

Uplifting Manhood to Wonderful Heights? Newspaper Reporting of American Combat Deaths from World War One to Gulf War Two

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Abstract

A large body of scholarship concludes that the dynamics of American war support follow a sort of cost-benefit calculus, with costs represented by American war deaths. However, little is known about whether simple counts of American deaths reflect how losses are conveyed to citizens through the news. This paper examines *New York Times* coverage of American war deaths in five major conflicts that occurred over the past century. We find that war coverage often downplays the human costs of war, and that the framing of casualty coverage is influenced by the tide of battle. When a war is going well, news stories become less likely to mention American war dead. Moreover, news coverage of casualties tends to be driven by trends in war deaths rather than numbers of war dead. These findings underscore the importance of studying the information environments in which wars are communicated to citizens.

Since the publication of John Mueller's (Mueller 1973, 1970, 1971) innovative work on war and public opinion, it has become an article of faith among scholars of international relations and public opinion that the willingness of citizens to support wars is shaped by information about the human costs of war. A scholarly consensus has emerged that the dynamics of American war support appear to be driven by a sort of cost-benefit calculus (e.g., Eichenberg 2005; Larson 1996; Larson and Savych 2005). The number of war deaths suffered by American forces plays an important albeit contested (e.g., Berinsky 2007; Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2005) role at the heart of this calculus.

Empirically, we know that popular support for war tends to decrease as American war deaths increase. Theoretically, the war support literature tends to interpret this pattern as evidence that the American public perceives fewer benefits from war as its human costs mount. This presumed relationship is usually tested with aggregate data, using time-series models predicting war support as a function of the actual occurrence of American war deaths. However, ordinary Americans learn about casualties not from time-series datasets but from news coverage. And although a voluminous literature has examined the smallest details of covariation between aggregate support and aggregate casualties, little attention has been paid to the ways that news media report the casualties of war. This is an important omission, because the frequency with which casualties are reported and the way they are framed should be important factors shaping the mass public's response to war deaths.

This paper presents the first content analysis of casualty coverage to compare the framing of casualty news across several major wars. Contrary to assumptions underlying much of the war support literature, our analysis of *New York Times* stories from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Iraq War reveals that American casualties are sometimes framed not as war victims but as justifiable sacrifices for the greater good. For example, the title of this paper comes from a July 9, 1916 *Times* story on British troops fighting in the trenches that summarized the costs of war in a simple headline: "Manhood Uplifted to Wonderful Heights in the Battles Now Raging." There was a

tendency in World War I to dramatize combat and casualties in a way that emphasized glory, honor, and sacrifice for a noble cause. Over time, this emphasis on war as a manly exercise has declined. But while we no longer see news coverage rhapsodizing about the glories of combat, the tendency to minimize the human costs of war remains. Our analysis of casualty reporting from World War I through the Iraq War shows that the amount of newspaper attention to the human costs of war has remained remarkably stable over the past century. Roughly eight in ten newspaper stories about war avoid even passing reference to American or enemy deaths, a figure that varies hardly at all from World War I through the Iraq War.

In contrast to the typical expectation that public support for war should be sensitive to incremental changes in casualty numbers, our analysis finds that news coverage of war deaths is more sensitive to casualty trends than casualty counts. High numbers of deaths tend to trigger no unusual attention to casualties in news reports, but the press takes notice when deaths are rising. Even then, news coverage often presents war casualties as a regrettable but routine and even justifiable consequence of the business of war. When a war is going well and prospects for eventual victory are bright, news stories become less likely to mention American war deaths. When America suffers setbacks, news coverage focuses more attention on the human cost of war.

These findings help to shed light on recent theoretical disagreements in the war support literature about the nature of the public's "casualty sensitivity" and the degree to which public support for war is eroded by mounting casualties (e.g., Berinsky 2007; Berinsky and Druckman 2007; Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2005; Mueller 2005; Eichenberg, Stoll, and Lebo 2006; Gartner 2008). In contrast to the traditional assumptions of this scholarly literature, our findings question the theoretical validity of using cumulative or marginal counts of American war dead as a statistical proxy for the war costs that are actually communicated to and perceived by the American public. However, in keeping with recent work on the importance of the war's perceived success as a moderator of the public's casualty sensitivity (e.g., Feaver and Gelpi 2004; Johnson and Tierney 2006) and new findings on the

importance of casualty trends rather than casualty levels (e.g., Gartner 2008), our analysis shows that news attention to war costs seems to vary as a function of battlefield successes and trends in American war deaths.

In short, this first-ever study to compare the levels and dynamics of casualty coverage across major American conflicts of the last 100 years calls into question a wide range of assumptions common to the political science literature about how public support for war should be modeled. By explicitly analyzing how casualty information is communicated to the American public, this study draws attention to the importance of moving past “black box” covariance models to better understand how information flows about military conflicts structure and moderate public support for war.

War Costs and War Support

John Mueller’s influential (1973) *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (see also Mueller 1970; 1971) proposed that public support for the Korean and Vietnam wars was largely a function of cumulative casualty rates: as casualties went up, support went down. Although a broader range of factors is now understood to shape public support for war, and while current scholarship suggests that marginal rather than cumulative casualties are more important in shaping war support (Gartner and Segura 1998; Gartner, Segura, and Wilkening 1997; Gartner 2008; although see Mueller 2005; Eichenberg, Stoll, and Lebo 2006), a surge of scholarship following Mueller’s book continues to see casualties as one of several important influences on the public’s resolve. A second wave of scholarship beginning in the 1990s focused on understanding variation in the initial support levels for military crises (e.g., Jentleson 1992; Jentleson and Britton 1998; Oneal, Lian, and Joyner 1996; Klarevas 2002; Burk 1999). When combined with the earlier emphasis on casualty sensitivity, this new wave of research gave rise to what many describe as a “rational calculus” or “cost-benefit” view of war support (e.g., Berinsky 2007; Eichenberg 2005). War costs are typically defined as the number of deaths among friendly forces, undoubtedly the most visible costs of war for ordinary citizens (Lorell and Kelley

1985). In this sense, notes Christopher Gelpi (Gelpi and Mueller 2006: 139), the mass public's "casualty sensitivity may be thought of as price sensitivity to the human cost of war."

The most recent work to emerge from this cost-benefit paradigm suggests that the perceived importance of a military operation and the perceived likelihood of winning a war may have a greater influence on public support than any aversion to casualties (e.g., Feaver and Gelpi 2004; Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2005; Johnson and Tierney 2006; Kull and Ramsay 2001; Larson 1996; Larson and Savych 2005). Current scholarship strongly suggests that policy objectives and the perceived likelihood of eventual victory are the main engines driving aggregate support for war (e.g., Eichenberg 2005; Larson 1996; Larson and Savych 2005), although disagreement remains on whether success is the most important factor (Feaver and Gelpi 2004; Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2005: 16; Gelpi and Mueller 2006; Kull and Ramsay 2001; Johnson and Tierney 2006) or whether perceptions of success are themselves influenced by casualty rates, support levels, and elite disagreement (Voetin and Brewer 2006; Berinsky 2007; Berinsky and Druckman 2007).

