Quick review
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Audience Costs theory
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Deeper Dive
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Multiple Inconsistencies
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Extra Material
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POLS 318: Theories of IR
Lecture 19 (10.22.2020):
Audience Costs: The Public Angle

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Overview

Review

WHAT WE COVERED LAST MEETING?

- Audience costs theory.
- The political costs of backing down from promises.
- Strategic angle - democracies and credible threats.
- Why costs? reputation, honor and credibility.
- The observation problem.
- The measures if information flow and crisis reciprocation.
- Beyond democracies - dictator have audience as well.

Questions?? Email me!

Politics in the real world

- 2020 elections and concerns over violence in the US (Link)

MORE WEB SOURCES

- The *Monkey Cage* blog (Washington Post).
- War on the Rocks - military focus.
- Political violence in a glance (POV).
- Podcasts:
    - IS: Off the Page Pod
    - Terrorism 360 Podcast
    - Brookings cafeteria
    - Paul Poast Podcast - IR focus

Audience Costs

Main Challenge

- How can we 'view' audience costs?

- Strategic state behavior.

- Measures $\rightarrow$ reciprocation in conflict.

- The public - fundamental element in AC...

- Do citizens matter in IR? How?

Audience Costs

Tomz (2007)

- Test public opposition to leaders' empty threats.
- Do citizens reject inconsistent behavior by leaders?
- Evidence for microfoundations of IR behavior.
- Method: experiment (isolate causal effect - inconsistency).
- Factors:
    1. Regime type.
    2. Motivation for attack.
    3. Power relations with the US.
    4. Interests at stake.

Audience Costs - public evidence

Tomz (2007)

	Public reaction to empty threat (%)	−	Public reaction to staying out (%)	=	Difference in opinion (%)	Summary of differences (%)
Disapprove						
Disapprove very strongly	31 (27 to 35)		20 (17 to 23)		11 (6 to 17)	16 (10 to 22)
Disapprove somewhat	18 (14 to 21)		13 (10 to 16)		5 (0 to 9)	
Neither						
Lean toward disapproving	8 (6 to 11)		9 (7 to 11)		0 (−3 to 3)	
Don't lean either way	21 (17 to 24)		21 (18 to 24)		0 (−5 to 4)	−4 (−9 to 2)
Lean toward approving	8 (6 to 11)		11 (9 to 14)		−3 (−6 to 0)	
Approve						
Approve somewhat	8 (5 to 10)		13 (11 to 16)		−6 (−9 to −2)	−12 (−17 to −8)
Approve very strongly	6 (4 to 9)		13 (10 to 16)		−7 (−10 to −3)	

Audience Costs - public evidence

LEVEL OF ESCALATION

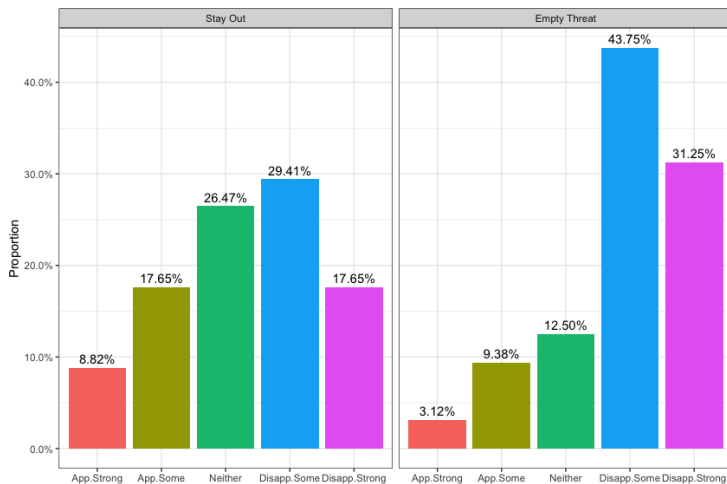| Level of escalation	Absolute audience cost (%)	Relative risk of disapproval (%)
Threat of force	16 (10 to 22)	1.5 (1.3 to 1.7)
Display of force	16 (10 to 22)	1.5 (1.3 to 1.7)
Use without U.S. casualties	23 (16 to 29)	1.7 (1.5 to 2.0)
Use with U.S. casualties	32 (26 to 39)	2.0 (1.7 to 2.3)

Audience Costs - public evidence

Tomz (2007)

