

Limited War and American Civic Engagement

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Abstract

Although a substantial literature investigates the influence of war on civic engagement, too often it focuses exclusively on mass-mobilizing, successful conflicts and treats war as a monolithic variable affecting all Americans equally. This study takes a new tack and examines the influence of disparities in local communities' casualty rates in three wars – Vietnam, Korea and World War II – on their residents' patterns of political engagement. Using individual-level data from the National Elections Studies and Social Capital Benchmark Survey as well as aggregate electoral turnout data at the county level we show that citizens from communities that suffered high casualty rates in the Vietnam and Korean Wars were significantly less politically engaged in each conflict's wake than their peers from low casualty communities. By contrast, respondents from communities that suffered higher casualty rates in World War II were no less politically engaged than their peers.

How does the scale and outcome of a war affect the way that military conflict shapes American political and civic life? The bulk of existing scholarship focuses on the ability of mass wartime mobilization to forge public-private partnerships that can spur tremendous growth in postwar associational life and civic engagement (Skocpol 1999; Skocpol, Ganz & Munson, 2000; Skocpol, et. al. 2002; Putnam 2000). In this article, we agree with the conventional wisdom that wars can have a transformative effect on society for years and even decades after the last gun falls silent. However, we argue that some wars have diametrically opposite consequences for American democracy and depress political engagement, particularly among the communities that bore a disproportionate share of the conflict's human costs.

While existing scholarship on war and civic engagement has focused primarily on large-scale, ultimately successful conflicts such as the Civil War, World War I and World War II, it says comparatively little about the effects of limited and less successful military engagements, such as Vietnam and Korea. As a result, the gap in our understanding of war and civil society is the opposite of that identified by Mettler in the realm of social policy. Mettler (2003, 351) argued that because studies of government programs and engagement had focused on low-level participatory programs “we know little about how major social programs that reach broad sectors of the population have shaped civic participation.” In contrast, research on war and engagement has focused almost exclusively on mass-mobilization conflicts, and thus we know little about how wars that do *not* reach wide sectors of the population shape patterns of civic engagement.

One of the most important reasons for this omission is methodological. Most analyses of war and civic engagement have employed a comparative historical approach: they identify differences in pre- and post-war engagement trends and endeavor to demonstrate the mechanisms by which military involvement produced the observed temporal changes. Viewed in this way, wars are conceptualized as “‘critical moments,’ ‘punctuated equilibria,’ or ‘branching points’” (Sparrow 1996, 7). The major limitation of this historical framework for causal inference is that it treats war as a single, national exogenous shock and attributes any observed changes in national participatory trends to the war and its direct and indirect

influences (though for a more sophisticated approach, see Crowley and Skocpol 2001). Such an approach may well be appropriate for large conflicts, such as World War II, which dominated virtually every aspect of American social and political life from 1941 to 1945. However, applying this conceptual framework to Vietnam, for example, creates causal inference problems because the temporal shock of war is correlated with many other social and political movements of the 1960s. A simple pre- and post-Vietnam comparison of national trends in engagement could attribute to the war changes that in fact were generated by independent processes.

In this article we present a new empirical strategy to overcome this problem of inference and assess the effects of limited and unsuccessful wars on American civic life. We re-conceptualize war not as a single uniform national experience, but as a collection of county-level experiences that differ significantly across the nation. Acknowledging that the burdens and costs of war are far from uniformly distributed across American society, we take advantage of this cross-sectional variance and examine whether variation in wartime experience across counties correlates with variation in political and civic engagement across those same counties.

The empirical challenge is how to measure variation in the local effects of war. We argue that local casualties – the number of American soldiers killed in war from a person’s own county – serve as an effective proxy for the “effects of limited war.” Not only do local casualty rates capture citizens’ differential exposure to the highest cost of military action – human sacrifice on foreign battlefields – but they also may serve as a proxy for a community’s direct involvement in the war more generally as high casualty communities may have placed more men in the military, and more importantly, in harms way fighting overseas than communities with lower casualty rates.

To demonstrate that residents from high casualty communities experienced war through a different lens than their low casualty peers, we begin with an analysis of National Election Study data assessing Americans’ concerns that the United States would become involved in a future war. Residents of communities that suffered high casualty rates in the Vietnam War were significantly more likely to be

worried about war in the post-1972 era, whereas before 1965 they were no more or less concerned about future military engagements than other Americans.

Having established that local casualty rates capture variance in war-related effects, the article turns to its central task: analyzing the influence of limited wars on political and civic engagement. Drawing on individual-level data from the National Elections Studies and Social Capital Benchmark Survey, as well as aggregate electoral turnout data at the county level, we show that citizens from communities that suffered high casualty rates in the Vietnam and Korean Wars were significantly less politically engaged in each conflict's wake than their peers from low casualty communities. By contrast, citizens from communities that experienced high casualty rates in World War II were no more or less engaged, on average, than their peers.

In every empirical model, we include socio-economic and demographic control variables to account for the fact that casualty rates are associated with county socio-economic status. Nevertheless, we recognize continued concerns of omitted variable bias – that casualty rates may be reflecting some underlying, but unobserved variable that is not war-related but is highly correlated with casualties and our dependent variables. To bolster confidence in our results, whenever possible we re-estimate all of our empirical models with pre-war and post-war data to show that statistically significant relationships between a community's wartime casualty rate and its residents' patterns of political engagement emerge only *after* a war's conclusion.

By operationalizing the local effects of war as county casualty rates, we have constructed an analytical framework that allows us to examine the negative effects of limited and less successful armed conflicts on citizens' subsequent patterns of political and civic engagement. Our article serves as a reminder that while militarized conflicts that mass mobilize the citizenry for war may boost postwar participation in political and civic life, limited and unsuccessful wars may depress political engagement, particularly among those communities that experienced its costs disproportionately.

War and Civic Engagement

Prior studies of the effects of war on civic engagement have focused almost entirely on the World Wars or the Civil War (Skocpol 1999; Skocpol, Ganz & Munson, 2000; Mettler 2002; Skocpol, et. al. 2002; Putnam 2000). An extensive literature argues that conflicts which mass mobilize the public sector behind the war effort and forge private-public partnerships have the potential to spur civic voluntarism, create new and bolster existing civic organizations charged with public purposes, and broadly transmit the civic skills necessary for a robust civil society (Stein and Russett 1980, Skocpol et al 2002). Other scholars emphasize the capacity of war, particularly of successful wars such as World War II, to affect patterns of participation by shaping popular levels of trust in government, feelings of political efficacy and conceptions of civic duty, all of which motivate citizens to bear the costs of participation (Putnam 1993, 2000 Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995, Fiorina 1999).

However, as a number of leading scholars have openly acknowledged, comparatively little is known about how other wars, including Korea, Vietnam and even ongoing conflicts such as the war in Iraq, have affected and will continue to influence patterns of political and civic engagement in America.¹ These and similar conflicts differ from their brethren on two important dimensions: their considerably smaller scales and their varying levels of ultimate success or failure.

Neither the Vietnam nor the Korean conflict mass mobilized society on a war footing. As a result, the major public-private partnerships between government, business, labor and civic associations so prominent in 1917 and 1941 never materialized. Without these synergistic relationships between state and civil society, the impetus that fueled greater political and civic engagement after previous wars failed to

¹ For example, Skocpol et. al. (2002, 137) acknowledged “a complete analysis would ... [probe] the effects of pivotal smaller conflicts, such as the Spanish-American War and the war in Vietnam.”

Similarly, Sparrow (2002, 269) laments that “leading students of U.S. civil-military relations ... did not and do not look at the linkage between the United States’ conduct of limited warfare and the declining legitimacy of the American state.”

emerge. As Skocpol has noted (1999, 483): “the aftermath of every previous war in American history brought rising fraternal enrollments, especially among elites, but not the aftermath of the war in Vietnam.” If mass mobilization is the engine that leads to postwar civic booms, then there is little reason to expect limited wars to fuel citizen activism and political engagement.

Perhaps even more important than their smaller scale is the divergent end result for these latter conflicts: at best, a military stalemate or at worse an embarrassing national defeat. As Skocpol, et. al. (2002, 140) argue: “associationalism during and after wars is, in short, not only influenced by how a nation mobilizes for the conflict. It is also shaped... above all by victory and defeat.” In their analysis of trends in civic engagement in the aftermath of the Civil War, Skocpol, et. al. find that growth in membership levels in fraternal associations after the Civil War was a function of victory. The three groups who benefited the most from the war’s outcome – Southern blacks, Northern blacks, and Northern whites – experienced significantly greater membership levels than their Southern white counterparts (Skocpol, et. al. 2002).² Indeed, Robert Putnam explicitly identifies the absence of victory as the factor that prevented a similar boom in political and civic engagement that occurred in the wake of World War

² In her APSA presidential address, Skocpol argued that the war in Vietnam combined with other factors to dampen associational engagement as well: “In this case, a critical event, the Vietnam War, coincided with converging social, political, and technological trends to spur civic reorganization. The Vietnam War mattered because it broke the tradition of cross-class male solidarity that had nourished traditional fellowship federations. Vietnam was a losing war, and unpopular with young, highly educated Americans. It drove a wedge in the associational world between social strata and between younger and older men.” By contrast, Kage’s (2005) cross national study of the effects of World War II on Japan, Great Britain, Finland, and Sweden finds that increased civic engagement is not a function of eventual success, but of pre-war associational life and wartime mobilization. Kage (2005, 60) argues that “wartime mobilization accounts for the overall rise in civic engagement in the wake of wars, while path-dependency effects account for the different extents of this rise.”