Although the importance of war costs occupies theoretical center stage within the academic debate over the nature of war support dynamics, the way that casualties are typically operationalized as cumulative or marginal counts of war dead is increasingly out of step with new findings in the literature and premised on assumptions that remain unsupported by empirical analysis. First, recent studies confirm that the context in which casualties are communicated to American audiences is just as important for understanding the public's assessment of war costs as the fact that losses have occurred. Casualty reports containing images of American dead affect public support more than textual descriptions only (Pfau et al. 2006; Gartner 2008; see also Pfau et al. 2008). Americans also seem more sensitive to war deaths when casualty rates are rising rather than when they are falling (Gartner 2008; Gartner, Segura, and Wilkening 1997). A recent experimental study (Boettcher and Cobb 2006) found that the effect of American deaths on perceptions of war success was conditioned by the way those deaths were framed. When presented in isolation, news of American deaths lowered perceptions of a

battle's apparent success. But when presented along with information about the number of enemy forces killed in the battle, experimental subjects were more likely to perceive the battle as a success despite American losses. The authors concluded that public tolerance for American deaths was increased when those deaths were conveyed in the context of enemy losses.

Second, although “the role of the media in relation to casualty aversion is often presented as critical” (Smith 2005: 498), news coverage of casualties is rarely studied in a systematic way. Many scholars seem to use numerical data about war deaths as a sort of proxy for information about war costs thought to be conveyed by news coverage. News transmission is assumed rather than observed. But the validity of this approach is cast into doubt by the few studies that have been done on news coverage of casualties. The general consensus among qualitative studies examining the history of war reporting is that accurate casualty information rarely reaches the eyes and ears of audiences on the home front (e.g., Carruthers 2000; Knightley 2004; Moeller 1989; Mott 1962; Roeder 1993; Zelizer 2004). Only a few quantitative content analyses of casualty coverage have been undertaken. Most focus on just a single conflict, typically either Vietnam or Iraq, and none have examined casualty coverage prior to the Vietnam War. This small number of quantitative analyses tends to support the conclusions of qualitative studies. American, enemy, and civilian casualties were rarely mentioned on Vietnam-era television newscasts outside of the weekly “body count” update on American deaths that appeared every Thursday night (Bailey 1976; Hallin 1986; Patterson 1984). During the 2003 invasion of Iraq only a fraction of stories airing on the three networks or the two main cable channels mentioned coalition, enemy, or civilian casualties (Aday, Livingston, and Hebert 2005; Aday 2005). Studies of casualty coverage from later in the Iraq war suggest that the amount of television news attention given to both American and civilian casualties had increased (Aday 2007; Binstock et al. 2006), but that the cumulative number of American war deaths was rarely mentioned in television news reports (Cobb 2007).

Along with the finding that casualty coverage is amplified at the local level when hometown casualties are suffered (Gartner 2004; Hayes and Myers 2009), this short review summarizes what little we know with certainty about news coverage given to casualties in major wars. No previous study has systematically compared the reporting of war casualties across the entire duration of any major war. Nor has any study yet compared news coverage of casualties across major wars in ways that could clarify how casualty coverage has changed over time. These are critical omissions in light of findings that support for war should be influenced both by the availability of casualty information and by how that casualty information is presented in the news.

This paper sheds light on these important gaps by presenting findings from a theoretically-grounded content analysis of news coverage given to war casualties. This content analysis was guided by two overarching goals. First, we aimed to trace changes in the way news of American casualties has been framed over time. We therefore examined the evaluative tone of war stories that mention American casualties and whether information about American casualties tended to be presented in isolation or in conjunction with reports of enemy casualties. Second, we calibrated the timing and amount of casualty coverage in relation to numerical data on American war deaths commonly used by scholars to measure war costs.

Data Sources for Newspaper Coverage and Casualty Trends

Newspaper Content

We analyzed every war-related story in sampled days of *New York Times* coverage from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Iraq War. Only a few newspapers are available in electronic form going back as far as World War I, and among those in the ProQuest Historical Newspapers series only the *Times* also had a published index that could be used to determine authoritatively which stories were war-related.

We used a stratified random sampling procedure to select days for inclusion in the analysis. Because newspaper content varies systematically by day of the week, we followed standard sampling

procedures for daily newspapers (Riffe, Aust, and Lacy 1993; Riffe, Lacy, and Fico 1998: 97-101) and randomly sampled one constructed week of coverage for each year of a war. But in order to track changes in coverage over the course of a war, we stratified these constructed weeks by elapsed months within each war. Because we were interested in tracking the development of news coverage both within and across wars, our choice to sample roughly every 60th day of each war produced larger subsamples for longer wars. Data reported in this paper¹ include 10 days of news coverage from the period of American involvement in World War I (April 2, 1917 to November 11, 1918), 20 days from the period of American involvement in World War II (December 7, 1941 to September 2, 1945), 18 days from the Korean War (June 25, 1950 to July 25, 1953), 49 days from the Vietnam War (considered to have begun with the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, passed on August 7, 1964, and to have ended on March 29, 1973, the day the last American combat troops left South Vietnam), and 29 days from the Iraq War (March 19, 2003 through September 30, 2006, the date we began collecting data for this project).

With the final sample in hand, we used the New York Times Index to identify all war-related stories published on each day included in this final sample. We then coded every war story within each day using full-text, scanned images of news stories obtained from ProQuest's Historical Database of the New York Times.² All war-related content was included in the analysis, including editorials and opinion columns, but excluding letters to the editor since the Times Index only began listing all letters

¹ Our sampling frame covered the entire duration of both world wars, but this paper considers only the later periods of those wars in which the United States was an active combatant.

² Full-text stories from Nexis-Lexis were used to code *Times* coverage from the Iraq War, as the ProQuest holdings ended in late 2003 at the time the coding for this project was conducted.

to the editor in the mid-1980s (Althaus, Edy, and Phalen 2001). This procedure identified a total of 2,033 war stories published in the 126 days sampled for the present analysis.³

Within each war-related story, coders recorded every mention of war deaths sustained by friendly forces and enemy forces. Stories coded as mentioning casualties were not necessarily stories “about” casualties, though many were. Mentions of casualties captured by our coders therefore range from long numerical reports of casualties from recent battles to brief, offhand remarks about “our losses” in editorials or op-ed articles. Coders also noted when stories described combat operations, and when stories offered cues about the moral stances of allied and enemy forces that suggested whether American involvement in a war was justified or not. To assess story-level cues about the likelihood of eventual victory, five coding categories were developed to capture different types of information relevant to the likely outcome of a war: the apparent military power of enemy forces, the apparent military power of allied forces, a measure of which side had the military initiative, a measure assessing which side was likely to win the war, and a measure of whether the story contained mostly good news or bad news for the US and its allies. Separate coding variables were collected using these five measures, but a principal components analysis later revealed a single factor solution with strong loads for all five items (Eigenvalue = 2.86). As a consequence, we scaled all five variables to a common metric (after reverse-coding the enemy strength variable) and averaged them into an aggregated estimate of the war’s likely outcome (Cronbach’s alpha = .81). This combined measure of the likelihood of victory runs from -1 to 1, with negative values representing an anticipated defeat and positive values indicating a likely victory.

Because of the complex alliances that the United States made in each of these wars, we considered friendly casualties as losses incurred either by American forces or by the forces of its allies. For

³ Our complete data set (including the periods of both world wars prior to American entry) contains 2,671 war stories published in 154 sampled days.

instance, coders were instructed to count reports of British casualties during World War II or ARVN forces during the Vietnam War as mentions of friendly casualties. In practice, however, despite casting a broad net we found that nearly all mentions of friendly casualties made during periods of American involvement referred to U.S. casualties alone—few stories mentioned casualties of allied nations without also mentioning American losses. For this reason, throughout the analysis that follows we consistently refer to friendly casualties as American casualties.

