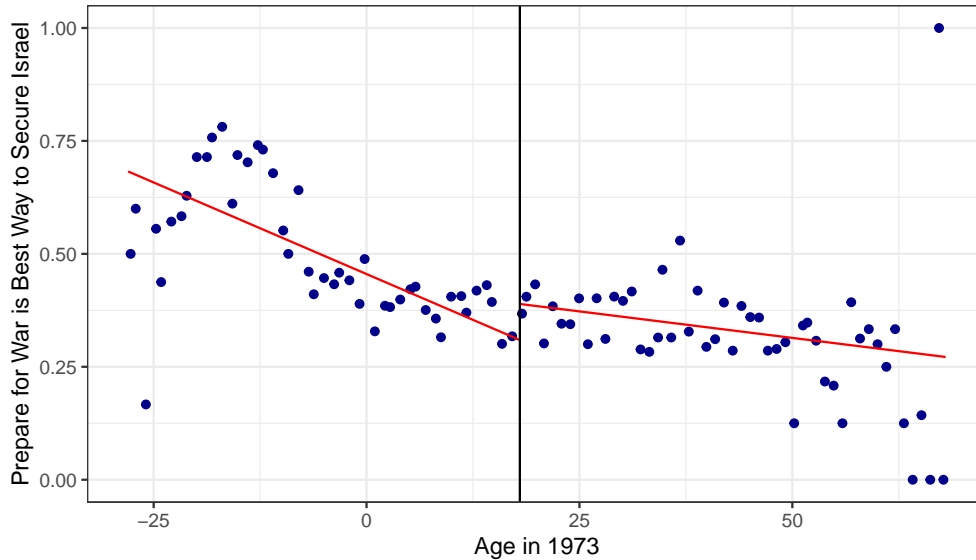
Figure 4: **Regression Discontinuity Plot** - Positive local average treatment effect of eligibility to participate in war on stating perpetration for war as a best policy to assure Israeli security.

party's competence and valence in security affairs, which led to long term changes in their political preferences.

Scope Conditions: Participating in Successful Wars does not affect Political Preferences

A key component of our theoretical framework is that military service during wars can impact soldiers' long-term support for the ruling party, because military service renders wars more salient and costly, and therefore soldiers are more likely to pay attention to war dynamics and use the war as a heuristic informing their partisan preferences. In other words, if soldiers witness a mismanaged war, they are likely to use the war as a "learning experience", and draw inferences from the war about the valence and competence of the party leading the war effort.

Accordingly, we expect that military service during war will lead soldiers to withdraw support from ruling parties, in cases of blunder wars where the ruling party's incompetence is revealed during the war and made salient to soldiers by virtue of their military service. However, participation in successful wars should not lead to negative effects, because such wars do not reveal negative information regarding incumbent parties' competence and valence. Therefore, soldiers are less likely to use such wars as a heuristic informing their partisan preferences.

To empirically examine this scope condition of our theory we replicate our analyses while focusing on eligibility to serve in the military during a successful war fought by the same incumbent Labor party six years prior to the Yom Kippur war. By identifying the effects of eligibility to participate in the 1967 war, we seek to demonstrate that serving in the military during a time of war in and of itself does not have negative effects on support for the ruling party. Instead, only military service in blunder wars lead soldiers to withdraw support from incumbents.

In our additional analyses we employ a similar identification strategy and model, but recode the running variable and discontinuity cutoff as described in Equation 3:

$$
Eligibility\,to\,Participate\,in\,War = \begin{cases} \text{Yes if age in 1967} \geq 18 \\ \text{No if age in 1967} < 18 \end{cases} \tag{3}
$$

We report our main results regarding the effects of participation in the 1967 War in Table 3. The point estimate on support for the ruling Labor party is positive, but as expected – substantively small, and imprecisely estimated. We therefore interpret this to suggest that participation in successful interstate wars does not affect soldiers' political preferences. Indeed, across all other outcomes, we do not find any statistically or substantively significant impact of military service on other political preferences.

Table 3: RD Estimates – The Effects of Conscription Eligibility in 1967

	Labor	Likud	Undecided	No Vote
	0.016	0.007	0.008	0.01
	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.017)	(0.011)
Bandwidth	14	12	15	11
Obs.	16962	16962	16962	16962

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal bandwidths,
and a triangular kernal. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Conclusion

In this paper, we consider whether military service during interstate war affects soldiers' support for the ruling party overseeing the war effort. Building on research regarding the electoral effects

of conflict, and theories regarding the impact of personal experiences on partisan preferences, we propose a series of expectations regarding how, why, and when serving in the military at times of interstate war can lead soldiers to withdraw support from the ruling party. Employing a regression discontinuity design, we demonstrate that survey respondents who likely served in the military during the 1973 Yom Kippur war, report over a tenth of a standard deviation decrease in support for the Labor party in seventeen waves of the INES from 1977-2019.

We argue and provide suggestive evidence that our main effects are driven by soldiers' re-evaluation of the Labor party's competence to deal with security threats, and increased support for policies that secure preparedness for conflict and avoid future blunders. We further rule out two alternative mechanisms relating to ideological change and decreases in personal well-being as a consequence of serving in the military during the war. Lastly, in line with our theoretical expectations, we demonstrate that serving in the military during successful (rather than blunder) wars does not affect partisan preferences. Together, our evidence provides strong empirical support for our argument that wars can have profound consequences for soldiers' partisan preferences if wars are mismanaged.

We contribute to the existing litterature in three central ways. First, we build on studies that consider the effects of war and its casualties on mass support for incumbents (Gartner and Segura 1998; Boettcher and Cobb 2009; Kriner and Shen 2012; Koch 2011; Karol and Miguel 2007; Berinsky 2007), and demonstrate that in addition to the effects of war on *public* support for incumbents, participation in war can have negative effects on *soldiers'* support for the ruling party managing the war effort. Moreover, we propose an explanation for why soldiers might punish incumbents by focusing on the higher salience of war for soldiers, and by distinguishing between blunder wars and successful wars. Unlike previous studies that highlight that wars make veterans either more hawkish or more dovish, we argue that the effects of war depend on whether the war is perceived to be well managed.