II from also following American involvement in Korea or Vietnam: “Most Americans in 1945 felt that the war had been a just one and that their terrible collective sacrifice – all those sons and daughters who would not come home – had been in some measure vindicated by victory. This was not a feeling that would be repeated in the 1950s in Korea or in the 1960s in Vietnam.” In a similar vein, Sparrow’s (2002) analysis of the changing relationship between state and society after Vietnam argues that not only did Vietnam fail to spur increased engagement, but he identifies the war as an important contributor to “the growing reluctance of Americans to participate in or assist the government.”³

Yet, in addition to providing little in the way of empirical evidence for their claims, Sparrow and others are largely silent on the precise mechanisms by which an unsuccessful war might depress subsequent levels of political engagement. Here we attempt to ground our expectations in the long-standing literature describing the calculus of political participation. Electoral scholars have long modeled the decision of whether or not to vote as a cost-benefit analysis. Citizens will only engage in the political arena when the benefits they stand to derive outweigh the costs of participation. Because the probability of casting the deciding vote in an election is infinitesimally small (Downs 1957), the benefits that citizens actually gain by participating are likely to be primarily expressive in nature (Riker and Ordeshook 1968, Fiorina 1976). From this perspective, citizens will participate when the expressive benefits they derive from affirming their allegiance to and efficacy within the political system and complying with norms of civic duty exceed the costs of doing so. Viewed within this calculus of participation framework, the ultimate success or failure of a war is critical to understanding its likely effects on citizens’ engagement. Experience with a failed war – the highest costs government policy can exact on its citizens – may

³ Sparrow examines both Korea and Vietnam, but only looks at national trends in several variables surrounding the two wars. Sparrow concludes that “the government gradually became more detached from Americans, [and] less trusted by the public,” yet his historical approach makes it impossible to isolate the effects of the Vietnam War from other social and economic changes occurring in the turbulent 1960s.

undermine political engagement by depressing the expressive benefits citizens expect to gain by actively engaging in politics.

Unsuccessful wars can reduce expressive benefits in at least two ways.⁴ First, as salient manifestations of failed government policies, they can decrease popular evaluations of governmental performance and competence. Second, because war has the potential to alter fundamentally the relationship between government and the governed, a failed military action may undermine levels of popular trust in government. Indeed, many scholars have explicitly linked the national experience in Vietnam with decreased levels of trust in national governing institutions (Miller 1974, Citrin 1974, Nye 1997, Sparrow 2002). Citizens with weaker evaluations of the federal government's performance and competence and lower levels of trust in government should logically derive fewer expressive benefits from actively engaging in politics and therefore should possess fewer incentives to participate than their peers.⁵

In the analyses that follow, we examine the effect of citizens' wartime experience with Vietnam and Korea on both their incentives to participate – their performance evaluations of and trust in the federal government – and on their actual levels of political engagement – their interest in politics and their propensity to vote. More specifically, we examine how these negative consequences of war are concentrated among citizens who experienced the costs of war most intensely through the lens of their local community.

⁴ Our emphasis on how perceptions of a war's success or failure determines its consequences for citizens' subsequent patterns of political engagement mirrors Feaver and Gelpi's argument (2004) that perceptions of success drive Americans' willingness to tolerate combat casualties.

⁵ While it is also possible that a costly, unsuccessful war may paradoxically increase citizen engagement by creating and fostering grassroots movements to end the conflict (Useem 1973, Fendrich 2003), such movements are difficult to sustain. In the case of the Vietnam antiwar movement, McAdam and Su (2002, 699) note that after a peak in 1969, the movement waned considerably, and "by the time the Paris Peace Accords were signed in January of 1973, the movement was largely moribund."

Experience and Effects of War

Just as Mettler (2002) argued that variation in individual experiences with the G.I. Bill matched variations in subsequent civic engagement, so we argue that variation in experiences with war more generally should also affect subsequent political participation. Our approach is also similar in spirit to the work of Crowley and Skocpol (2001), who recognized that “effects of the Civil War” were not uniform across the states. Crowley and Skocpol operationalized Civil War effects as “percent in Union armies” and “pension dollars per pensioner.” In this article we operationalize effects of the Vietnam and Korean conflicts as county casualty rates – the per-capita rate of soldiers killed in an individual’s own county.

A county’s casualty rate is a strong measure of a local community’s experience with war on two dimensions. First, casualties, particularly casualties suffered from one’s own community, are one of the most important windows through which citizens are exposed to the costs of war.⁶ Indeed, an extensive

⁶ Prior scholarship has proposed at least three mechanisms by which local casualty rates’ increase citizens’ direct exposure to the costs of war. First, social network theorists calculate that more than 8 million Americans may know the name of a soldier killed or wounded in Iraq through informal networks of family and friends (Moody 2006). Because these networks are usually most dense in one’s community, Americans from high casualty communities should have a greater probability of personal contact with a casualty than citizens from low casualty communities. The cues of political elites are a second mechanism through which local casualties might influence citizens’ opinions and behaviors (Berinsky 2007, Brody 1991, Larson 1996, Zaller 1992, 1994a, 1994b). In other work (authors 2008), we have analyzed Howell and Kriner’s (2007) database of over 5,000 speeches given in the House of Representatives and Senate on the war in Iraq between March 2003 and May 2006 and found clear evidence that the number of speeches a Congressman made against the Iraq War is positively and significantly related to the casualty rate of that Congressman’s home state. A final mechanism through which local casualties may affect opinions on the war and patterns of political behavior is through the differential coverage of local media outlets. Local media, from which most Americans get their news (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000), pay considerably greater

literature has demonstrated the importance of local casualties in shaping political opinions and behaviors from support for war and its political leaders (Gartner and Segura 1997, 2000) to congressional and presidential electoral outcomes (Carson, Jenkins, Rohde and Souva 2001, Gartner, Segura and Barratt 2004, Koch and Gartner 2005, Karol and Miguel 2007, Kriner and Shen 2007).

In addition to capturing variance in citizens' exposure to the human costs of war, local casualty rates may also serve as a proxy for local experience with the war more generally. For example, communities that suffered high casualty rates may have sent disproportionately more young men and women to fight in service to the nation than other communities. Moreover, soldiers from these communities may well have been more likely to be assigned to dangerous occupations within the military, and consequently had greater exposure to combat. If communities experience war through the eyes of their sons, daughters and neighbors in uniform, then the local effects of war on high casualty rate communities may be dramatically different than in low casualty communities.

Because we lack the necessary personnel data on enlistments, and more importantly on duty assignments within the military, necessary to distinguish between the two, we remain agnostic as to the specific mechanisms producing diminished engagement. It may be specific exposure to battle deaths, or just more intense local experience with the war more generally, that affects residents of high casualty communities differently than residents of low casualty communities. However, regardless of the mechanism, the first stage of our analysis clearly demonstrates that citizens from high casualty communities hold very different views and fears concerning war than their peers in the aftermath of a major conflict, even when they did not before the conflict's initiation.

Both before and after Vietnam, the NES asked respondents how worried they were that the United States would become involved in another war. If county level casualty rates provide important

attention to local casualties, including emotional, personal stories, than they do to war casualties with little local connection (e.g. Gartner 2004). This variance in local media coverage can greatly shape popular beliefs about war (e.g. Howell and Pevehouse 2007).

information about the variance in Americans' experience with the costs of war and wartime service which then inform their subsequent military policy attitudes, then local casualty rates should be an important predictor of citizen unease about the prospects of a future war. Accordingly, we construct a series of three models assessing the relationship between local casualties and fears of war (Table 1). In the first column, examining attitudes in the decade immediately following the Vietnam War, the coefficient for respondents' local Vietnam casualty rate is positive as expected and statistically significant. Citizens that saw firsthand the human costs of the Vietnam War through the lens of their local community were more wary that the government would lead the nation into renewed hostilities than those Americans who did not experience the war as directly. To insure that citizens from these counties were not simply always more fearful that war would erupt than other Americans, the second model replicates the analysis with pre-Vietnam era data. The relevant coefficient is now actually negative and statistically insignificant. Thus, citizens from communities that would later suffer high casualty rates in Vietnam were no more or less fearful of war breaking out before the Vietnam conflict; rather, this divergence emerged only after the war's conclusion.

<< Table 1 About Here >>

Finally, in the third column we replicate an identical model using county-level casualty rates in Korea as the independent variable of interest. In this specification, we observe the same pattern that we did with Vietnam in the late 1970s. In the immediate aftermath of the Korean War, citizens from high casualty communities were more fearful of renewed war than were their peers from low casualty communities. These empirical tests, coupled with a large body of existing research, provide strong support for our use of local casualty rates as a proxy for citizens' divergent experiences with war. Having addressed this important preliminary issue of measurement, we now investigate the effect of local casualty rates on citizens' levels of political and civic engagement.

The Immediate Effects of Vietnam on Political Participation

Model

Defined as local casualty rates, we can examine variation in the effects of the Vietnam and Korean wars on citizens' political engagement and participation. In this section we examine how variance in local experiences with Vietnam affected citizens' levels of political engagement in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. Toward this end, the analysis employs National Election Study (NES) survey results for the ten years following the conflict's conclusion.⁷

The NES affords an opportunity to explore Vietnam's effect on respondents' relationship with, and attitudes toward, the federal government along several dimensions. The first three models examine the effect of a community's experience with the war on respondents' incentives to participate in the political process. First, we examine whether citizens' experience with Vietnam affected their evaluation of the federal government's performance. Second, we analyze in two models the effects of Vietnam on respondents' levels of trust in government. Disillusioned and betrayed by costly military policies, citizens from communities that suffered disproportionately large casualty rates in Vietnam may be more likely to re-evaluate their relationship with and trust in the federal government than their peers less immediately affected by the war. Collectively, these models assess the impact of citizens' local experience with the Vietnam War on the expressive benefits they should derive from actively engaging in the political process. Finally, we explore the influence of local wartime experience on political engagement and participation directly by modeling the effect of local casualty rates on residents' interest in politics writ large and, most importantly, on citizens' propensity to vote.

Building on an extensive literature on the individual level determinants of civic and political engagement (Verba and Nie 1972, Verba, Scholzman, Brady and Nie 1993, Wolfinger and Rosenstone

⁷ This spans the 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980 and 1982 surveys. All data was taken from the NES cumulative data file. Adjusting the time horizon of the years analyzed yields virtually identical results across specifications.

1980, Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), the models begin by controlling for a host of demographic characteristics known to affect rates of participation. Specifically, following Oliver (2000), the models include measures of each respondent's educational attainment (*Education*), family income (*Income*), race (*White*), gender (*Male*), age (*Age*), marital status (*Married*), home ownership (*Own Home*), length of residence in the community (*Length in Community*), and partisan affiliation (*Republican* and *Democrat*).