Five coders carried out the content analysis after extensive training and reliability testing. A final reliability test using 161 stories was conducted prior to the start of data collection process, and this test confirmed that coders were applying the protocol with acceptable levels of agreement and chance - corrected intercoder reliability. Average pairwise agreement across coders ranged from 99% to 87%, and minimum pairwise agreement ranged from 98% to 74% for the variables used in this analysis. The likelihood of eventual victory measure had an average pairwise correlation of .80 across coders, and a minimum pairwise correlation of .70. Besides measures of “raw” agreement, we also calculated intercoder reliability statistics, which represent the percent agreement above what can be expected by chance (details on agreement and intercoder reliability measures for each content variable used in this paper are available from the authors upon request). All content variables used in this analysis have acceptable levels of intercoder reliability, achieving at least a .70 level of reliability with either Brennan and Prediger’s (1981) kappa or Krippendorff’s (2004) alpha, as appropriate.

To maximize the validity of the content analysis data, we not only tested for chance-corrected intercoder reliability prior to data collection but also randomized the assignment of coders to stories during data collection. Coders were assigned to every fifth story in sequence within each war to ensure that any remaining coding error would distribute randomly across sampled days and that any single day’s coding was done by more than one person. Coders were also assigned to begin their analysis in different wars and to proceed in chronological order so that any idiosyncratic errors would distribute

evenly across wars. This additional validity check ensures that trends within and across wars are not merely artifacts of the coder assignment process.

Trend Data on American War Deaths

Trend data on cumulative American war deaths are shown in Appendix Figure A1, and trend data on marginal war deaths that occurred during the 120 days prior to each data point are shown in Appendix Figure A2. Trends in Korean War deaths were derived from the Korean Combat Casualty File, 1950-57, while those for the Vietnam War come from the Southeast Asia Combat Area Casualties File.⁴ Casualty data for the Iraq War comes from official Department of Defense data compiled by the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count web site (www.icasualties.org). Trends in American deaths from World War I and World War II were estimated from government casualty reports published regularly in the *Times*. See the appendix for details on how trend data for the world wars were compiled.

The Framing of American War Deaths

Although friendly casualties play a central role in most studies of public support for war, we find that news coverage tends to draw little attention to the human costs of war. Our data reveal that war news contained no mention at all of American fatalities on 20% of sampled days. On days when American deaths were noted, such references were often brief and most stories made no mention of them at all. Across all five wars, American war deaths were mentioned in an average of 1.7 stories per day, which means that just 11% of war-related stories on an average day mentioned American deaths even in passing.

While news attention to war casualties has been minimized consistently over the last century, the framing of casualties in news coverage has changed over time. Framing analysis has been used extensively by political communication scholars to examine how news discourse is constructed and used by citizens in the process of forming and updating foreign policy attitudes (e.g., Bennett,

⁴ The authors are grateful to [REDACTED].

Lawrence, and Livingston 2007; Entman 2003; Hallin 1986; Entman 1993). Making sense of the potential effects of casualty coverage invites us to consider two dimensions of news framing that could influence how citizens respond to casualty information: the frequency with which American casualties are presented in the context of enemy casualties, and the evaluative tone of stories that present American war deaths.

War Costs Are Often Presented in Redeeming Contexts

The frequency with which American casualties are presented in the context of enemy losses could influence whether citizens see those casualties as justified for achieving a war's larger purposes, as recent experimental work has shown (Boettcher and Cobb 2006). However, no previous study has assessed the frequency with which American and enemy casualty reports occur in the same news stories.

Our data reveal that an average of 84% of war stories made no mention of either American or enemy deaths. The first row of Table 1 shows little variation in this percentage across wars prior to Iraq. But during the Iraq War the percentage of stories making no mention of either friendly or enemy deaths dropped slightly to 78%. This is a statistically significant difference, and F-tests from ANOVAs on the between-war differences for each row in Table 1 are all significant at conventional levels.⁵ The second row shows that the proportion of stories mentioning American deaths in isolation from enemy

⁵ While F-tests for between-group differences are significant for each of the rows in Table 1, post-hoc contrasts verify only the most extreme pairwise differences in the table due to the small numbers of stories that mentioned deaths of any sort. These contrasts confirm that for the "No US or enemy deaths" row, significant pairwise differences are found between Iraq on the one hand and Vietnam and World War II on the other. For the "US deaths only" row, differences between Iraq and all other wars are significant at conventional levels. For the "enemy deaths only" row, no differences between any pair of wars are significant at conventional levels, although the difference between Vietnam and World War II is marginally significant. Finally, between-war differences in stories that mention both US and enemy deaths are significant between Iraq and Vietnam as well as between Vietnam, Korea, and World War II.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

If Vietnam had the most sympathetic framing of American losses, then Iraq had by far the least sympathetic framing of war costs. During the Iraq war, only 7.6% of stories mentioning American deaths presented those deaths in the context of enemy losses. This increased tendency for Iraq coverage to portray American losses in isolation from enemy losses stems from two historical shifts in war coverage. First, during the Iraq War, 18.2% of *Times* stories about the conflict mentioned American deaths, which is more than twice the proportion of stories mentioning American losses found in any previous war. Second, Iraq coverage was not only more likely to mention American losses but also less likely mention enemy losses than had been the case in earlier wars. Adding the bottom two rows in Table 1 reveals that from World War I through the Vietnam War, enemy deaths were mentioned in an average of 7.6% of war stories. In contrast, enemy deaths were mentioned in only 3.7% of Iraq War stories. In short, Table 1 suggests that the framing of American war deaths underwent a substantial change following the Vietnam War: attention to American losses increased, and mentions of enemy losses decreased.

We conclude from the findings in Table 1 that war stories often mention American deaths in the redeeming context of enemy deaths, although this tendency varies across wars. Our findings cannot directly address why the framing of American losses has been inconsistent in the two most recent wars. The higher proportion of casualty stories from Vietnam that mention American and enemy losses together could be an outgrowth of the “body count” strategy that was initially developed by the U.S. military during the Korean war (Gartner and Myers 1995). Compared to American involvement in the two world wars, both Korea and Vietnam eventually developed into attrition-style warfare designed to inflict enemy losses rather than to capture and hold territory. Within this framework, the number of enemy losses became important benchmarks of the war’s success, and it is no surprise that news coverage of casualties should reflect this emphasis by military leaders. What is less clear is why Iraq has relatively more coverage devoted to American casualties alone. News coverage during neither Iraq nor Vietnam was subject to overt censorship (e.g., Cortell, Eisinger, and Althaus 2009; Knightley 2004), so differences in casualty framing between these wars could not have resulted from changes in censorship policies. A more plausible alternative is the nature of nature of insurgency combat in Iraq. Enemy deaths are easiest to report in the context of traditional linear battlefields where large numbers of American and enemy forces engaged in direct combat over extended periods of time. This was the typical style of combat during Korea and the two world wars. Although combat in Vietnam sometimes occurred in traditional linear battlefields, this type of combat was almost unheard of in the post-invasion phase of the Iraq War. And while both Vietnam and Iraq were insurgency wars in which ambushes were a primary mode of engagement, the nature of those ambushes was quite different between these wars. Vietnam-style ambushes involving small arms exchanges between small units was replaced with Iraq-style ambushes characterized by suicide bombs and remotely-detonated explosives, where casualties were often incurred by American forces without direct engagement with enemy forces.