Second, we contribute to the literature on legacies of combat (Blattman 2009; Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015; Littman 2018; Lupton 2022). Specifically, we demonstrate that

the experience of serving in the military during a war can lead soldiers to update their partisan preferences and reduce support for a party overseeing a mismanaged war. In contrast to some studies on legacies of combat (Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015), our findings indicate that reduced support for incumbents was unrelated to ideological change. Instead, we argue and provide evidence that reduced support for incumbents was driven by soldiers' learning during the war. Such war-based learning led soldiers to associate the incumbent overseeing the war effort with security incompetence and avoid voting for the said incumbent.

Lastly, we contribute to the literature on the formation of political and partisan attitudes during impressionable years (Krosnick and Alwin 1989; Sears and Valentino 1997; Erickson and Stoker 2011; Osborne, Sears and Valentino 2011; Aguilar, Balcells and Cebolla-Boado 2011; Margalit 2013; Aksoy, Eichengreen and Saka 2020; Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2020; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2020). We demonstrate that military service at times of war can shape soldiers' partisan preferences if wars are mismanaged. This finding emphasizes the potential downstream effects of military drafts that can facilitate meaningful learning experiences during soldiers' impressionable years.

In addition, our evidence provides important insights for scholars of Israeli politics, who seek to understand the ongoing decline of support for the Labor party in Israel. As we demonstrate in Figure 5, public support for Labor declined from 25% in 1977 to 6% in 2019. This decline is remarkable for a party that has held office since the founding of the Israeli state, until four years following the Yom Kippur war. The findings in this paper, as well as other recent explorations of the Yom Kippur war (Getmansky and Weiss 2022), suggest that one reason for the decline of the Labor party relates to the incompetence that voters ascribed to the party, as a result of the mismanaged Yom Kippur war.

Despite the contributions of this paper, our findings are not without limitation. First, as noted above, we do not measure actual military service directly. Instead, we rely on an age-cutoff determining eligibility to participate in the war. As we argue and demonstrate above, this approach likely leads us to *underestimate* the true effect of serving in the military during the war, on long-
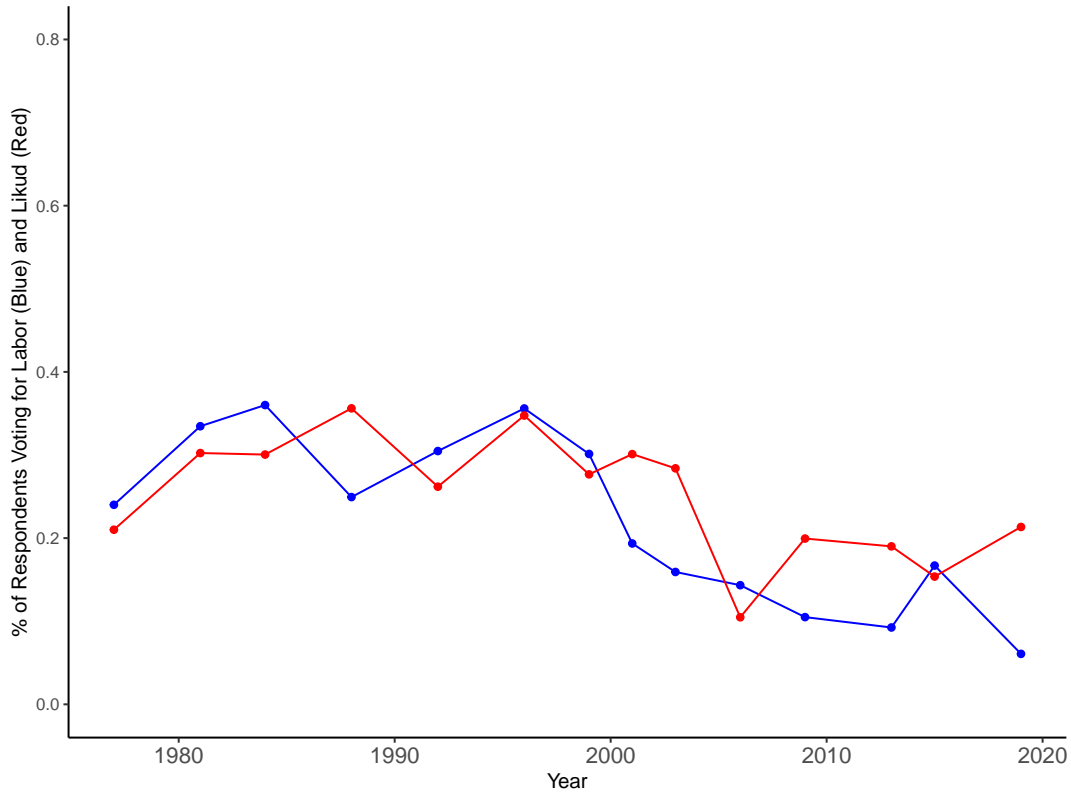
Figure 5: **Average Support for Likud (red) and Labor (blue) Over Time**

term support for the Labor party. That said, future research may leverage other empirical strategies in order to provide additional evidence regarding the effects of war on soldiers' support for incumbents. In doing so, scholars might seek to pay further attention not only to the general magnitude of effects but also consider decay rates and potential over time variation in the effects of participation in wars.

Second, our outcomes are primarily focused on self-reported rather than revealed preferences. We believe these shifts in public opinion to be important in and of themselves, given evidence of leaders' responsiveness to public opinion (Tomz et al. 2020). However, future research might consider focusing on behaviors such as party registration, to determine the extent to which serving in the military during a war affects soldiers' partisan behaviors.

Third, our local average treatment effect estimates are smaller than previous studies employing a regression discontinuity approach (Cavaille and Marshall 2019; Valentim 2021). We expect the modest magnitude of our local average treatment effects to be driven by the long time separating

between treatment and outcome for most respondents, as well as by the fact that our treatment is measured with a degree of measurement error. In addition, the war had a profound effect on the general population as well, further narrowing the gap between soldiers and civilians. Future replications focusing on our similar treatments and outcomes in different contexts would further help to benchmark the magnitude of our estimates and determine whether the effects of participation in the Yom Kippur war are small or large, in a comparative context.