In addition to these individual characteristics, the models also include several contextual control variables at the county level. Previous research suggests that poorer, economically depressed counties with greater concentrations of racial minorities may have borne a disproportionate share of the casualties in Vietnam.⁸ If so, without suitable controls, we cannot be sure that these communities' experience in

⁸ This non-random distribution of casualties across society raises two concerns. First, it raises the possibility that political engagement is simply decreasing in socio-economically disadvantaged communities during this period for reasons unrelated to the war. However, our analysis begins to account for this possibility by controlling for community income and unemployment levels, as well as non-white population. Additionally, the non-random distribution of casualties raises the question of whether we would observe the same participatory effects on other communities that did not experience high casualty rates – in essence, it questions whether our analysis is only observing the “effect of the treatment on the treated.” While Vietnam and Korean casualty rates *are* disproportionately concentrated in socio-economically disadvantaged communities, the variance is not as great as the conventional rhetoric of a “class war” sometimes suggests. For example, Barnett, Stanley and Shore (1992) for a stratified sample of Vietnam casualties compared the income levels of the deceased soldiers' census tracts or block groups to national averages and found that the lowest three income deciles had casualty rates 1.5 times as high as those in the top three income deciles. Similarly, in our own county-level analysis of all soldiers who died in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, we found that the lowest three county income deciles suffered 35% and 36% of casualties, respectively, compared to the 25% and 26% suffered by the top three income deciles. In terms of county-level educational attainment, the bottom three deciles suffered 34% and 37%

Vietnam is producing any observed correlations, or whether other factors unfolding during the period – such as racial unrest, economic shocks and the failure of Great Society programs – may also have depressed political engagement in precisely the same socio-economically disadvantaged communities that bore disproportionately large shares of casualties. Accordingly, we control for each county’s median income (*Median Family Income in County*), unemployment rate (*% Unemployed in County*) and percentage of residents who are not Caucasian (*% Non White in County*).⁹

The explanatory variable of interest is the casualty rate experienced by each respondent’s county in the Vietnam War (*Vietnam Casualty Rate*).¹⁰ All casualty data was obtained from the National Archives’ recently updated Richard Coffelt, Richard Arnold, and David Argabright (COFFELT)

of the casualties in Korea and Vietnam respectively compared to the 26% and 23% suffered by the top three education deciles (authors 2008). While this variance in casualty rates along socio-economic lines is real and normatively and politically important, it is not the case that *only* poor, low education communities suffered high casualty rates in both Korea and Vietnam. Given this distribution, and the fact that we explicitly control for income, unemployment, and racial demographics, it is highly unlikely that our results are spurious artifacts of an omitted variable that is decreasing participation among socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Similarly, there is little reason to believe that the effects we observe of high casualty rates depressing political engagement would only apply to a small, socio-economically underprivileged segment of the citizenry.

⁹ We have also re-estimated all of the models with a variety of alternative contextual control variables, many of which are highly correlated, including: percentage of residents living in urban areas, population density, median education, median age, etc. All results are virtually identical across specifications.

¹⁰ Because data on soldiers wounded in Vietnam and World War II are not available at the county level, we define casualties strictly as soldiers killed in a foreign theater. For Korea, wounded data at the county level is available. Replicating the Korea models with wounded soldiers, as well as a combination of killed and wounded, yields virtually identical results to those presented in Table 4 below.

database: Records with Unit Information on Military Personnel Who Died During the Vietnam Conflict.¹¹ For each soldier who died in Vietnam, this database provides the name, unit, date of birth, date of death, and home city and state of record.¹² The raw casualty tallies were converted to rates using population data

¹¹ The COFFELT database tracking Vietnam casualties provides home state and city, not county (which is the lowest geographical unit included in the NES), information for each casualty. Aggregating from the city to county level generally posed few problems, as we were able to assign counties based on cross-referenced census data. For some, additional steps were necessary. For single cities, such as New York City, which span two or more counties in a single state, we followed two methods. The first method, which we report in this article, evenly divided such casualties for each city among all of the counties it spanned. The second method assigned each casualty to each county spanned by the city under the premise that deaths from a city spanning multiple counties could affect residents of all counties involved. The results across specifications for both the NES and SCBS analyses are virtually identical regardless of which casualty rate operationalization is used. For towns, such as Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, for which there is more than one city of the same name in a single state (less than 5% of the total), we also used two methods. First, we dropped all such casualties and ran our models. We then ran alternative models in which we randomly assigned each casualty to one of the towns. The two methods yielded nearly identical results. In this article, we report models using the first method.

¹² The home town of record, from which we obtained the home county of record through the method described above, is the home town listed by each soldier upon entering the military. An analysis of the data suggests that military hometowns are not frequently listed as home towns of record. Indeed, the greatest difficulty with the home town data identified by Barnett, et. al. (1992) is that residents of very small, rural communities may have listed the closest sizeable town as their home of record. Aggregating from the town to the county level should alleviate such concerns.

from the 1970 census, producing measures of the number of casualties in each county per 1,000 adult males aged 18-34.¹³

Finally, because our analysis pools responses across surveys from multiple years, the models also include dummy variables for each survey year (Beck, Katz and Tucker 1998) as well as state fixed effects. Summary statistics for all variables used in both the NES and Social Capital Benchmark Survey (SCBS) analyses are presented in Appendix Table 1.

Before turning to the empirical results, a methodological caveat is in order: attempting to discern the effects of community-level variables on individual behavior poses inherent problems and raises the distinct possibility of selection bias (Achen and Shively 1995, Sampson et al 2002). The selection bias problem is particularly acute for many contextual arguments asserting the importance of factors such as city size and population density (Oliver 2000, 2001, 2003), urban design (Kohn 2004, Humphries 2001, Williamson 2002) or socioeconomic segregation (Oliver 1999) because individuals with strong predispositions toward certain patterns of political and civic participation may self-select into specific types of neighborhoods and communities. The prospects for selection bias are considerably less, however, in the current context. While less civically-inclined individuals may logically choose neighborhoods with certain characteristics in terms of size, density and balance between residential, commercial and industrial zones, it is unlikely that such individuals would consciously seek out communities that bore disproportionate shares of casualties in Vietnam.

Moreover, because the NES asked three of the five questions analyzed before the war, the time series affords a unique opportunity to assess whether residents of these high casualty rate counties were always less politically engaged than their peers. Evidence of lower pre-war trust in government, interest

¹³ Over 90% of all casualties reported in the COFFELT database were men between 18 and 34 years of age. Re-estimating the models with casualty rates calculated in terms of casualties per 1,000 males aged 18-24 or per 1,000 total inhabitants yields virtually identical results across specifications in both the NES and SCBS analyses.

in politics and political participation would indicate the presence of an omitted variable correlated with casualty rates; however, estimating identical models using pre-war data finds no correlation between casualty rates and engagement and lends strong support to our argument that decreased levels of political engagement emerged only after these communities' experience in Vietnam. These null results, reported and discussed in Appendix A, greatly improve our confidence that the observed correlations are genuine, not spurious.

Results

Results from the NES analysis, summarized in Table 2, strongly suggest that the local effects of Vietnam significantly dampened citizens' incentives to engage in politics and their actual levels of political participation.¹⁴ Our five models cover a wide range of respondents' political attitudes and behavior: (1) approval of *Federal Government Performance*; (2) *Trust in Federal Government*; (3) Whether Federal, State, or Local Government is Least Trusted (*Trust Federal Government Least*); (4) *Interest in Politics*; and (5) Whether Respondents *Voted in the Last Election*. The ordinal dependent variables in models 1, 2 and 4 were estimated by ordered probit analysis; the binary dependent variables in models 3 and 5 were estimated using probit models. All models report robust standard errors clustered on county.

<< Table 2 About Here >>

Examining the Federal Government Performance Model (Table 2, col. 1), we find that evaluation of the federal government was adversely affected by the casualty rate in a respondent's county. Respondents from counties that suffered disproportionate shares of the national sacrifice in Vietnam gave consistently lower evaluations of the federal government's performance than their peers, even after controlling for a host of demographic factors.

¹⁴ The results in both Tables 2 and 5 are for unweighted NES data. As a robustness check, all models were re-estimated both by using survey weights and by simply including the weights on the right hand side of the regression equation with virtually identical results across specifications.

In a pattern repeated across the models, the substantive effect of casualty rates, while not as large on average as the effects of similar shifts in long-studied determinants of political engagement, such as income and education, was quite large, particularly toward the tails of the casualty distribution. The average casualty rate suffered by U.S. counties in Vietnam was just under three soldiers killed per 1,000 men between the ages of 18 and 34 in that county. However, there is considerable variance around that mean. Over 225 counties experienced a casualty rate of one or fewer men killed per thousand, while over 100 counties suffered rates of more than ten casualties per thousand. Simulations show that respondents from counties that suffered death rates of ten men per thousand were six percent more likely to give the federal government's performance one of the lowest three ratings on a nine point scale than were respondents from counties with zero casualties (34% vs. 28%). Relative to the influence of other standard control variables, this effect is considerable. For example, the six percentage point shift is more than double the difference between men and women, and three times the shift produced by a three unit change in respondent education.

Perhaps more importantly, Vietnam's impact was not limited to respondents' immediate evaluations of the government's performance. Both of our Trust in Government Models (Table 2, cols. 2 and 3) strongly suggest that not only did local casualty rates shape Americans' judgments of the government's job performance, but more fundamentally they also influenced residents' trust in national governing institutions. In the Trust in Federal Government Model, the NES asked respondents on a four point scale how often they trusted the federal government. Consistent with the hypothesis that local experience with the human costs of Vietnam may prompt respondents to become more disillusioned with and alienated from the federal government, the coefficient for Vietnam casualty rates is negative, though it narrowly misses conventional levels of statistical significance ($p = .12$). The results from the Trust Federal Government Least Model add even stronger evidence of a genuine link between the severity of a community's Vietnam War experience and its residents' levels of trust in the national government. Even after controlling for race, gender, education, income and other individual and county level characteristics, this model strongly suggests that local casualty rates had a considerable impact on the probability of

respondents having the least faith in the federal government (Table 2, col. 3). First differences derived from simulations show that increasing the casualty rate from 1 per thousand to 11 per thousand (a three standard deviation increase), while holding all other variables constant at their means or medians, increased the probability of having the lowest level of trust in the federal government by over 15% (from 59% to 74%).