MORE ELEMENTS

- Overall → disapproval for backing-down.
- Less criticism for 'stay-out' option.
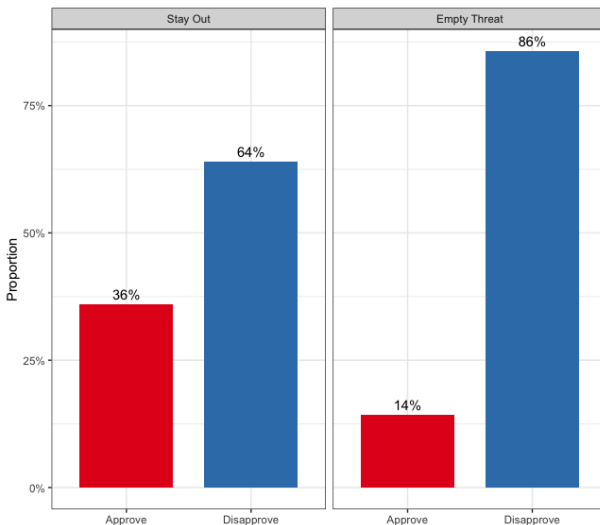- Stronger effect for politically engaged.

Why reject backing-down?
- 'Right thing to do'.
- Credibility, reputation.

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Deeper Dive
○○○

Multiple Inconsistencies
○○○○○○○○○○○

Extra Material
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POLS 318 & Audience Costs

POLS 318 & Audience Costs

Audience Costs - public evidence

Levendusky and Horowitz (2012)

- Explore the situation and effects on AC.
- Focus → domestic political conditions.
- How changes the extent of audience costs?

(1) Elite reactions

- Opposition → view of resolve.
- Elites, info advantage and signal for public.
- Split vs. consensus to president's actions.

Audience Costs - public evidence

(2) Partisanship

- Political affiliation and criticism on leader.
- Security crisis as immediate threat.
- Framing by president - the national interest.

(3) Justification

- How new information changes views?
- Information to justify backing-down.
- Competent leader $\rightarrow$ reduced costs.
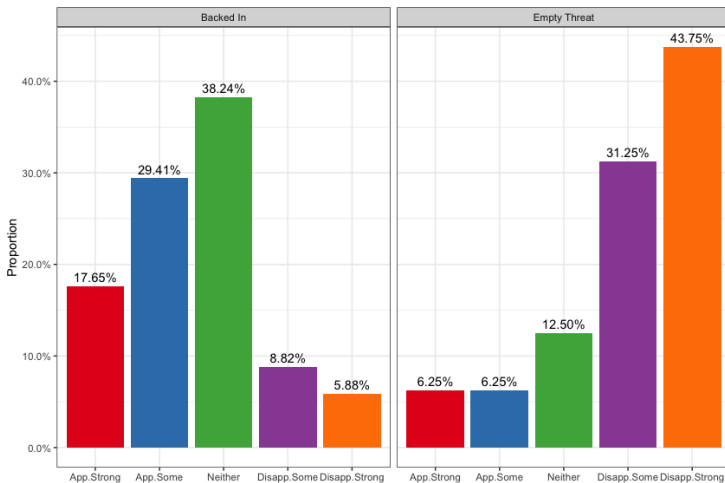
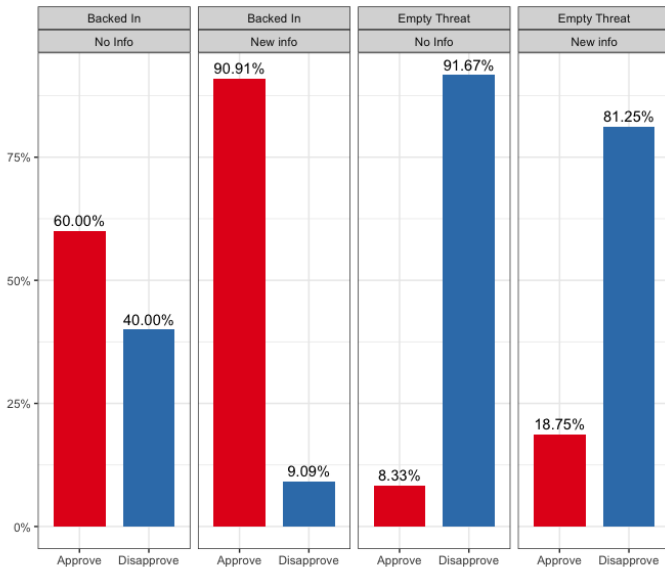## Audience Costs

Information and domestic politics

MAIN RESULTS:

- Effects on approval of president. ▸ Approval
- New information and elite views affect public opinion.
- Partisanship has limited effect.
- Reputation and incompetence.
- The process of AC formation.