American War Deaths Tend to Be Presented without Moral Commentary

In addition to framing friendly deaths in light of enemy deaths, the few *Times* stories that mentioned American losses rarely criticized America's involvement in a war. In a previous paper we examined the tone of judgments made in news coverage about the moral standing of allied and enemy forces (for full details of the coding of these variables, see **CITATION DELETED**). Separate codes for the moral stance attributed to allied and enemy forces helped us identify cues about the relative appropriateness of American involvement in a war. Here, we combine those separate scores to create a composite measure of the *relative* moral standing of the American cause as communicated through news coverage. As we use the terms in this paper, "positive" moral tone includes both stories that praise the moral stance of allied nations and stories that criticize the moral stance of enemy nations, while "negative" moral tone includes both stories that criticize the allied cause as well as stories that praise the enemy's cause.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of stories mentioning American deaths that were scored as positive or negative relative to the moral stance of the American side. Two features of this figure clarify the nature of moral cues in news coverage associated with the loss of American lives. First, in every war the overwhelming majority of stories mentioning American casualties have always been neutral with respect to the American cause. In four of the wars, more than eight out of ten of these stories conveyed no moral stance at all, while between 5% and 12% praised the rightness of the American cause and at most 7% criticized it. The exception is Korea, where 32% of stories mentioning American deaths also praised the justice of the American cause. This outlier may stem from the Cold War backdrop of that war, which cast the American forces as paladins of freedom arrayed against trumpeting hoards of godless Communists. But even with Korean coverage, the majority of casualty stories contained no moral evaluations at all.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The second feature of note is that despite the appearance of critical stories mentioning American deaths beginning in Korea (see the bottom half of Figure 1), there has been no statistically significant increase over time in the percentage of stories mentioning American deaths that also criticize the American cause or praise its enemies ($F [4, 220] = 1.1, p = .36$). However, fewer stories in recent wars that mention American deaths praise the justice of the American cause ($F [4, 220] = 3.6, p < .01$). Post-hoc contrasts confirm that Vietnam and Iraq casualty coverage contained somewhat less moral boosterism than did previous wars. As Figure 1 shows, in these wars there was an even balance between praise and criticism of the justice of the American cause.

War Costs and Cues about the Likelihood of Victory

Cues about the relative moral standing of America's purpose in a war capture just one aspect of evaluative tone. Equally important from a theoretical standpoint are cues evaluating the likelihood that the United States will win a war. With each successive war, *Times* coverage became increasingly pessimistic about the likelihood of an eventual American victory (CITATION DELETED). Whereas the typical war story from either of the world wars tended to be relatively optimistic about the chances of winning, war coverage from Korea tended to be neutral while stories from Vietnam and Iraq tended to suggest that victory was somewhat unlikely.

Looking at the subset of stories mentioning American deaths, Figure 2 reveals a similar pattern in the tone of coverage given to war casualties. In this figure, negative values indicate pessimism about the chances of eventual victory, positive values indicate optimism about the likely outcome of the war, and values near the zero line indicate either mixed cues or no clear signal about the war's probable winner (more details about the coding of this variable can be found in CITATION DELETED). Stories mentioning American deaths during World War II tended to be slightly optimistic about the war's likely outcome, whereas similar stories from Iraq tended on average to present war deaths in a slightly pessimistic context. These differences between World War II and Iraq are statistically significant ($F [4, 216] = 3.1, p < .05$), but post-hoc contrasts show no statistically significant differences in levels of

optimism for similar stories from World War I, Korea, or Vietnam. Stories about American deaths from Iraq may be more pessimistic about the war's chances of success than comparable stories from World War II. But despite appearances in Figure 2, there is no clear trend over time in levels of relative optimism about chances of victory in stories that mention American war deaths.

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

American war deaths during the Iraq War tended to be reported in stories that were relatively pessimistic regarding the war's eventual outcome, but the reason that this is so may have less to do with the changing nature of war coverage than with the changing nature of war. This becomes clear when we compare stories mentioning only American deaths, stories mentioning only enemy deaths, and stories mentioning both American and enemy deaths. Figure 3 shows that stories mentioning only American dead consistently were coded as pessimistic in outlook for every conflict save World War II, when stories featuring only American dead were neutral on average rather than pessimistic. In contrast, stories that mention both American and enemy deaths tended not only to be consistently optimistic about the war's expected outcome, but ANOVA testing confirmed that in every war save Korea stories mentioning both American and enemy deaths were significantly more optimistic than stories mentioning only American deaths. Due to the small number of casualty stories in Korea coverage, for the Korean War this relationship was only marginally significant ($F [2, 30] = 3.0, p = .07$). ANOVA testing also revealed that for each of the five wars the degree of optimism in stories mentioning American and enemy deaths together was statistically indistinguishable from that in stories mentioning only enemy dead. When enemy dead are reported, stories consistently wax optimistic about a war's likely outcome regardless of whether American deaths are also mentioned.

INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Even more telling than these within-war differences is the lack of significant differences across wars. For each of the three story categories in Figure 3, the average level of optimism was statistically indistinguishable between wars. That is, no significant between-war differences were found in average

likelihood of victory scores for stories mentioning only U.S. deaths ($F [4, 147] = 1.7, p = .16$) or for stories mentioning both U.S. and enemy deaths ($F [4, 45] = 1.6, p = .19$). Between-war differences for stories mentioning only enemy deaths were marginally significant ($F [4, 64] = 2.2, p = .08$), but none of the pairwise comparisons approached even marginal levels of significance in post-hoc contrast tests. In short, Figure 3 helps explain why coverage of American deaths during the Iraq War was more pessimistic than the coverage of American deaths during World War II: American deaths in Iraq were more likely to be presented in isolation from enemy deaths (see Table 1). Figure 3 shows that stories presenting American deaths in isolation have always tended to be less optimistic about the war's eventual chances of victory. The difference with Iraq is that hardly any of its casualty coverage places American deaths in the redeeming context of enemy losses.

However, this is not the only reason for the pessimism of Iraq's casualty coverage relative to that from World War II. A second reason is that stories from the Iraq War mentioning dead Americans were less likely to include reports of combat than in earlier wars. Stories describing combat operations are significantly more likely to convey an optimistic sense of the war's likely outcome than stories that have no combat descriptions ($t [2031] = 12.8, p < .001$). In World War I, World War II, and Vietnam, around half of stories presenting American deaths in isolation framed those deaths in the context of combat operations. In Iraq coverage, by contrast, just 22% of the stories mentioning only American deaths also described combat operations, a significant departure from those three earlier wars ($F [4, 147] = 3.9, p < .01$). This clarifies that coverage of American deaths was relatively more pessimistic during Iraq for two reasons. Not only did proportionally more stories about American deaths in Iraq focus on American losses only (see Table 1), but those stories were also less likely to present American losses in the context of ongoing fighting.⁶ Together, this combination made coverage of American

⁶ A similar decline in combat reports is found in stories mentioning both American and enemy deaths. Back in World War I, every story that mentioned US and enemy deaths together featured those losses in the context of ongoing

deaths in Iraq relatively less optimistic about the eventual chances of American victory than it had been in World War II.