A great deal of existing scholarship on social capital and civic and political engagement places a premium on trust and norms of reciprocity both between private citizens and between citizen and state (Hetherington 1998, Levi 1996, Fukuyama 1995, Coleman 1990, Putnam 1993, 2000). Consequently, casualty rates, at least in part because of the decreased trust in government they yield, may have widespread consequences for levels of political engagement and participation.¹⁵ Indeed, when coupled with decreased approval of the government's performance, lowered levels of trust in government may decrease the expressive benefits citizens stand to reap from engaging in politics and the political process, which in turn should depress their levels of political engagement and participation. Indeed, the results from our Interest in Politics and Voting Models are consistent with this conjecture.

The Interest in Politics Model confirms expectations that respondents from high casualty counties were less engaged in politics than those from lower casualty communities. The relationship is both statistically and substantively significant; simulations suggest that a ten point increase in a county's casualty rate raises the probability of a respondent expressing one of the two lowest levels of interest in politics by 5%. Again, the relative size of the impact of this shift in local casualty rates is substantial compared to that of smaller, but significant shifts in key variables long known to drive political engagement; the five percentage point swing for casualties is more than that caused by a two unit increase in family income and more than half the shift produced by a one unit change in respondent education.

¹⁵ However, other scholars have found little evidence of a significant causal effect for levels of trust on political participation: see Brehm and Rahn 1997, Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, Teixeira 1992.

Finally, our Voted in Last National Election Model demonstrates that Vietnam experience also influenced the quintessential act of democratic participation: voting. The probit model yields a strong negative coefficient for local casualty rates, suggesting that respondents from high casualty communities were systematically less likely to vote in national elections in the years immediately following Vietnam than were their peers in lower casualty areas (Table 2, col. 5). It bears repeating that this negative relationship remains robust even after including a host of individual and county level controls. Thus, it is not the case that all socio-economically disadvantaged counties experienced equally lower levels of political engagement in the years immediately following Vietnam; rather, even after accounting for these factors, respondents from high casualty communities had lower levels of political engagement than their peers with identical personal and community-level demographic characteristics.

The estimated size of casualties' effect on voting is substantial. First differences holding all other variables constant at their means or medians suggest that increasing the casualty rate by ten men per thousand decreases the probability that respondents voted by over 6%, from 68% to 62%. This change in probability exceeds that produced by a two unit change in family income and almost precisely mirrors the drop associated with a one unit decrease in educational attainment.

Yet, if the NES results are correct and citizens from high casualty counties are less likely to vote than their peers from low casualty communities, then aggregate level turnout should also decrease in counties that suffered the highest casualty rates in Vietnam. Thus, as a further robustness check we analyze turnout data over three decades of presidential elections from ICPSR 13, General Election Data for the United States, 1950-1990. For each presidential contest, we model the number of citizens voting in each county as a function of the number that voted in the previous presidential election, the county's casualty rate in Vietnam, and three county-level contextual controls: each county's unemployment rate, percentage of the population that was non-white, and educational attainment.¹⁶ If Vietnam casualties are

¹⁶ For census demographic data we used the county data books included in ICPSR 2896, Historical, Demographic, Economic and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2000. Because the 1982 county data

merely tapping some unobserved county level characteristic not controlled for in the models that is also correlated with decreasing participation, then the coefficient for the casualties variable should be negative and statistically significant throughout the elections in our sample. If, however, the negative relationship between a county's Vietnam casualty rate and decreased turnout begins as the war's costs mount and then wanes after its conclusion, it would be strong support for our theoretical contention that it is the county's experience in Vietnam that caused the observed decrease in its citizens' turnout. Results from this analysis are presented in Table 3 below.

<< Table 3 About Here >>

Taken collectively, the new round of analysis provides considerable, if not unconditional support for our theory.¹⁷ Although in most years the casualty rate coefficients are negative, the only three that were statistically significant were in the last two war-time elections and in the election immediately following the war's conclusion. Equally importantly, the magnitude of the estimated relationship between

book did not include median years of school completed, we substituted the percentage of residents 25+ who had completed four or more years of college. Replicating the 1980s models instead with county median education from the 1970 census yields virtually identical results. For the 1956 through 1968 elections, we used each county's casualty rate as of the 1968 elections as the independent variable of interest. For 1972 and all subsequent elections, we used each county's casualty rate as of the 1972 election as the dependent variable. Less than 100 U.S. soldiers died between the 1972 elections and the withdrawal of American combat troops from Vietnam in March of 1973.

¹⁷ In all but one of the elections, the coefficient for a county's Vietnam casualty rate is negative, even before the war and a full decade afterwards. The consistency of the result is at least suggestive that counties that experienced high casualty rates in Vietnam may have been suffering decreases in political engagement throughout this period for reasons unrelated to the war, particularly before U.S. engagement in Vietnam began in earnest. However, in stark contrast to the wartime and immediate post-war election models, none of the pre-war coefficients are statistically significant.

a county's casualty rate and decreased turnout is much greater during the war and in the immediate postwar elections. The average decrease in overall turnout because of declining participation in high casualty communities during the pre-war years is about -.4% per year.¹⁸ In the three wartime elections, the average decrease in turnout generated by declining participation in high casualty communities is -1.6% per year. And after the war, the estimated turnout effect again declined to an average of -.2% per year. As a result, while the evidence is suggestive that there may have been something afoot depressing turnout in counties that would later suffer high casualty rates in Vietnam even before the war, the additional analysis provides strong evidence that turnout in these counties decreased most dramatically in the last two elections of the war and in the first one after its completion.

Often when scholars think of Vietnam and its ramifications for the American polity, they speak in general terms and speculate on the war's effect on society as a whole. By contrast the preceding analyses begin to put a concrete estimate on that cost. Over the course of several elections in the late 1960s and early 1970s hundreds of thousands and even millions of Americans stopped coming to the polls, and, equally importantly, these losses were concentrated in communities that witnessed the human costs of the government's policies in Southeast Asia most directly.

The Lingering Effects of Vietnam on Civic Engagement

Model

The National Election Studies and county level turnout analyses unambiguously demonstrated the immediate impact of variance in local communities' Vietnam War experiences on their inhabitants' assessments of and trust in government, interest in politics and patterns of political participation. However, the engagement measures included in the NES are limited and consequently the preceding analysis affords little insight into the full range of Vietnam's influence on individuals' political and civic

¹⁸ These figures represent the estimated number of voters who stayed away from the polls as a result of local casualty rates (generated by multiplying each county's casualty rate by the relevant coefficient and summing across counties) as a percentage of the total number of Americans who voted in that election.

activities. Did the decline in trust, interest in politics and the general re-evaluation of many citizens' relationship with their government wrought by Vietnam only affect voting? Or did the war also dampen other forms of electoral and non-electoral political participation among citizens from areas that suffered disproportionately the conflict's human costs? Finally, are Vietnam's ramifications for society limited to the political realm, or did the war adversely affect broader forms of civic engagement and non-governmental participation as well?

To answer these questions and examine the impact of local casualty rates on a wider range of participatory activities, the analysis exploits the rich array of data in the 2000 Social Capital Benchmark Survey (SCBS). The SCBS is comprised of both a national survey of over 3,000 individuals from over 1,100 counties and an intensive sample of more than 26,000 respondents from 41 communities spread across 29 states. Moreover, the SCBS provides measures on an extraordinary range of political and non-political participatory activities. The subsequent analyses focus on four broad indices: electoral political participation, non-electoral political participation, civic organizational participation and charitable (financial and volunteering) participation. The SCBS *Electoral Politics Index* comprises two measures of political participation – registering to vote and voting in national elections – a measure of respondents' political interest and two questions gauging levels of political knowledge. The *Non-Electoral Politics Index* tracks respondents' participation in a range of political activities from signing a petition to joining a political group to engaging in a rally, march, protest or boycott. The *Organizational Activity Index* examines respondents' non-political civic participation including involvement in civic groups and clubs, serving in leadership capacities within these organizations and participating in public meetings. Finally, the *Charitable Activity Index* assesses the scope of respondents' volunteering and financial contributions to a range of secular and religious charitable groups.¹⁹

¹⁹ The specific variable names within the SCBS are ELECPOL2, PROTEST, MACHER, and CHARITY2. Each variable is a continuous index constructed according to the equations outlined in the SCBS codebook.

For each of these four dependent variables, Table 4 estimates an OLS regression model virtually identical in specification to those in Table 2 above, with state fixed effects and standard errors clustered on county.²⁰ In addition to the casualty rates suffered by each county in terms of servicemen killed in Vietnam per 1,000 men aged 18 to 34, the models control for individuals' educational attainment, family income, race, gender, age, marital status, home ownership and length of residence in the community. To control for community demographics, we again include measures of median family income, the unemployment rate and the percentage of the community that is not Caucasian. Summary statistics for all dependent and independent variables are presented in Appendix 1. As with the NES models, we performed a robustness check, here by re-estimating separate models for respondents who had lived in the same community for over 20 years, and for respondents who had not. Presumably, long-tenured residents should feel the war's lingering effects more acutely than newcomers to a hard hit community. The results of these additional models, which we present and discuss in Appendix B, strongly support the primary findings presented in Table 4.

<< Table 4 About Here >>

Results

The results of our social capital analysis suggest that Vietnam had lingering consequences for political aspects of citizens' civic engagement, but not for their participation in non-political activities. Consistent with the NES results in Table 2 showing an immediate negative impact of high Vietnam

²⁰ The SCBS did not ask individuals for their partisan affiliation; hence these indicators are not included in the analysis. For the community level income and percent minority controls, we used the SCBS' measures of *Mean Family Income in Community* and *% Non White in Community*. We also added county level unemployment (*% Unemployed in County*) from the 2000 census. Since the community sample comprises the vast majority of the observations, the models were also re-estimated with community fixed-effects and clustered standard errors with virtually identical results. Alternatively, the models were re-estimated with just the national sample with similar results.

casualty rates on interest in politics and voting, our Electoral Participation Model finds that more than 25 years since the last American troops evacuated Saigon, respondents from areas that bore disproportionate shares of the nation's human costs in the Vietnam War remained less interested in politics and less likely to participate in them than their fellow citizens from other parts of the country. This long-term persistence of a gap in political engagement between citizens of communities that suffered high and low casualty rates in Vietnam parallels research by Putnam (2000, 272) suggesting that Vietnam veterans, unlike veterans of previous wars, experienced greater isolation and social alienation for decades after the war's conclusion. As in the NES results, the effect of local casualty rates on political participation, although smaller than those produced by comparable shifts in other traditional predictors of engagement, is substantively significant. For example, the decrease in political participation caused by a ten man per thousand increase in a county's casualty rate is larger than that produced by a one unit shift in income and more than half that produced by a one unit change in educational attainment.