Lastly, like other studies which consider the effects of war on mass-support for incumbents (Gartner and Segura 1998; Gartner 2008a; Kriner and Shen 2007; Karol and Miguel 2007), or the experience of combat on soldiers' attitudes and behaviors (Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015; Blattman 2009),[9] our evidence is drawn from a single country. We provide empirical support for our theoretically motivated scope conditions with an additional examination of the 1967 war. However, like any empirical study, future research should establish the generalizability of our findings in additional countries and wars (McDermott 2011). In doing so, scholars might focus on contemporary instances of war such as the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Karol and Miguel 2007), or historical instances of conflict such as World War I (Cagé et al. 2021; De Juan et al. 2021), and examine different mechanisms through which participation in war shapes political preferences and behaviors. We especially encourage scholars to build on our theoretical framework and empirical set up to further develop and systematically test the conditions under which participation in war might have positive, negative, or null effects on support for incumbent parties and leaders.

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[9]Though see Littman (2018) for a multi-site investigation in Uganda and Liberia.

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War Experiences Can Shape Soldiers' Support for Incumbents

Online Appendix

A INES Survey

In our analyses we consider recurring questions fro 17 waves on the Israeli National Election Study (INES) conducted in Israel between 1977-2019. As reported in Table A1, our data includes 19,613 survey responses. Descriptive statistics for all variables employed in our analyses are presented in Table A2. Note that for some variables (e.g. `War over Peace`) do not recur in all waves, and thus are reported as missing in some waves.

Table A1: Observations Per Wave

	Wave	Observatiosn
1	1977	1,372
2	1981	1,249
3	1981B	1,075
4	1981C	1,237
5	1984	1,259
6	1988	873
7	1988B	416
8	1992	1,192
9	1996	1,168
10	1999	1,075
11	2001	1,249
12	2003	1,083
13	2006	1,194
14	2009	1,037
15	2013	1,457
16	2015	1,330
17	2019	1,347

Table A2: Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Age 1973	19,258	18.937	19.719	−28	87
Vote Labor	19,449	0.224	0.417	0	1
Vote Likud	19,449	0.257	0.437	0	1
Undecided	19,449	0.136	0.343	0	1
No Vote	19,449	0.036	0.186	0	1
Male	18,134	0.502	0.500	0	1
Education	18,909	1.114	0.762	0	2
Religiosity	19,387	0.913	0.952	0	3
Ashkenazi	19,319	0.387	0.487	0	1
Ideology	16,217	3.409	1.753	1	7
Right Wing	17,292	0.481	0.500	0	1
Left Wing	16,217	0.255	0.436	0	1
Labor Security	14,708	0.307	0.461	0	1
War over Peace	8,008	0.417	0.493	0	1
HH Spending	11,873	2.899	1.215	1	5
Rooms in HH	17,892	3.676	1.270	0.000	32.000
People in HH	18,071	3.768	1.902	0	50

Labor Security is a variable taking the value of 1, if a respondent believes that the Labor party is best suited to handle security issues. Labor Economics is a variable taking the value of 1, if a respondent believes that the Labor party is best suited to handle economic issues. War over Peace is a variable taking the value of 1, if a respondent believes that the best way to protect Israel is to prepare for war.

A.1 Coding Main Variables

Our main running variable is respondents Age in 1973. To create this variables we took respondents age when responding to a given survey, and calculated their age in 1973. This variable takes negative values for respondents born after 1973. We plot the distribution of the our running variable, by survey wave, in Figure A1.
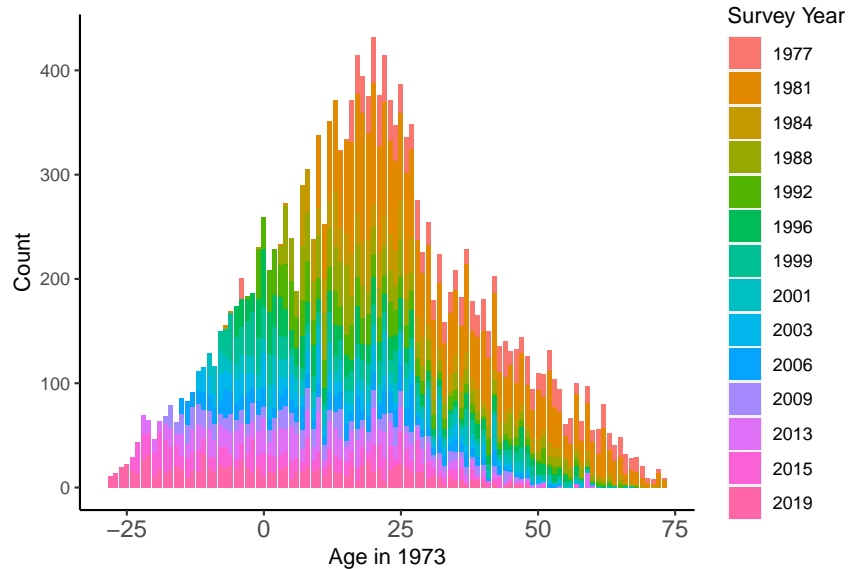

Figure A1: **Distribution of Running Variable by Survey Year**

Our main outcome of interest is responds self-reported vote share in an upcoming election. To create this question, we leverage the following question, which asks:

- If the Knesset elections were to take place today, which party list would you vote for?

Our `Vote Labor` variable takes a value of 1 if respondents report they will vote for the Labor party, and 0 otherwise. Our `Vote Likud` variable takes a value of 1 if respondents report they will vote for the Likud party, and 0 otherwise. Our `No Vote` variable takes a value of 1 if respondents report they will not vote, and 0 otherwise. Lastly, our `Undecided` variable takes a value of 1 if respondents report they are undecided, and 0 otherwise.

