

The Political, Economic, and Cultural Effects of the United States' Overseas Military Presence



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This material is based upon work supported by, or in part by, the Minerva Research Initiative, U.S. Army Research Laboratory and the U.S. Army Research Office under grant number W911NF-18-1-0087. Opinions and interpretations are those of the author and not the Army or Department of Defense.



Roadmap

- Project Overview
- Relevance
- Expectations
- Methods
- Results
 - Contact/Economic
 - Protests
- Conclusions



Project Overview

- Deployments as a series of positive and negative externalities
- Perceptions matter
- Strategy
 - Measure Perceptions
 - Surveys 2018-2020
 - 14 countries
 - 1,000 respondent in each
 - 50 questions
 - Qualitative Interviews
 - Panama and Peru 2018
 - United Kingdom and Germany 2019
 - Japan and South Korea 2021?

Project Overview (continued)



Why does the US pay so much for the defense of its allies? 5 questions answered

December 1, 2019 10:27pm EST

The U.S. pays billions to maintain military bases in Japan and South Korea. BOATFOTO/Shutterstock.com

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Since the start of Donald Trump's run for the U.S. presidency in 2015, he has been [critical of the amount of money U.S. allies contribute to their own defense](#).

Now, the Trump administration is demanding that [Japan](#) and [South Korea](#) pay more for hosting U.S. troops stationed in those countries.

The [media also reported](#) that U.S. military leadership in South Korea discussed the possibility of withdrawing up to 4,000 troops from South Korea if it does not increase its contributions. The Pentagon has since denied having such plans.

We have [each studied overseas deployments](#) of U.S. military personnel for nearly a decade and have recently come together to research the costs and benefits of such deployments.

1. What's in it for the US?

The U.S. currently has approximately 174,000 active-duty personnel deployed to overseas locations in approximately 140 countries. The Department of Defense

Authors



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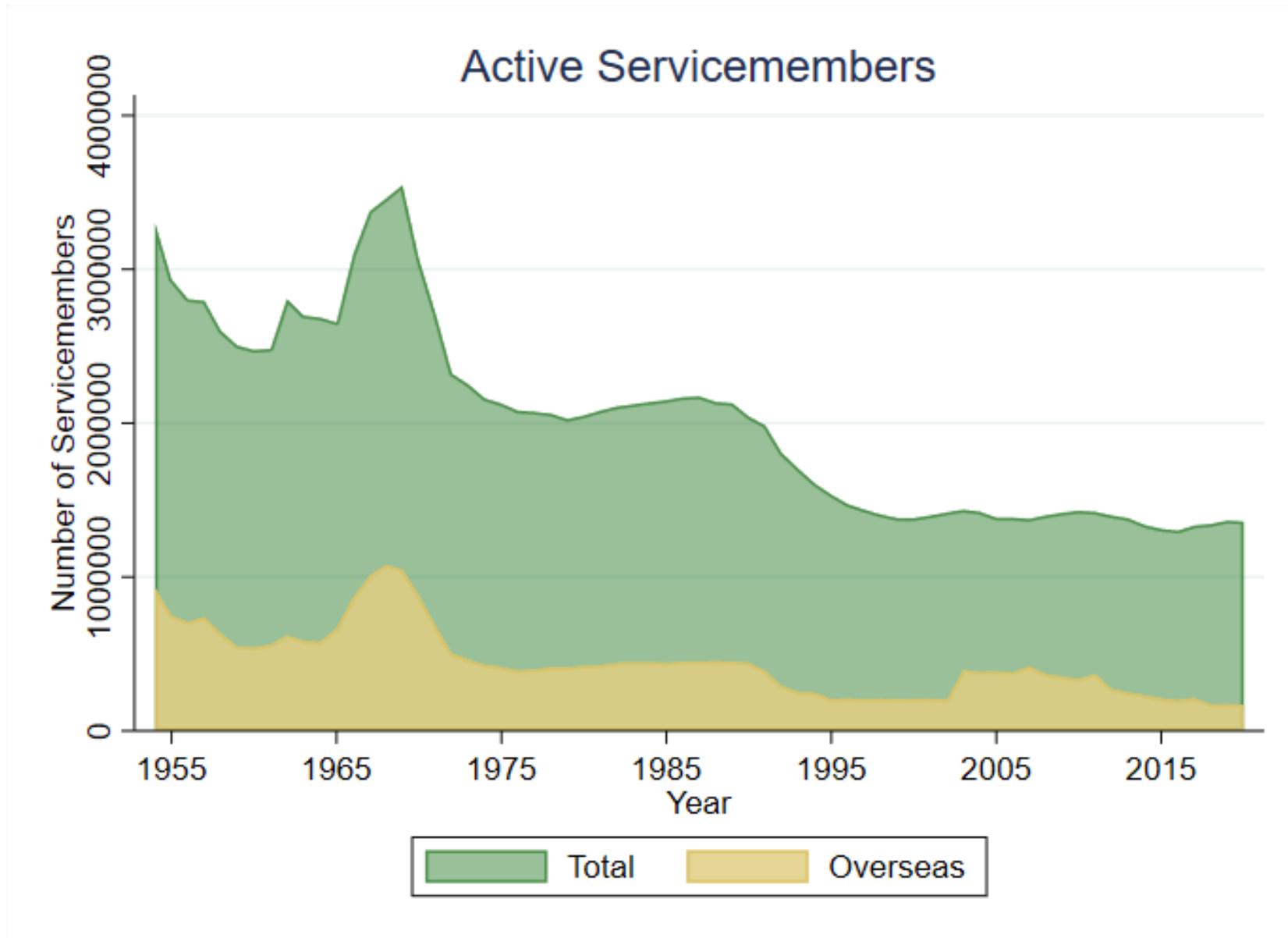
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Disclosure statement