Moreover, the results from our Non-Electoral Political Participation Model suggest that the lingering impacts of Vietnam were not limited to the electoral realm (Table 4, col. 2). Rather, the model provides compelling evidence that direct exposure to the costs of the war through the lens of their local community depressed citizens' willingness after the war's conclusion to engage government through both direct *and* indirect means. Drawing on the SCBS' comprehensive measures of multiple types of non-electoral activities not covered in NES surveys, the Non-Electoral Political Participation Model shows that respondents from high casualty areas were also less likely to join political, ethnic or labor groups, sign petitions, or actively engage in organizations seeking governmental reform than respondents with identical personal and demographic characteristics from areas with less severe experiences in Vietnam. Substantively, the size of casualties' effect on non-electoral forms of participation is again large; a ten man per thousand increase in the county casualty rate decreases non-electoral participatory activities by the same amount as a two unit change in income levels and almost as much as a one unit change in respondent education.

Finally, our Civic Organization and Charitable Giving Models expand the scope of analysis to explore whether differences in local Vietnam casualty rates have also had consequences for non-political forms of participation (Table 4, cols 3 and 4). Both models suggest they have not. The coefficient for casualties' effect on civic organizational participation is substantively and statistically insignificant while the relevant coefficient in the Charitable Giving Model is actually positive, suggesting that residents of high casualty rate communities may actually be more active in non-governmental activities than their peers.

The lack of significant negative effects for casualties on non-political participation is theoretically unsurprising. The strong correlations between casualty rates and trust in the federal government, interest in politics and feelings of political efficacy demonstrated in Table 2 suggest that local experience with Vietnam affected participatory trends by depressing citizens' incentives to participate and decreasing the expressive benefits they derived from engaging the political process.²¹ If war has the potential to reshape relations between governors and governed, the ramifications of such changes should be most acute in the political realm. However, decreased levels of trust in government or interest in politics will not necessarily depress participation in non-governmental civil society. If anything, lower levels of trust in government may cause individuals to seek to effect change through the private sphere, as the positive relationship between casualty rates and charitable giving and volunteering suggests. As such, the null or even positive correlations between local casualty rates and civic public activities, particularly in the Charitable Giving Model, provide a modest robustness check on the Political Engagement Models. Respondents from high casualty rate counties do not simply participate less across the board. Rather, the types of participatory activities in which they differ substantially from their peers from other communities are limited to the political sphere.

²¹ The SCBS also contains a measure of trust in the federal government. Replicating the Trust in Government Model in column 2 of Table 2 using SCBS data also yields a strong, negative, statistically significant correlation between local casualty rates and trust.

Korea, World War II and Patterns of Political Engagement

Model

While the preceding analyses found strong evidence across data sets and specifications of a negative correlation between a community's casualty rate in Vietnam and its citizens' subsequent patterns of political engagement, generalizing from these models to speculate on other wars' likely effects on engagement may be complicated by the tumultuous times of the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to Vietnam, racial unrest, the unraveling of the Great Society, Watergate and economic stagflation all tore at the fabric of American society. Indeed, the very presence of these additional powerful forces that might have negatively affected citizens' political engagement during this period makes it virtually impossible to parse out the effects of Vietnam on the nation as a whole. Instead, we theorized that in addition to its impact on all Americans, the conflict in Vietnam had the greatest negative influence on political engagement in communities that experienced the costs of war most intensely. This emphasis on variance in wartime experience not only recognizes that war is not a monolithic variable affecting all Americans equally, but, from a methodological standpoint, it also provides an opportunity for us to assess the impact of Vietnam on engagement by isolating it from other forces active in the 1960s and 1970s that may also have decreased the base levels of engagement for the nation as a whole versus the pre-war period. Indeed, for our observed relationships between a county's casualty rate and decreased engagement to be spurious, these other forces must be correlated with a county's casualty rate, even after controlling for community level economic conditions and racial composition. There is no immediate reason to suggest that this should be so. Nevertheless, the turbulent times do raise the possibility that differential community wartime experiences may not have the same effects on political engagement in less chaotic and poisonous political environments.

An additional question regards whether the observed negative relationship between citizens' local casualty rates and depressed political engagement should characterize all conflicts, or just non-mass mobilizing, unsuccessful wars. If local casualties and direct experience with the costs of war inherently

diminish participation, then we should observe similar dynamics after all major conflicts. If, however, local casualties and intense community involvement in war only depress engagement when they compel citizens to re-evaluate negatively their relationship with the government and lower the expressive benefits of participation, then casualties suffered in successful conflicts enjoying broad based popular support should not stifle participation. To the extent that they are viewed as patriotic sacrifices in service of the nation, in the wake of such wars casualties and high rates of military involvement may even increase civic pride and participation.

To explore these possibilities, the analysis shifts focus from Vietnam first to the Korean War and then to World War II.²² Beginning in 1956, the NES reported respondents' home county and over the next five surveys leading up to the Vietnam conflict the NES asked many of the same questions examined in Table 2, affording the opportunity to examine whether variance in local casualty rates in the Korean War (*Korea Casualty Rate*) also depressed respondents' levels of trust in government, interest in politics and propensity to vote. Except for the exclusion of home ownership and length of residence measures, which

²² The Korea casualty data was obtained from the "Records on Korean War Dead and Wounded Army Casualties, 1950 – 1970," both maintained by the U.S. National Archives. We included in our Korea casualty count soldiers listed as: Died nonbattle; Declared Dead (Missing in Action or Captured); Died as result of being gassed in action; Died as result of missile wound received in action; Died as result of nonmissile wound received in action; Died as result of radiation received in action; and Died of other injuries received in action. The World War II casualty data was obtained at the county level from the World War II Honor List of Dead and Missing Army and Army Air Forces Personnel maintained by the U.S. National Archives. See: <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/ww2/army-casualties/>. One difference between World War II data availability and the other two wars is that records of Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard personnel are available only at the state, and not county, level. Since the vast majority of casualties were experienced in the Army and Air Force, we do not expect this to significantly bias our findings.

were not asked in this earlier period, model specifications remain identical to those in the Vietnam era.²³

Results are summarized in Table 5 below.

<< Table 5 About Here >>

Results

Beginning with an analysis of trust in government, the first model in Table 5 suggests an important difference between the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. While the estimated relationship between a respondent's community's casualty rate in Korea and his or her trust in government is negative, the coefficient is not statistically significant. Unlike in the Vietnam models (in which the casualties coefficient was negative and almost significant in the Trust in Federal Government Model and was negative and significant in the Trust Federal Government Least Model), there is little empirical evidence that respondents from counties that suffered disproportionately large casualty rates in Korea held lower levels of trust in the national government than their peers from lower casualty communities.

However, the Interest in Politics and Voting Models both show strong relationships between local casualty rates and respondents' political engagement that parallel those observed in the Vietnam era analysis. In the Interest in Politics Model, the coefficient for a county's Korean War experience is negative and statistically significant, while the control variables all largely accord with theoretical expectations. Moreover, the relationship is substantively important. As in Vietnam, there was considerable variance in the distribution of Korean War casualties across the country. For example, over 300 counties experienced casualty rates of fewer than .5 casualties per ten thousands residents while more than 100 counties suffered casualty rates exceeding 5.5 battle deaths per 10,000 residents. Simulations reveal that such a 5 casualties per 10,000 residents shift in a county's casualty rate increased the

²³ The 1950 census county data books did not include figures on the male population of military service age (18-34); as a result, the casualty rate measure for Korea is county casualties per 10,000 inhabitants. As noted above, replicating the Vietnam analyses with rates per 10,000 inhabitants yields virtually identical results.

probability of a respondent reporting one of the two lowest categories of interest in politics by 4% (from 25% to 29%). Relative to other traditional explanatory variables the size of the effect is also large, virtually mirroring the effect of a one unit change in educational attainment or family income.

Although residents of high casualty communities did not possess lower levels of trust in government on average, citizens with less interest in politics may logically perceive fewer expressive benefits from actively participating in the political process. Accordingly, the experience of a respondent's community in the Korean conflict also appears to have influenced his or her probability of voting in national elections. In the Voting in all Elections Model (Table 4, col. 3), the coefficient for the county's Korean casualty rate is negative as expected, though it fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance. However, if variance in local communities' wartime experiences did indeed influence their citizens' voting patterns, the impact should be most apparent in presidential elections, which normally mobilize a greater number of less engaged voters particularly susceptible to pressures simply to stay home. When narrowing our scope to the three presidential election year surveys in our sample, the estimated negative coefficient for Korean casualties is even larger and is statistically significant. Simulations suggest that a 5 casualties per 10,000 residents increase in a county's casualty rate depressed respondents' probability of voting by almost 4% (83% to 79%). This decrease almost exactly parallels that caused by a one unit decrease in respondent education or income.

To bolster confidence that the observed negative effect of local Korean wartime experience on voting is real, we again conduct additional analyses using historical aggregate turnout data at the county level. Accordingly, we analyze seven presidential election results from 1940 to 1964 using data from ICPSR 8611, Electoral Data for Counties in the United States: Presidential and Congressional Races, 1840-1972.²⁴ As in the Vietnam analysis, we modeled each county's vote total in an election year as a

²⁴ In addition to dropping counties with missing data, our analysis also grappled with several potential errors in ICPSR 8611. Calculating the change in total voters from the preceding to the current election revealed a number of very large outliers – alleged changes in turnout of hundreds of thousands of voters

function of the county total in the preceding election, the county's casualty rate in the Korean War, and three county-level controls: measures of its unemployment rate, racial composition and average level of educational attainment. Results are presented in Table 6 below.