As noted in the main text, our two-main outcome relating to mechanisms leverage the following questions which ask:

- In order to secure its safety, should Israel prepare for war or engage in peace negotiations

    - Possible answers include: Prepare for war, engage in peace negotiations, or do both.

- What party [leader] is better suited to deal with security affairs

    - Possible answers include main large parties (in some waves leaders) competing for Knesset

We code our first variable `War over Peace` as 1, if respondents state that the best way to secure safety is by preparing for war, and 0 otherwise. In addition, we code our `Labor Security` as 1, if respondents state that Labor is most suited to deal with security affairs, and 0 otherwise. Our `Ideology` variable is based on a question which asks respondents:

- There is much talk about left and right in politics. Where would you rank yourself along a left-right continuum, where 1 is the right end and 7 is the left end?

In the few waves where the ideology scale presented to respondents was not a 1:7 scale, we recoded responses into a 1:7 scale for consistency sake. Our `Left Wing` variable codes as 1 any respondent who reports a value higher than 3 on the `Ideology` scale. Similarly, our `Right Wing` variable codes as 1 any respondent who reports a value lower than 4 on the `Ideology` scale. Lastly, our economic standing measures regarding household spending, rooms in household, and people in household, as well as our gender, ethnicity, religiosity, and education measures are based on standard demographic questions from the INES.

B   RDD Diagnostics

In Figure A2 we report results from a diagnostic test proposed by McCrary (2008). This figure provides a formal test to rule out the possibility of manipulation and selection in our running variable. As reported in Figure A2, the marginal density of our running variable (age in 1978), is continuous around age 18, reducing concerns regarding endogenous sorting around our threshold.
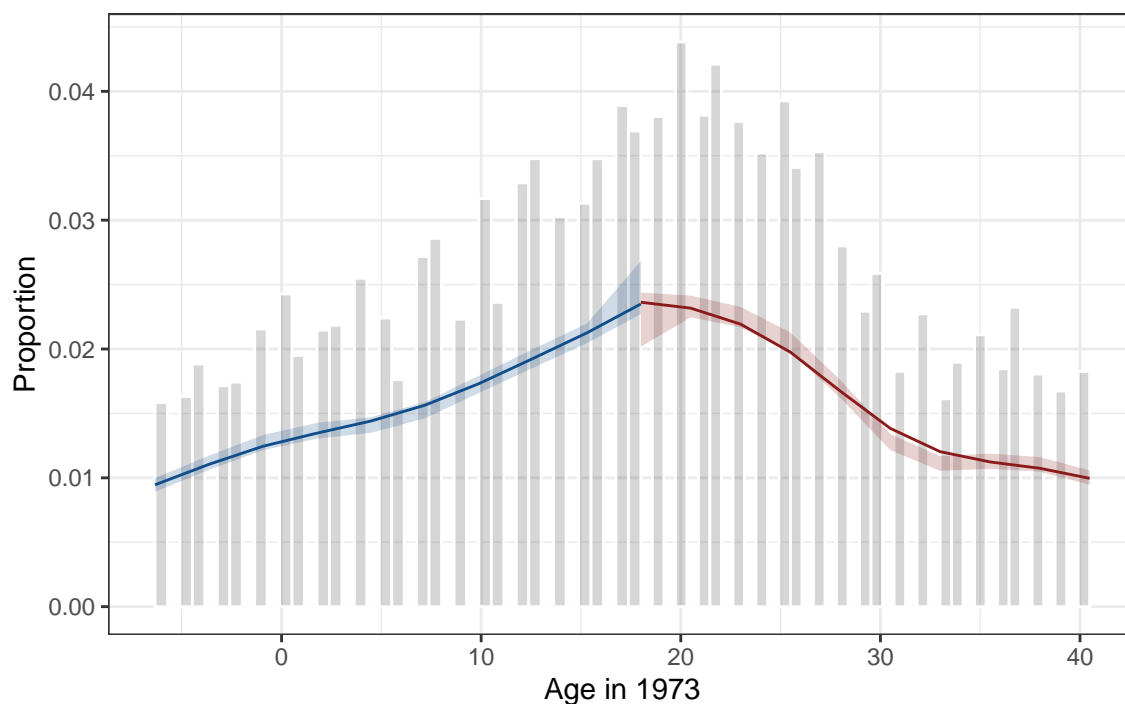
Figure A2: **McCrary Density Test** - This figure and its associated test, suggests that there is not sorting around the cutoff of our running variable.

In Figure A3 we run several placebo tests, to consider the possibility that similar effects emerge when focusing an arbitrary age-cutoffs. Specifically, we consider a cutoff which compares support for Labor amongst respondents just over or bellow ages 8-28. Interestingly, the results reported in Figure A3 yield only two precisely estimated effects (shaded in red). The first precisely estimated effect is the negative point estimate reported in Table 1, relating to the negative effect of eligibility to serve in the military during the Yom Kippur war (age 18), on support for Labor. The second precisely estimated effect is a positive point estimate, at age 22. We interpret this positive point estimate as evidence that respondents just old enough to complete their three year mandatory military service before the war erupted, are *more* likely to support the Labor party, because they were less likely to serve in the military during the war.