In sum, our analysis of the way American war deaths are framed in news coverage draws three main conclusions. Each calls into question the typical assumption in scholarly research that American war deaths should be straightforwardly interpreted as simple cost factors to be weighed against the potential benefits of a war. First, although American dead are typically presented without reference to enemy dead, friendly losses are often presented in the context of enemy losses, and recent experimental work shows that this type of framing blunts the impact of casualty information on evaluations of war support (Boettcher and Cobb 2006). Second, although stories mentioning American deaths have become over time slightly less likely to promote the moral aims of the United States, those stories are today no more critical of American involvement in military action than they were in either of the world wars. The moral imperative of American involvement in World War II is sometimes invoked as a reason why the high casualties of that war had no clear effect on public support (e.g., Larson 1996), but our finding that Iraq's casualty coverage is framed in much the same moral tone as that of World War II raises important questions about this line of reasoning. Third, reporting of war deaths during Iraq was slightly more pessimistic regarding that war's likely outcome than similar reporting from World War II, but no other between-war differences are significant for levels of pessimism expressed in stories that

combat operations, as did two thirds of stories mentioning enemy deaths only. The same tendencies held for coverage from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. But in Iraq coverage, combat operations were described in only 33% of stories mentioning US and enemy losses together. Iraq coverage not only had proportionally fewer stories that mentioned both American and enemy deaths (see Table 1), but those stories were also significantly less likely to be framed in terms of combat operations than in previous wars ($F [4, 45] = 3.0, p < .05$). ANOVA testing confirmed that there were no statistical differences in the propensity to report combat operations in stories mentioning enemy dead only: between two thirds and three quarters of those stories from every war also described combat operations.

mention American dead. This slight difference in levels of pessimism expressed in stories mentioning American dead appears to stem more from changes in the way these wars were fought than from changes in the way these wars were reported. In short, although some scholars suggest that the American public has become more casualty phobic over time (e.g., Norpoth and Sidman 2007; Mueller 2005), our analysis finds no gradual or consistent shift in the way American casualties are framed in newspaper coverage of war over the past century.

What Drives Coverage of American War Deaths?

Having identified tendencies over time in the framing of American war deaths, we now turn to examine the factors that drive wartime casualty coverage. Connecting information about casualties with public support for war requires understanding when and how average Americans actually learn about casualties through media coverage. The apparent consistency of casualty coverage across conflicts prior to the Iraq War presents an intriguing puzzle. Newspaper coverage of American deaths was more common during the Iraq War than during Vietnam, Korea and both world wars, yet the number of Americans who died in Iraq is orders of magnitude smaller than the death tolls from those earlier conflicts.

In order to find what drives coverage of casualties, seven “likely suspects” were drawn from the war support literature and from our own analysis of casualty coverage. Following the lead of previous studies (e.g., Gartner 2008; Gartner, Segura, and Wilkening 1997), we coded the *marginal number of American deaths* (in hundreds) occurring in the 30 days leading up to the date of each story as well as the *trend in marginal deaths*, coded -1 if the marginal number of American deaths were falling relative to the previous 30-day period, +1 if marginal deaths were rising, and 0 if the marginal death trend was stable. We expected, following assumptions implicit in the war support literature, that larger numbers of recent American deaths and rising numbers of marginal deaths should prompt increased news attention to those deaths. We therefore expected positive relationships between each of these variables and the probability that any war story would mention American deaths.

Although the cumulative number of American deaths is an important variable within the war support literature, we could think of no theoretical reason to expect that cumulative deaths should trigger news attention. Instead, we expected that the relative novelty of casualties should have an important bearing on the likelihood of casualty coverage: the news should give more attention to American deaths in the early stages of a war than in the later stages, since novelty is an important news value (e.g., Gans 1979; Graber 2002). Our models therefore include a counter for *elapsed time since the start of American involvement* equal to the number of years (measured in daily increments) since the United States entered each war.

We also included variables capturing the *daily average likelihood of victory* score for all of the war stories published on the day any given story appeared, as well as the *story-level likelihood of victory* score. Both measures capture how the news signaled American prospects for success, cues that have been shown to closely track the occurrence of actual military successes and failures on the battlefield (for full details on these relationships as well as details on the coding of tone variables, see **CITATION DELETED**). We included the daily average likelihood of victory score to capture the dynamic impact of particular stages of wars, since the probability of casualty coverage could be a function of how well the war is going: news media might not want to report more bad news when the outlook is grim, or conversely might not want to report depressing news of casualties when victory is in sight. Lacking guidance from any prior literature on this point, we have no directional expectations for the average daily likelihood of victory score. In contrast, from the findings reported in Figure 3 we expect a negative relationship between the story-level likelihood of victory score and the probability of mentioning American deaths. While these two measures are related, they capture distinctive aspects that should have independent relevance to the appearance of casualty coverage: the general level of optimism about the war versus the outcome of a particular event that prompts a given story.

Finally, we included two combat variables: the *daily percentage of stories describing combat operations* on the date a given story appeared, and a dummy variable for *story-level references to combat*. As with the tone variables, our aim was to capture two separate dynamics. First, our analysis revealed that many stories mentioning American deaths also mentioned combat operations. Omitting a story-level measure of combat descriptions could therefore distort any relationship between the daily percentage of stories mentioning combat and the likelihood of hearing news about American deaths. Second, because most war deaths result from fighting (although this was not true in World War I, see Department of Defense 2008), it may be that periods of intense combat will have more mention of casualties. However, the opposite might also hold. Given a fixed amount of space for reporting the day's war news, more stories about combat operations should tend to crowd out stories about other aspects of war, such as developments on the home front or stories about war leaders. To the extent that casualties are covered in their own stories, heightened news attention to combat operations could diminish the probability of seeing casualty coverage. As with the average daily likelihood of victory variable, we have no directional expectations for the relationship between daily percentage of stories mentioning combat and the probability of mentioning American deaths.

Table 2 shows how these variables affect the probability that a given story will mention American deaths. Separate models are presented for each war but our focus will be on the three pooled models: one that combines all wars together, one that pools just the two world wars, and one that pools just the three later wars. Two main factors warrant our attention to these pooled models, especially to differences between the two world wars and the three later wars. First, casualties rose dramatically over time during both world wars, but were less highly correlated with time among the three later wars (see Appendix Figures A1 and A2). Second, news coverage of both world wars tended to be relatively optimistic about the chances of victory, whereas coverage of later wars tended to be more pessimistic (CITATION DELETED). These similarities suggest that the model pooling stories from the world

wars and the model pooling stories from the later wars are likely to provide the strongest evidence about factors that drive coverage of American war deaths.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Table 2 shows that the marginal numbers of war dead had no significant relationship with the probability of mentioning American deaths in any of the individual wars, and only in the pooled model for the three most recent wars does this relationship become negative and significant. At first glance, the predicted effect seems odd: higher numbers of marginal deaths predict a decrease in the probability of mentioning American dead in the news. However, this relationship holds only after controlling for all the other variables in the equation, and is therefore counterbalanced by the casualty trend variable, which is positive and significant in all three pooled models. As the number of recent casualties goes up, news coverage becomes more likely to mention American deaths. Taken together, these findings show that news coverage of American deaths tends to be driven not by the number of war deaths but by the trends in war deaths. The *Times* paid attention when the casualty rate changed, regardless of how many lives were being lost. When casualty rates dropped or held steady, news coverage became less likely to mention American war deaths. In such situations, news logic interprets additional deaths as a routine and expected part of war, and therefore deems those additional deaths as less worthy of public notice than other war-related topics.

Cues about the likelihood of victory exert a strong impact on casualty coverage across wars. The level of optimism in daily coverage and in particular stories is negatively related to mentions of dead Americans, and these relationships tend to be stronger and more consistently significant in the three most recent wars. When the war is going well and prospects are bright for eventual victory, news stories become less likely to mention American war dead. When America suffers setbacks on the field of battle, news attention shifts to emphasize the human cost of war.

The effects of combat reporting are in the expected directions, but stronger for the world wars than for the three later wars. As the percentage of the day's war stories mentioning combat goes up, the

likelihood of mentioning American deaths goes down. We interpret this as a displacement effect of combat coverage on other types of war coverage. But although this relationship was significant in the pooled models for all wars and for the world wars only, it became insignificant for the three later wars considered together. In contrast, this same relationship at the story level held through all of the wars, and was one of the few variables to be consistently significant in the models for individual wars. Stories that mention combat are also likely to mention war deaths suffered by friendly forces. Topical displacement of casualty mentions by combat stories occurs only at the level of newspaper editions rather than at the level of individual stories.