<< Table 6 About Here >>

The additional round of analysis again provides considerable support for our theoretical contention that local experience with the Korean War, as measured by a county's casualty rate, decreased turnout in presidential elections.²⁵ In strong accordance with our theoretical expectations the coefficient for Korean War casualties in 1952, the only election held during the war itself, is by far the largest coefficient for any year and, indeed, it is the only statistically significant relationship observed across the seven elections. The estimated size of the casualties effect in 1952 is also by far the largest, quadrupling that for any other electoral contest.

Substantively, the overall size of the estimated decrease in turnout due to Korea is modest, particularly in comparison to the large effects for Vietnam. Our analysis suggests that turnout in 1952 decreased only by about a half a percentage point as a result of war casualties. However, the war's estimated effect on turnout in high casualty communities was considerable, and even at the national level, our models suggest that in 1952 the war caused more than a quarter million voters to stay home from the

over the course of a single electoral cycle within a county. To control for these outliers, we estimated our models dropping counties greater than the 99th and less than the 1st percentile in terms of the change in turnout from the preceding to the current election. Using a similar methodology in the Vietnam analysis yields virtually identical results to those presented in Table 3.

²⁵ Surprisingly the coefficient for a county's casualty rate in Korea is negative throughout the years surveyed, even before the war. The consistent negative relationship suggests that turnout may have been declining, albeit very slightly, in communities that would suffer high casualty rates in Korea even before the conflict began. Yet, as in the Vietnam analyses, none of the pre-war casualties coefficients are statistically significant.

polls. Thus, collectively the analyses in Table 6 represent another strong piece of empirical evidence supporting our theoretical argument emphasizing the capacity of war and of citizens' experience with it through the lens of their local communities to influence their patterns of political engagement.

While our analyses at both the individual and aggregate level provide strikingly consistent evidence of the negative effect of local experience with the Korean and Vietnam Wars on citizens' subsequent levels of political engagement and participation, the foregoing models offer little insight into whether local casualties always depress political engagement in the hardest hit communities. To seek additional leverage on this question, the final two models in Table 5 replicate the Interest in Politics and Voting in Presidential Elections Models with an additional covariate, each county's *World War II Casualty Rate*.

In the augmented Interest in Politics Model, the coefficient for Korean War casualty rates remains negative and substantively and statistically significant. By contrast, however, the coefficient for a county's war experience in World War II is positive, though statistically insignificant. Thus, local experience with World War II does not appear to have dampened interest in politics, not even in counties that suffered the greatest number of casualties. The revised Voting in Presidential Elections Model reveals a similar pattern. While the coefficient for Korean casualty rates remains negative and significant, the coefficient for a county's World War II casualty rate is again positive, and only narrowly misses conventional levels of statistical significance. Consistent with Putnam, Skocpol, Mettler and others who have documented how World War II provided the impetus behind the long civic generation, our models suggest that respondents from counties with the most direct stakes in that conflict emerged, if anything, with even greater levels of political engagement than their peers from counties with lower casualty rates.

Discussion

Prior research has shown that war provides a boost to civic engagement when it is successful and when it involves mass mobilization. But our analysis of Vietnam and Korea demonstrate that when war is limited and not successful, the consequences for political engagement are negative and significant. In

contrast to a synergistic relationship between state and civil society (Evans 1997), in limited, failed wars we see evidence of an antagonistic relationship. While this antagonism may produce some protest activity that in the short term spurs political engagement through non-traditional means, it does not build the types of lasting partnerships that Putnam (2000) and others laud.

Our findings raise important questions about the possible negative effects of the current Iraq War on future American civic engagement. A number of scholars have debated whether September 11 and the nascent War on Terror may yet provide a unifying surge of patriotism capable of regenerating America's waning civic life in a mold similar to previous national martial endeavors (Galston 2001, Sander and Putnam 2002, Skocpol 2003). Our analysis suggests a pessimistic prediction.

Further work is needed to parse out the relative effects of limited versus unsuccessful warfare. Vietnam and Korea were both limited *and* generally viewed as relatively unsuccessful. We cannot say, therefore, whether it was their limited mobilization or their collective failure that caused drops in civic engagement, though we strongly suspect the latter. Despite the small number of casualties involved, conducting similar analyses with data from the First Persian Gulf War or the Spanish-American War may prove helpful in settling this debate. Similarly, from the data presented in this article alone we are unable to lock down the precise mechanisms by which limited and unsuccessful war affect civic engagement. We can, however, make a strong case that when wars are both limited and unsuccessful they have significant and sizeable negative consequences for citizens' engagement with politics and participation in the political process and that these adverse consequences are concentrated in communities that bore a disproportionate share of the war's costs.

Conclusion

Writing on the effects of war on American society, David Mayhew (2005, 486) observes that wars "can create, shape, crystallize, or institutionalize interests and preferences." When wars are limited and unsuccessful, our article argues, they can also disrupt and fundamentally alter Americans' subsequent patterns of civic engagement and political participation.

By examining variance in communities' experience with war as measured by their local casualty rate, we were able to isolate decreases in political engagement and participation stemming from the Korean and Vietnam Wars as opposed to other factors buffeting the nation in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Previous scholarship has speculated that Korea and Vietnam were somehow very different from their predecessors in terms of their lasting consequences for the vibrancy of democracy in America. In this article, we demonstrate empirically that not only did these more limited, unsuccessful conflicts fail to trigger the increased levels of political and civic engagement observed in the wake of the Civil and two World Wars, but they also even depressed political engagement and participation in communities that experienced their costs most acutely. We hope that our findings will spur more cross-national analysis of the relationships between war and civic engagement, as limited conflicts with murky military outcomes are far more prevalent than the major wars ending in unconditional victory featured in almost all prior analyses of war and civic engagement.

Moreover, while our use of local casualty rates solved a methodological problem and allowed us to make causal inferences about the effects of war on engagement in turbulent times, it also reminds scholars that wars are not monolithic events that affect all Americans equally. Thus, long literatures in both American politics and International Relations asserting simple causal claims linking mounting casualties to decreased support for the president and his military policies (Kernell 1978, Brody 1991, Larson 1996, Kull and Destler 1999, Gartner and Segura 1998, Klarevas 2002, Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, Eichenberg 2005, Eichenberg, Stoll and Lebo 2006) and to increased pressure on democratic regimes to eschew costly military policies more generally (Kant 1795, Ray 1995, Russett 1990, Maoz and Russett 1993, Russett and Oneal 2001, Morgan and Schwebach 1992, Morgan and Campbell 1991) would do well to remember that the effects of casualties are far from uniform across society. If casualties are concentrated disproportionately among socio-economically disadvantaged groups with *ex ante* lower rates of participation, and if the imposition of these human costs only further dampens their political engagement, the political costs casualties impose on political leaders and the democratic brake they exert on military adventurism may be more nuanced than previously supposed.

Appendix A. Robustness Check for National Election Studies (NES) Models

All statistical analyses are plagued by the lurking danger of omitted variable bias, and too often there are few even partial solutions. The models in Table 2 were re-estimated with a variety of additional control variables with similar results; yet, even consistent results across multiple specifications cannot alleviate all concerns. Fortunately in the current context an additional test is possible to insure that the effects attributed to county casualty rates are not merely artifacts of failing to control for other correlated characteristics of these communities.

Because the NES asked three of the five questions analyzed in Table 2 before active American involvement in the conflict began in earnest in 1965, we can re-run our models with pre-war data. For the three questions for which pre-war data is available, Table A-1 re-estimates the analysis of Table 2 to ascertain whether residents of counties that in the late 1960s and early 1970s would suffer high casualty rates in Vietnam also exhibited lower levels of trust in government and political engagement in this earlier period.²⁶ If the coefficients for the high casualty counties in this pre-1965 period mirror those in the post-1973 results in Table 2, then the results can be attributed to some omitted factor. However, if the coefficients for casualty rates are statistically indistinguishable from zero in the earlier period, it would greatly improve our confidence that these communities' experiences in Vietnam did indeed produce the observed impacts on their residents' patterns of participation and engagement observed in Table 2.

²⁶ The model specifications are exactly the same as those in Table 2 except for the exclusion of the home ownership and length of residence in community variables. NES did not begin asking the length of residence question until 1968, and the only early surveys containing the home ownership question were 1952 and 1964. Re-estimating the models in Table 3 with the home ownership variable actually yields positive correlations between a county's future casualty rate and interest in politics and voting ($p = .33$ and $p = .21$, respectively), further strengthening our confidence that the negative relationship in the postwar era is not the product of some unobserved characteristic of these counties.

Re-estimating the models using pre-war data provides strong support for the contention that casualty rates, not unobserved county characteristics, are driving the results observed in Table 2. In all three models, the coefficients for the casualty rate variable are statistically insignificant. However, because of the social and demographic changes that may have transformed America's counties from the 1950s to the 1970s, we also re-estimated the three models using only data from the 1964 NES survey, which was the most temporally proximate of the pre-war surveys. When restricting ourselves to the 1964 data, the casualties coefficients in the interest in politics and voting models are actually positive, and none of the three are statistically significant.

Thus, replicating our analyses using pre-war data provides considerable support for the contention that residents of counties that suffered high casualty rates in Vietnam only began to exhibit lower levels of trust in government and political participation *after* the war's conclusion. Unless some other unobserved factor common to all residents of these counties, (aside from minority population, median income and unemployment, all of which are controlled for in the models), also began driving respondent behavior precisely in the period after the war's conclusion, the combination of results in Tables 2 and A-1 provide compelling evidence that individual respondents' local experience with the war greatly influenced their relationship with the federal government and their patterns of political engagement and participation in the years immediately following the U.S. withdrawal.