In Figure A4 we further estimate 10 models with age cutoffs ranging between 50-60. We find that the only precisely estimated effect from these models is around the age of 54. We attribute this precisely estimated effect to exemption age from reserve military service. In other words,
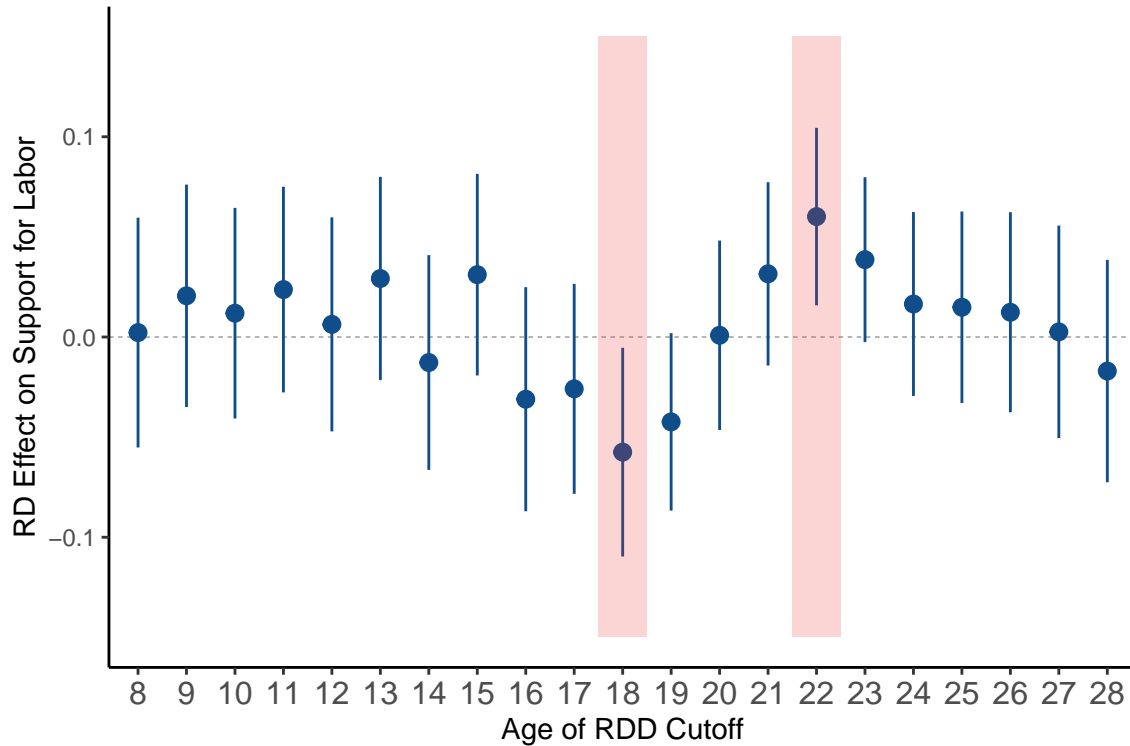
Figure A3: **RD Estimates Using Alternative Cutoff Points** - This figure contrasts the negative and significant RD effects for the 1955 cohort, with other cohorts around the discontinuity. The figure demonstrates that respondents just old enough to serve in the military report lower support for Labor, and respondents just old enough to be exempt from mandatory service report higher support for Labor.

respondents just old enough to be exempt from reserve military service are more likely to vote for Labor. Taken together, we construe the patterns reported in Figures A3-A4, as further evidence that our main negative effect is driven by soldiers conscripted in military service during the Yom Kippur war. In light of the war and the incompetence revealed by the Labor party, such soldiers are less likely to support the Labor party well after the war concluded.

Lastly, In Table A3 we consider the extent to which several covariates are continuous around the discontinuity. As noted by De la Cuesta and Imai (2016), such continuity, which some refer to as balance, is not a necessary condition for our design to be valid. Regardless, it appears that subjects around the continuity are similar in terms of education and religiosity. However, it appears that treated respondents in our sample are less likely to be of Ashkenazi descent.
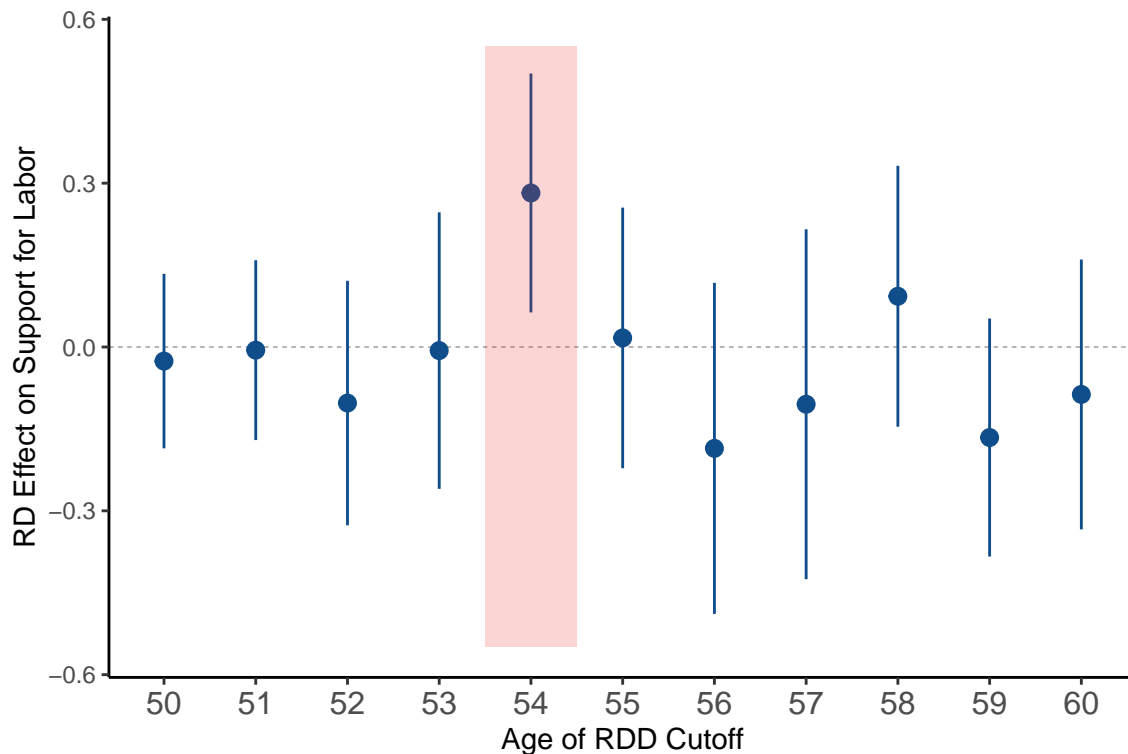
Figure A4: **RD Estimates Using Alternative Cutoff Points II** - This figure demonstrates that male respondents just old enough to be exempt from reserve duty report higher levels of support for Labor.