All of the variables considered thus far had the same directional relationships with casualty coverage during the world wars as during the three later wars, even if the significance of some of those relationships varied. But the relationship between elapsed time and casualty mentions may have changed. During the two world wars, American deaths were more likely to be mentioned the longer the war went on. This marginally significant relationship may be a simple reflection of the changing scale of death in those conflicts: most battle deaths occurred relatively late in the fighting (see Appendix Figures A1 and A2). For the three more recent wars, there is no consistent relationship between elapsed time and marginal casualty rates. Yet the elapsed time variable has a marginally significant negative relationship with the probability of mentioning American deaths in these wars.

We believe that the key to interpreting this changed relationship comes in the way that fighting evolved during these wars. The wars in Korea and Iraq opened with large-scale, linear battles between major forces. But after those opening stages, they soon devolved into a larger number of small, disconnected skirmishes much like those that characterized most of the Vietnam War. Most battle deaths occurred in small, unrelated conflicts that were quickly over. These smaller conflicts occurred on a regular basis and in much the same way for a period of years. Under such circumstances, the news value accruing to each subsequent firefight diminishes. In these later wars, it seems, American deaths received a great deal of attention early on in the conflict but gradually lost their novelty over time.

Lacking a clear metric for battlefield success, the news became less and less concerned with the daily toll in American lives. Casualties were still reported as time goes on, but became less likely to draw special attention as the news shifts to more novel and momentous topics like peace negotiations (Korea and Vietnam) or the politics surrounding the war effort (Iraq). This interpretation is admittedly speculative, as our data cannot speak to the other topics in war coverage that might be displacing mentions of American deaths. But the loss of novelty provides a plausible explanation for the tendency of *Times* coverage to provide diminished attention to American war deaths in the later stages of recent wars.

Conclusion

The cutting edge of scholarship on public support for war has begun to turn from conventional correlational approaches using aggregate trend data to more sophisticated, individual-level models and theories (e.g., Boettcher and Cobb 2006; Gartner 2008; Berinsky 2007; Berinsky and Druckman 2007; Baum and Groeling Forthcoming). Understanding how individuals think about wars requires attention not only to psychological moderators and key attitudes but also to the ways that wars are communicated to citizens. Some political scientists seek out casualty information directly from the Department of Defense, but few outside the academy are likely to follow their lead. Instead, information about the costs and benefits of war reaches ordinary Americans through the news. In order to understand what drives public support for war, it is therefore important to study how often the news reports casualty information, and how the news presents casualties. Recent work drawing from individual-level survey data has suggested that Americans have little clear knowledge of casualty levels in ongoing wars (e.g., Berinsky 2007, 2009; Boettcher and Cobb 2006; Cobb 2007; although see Gaines et al. 2007). This study helps to explain why.

Our analysis of *New York Times* coverage given to casualties during five major wars examined both the framing of American deaths and the factors that influence when American deaths will be mentioned in the news. *Times* coverage of American wars often minimized the human cost of war.

Most war stories made no mention at all of casualties. The few stories that did mention American deaths were no more likely to criticize the government's moral stance during the Iraq War than they were during World War I. American deaths are often reported in the context of enemy losses, which has been shown to minimize the impact of casualty information on support for war (Boettcher and Cobb 2006). American deaths are also frequently reported in the context of combat operations, and the cues that accompany such reports tend to be optimistic about the prospects of eventual victory.

Despite a general tendency for casualties to be downplayed, we also find some countervailing trends in news framing of war losses. One is that news coverage mentioned American deaths at least as frequently in wars with lower casualty rates as in wars with higher death tolls. Because the relative amount of news devoted to casualty coverage has remained relatively stable regardless of the number of war-related deaths, the *Times* mentioned American deaths as often in its Iraq coverage as in its coverage of World War II, even though the scale of American losses was over 100 times greater in World War II.

A second set of countervailing findings revealed some differences in casualty coverage between Iraq and the earlier wars in our analysis. While the typical story mentioning American deaths during World War II hinted that the war was likely to be won, the typical story mentioning American deaths during the Iraq War cast doubt on the chances of winning. Moreover, American deaths received proportionally greater news attention in Iraq coverage than they received in any of the earlier wars studied here. Our analysis suggests that the differences between Iraq and previous wars may have less to do with the changing nature of war news than with the changing nature of war: today's battlefields often lack clear winners, and casualties are less likely to be sustained in large, linear battles than they were in an earlier era. News coverage during the Iraq War framed American deaths more pessimistically in part because a greater proportion of casualty stories featured American losses in isolation from enemy losses, and in part because Iraq stories were less likely than stories from World War II to mention those losses in the context of ongoing combat operations.

Our analysis also shed light on the factors that influence whether American deaths will be mentioned at all in news coverage. Higher numbers of recent American deaths did not increase the probability that American deaths would be mentioned in the news, but *Times* coverage paid more attention to war deaths when casualty rates were on the rise. Deaths were also more likely to be reported when stories included details about combat operations. However, American losses were less likely to be mentioned when the news of the day was relatively optimistic about the war's likely chances of success. During the two world wars, casualties were also less likely to be mentioned in the early stages of those conflicts, perhaps because more casualties actually occurred in the later stages of those conflicts. But American losses in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq were more likely to be noted in the early stages of those wars. Casualty coverage seems to have declined over time in recent wars because war deaths declined in novelty, unless there was a sudden rise or fall in marginal casualty rates. In short, these findings reveal that casualty coverage varies with the perceived news value of American losses, rather than simply being a function of those losses.

Many of the changes in war coverage detailed here probably stem from changes in the way military commands disseminate war information and the way wars are fought more than by any conscious editorial policy or censorship regime. Our coders found that during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War the *Times* provided extended space for official communiqués written by military commanders that detailed daily combat operations and casualty numbers. These daily communiqués used to provide an important and often colorful source of public information on the war's progress and its costs in enemy and American lives. Such printed communiqués were discontinued by the time of the Vietnam War, replaced instead with more analytical daily public affairs briefings fronted by military officials. During the Vietnam War, these briefings were dubbed the "Five O'Clock Follies" for their habit of putting an optimistic spin on the war effort. The use of live briefings to "spin" as well as to inform has since become the standard mode of disseminating war-related information to reporters. Unlike the older communiqués, which were reproduced in full in newspapers around the country, the

live briefing format allows journalists to select specific pieces of information to report on, ignoring whatever else doesn't fit into that reporter's assigned story of the day (e.g., Knightley 2004).

The nature of war has also changed, from linear battlefields and progress that could be measured on maps to asymmetrical warfare and counterinsurgency operations that often lack clear metrics for success (Gartner and Myers 1995). Americans in Iraq are more likely to die in isolated ambushes than in large-unit combat, and this affects how those deaths are conveyed through news coverage. Cues about the likelihood of victory tended to be more pessimistic in recent wars compared to earlier conflicts (**CITATION DELETED**), in part because the newer tendencies toward small-unit actions make recent wars harder to score than their predecessors. This change may also have influenced how casualties from recent wars have been framed. Our analysis found that news coverage is more likely to focus on American losses when the war's outlook for success is uncertain. Recent wars have tended to be covered more pessimistically, and as a result news coverage may have paid disproportionately more attention to war deaths in Vietnam and Iraq than in earlier wars that had clearer signs of progress.