As a further robustness check, we collapsed both pre-war and post-war NES data to perform a difference in differences analysis on changes in trust in government, interest in politics and patterns of voting at the county level. Through this differencing approach we are able to control for unmeasured county level characteristics omitted from the previous analyses that could potentially be producing a spurious result. The three dependent variables are the change in the average level of trust in government, interest in politics and voting observed at the county level from the pre-1966 surveys to the five post-Vietnam surveys from 1974 to 1982. The change in each county's casualty rate from 0 in the pre-war years to its post-war value is the main independent variable of interest, while the change in all of the other individual-level control variables included in the analysis in Table 2, except home ownership and length

of residence in the community, are also added as controls. Results from the difference in differences analyses are presented in Table A-2.

Simple summary statistics of the dependent variables show that across all counties, on average, levels of trust in government and voting decreased considerably across the pre and post war periods, while overall interest in politics remained virtually unchanged. Yet, the results in Table A-2 strongly suggest that, on all three dimensions, the decreases in political engagement and participation were most severe in counties that experienced high casualty rates in Vietnam. As in the individual level models, the estimated effect of a county's casualty rate on its respondents' average level of trust in the federal government is negative, though the resulting coefficient is not statistically significant. However, in both the interest in politics and voting models, the casualty rate coefficient is negative and statistically significant. A ten point increase in a county's casualty rate decreased a county's average level of interest in politics by more than .70 standard deviations and decreased the average turnout rate in a county by more than 10%, a .68 standard deviation decrease. Thus, even after differencing out county means to control for unmeasured contextual characteristics, we find considerable evidence that political engagement and participation decreased from the pre-Vietnam years to the post-war era and that these decreases were sharpest among residents from counties that shouldered a disproportionate share of the burden in the costly war.

Appendix B. Robustness Check for Social Capital Models

While the Social Capital Benchmark Study provides unique opportunities to explore the influence of local communities' Vietnam War experiences on their residents' behavior across a full range of participatory activities, the very innovativeness of the survey means that we are unable to replicate our models with pre-war data as we were with many of the NES models. One additional robustness check, however, is possible. The theoretical logic described above suggests that individuals' own experience with the war, as filtered through the community in which they lived at the time, fundamentally reshapes their relationship with government, which affects their willingness to participate accordingly. With more than twenty-five years having passed since the end of American involvement in Vietnam and the conducting of the SCBS, many individuals may have moved in the interim and many respondents may have been too young to have had any direct experience with the war. It is certainly possible that even a more recent newcomer to a community may still be affected by that community's wartime experience, even if he or she did not experience it directly. Neighbors' attitudes and patterns of participation may inexorably influence one's own. However, at the very least we would expect the negative effects of casualty rates on participation to exist at the same or even higher levels for long time residents of high casualty rate communities who lived there during or in the immediate aftermath of Vietnam itself.

As a robustness check, the models in Table B-1 replicate the two political participation models estimated in Table 4, but divide the respondents into those that have lived in their community for twenty or more years and those who have not. For both long-tenured residents and shorter-tenured residents, higher local casualty rates in Vietnam are strongly correlated with lower levels of electoral and non-electoral forms of political participation. However, the results in Table B-1 demonstrate that the negative effect of casualty rates on political engagement was on average almost 50% larger for respondents who had lived in their current communities for more than twenty years than it was among respondents who were more recent arrivals to their communities. While not conclusive proof of a direct causal link between Vietnam and respondents' behavior twenty years later, the larger effects for long-tenured residents are a further observable implication consistent with our theoretical argument.

As a final robustness check, we re-estimated the electoral and non-electoral participation models in Table B-2 for a third category of respondents, the 1,650 respondents who moved to their current communities within the last year. While it is certainly plausible that shorter-tenured residents of a high casualty community may also exhibit depressed levels of political participation even if they didn't live in that community during the war because of interactions with neighbors and others through social networks, any indirect effect of a community's war experience should be weakest among the most recent newcomers to a community. In this final re-analysis, the coefficients for a community's casualty rate are again negative, however neither is statistically significant ($p = .66$ and $p = .18$, respectively). Collectively, the SCBS analyses, like the NES and aggregate turnout analyses, strongly support the theoretical contention that the Vietnam War significantly depressed political engagement in the United States and that its effects were most acute in communities that experienced the costs of the government's failed war policies most directly.²⁷

²⁷ In the NES analyses of local casualty rates' immediate effects on residents' patterns of political engagement and participation, the much shorter lag between the end of the war and the administration of the surveys significantly reduces concerns about effects among short-tenured residents. Fully 80% of the respondents across the five surveys lived in their current communities during the Vietnam War. However, a similar robustness check on the NES results in Table 2 is possible to examine whether newcomers to a community who did not reside in it during the war itself exhibited similar decreases in political engagement and participation. When replicating both the Federal Government Performance Model and Trust in Federal Government Model for split groups of respondents, the coefficients for a county's casualty rate were positive and insignificant for respondents who did not live in their current community during the war, and negative and statistically significant for long-tenured residents who viewed the Vietnam conflict through the lens of their current community. Replicating the Interest in Politics Model yields negative coefficients for both long and short-tenured residents, though the coefficient for short-tenured residents is considerably smaller in size and not statistically significant. The only surprising

finding was for the Voting in Last National Election Model which yielded strong negative coefficients for both short and long-tenured residents. However, the supplementary evidence from aggregate county-level turnout data greatly bolsters our confidence that the observed effect for local casualty rates in the Vietnam War is genuine and substantively important.

Table 1: County Casualty Rates and Fears of Future War

	1974-1982	Pre 1966	Pre 1966
Vietnam Casualty Rate	.032** (.015)	-.016 (.019)	--
Korean Casualty Rate	--	--	.012* (.007)
Republican	.020 (.121)	.069 (.071)	.068 (.071)
Democrat	.169 (.112)	.231*** (.069)	.230*** (.069)
Education	-.094*** (.024)	-.002 (.013)	-.001 (.013)
Income	-.018 (.038)	-.022 (.022)	-.023 (.022)
White	-.157 (.108)	.142* (.081)	.146* (.081)
Male	-.190 (.069)	-.325*** (.036)	-.323*** (.036)
Married	.037 (.078)	.099** (.048)	.010 (.048)
Age	-.001 (.002)	-.008*** (.001)	-.008*** (.001)
Own Home	-.111 (.097)	--	--
Length in Community	-.002 (.001)	--	--
% Non White in County	.570 (.449)	.002 (.004)	.002 (.004)
Median Family Income in County	-.000 (.000)	-.000 (.000)	-.000 (.000)
% Unemployed in County	-6.750*** (2.11)	-2.743* (1.652)	-2.797* (1.621)
Log-likelihood	-1245.003	-4026.821	-4032.323
N	1232	4228	4235

All models estimated with state and year fixed effects; all models report robust standard errors clustered on county. All significance tests two-tailed.

- * p < .10
- ** p < .05
- *** p < .01

Table 2: Relationship between Vietnam Casualty Rates and National Election Study Measures of Political Participation, 1974-1982

	Fed Govt. Performance	Trust Fed Govt.	Trust Fed Govt. Least	Interest in Politics	Voted in Last Election
Vietnam Casualty Rate	-.016** (.007)	-.007 (.004)	.040** (.019)	-.012*** (.004)	-.016** (.007)
Republican	.132*** (.054)	.182*** (.049)	-.033 (.099)	.355*** (.042)	.555*** (.055)
Democrat	.093* (.049)	.203*** (.048)	-.008 (.093)	.371*** (.040)	.515*** (.052)
Education	.018 (.012)	.038*** (.010)	.013 (.021)	.221*** (.010)	.228*** (.012)
Income	-.023 (.021)	-.013 (.016)	.020 (.032)	.069*** (.016)	.067*** (.018)
White	-.064 (.095)	.132** (.057)	.030 (.082)	-.013 (.044)	.028 (.049)
Male	-.104*** (.031)	.060** (.027)	-.057 (.058)	.289*** (.028)	.062* (.036)
Married	-.060 (.041)	-.021 (.037)	.015 (.070)	.072*** (.029)	.179*** (.044)
Age	-.004*** (.001)	-.000 (.001)	-.005** (.002)	.016*** (.001)	.018*** (.001)
Own Home	.020 (.045)	-.056 (.035)	.042 (.067)	.033 (.034)	.289*** (.046)
Length in Community	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.003** (.002)	-.000 (.000)	.004*** (.001)
% Non White in County	-.380** (.196)	-.809*** (.166)	-1.464*** (.347)	.116 (.179)	-.253 (.254)
Median Family Income in County	-.0253** (.011)	.002 (.010)	-.008 (.026)	-.017 (.012)	-.015 (.015)
% Unemployed in County	-.531 (1.190)	-.249 (1.339)	-4.412 (2.847)	.600 (1.721)	1.246 (2.184)
Constant	--	--	.609 (.394)	--	-1.478*** (.145)
Log-likelihood	-6689.531	-6319.407	-1517.260	-9188.843	-4615.307
N	4,172	7,853	2,334	7,553	8056

All models estimated with state and year fixed effects; all models report robust standard errors clustered on county. All significance tests two-tailed.

* p < .10

** p < .05

*** p < .01

Table 3: The Effect of Vietnam Casualty Rates on County-Level Presidential Turnout, 1956-1988

	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988
Coefficient	-66	-76	-36	-153	-107	-164	-55	6	-6
P-value	.19	.21	.48	.01	.03	.00	.13	.84	.87
T/O effect	-.5%	-.6%	-.2%	-1.2%	-1.4%	-2.1%	-.7%	0%	0%

Coefficients in **bold** are statistically significant, $p < .10$, two-tailed test.