Table A3: Demographic Differences Around the Discontinuity

	Education	Religiosity	Ashkenazi
	0.027	0.034	-0.103
	(0.081)	(0.057)	(0.037)
Bandwidth	8	10	5
Obs.	16474	16919	16828

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal bandwidths, and a triangular kernal. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

C Robustness Checks

C.1 Ruling Out Concerns Regarding Measurement Error and Cohort Effects

A central concern regarding the analyses reported in Table 1 relates to the fact that we do not measure respondents' participation in war directly. Instead, we rely on an age-cutoff to differentiate

between survey respondents who participated or did not participate in the Yom Kippur war. In the main text we argue that our approach introduces measurement error in our treatment. We expect this measurement error to bias our point estimates towards zero. This is since, respondents' too young to participate in the war could not have served in the military, whereas respondents old enough to participate in the war did not necessarily serve in the military. It follows that some respondents which we consider to have participated in the war, and expect to report lower-support for the incumbent party, may have not participated in the war, and may have not changed their evaluation of the incumbent.

To substantiate our argument regarding downward bias introduced in light of potential measurement error, in Table A4 we replicate our main models on three sub-samples of the INES: male respondents, female respondents, and respondents who immigrated to Israel after 1973. These models include two outcomes: support for labor and self-reported undecidedness.

We have reason to believe that men who were older than 18 in 1973, were more likely than women who were older than 18 in 1973, to serve in the military during the war. Accordingly our point estimate should be significant and larger amongst our male sample, when compared with the female sample. More so, men who were older than 18 in 1973, were more likely to participate in the war, when compared with immigrants who moved to Israel after 1973 and are not included in our main sample. Accordingly, the point estimate amongst our immigrant sub-sample should be insignificant and close to zero.

Table A4: RD Estimates – The Effects of Conscription Eligibility in 1973 by Subgroups

	Labor	Labor	Labor	Undecided	Undecided	Undecided
	-0.071	-0.048	-0.008	0.081	0.01	0.034
	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.048)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.051)
Bandwidth	9	11	15	10	13	16
Sample	Male	Female	Immigrant	Male	Female	Immigrant
Obs.	7813	7699	2124	7813	7699	2142

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal bandwidths and a triangular kernal,
Robust standard errors in parentheses.

The findings in Table A4 confirm our expectations. When estimating our main models amongst

male survey respondents the point estimate of our average treatment effect on support for Labor increases substantially from a tenth of a standard deviation to a seventeenth of a standard deviation. Similar patterns emerge with regards to our undecidedness outcome.

We interpret the increased point estimates in our male-only sample to suggest that the inclusion of "treated" subjects who are less-likely to serve in the military in 1973 (i.e. non-compliers), introduces downward-bias in our main estimates. Indeed, the point estimates in models which focus on female survey respondents are smaller and estimated imprecisely. Likewise, models focusing on our immigrant sub-sample yield very small estimates with high uncertainty.

These additional models help address concerns regarding measurement error. However, they also reduce concerns regarding alternative cohort effects which may be confounding our main estimate. In other words, if cohort effects such as high-school graduation or eligibility to vote in national elections are driving our main estimates, than all models reported in Table A4 should result in precisely estimated effects, in similar magnitude to our main effect from Table 1. However, the fact that our effects are driven by male respondents—those most likely to serve in the military in 1973 conditional on being over the age of 18— enhances our confidence that the negative effects on support for the Labor incumbent party are driven by participation in interstate war. Finally, in Table A5, we show that our results remain unchanged when omitting respondents above the age of 54 in 1973.

Table A5: RD Estimates – The Effects of Participation in 1973 War (Omiting Respondents 54+)

	Labor	Likud	Undecided	No Vote
	-0.06	0.032	0.055	-0.004
	(0.024)	(0.032)	(0.023)	(0.010)
Bandwidth	10	8	8	15
Obs.	16004	16004	16004	16004

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal, bandwidths and a triangular kernal. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

C.2 Alternative RDD Specifications

In this section, we consider the robustness of our result to several alternative specifications. First, in Table A6 we demonstrate the robustness of our findings when employing a second-order polynomial. Second, In table A7, we employ Uniform and Epechnikov Kernels. Doing so, does not substantially change our main findings. Third, in Figure A5 we report our main RD estimates, with all different possible bandwidth selection procedures proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2015). For our main effect relating to Labor support, the point estimate is consistent across all bandwidth selection procedures. In 5 of our Labor support models point estimates are precisely estimated at conventional levels ($p < 0.05$) and in all other Labor support models effects are approaching conventional levels of statistical significance ($p < 0.1$). While the null effects remain consistent for the Likud and no-vote models regarding of bandwidth selection procedure, our results for the undecided effect are somewhat sensitive to the procedure one employs to calculate the RD bandwidth. Regardless, our main specification in the paper follows the default specification proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2015).

Table A6: The Effects of Conscription Eligibility in 1973 – (2nd Order Polynomial)

	Labor	Likud	Undecided	No Vote
	-0.057	0.041	0.062	0.007
	(0.027)	(0.035)	(0.026)	(0.014)
Bandwidth	10	14	13	15
Obs.	16962	16962	16962	16962

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal bandwidths,
and a triangular kernal. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

In Table A8 we seek to rule out the possibility that our results are driven by a particular survey wave. To do so, we omit one wave at a time and our estimate our model with one missing year of survey data. Despite reductions in sample size, our results remain similar. In Table A9 we consider models with a survey-wave fixed-effect, where we cluster our errors by wave. Our results are robust to these additional models. Finally, in Table A10, we consider additional models, controlling for pre-treatment covariates, including: age, education, religiosity, and ethnicity. Point estimates

Table A7: The Effects of Conscription Eligibility in 1973 – (Alternative Kernel Functions)