These findings raise important questions about conventional theoretical and methodological approaches used in political science research on the dynamics of war support. Conventional ways of measuring war costs in political science research appear to have little obvious relationship to the ways that casualty information is publicly communicated to citizens. Two findings in particular raise questions that could be fruitfully addressed in future empirical work on war support dynamics. First, the war support literature often treats each American death as having a uniformly negative and cumulating effect on war support, though many conditions are thought to potentially moderate the power of this corrosive potential. Our analysis of casualty framing suggests that news coverage often presents American losses in ways that could mitigate the corrosive effects of friendly deaths. American losses are sometimes framed in positive terms and reported in contexts that implicitly seem to justify the human costs of war. This finding adds to mounting empirical evidence (e.g., Berinsky 2007; Boettcher

and Cobb 2006; Gaines et al. 2007; Gartner 2008) that simple counts of marginal or cumulative American deaths seem to be inappropriate proxies for the war costs that are actually perceived and weighed by ordinary citizens.

Second, our finding that news attention to American deaths is more sensitive to casualty trends than casualty numbers raises additional questions about the usefulness of measuring war costs as a simple count of flag-draped caskets. The volume of coverage about American deaths in the *New York Times* is higher today than in previous wars, even though fewer Americans are dying. If it is the relative amount of news coverage that prompts Americans to reflect on war losses rather than the relative number of deaths incurred by American forces, then greater research attention would need to be paid to tracking changes in the amount of news attention given to friendly casualties. It is possible that the greater sensitivity shown by Americans to trends in recent deaths than to cumulative deaths (e.g., Gartner and Segura 2000; Gartner, Segura, and Wilkening 1997) could reflect awareness not of changes in actual casualty levels but of changes in the levels of casualty coverage.

The aim of this paper has not been to address the potential effects of casualty coverage on war support so much as to fill gaps in our understanding of how casualty information is communicated to popular audiences. The literature on public support for war has for too long taken the public's knowledge of war for granted without accounting for what and how the public learns about the fighting. By drawing attention to potential validity problems arising from the use of aggregate casualty data to measure war costs, we hope to stimulate further scholarship about the roles played by casualty information in shaping the dynamics of war support.

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Appendix: Sources of Trend Data for American Deaths in the World Wars

Compared to the relative ease of locating daily counts of American dead in the three most recent wars, determining trends in American deaths during the two world wars proved challenging. For World War II the only trend data are monthly casualty statistics recorded by the U.S. Army. These data exclude losses suffered by Navy and Marine personnel. To fill these gaps, we combed through the entire range of war-related content in the *New York Times* and located every governmental casualty report published during both world wars. For World War II, we found 54 casualty reports that included cumulative totals for Army, Navy, and Marine casualties. These reports were published at somewhat regular intervals during the war, covering the period from immediately after December 7, 1941 through August 23, 1945, the date on which casualties from VJ Day (August 15) were publicly announced. These reports were spaced an average of 25 days apart, and from them we interpolated daily casualty totals using the “ipolate” routine in Stata 9.0. We also interpolated daily measures of cumulative American deaths from the official Army statistics, and this series correlates at .993 with the combined Army, Navy, and Marine cumulative deaths interpolated from the *New York Times* reports. Our analysis of World War II uses the *Times* data rather than the Army data for two reasons: early casualties in World War II came disproportionately from the Navy, and Army casualty rates diminished substantially as the European campaign wound down in 1945, while Marines (considered a branch of the Navy) and Naval forces continued to suffer heavy casualties through VJ Day.

To our knowledge, no trend data on World War I casualties have ever been collected. For World War I, we found that General Pershing’s official reports of American casualties were typically published several times per week in the *New York Times*. A total of 158 casualty reports were published between October 20, 1917—when the first American casualty of the war was announced—and November 11, 1918. The long delays between when casualties were incurred and when they were publicly reported meant that by war’s end, the American public was aware of only 22,116 of the

116,516 deaths that had occurred among American military forces.⁷ About half of the known combat deaths were reported by the *Times* during the last six weeks of the war. We used the same interpolation procedure to produce daily estimates of known combat deaths as was used for *Times* casualty data from World War II.

⁷ The last of General Pershing's casualty reports was published in early August 1919, with the final casualty figures published in the *Times* on February 8, 1920.

Figure A1
Cumulative Number of American War Deaths



Note: The dotted line for World War I represents cumulative casualties reported after the end of hostilities.

Figure A2
American War Deaths during the Previous 120 Days



Table 1. Frequency of Mentioning American and Enemy Deaths in War Coverage, by Conflict

% of War Stories Mentioning:	WW1	WW2	Korea	Vietnam	Iraq
No US or enemy deaths	84.4%	88.6%	84.6%	85.2%	78.1%
US deaths only	7.5	4.9	7.5	6.9	18.2
Both US and enemy deaths	2.5	0.9	1.4	5.3	1.5
Enemy deaths only	5.6	5.6	6.5	2.6	2.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<i>N</i> of stories =	160	737	214	509	413

Note: Columns sum to 100%.

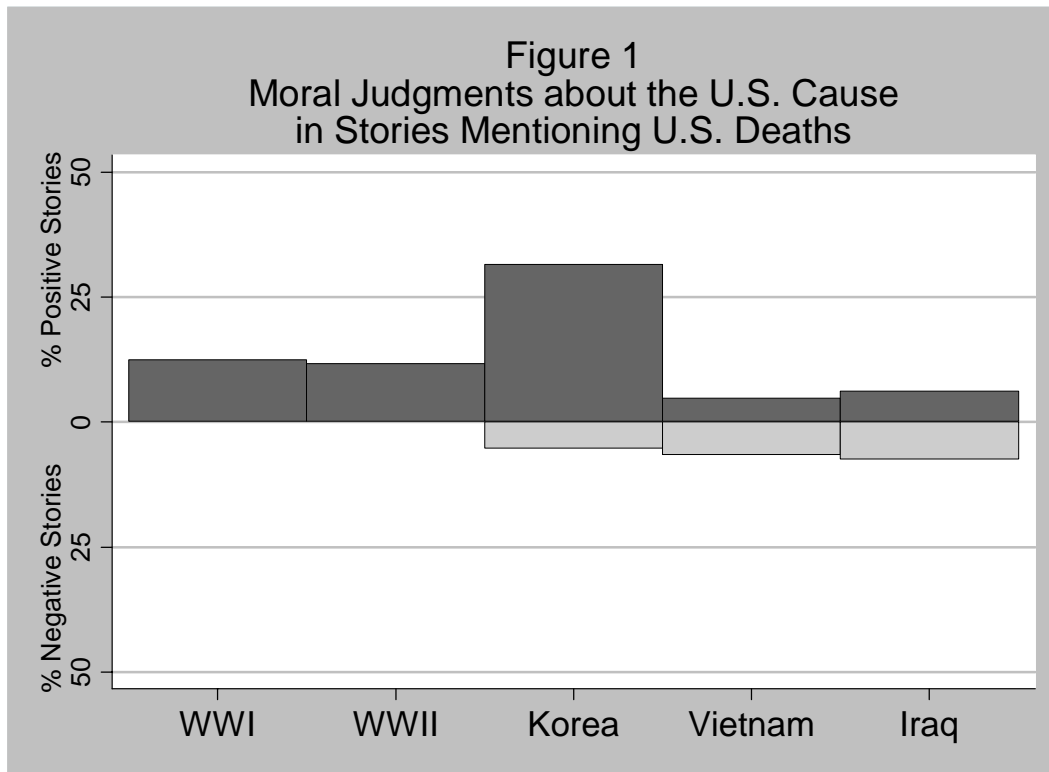


Figure 2. Average of Cues about the Likelihood of Victory among Stories Mentioning U.S. Deaths