Table 4: Relationship between Vietnam Casualty Rates and Social Capital Benchmark Survey Indices of Political Civic Engagement

	Electoral Politics Index	Non-Electoral Politics Index	Organizational Activity Index	Charitable Activity Index
Vietnam Casualty Rate	-.011** (.004)	-.014** (.006)	-.001 (.004)	.033 (.022)
Education	.205*** (.006)	.188*** (.007)	.147*** (.005)	.609*** (.020)
Income	.088*** (.005)	.064*** (.005)	.057*** (.004)	.386*** (.014)
White	.261*** (.036)	-.147*** (.036)	-.102*** (.026)	-.024 (.090)
Male	.146*** (.015)	.078*** (.016)	-.054*** (.013)	-.587*** (.051)
Married	.058*** (.018)	-.097*** (.024)	-.013 (.014)	.589*** (.051)
Age	.025*** (.000)	-.002** (.001)	.002*** (.000)	.011*** (.002)
Own Home	.186*** (.021)	.075*** (.023)	.105*** (.013)	.680*** (.065)
Length in Community	.100*** (.006)	.055*** (.008)	.048*** (.005)	.221*** (.021)
% Non White in Community	.254 (.161)	.315 (.228)	-.175* (.005)	-.798*** (.293)
Mean Family Income in Community	.036 (.062)	-.086 (.106)	-.098** (.035)	-.445*** (.127)
% Unemployed in County	-1.924*** (.719)	-1.556 (1.248)	.192 (.527)	-1.281 (2.022)
Constant	.054 (.253)	.238*** (.047)	-.517*** (.144)	1.717*** (.488)
R ²	.35	.11	.12	.19
N	25,245	25,251	25,183	25,242

All models estimated using OLS regressions with state fixed effects and standard errors clustered on county. All significance tests two-tailed.

* p < .10
 ** p < .05
 *** p < .01

Table 5: Relationship between Korean and WWII Casualty Rates and National Election Study Measures of Political Participation, 1956-1964

	Trust Fed Govt.	Interest in Politics	Voted in Last Election	Voted in Pres Election	Interest in Politics (II)	Voted in Pres Election (II)
Korea Casualty Rate	-.003 (.006)	-.022** (.011)	-.011 (.010)	-.019** (.008)	-.025** (.013)	-.032*** (.011)
World War II Casualty Rate	--	--	--	--	.002 (.006)	.008 (.005)
Republican	-.002 (.099)	.373*** (.089)	.493*** (.081)	.514*** (.081)	.371*** (.088)	.508*** (.080)
Democrat	.069 (.097)	.260*** (.081)	.570*** (.072)	.534*** (.075)	.259*** (.081)	.529*** (.075)
Education	.037*** (.014)	.157*** (.017)	.160*** (.014)	.165*** (.017)	.156*** (.017)	.165*** (.017)
Income	.042* (.025)	.133*** (.027)	.189*** (.026)	.154*** (.027)	.133*** (.027)	.153*** (.027)
White	-.060 (.114)	.005 (.094)	.280*** (.096)	.293*** (.102)	.004 (.094)	.295*** (.102)
Male	.132 (.047)	.390*** (.045)	.211*** (.050)	.166*** (.054)	.390*** (.045)	.164*** (.054)
Married	-.091* (.051)	-.013 (.065)	.110** (.057)	.158*** (.060)	-.014 (.065)	.158*** (.060)
Age	-.003** (.002)	.011*** (.002)	.018*** (.002)	.015*** (.002)	.011*** (.002)	.015*** (.002)
% Non White in County	.122 (.554)	.018 (.654)	-.190 (.451)	-.028 (.475)	.040 (.652)	.059 (.489)
Median Family Income in County	-.054 (.047)	-.103* (.061)	-.158*** (.061)	-.163** (.067)	-.098 (.064)	-.142** (.071)
% Unemployed in County	2.673 (2.247)	-.326 (2.674)	-2.881* (1.738)	-2.108 (1.722)	-.342 (2.697)	-2.116 (1.723)
Constant	--	--	-1.699*** (.296)	-1.711*** (.290)	--	-1.866*** (.322)
Log-likelihood	-2415.961	-2848.739	-2812.643	-2078.079	-2848.595	-2076.596
N	2657	2444	5651	4284	2444	4284

All models estimated with state and year fixed effects; all models report robust standard errors clustered on county. All significance tests two-tailed.

* p < .10
 ** p < .05
 *** p < .01

Table 6: The Effect of Korean Casualty Rates on County-Level Presidential Turnout, 1940-1964

	1940	1944	1948	1952	1956	1960	1964
Coefficient	-11	-3	-8	-36	-2	-13	-8
P-value	0.24	0.61	0.26	0.10	0.75	0.36	0.43
T/O effect	-0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%	-0.4%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.0%

Coefficients in **bold** are statistically significant, $p < .10$, two-tailed test.

Appendix Table 1: Summary Statistics for Dependent and Independent Variables

National Election Study	Mean	Standard Dev.
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
Federal Government Performance	3.839	1.528
Trust Federal Government	2.461	.633
Trust Federal Government Least	.471	.499
Interest in Politics	2.754	1.060
Voted in Last Election	.634	.482
<i>Independent Variables</i>		
Vietnam Casualty Rate (per 1k Men 18-34)	3.523	3.291
Korea Casualty Rate (per 10k residents)	2.299	4.976
World War II Casualty Rate (per 10k residents)	22.934	9.561
Republican	.331	.470
Democrat	.536	.499
Education	3.292	1.760
Income	2.888	1.162
White	.872	.334
Male	.440	.496
Married	.700	.458
Age	45.598	16.862
Own Home	.699	.459
Length in Community	27.783	28.678
% Non White in County	.110	.111
Median Family Income in County (in \$1,000s)	9.498	2.188
% Unemployed in County	.043	.018
Social Capital Benchmark Survey		
	Mean	Standard Dev.
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
Electoral Politics Index	3.058	1.324
Non-Electoral Politics Index	1.125	1.387
Organizational Activity Index	.067	1.038
Charitable Activity Index	5.202	4.305
<i>Independent Variables</i>		
Vietnam Casualty Rate (per 1k Men 18-34)	3.523	3.291
Education	3.652	1.840
Income	3.179	2.052
White	.729	.443
Male	.411	.492
Married	.511	.500
Age	44.756	16.703
Own Home	.696	.460
Length in Community	3.572	1.485
% Non White in Community	.282	.155
Mean Family Income in Community (in \$10ks)	3.168	.357
% Unemployed in County	.037	.016

Appendix Table A-1: Robustness Check for National Election Studies Models Using Pre-1966 NES Data

	Trust Fed Govt.	Interest in Politics	Voted in Last Election
Vietnam Casualty Rate	-.014 (.029)	-.007 (.026)	-.001 (.028)
Republican	-.002 (.099)	.369*** (.089)	.491*** (.081)
Democrat	.070 (.098)	.258*** (.081)	.568*** (.072)
Education	.037*** (.014)	.156*** (.017)	.159*** (.014)
Income	.043* (.025)	.133*** (.027)	.190*** (.026)
White	-.057 (.115)	.000 (.095)	.273*** (.096)
Male	.129*** (.047)	.387*** (.045)	.210*** (.050)
Married	-.090* (.051)	-.018 (.066)	.107* (.057)
Age	-.003** (.002)	.011*** (.002)	.018*** (.002)
% Non White in County	.103 (.550)	.029 (.696)	-.141 (.477)
Median Family Income in County	-.055 (.046)	-.098* (.059)	-.159*** (.061)
% Unemployed in County	2.812 (2.261)	-.286 (2.763)	-3.017* (1.811)
Constant	--	--	-1.746*** (.301)
Log-likelihood	-2411.834	-2840.644	-2809.444
N	2651	2438	5644

All models estimated with state and year fixed effects; all models report robust standard errors clustered on county. All significance tests two-tailed.

* p < .10
 ** p < .05
 *** p < .01

Appendix Table A-2: Robustness Check for NES Data Using Difference in Differences Analysis of the Change in County-Level Engagement and Participation

	Trust Fed Govt.	Interest in Politics	Voted in Last Election
Vietnam Casualty Rate	-.023 (.022)	-.033** (.019)	-.013* (.009)
Δ Republican	-.479** (.239)	1.439*** (.379)	.533*** (.113)
Δ Democrat	-.379** (.213)	1.293*** (.355)	.422*** (.122)
Δ Education	-.056 (.048)	.130** (.064)	.014 (.024)
Δ Income	.071 (.072)	-.097 (.103)	.031 (.063)
Δ White	.207** (.125)	.068 (.259)	-.051 (.147)
Δ Male	.243* (.167)	.327 (.271)	.138* (.085)
Δ Married	.080 (.265)	.224 (.375)	.120 (.120)
Δ Age	.008** (.004)	-.013 (.010)	.009*** (.003)
Constant	-.522*** (.087)	.129* (.088)	-.066* (.040)
R ²	.24	.25	.26
N	109	110	110

All models estimated using OLS regressions with standard errors clustered on state. All significance tests one-tailed.

* p < .10

** p < .05

*** p < .01

**Appendix Table B-1: Robustness Check on Social Capital Benchmark Survey Models
Disaggregating by Length of Residence**

	Electoral Politics Index, 20+ Years	Electoral Politics Index, < 20 Years	Non-Electoral Politics Index, 20+ Years	Non-Electoral Politics Index, < 20 Years
Vietnam Casualty Rate	-.014* (.008)	-.010* (.006)	-.020* (.011)	-.013*** (.001)
Education	.183*** (.008)	.214*** (.008)	.187*** (.011)	.187*** (.009)
Income	.076*** (.008)	.092*** (.006)	.062*** (.008)	.060*** (.006)
White	.080** (.039)	.324*** (.040)	-.309*** (.051)	-.087** (.038)
Male	.110*** (.021)	.163*** (.019)	.107*** (.029)	.061*** (.020)
Married	.181*** (.027)	-.000 (.022)	.036 (.028)	-.166*** (.030)
Age	.024*** (.001)	.025*** (.001)	-.003*** (.001)	-.001 (.001)
Own Home	.266*** (.038)	.145*** (.023)	.035 (.050)	.083*** (.022)
Length in Community	-.045* (.028)	.134*** (.010)	-.067** (.032)	.087*** (.014)
% Non White in Community	.223 (.181)	.263 (.166)	.598** (.309)	.199 (.263)
Mean Family Income in Community	-.057 (.061)	.063 (.067)	-.084 (.108)	-.099 (.121)
% Unemployed in County	-2.178** (1.013)	-1.864*** (.754)	-.408 (1.634)	-2.195* (1.316)
Constant	1.324*** (.293)	-.171 (.278)	1.126*** (.420)	.466*** (.482)
R ²	.31	.33	.12	.11
N	8,633	16,612	8,633	16,618

All models estimated using OLS regressions with state fixed effects and standard errors clustered on county. All significance tests two-tailed.

* p < .10
 ** p < .05
 *** p < .01

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