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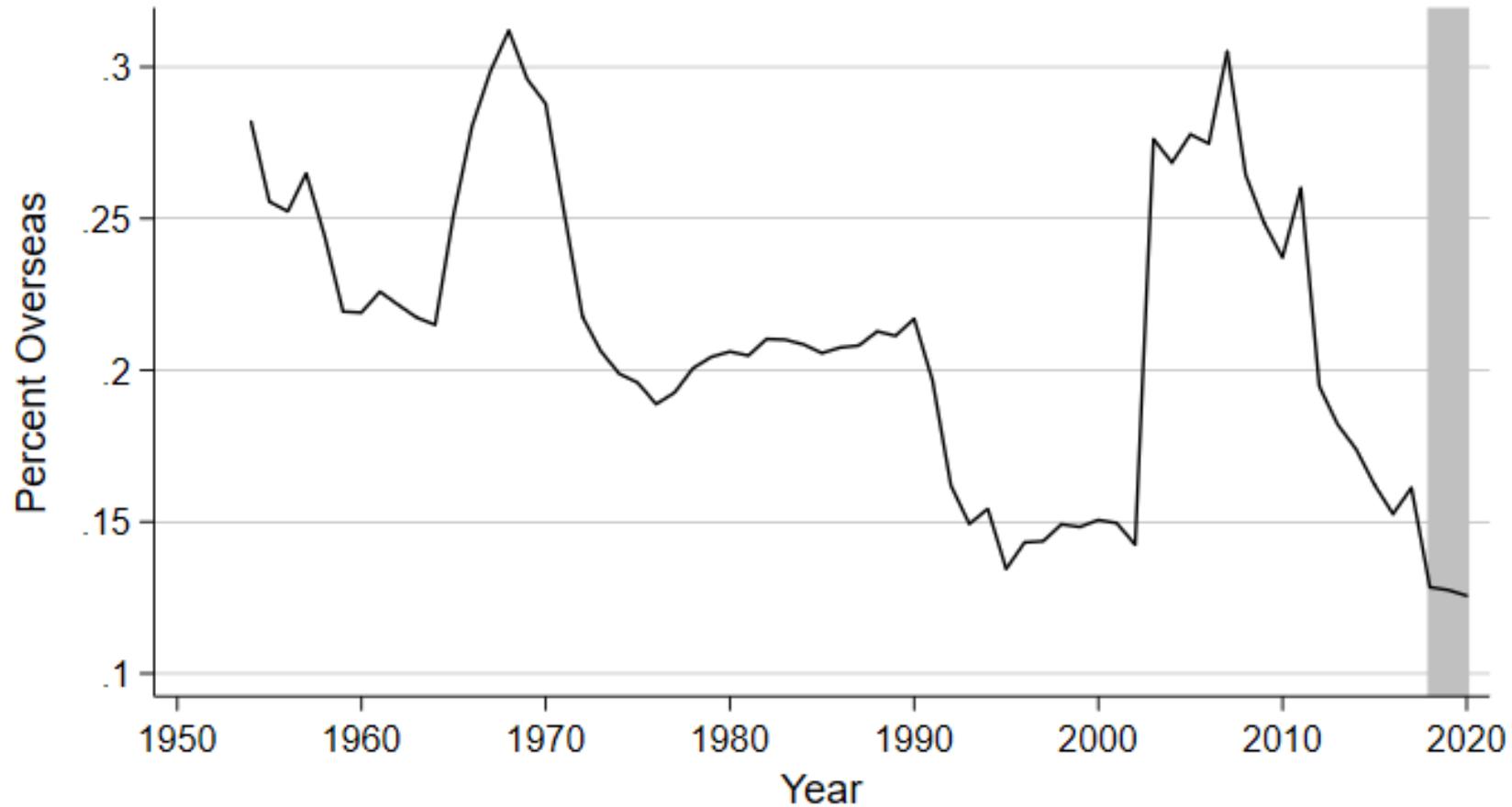
- Collect relevant data
 - Defense expenditures in specific regions
 - Crime perpetration and victimization
 - Protests (anti-U.S. and anti-base)
- Dissemination strategy
 - Academic article
 - Online articles
 - Book