	Labor	Labor	Likud	Likud	Undecided	Undecided	No Vote	No Vote
	-0.06	-0.062	0.029	0.029	0.058	0.054	0.007	0.014
	(0.027)	(0.024)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.02)	(0.014)	(0.016)
Bandwidth	9	8	9	7	8	8	15	10
Kernel	Epanechnikov	Uniform	Epanechnikov	Uniform	Epanechnikov	Uniform	Epanechnikov	Uniform
Obs.	16962	16962	16962	16962	16962	16962	16962	16962

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal bandwidths. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
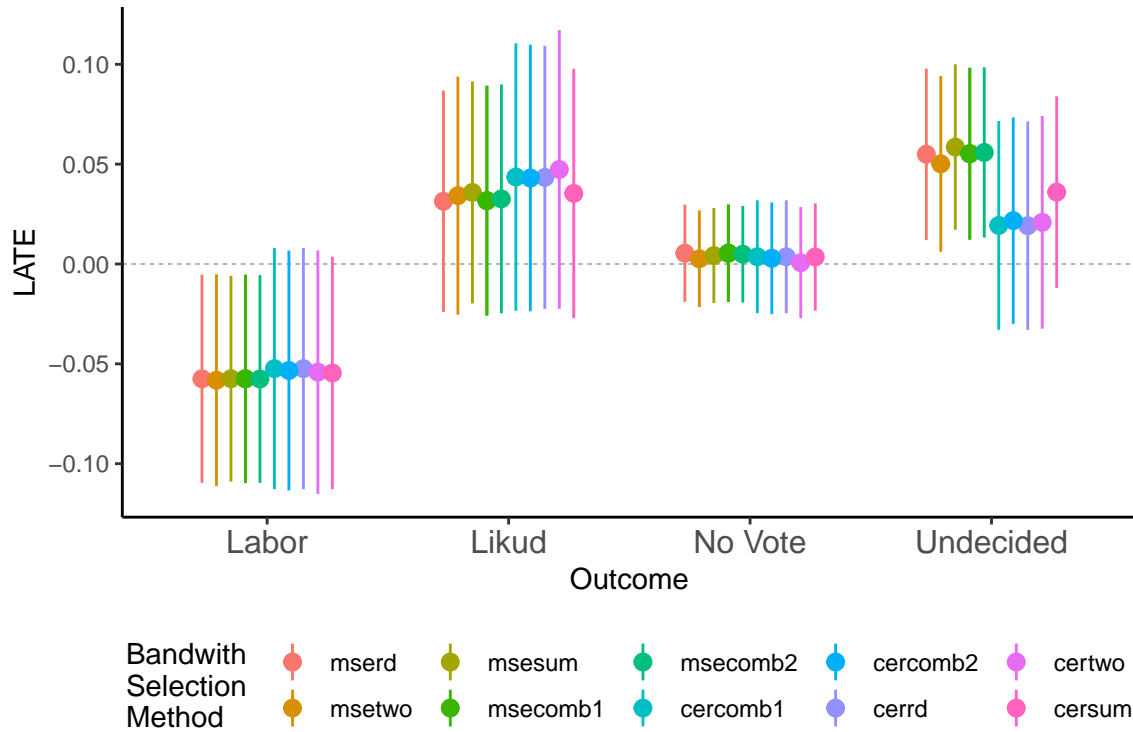

Figure A5: **Main RD Estimates Using Alternative Bandwidth Selection Methods** - This figure demonstrates that our main estimates are largely consistent when using different bandwidth selection methods.

from these models yield similar results. Indeed, including controls increases the magnitude of our estimates, and when doing so, we further identify a positive effect of serving in the military, on support for the Likud party.

Table A8: RD Estimates – Omit One Year from Sample

	77	81	84	88	92	96	99	01	03	06	09	13	15	19
	-0.061	-0.062	-0.057	-0.059	-0.056	-0.05	-0.055	-0.059	-0.059	-0.062	-0.056	-0.059	-0.056	-0.05
	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.028)
Bandwidth	9	9	9	10	10	11	14	10	10	9	10	10	10	9
Obs.	15596	13519	15804	15763	15889	15903	16026	16032	16152	16055	16190	15794	15908	15875

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal bandwidths, and a triangular kernal. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Each column omits survey respondents from one INES wave.

Table A9: RD Estimates – The Effects of Participation in 1973 War (Accounting for Cycle)

	Labor	Likud	Undecided	No Vote
	0.05	0.027	0.05	0.001
	(0.019)	(0.029)	(0.019)	(0.013)
Bandwidth	9	7	9	10
Fixed-Effect	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle
Cluster	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle
Obs.	16962	16962	16962	16962

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal, bandwidths and a triangular kernal. Models include cycle fixed-effects, and robust standard errors clustered by cycle in parentheses.

Table A10: RD Estimates – The Effects of Participation in 1973 War (with Controls)

	Labor	Likud	Undecided	No Vote
	-0.054	0.053	0.034	0.001
	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.019)	(0.013)
Bandwidth	14	11	13	11
Obs.	14507	14507	14507	14507

Regression discontinuity models with MSE optimal, bandwidths and a triangular kernal. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Controls include gender, religiosity, ethnicity, and education.