Finding audience costs: POLS 318

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Deeper Dive
○○○

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Extra Material
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Finding audience costs: POLS 318

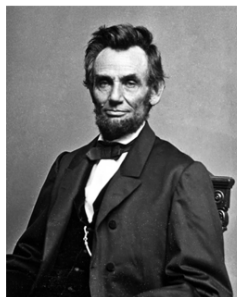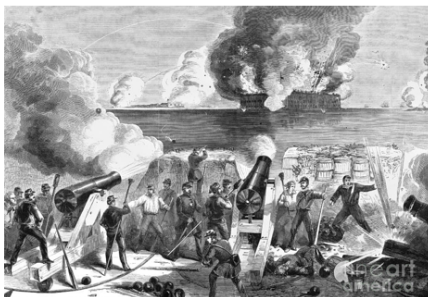# Audience costs: POLS 318

INCONSISTENCY - NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Probing Inconsistency

More than backing-down

- Empty threat → reputation and credibility costs.
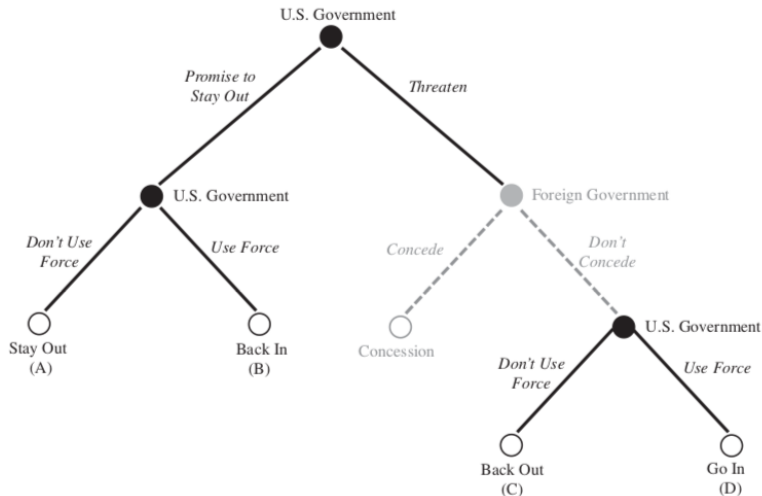- Backing-In??

Fort Sumter April-June 1861

Compare Inconsistent actions

Back-down vs. Back-in (Levy et al. 2015)

- Consistency $\rightarrow$ foundation of AC.

- Domestic costs for failure to honor promise to 'stay-out'.

- Game setting - expand the 'stay-out' node:
  - Remain out.
  - Backing in: intervene and break promise.

Back-down and Back-in

Back-down and Back-in

Results

- Inconsistency and growing audience costs.
- New information.
- Rewarding the leader for 'backing-out'.
- Small punishment for 'backing-in'.
- Competence, reputation and credibility.

Inconsistency and the public

Kertzer and Brutger (2016)

- Extend debate on costs of inconsistency.
- Punishment for initial intervention decision.
- The 'belligerence costs' (a sunk cost).
- The two elements of audience costs.

A double barreled gun

Belligerence costs:

- Citizens oppose using force in IR.
- Fears of escalation, isolationist views.

Heterogeneous Audience

- Different views of AC elements.
- Public characteristics matter for signal of resolve.
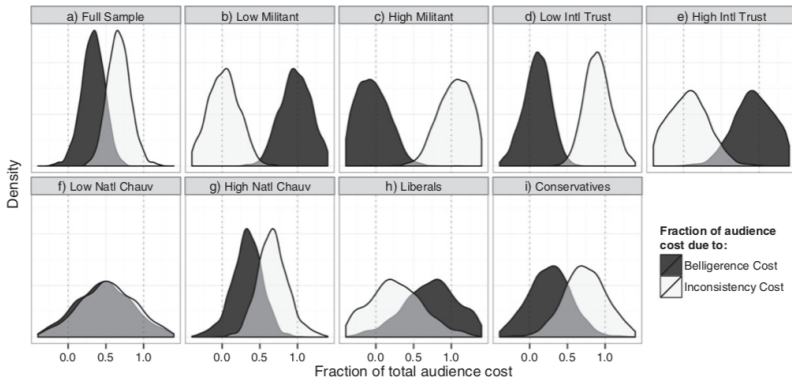
Audience costs and public

Heterogeneous Audience

- Military assertiveness.
- International trust.
- Nationalism.
- Political ideology.

Results

- Backing down and approval ratings.
- Decompose audience costs - inconsistency (67%) and belligerence (33%).

Decompose audience costs and public

Recommended readings

More studies on audience costs:

1. Schwartz, Joshua A., and Christopher W. Blair. "Do Women Make More Credible Threats? Gender Stereotypes, Audience Costs, and Crisis Bargaining." International Organization (2020): 1-24.

2. Li, Xiaojun, and Dingding Chen. "Public opinion, international reputation, and audience costs in an authoritarian regime." Conflict Management and Peace Science (2018).

3. Weiss, Jessica Chen, and Allan Dafoe. "Authoritarian Audiences, Rhetoric, and Propaganda in International Crises: Evidence from China." International Studies Quarterly 63.4 (2019): 963-973.

President Approval