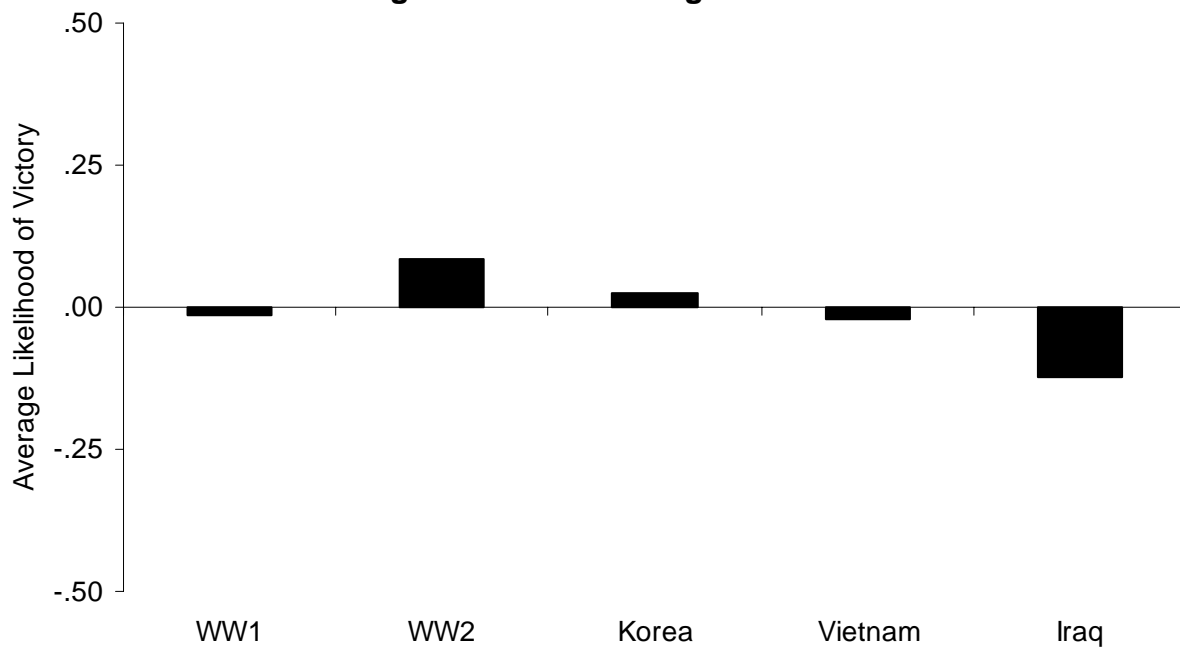


Figure 3. Average of Cues about the Likelihood of Victory by Type of Deaths Mentioned

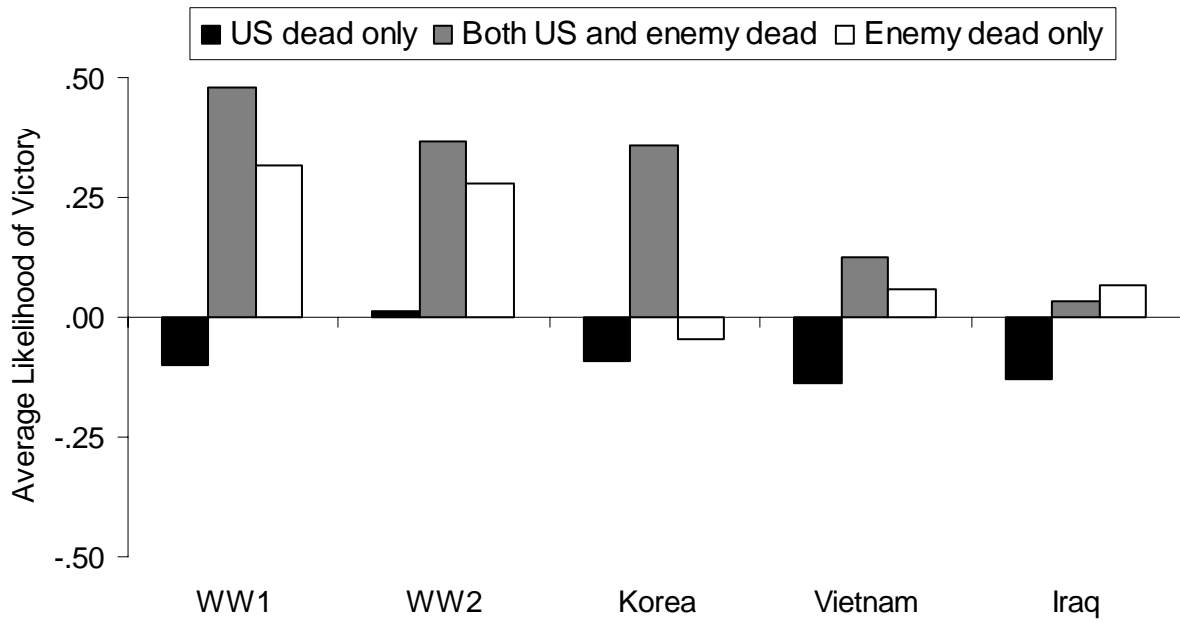


Table 2. Predicting Mentions of American Deaths in War-Related Newspaper Stories

	Models for Separate Wars					Pooled Models		
	WWI	WWII	Korea	Vietnam	Iraq	All Wars	WWI and WWII	Korea, Vietnam, Iraq
Elapsed Time Since Start Of U.S. Involvement (Years)	3.44† (1.91)	.65 (.42)	-.17 (.31)	-.06 (.07)	.02 (.15)	-.02 (.04)	.51† (.32)	-.06† (.04)
Marginal # Of U.S. Deaths In Past 30 Days (100s)	-.05 (.06)	-.00 (.01)	-.00 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.07 (.59)	.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.03* (.01)
Trend In Marginal American Deaths (-1, 0, +1)	-1.82 (1.53)	.13 (.24)	-.20 (.30)	.12 (.17)	.14 (.21)	.22** (.08)	.29† (.17)	.18† (.10)
Daily Average Likelihood Of Victory (-1 - +1)	3.10 (14.22)	-9.35 (8.29)	-2.87 (6.63)	-8.55† (5.26)	-1.68 (3.66)	-6.01** (1.79)	-5.28 (4.67)	-5.34* (2.38)
Story-Level Likelihood Of Victory (-1 - +1)	-2.42** (.92)	-.73† (.42)	.05 (.92)	-.14 (.61)	-2.55** (.71)	-.96** (.26)	-1.04** (.37)	-.99** (.39)
Daily Proportion Of Stories Describing Combat Ops (0-1)	1.15 (4.56)	-3.81 (2.32)	.88 (2.65)	-1.53 (1.23)	1.37 (1.67)	-1.55* (.70)	-3.78* (1.69)	-.45 (.78)
Story Describes Combat Ops (1, 0)	1.44* (.59)	1.27* (.34)	.41 (.56)	2.75** (.33)	.99** (.3)	1.50** (.17)	1.26** (.29)	1.64** (.20)
Constant	-6.14 (7.65)	2.50 (3.87)	-.95 (3.38)	1.67 (2.54)	-1.38 (1.76)	.92 (.86)	.72 (2.26)	.69 (1.15)
Log Likelihood	-43.30	-149.29	-63.27	-146.70	-188.80	-630.20	-199.97	-419.08
N =	160	737	214	509	413	2033	897	1136

† $p < .10$ * $p < .05$

Note: cells contain logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.