C.3 Alternative Consideration of Long-Term Effects

Figure A6 in this section supplements Figure 2 from the main text. In Figure A6 we consider how gradually adding survey waves farther from the Yom-Kippur war shapes our key point estimates. As noted in the main text, doing so allows us to consider the extent to which RD analyses that focus on different time frames yield similar point estimates. However, doing so comes at the cost of precision (since estimates based on the time frame closest to the war are likely underpowered), and as noted in the main text, we emphasize that these analyses are subject to power limitations.
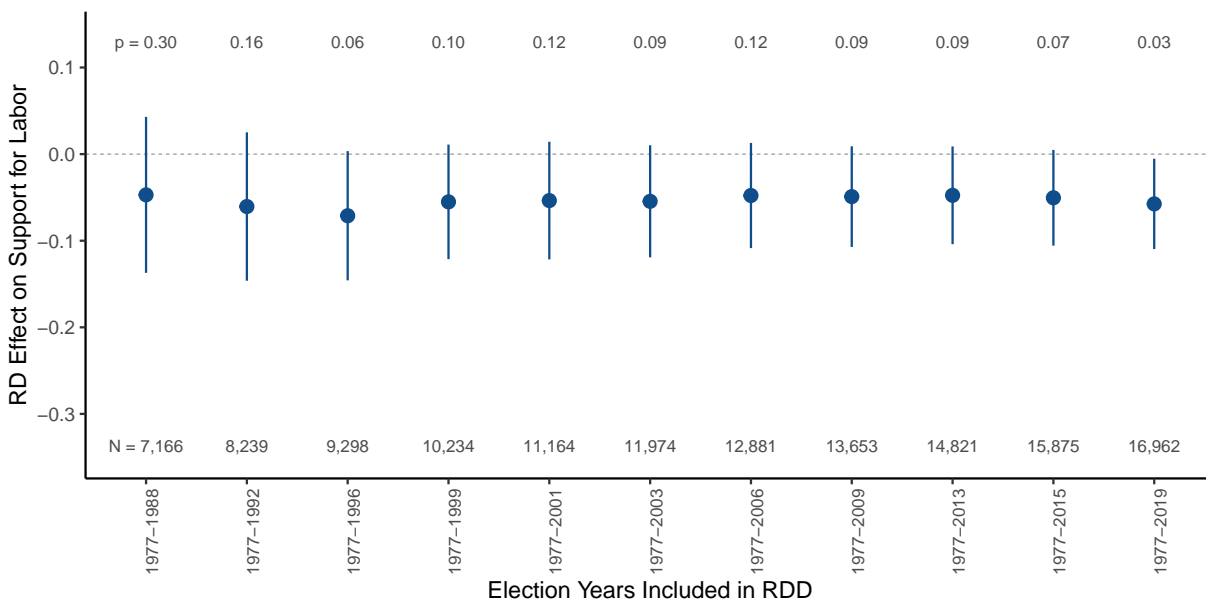

Figure A6: **Point estimates from 11 RDD regressions in which we gradually narrow the temporal scope of our sample, and estimate the effects of participation in the Yom Kippur war on support for the Labor party.** In these models we gradually omit survey waves, in order to consider the long-term effects of war participation on our main outcome – Support for Labor.

With this limitation in mind, we carefully interpret the stable point estimates reported in Figure A6 to suggest that the effects of the Yom-Kippur war appear to be stable over time. In other words, though the precision of estimates varies (likely as a consequence of sample size), the point estimates for the 1977-1988 time frame, are similar to point estimates of time frames that include later years (e.g. 1977-2003). Thus, these patterns do not provide strong evidence for decaying effects. If anything they provide suggestive evidence that the effects of the war were relatively stable

over time. However, as we emphasize in our analyses and conclusions, the analyses in Figure 2 and Figure A6 are subject to empirical limitations, and we encourage future research to leverage different designs that rely on panel data in order to fully test variation in effect sizes over time.

D   Military Conscription and Mobilization in 1973

A central underlying assumption in our empirical analysis is that respondents, and especially male respondents who were at the age 18 in 1973, were more likely to serve as soldiers during the Yom Kippur war. Mandatory military service in the Israeli case (Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015), as well as previous documentation of mass-mobilization during the Yom Kippur war (**?**), warrant this assumption as to be plausible. However, to gain more insight on recruitment and mobilization in 1973, we filed a FOIA request, asking the Israeli military's spokesman to provide details regarding the share of Israeli citizens in the 1955 cohort who were recruited to the military during 1973. We also asked for information regarding the share of military reserve soldiers who were enlisted to serve in the military during the 1973 war.

We present the response from the Israeli military's spokesman in Figure A7. The formal response notes that almost 70% of men born in 1955 were enlisted for military service in 1973. Since this figure includes Arab citizens, the share of military service amongst Jews (the population which we focus on), is likely higher. Similarly, the response from the military's spokesman confirms that during 1973, the military engaged in mass mobilization, recruiting 82% of eligible reserve soldiers throughout the year.

The spokesman emphasizes that these numbers are based on old records which were hand coded, and therefore their precision should be considered with caution. However, the general insights from the response reported in Figure A7, emphasize that the probability of serving in the military, conditional on being over the age of 18 in 1973, was substantively high especially for men, and that mobilization amongst eligible reserve soldiers was very high as well. Together, these points provide further intuition regarding the suitability of our empirical approach.

צבא	ההגנה	לישראל
חטיבת	דובר	צה״ל
תא	חוק	חופש	המידע
		073-3862131	:טל׳
כ׳	סיון	תשפ״א
31	מאי	2021

לכבוד,

אנה גיטמנסקי

הנדון : **בקשתך למידע בנושא גיוס במלחמת יום כיפור**

שלך : בקשתך מתאריך 18 באפריל 2021

1. בקשתך בנושא שבנדון התקבלה בצה״ל והועברה להתייחסות הגורמים המקצועיים. להלן התייחסות צה״ל לבקשתך.

2. להלן אחוזי הגיוס בעבור שנת הלידה 1955 (ששנת הגיוס העיקרית שלה היא 1973) :

   גברים – 68.9%

   נשים – 44.17%

3. מתוך כלל המשרתים בסוג שירות מילואים, 82% זומנו למילואים פעילים במהלך שנת 1973. לא ניתן להוציא את הנתונים בפילוח לפי שירות מילואים בתקופת המלחמה בלבד.

4. יצוין כי הנתונים המובאים מתבססים על נתונים ישנים ושהוזנו באופן ידני, ומאז שהוזנו, הוכנסו למערכת הממוחשבת. על כן, הנתונים עלולים להיות לא מדויקים.

5. בברכה,

ליפשיץ	מיקה	סא״ל
ומבצעים	אסטרטגיה	רע״ן

ב/דובר צה״ל והממונה על חופש המידע בצה״ל

Figure A7: **Response to FOIA from the Israeli Military's spokesman** - This response details that 68.9% of male and 44.17% of female citizens born in 1955 were recruited to the Israeli military. In addition, 82% of eligible reserve soldiers were mobilized for service in 1973.