Relevance



Data drawn from the annual DoD Personnel, Workforce Reports & Publications published by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)

Percent of Total U.S. Troops Overseas



Shaded region from 2018-2020 indicates when the DMDC stop reporting servicemember counts in countries with active operations

Data drawn from the annual DoD Personnel, Workforce Reports & Publications published by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)

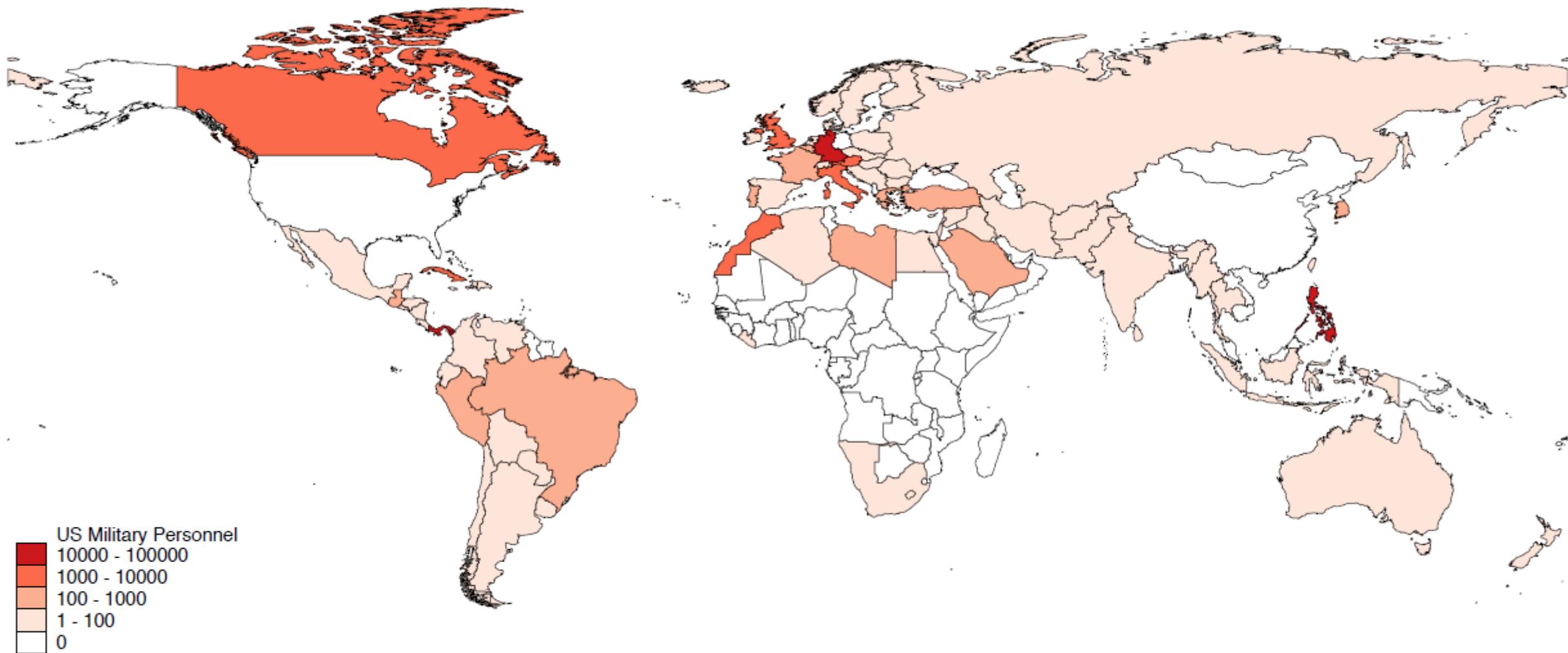


Figure 1: U.S. troop deployments, 1950.

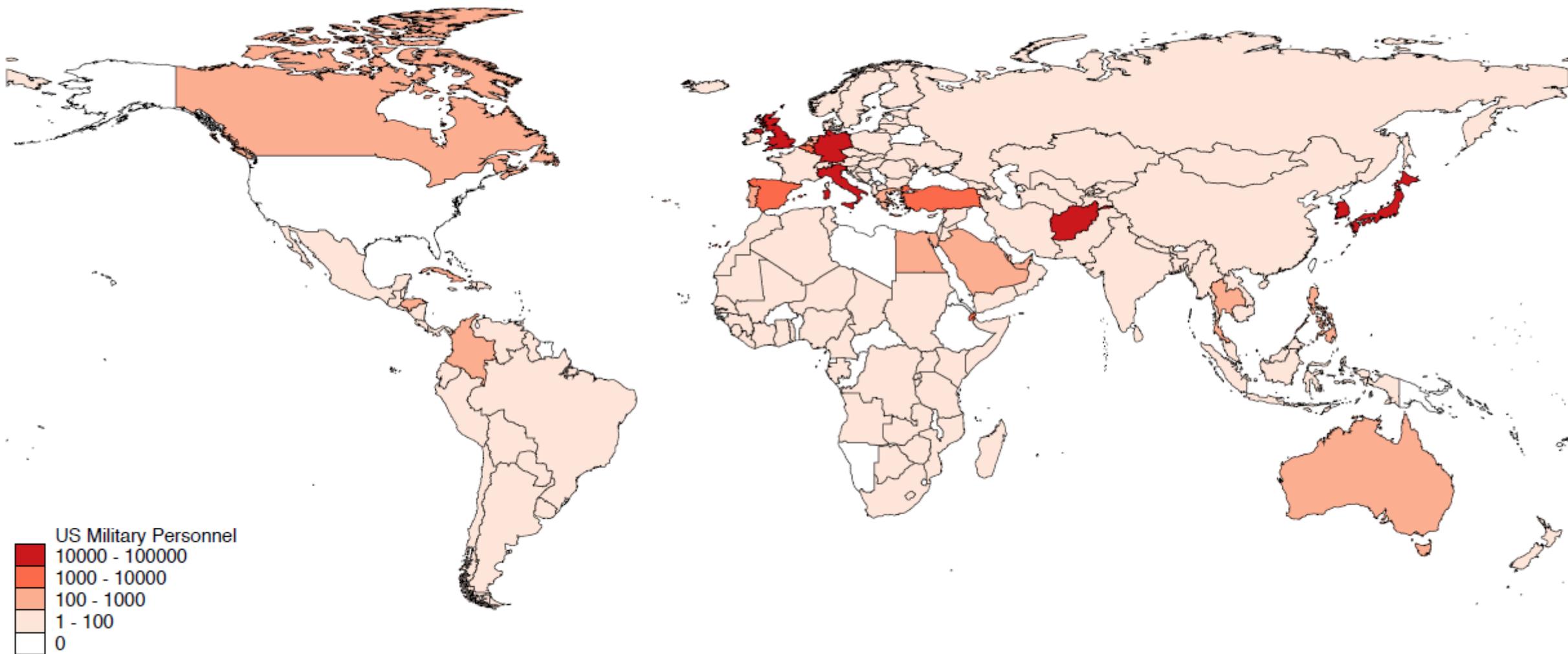
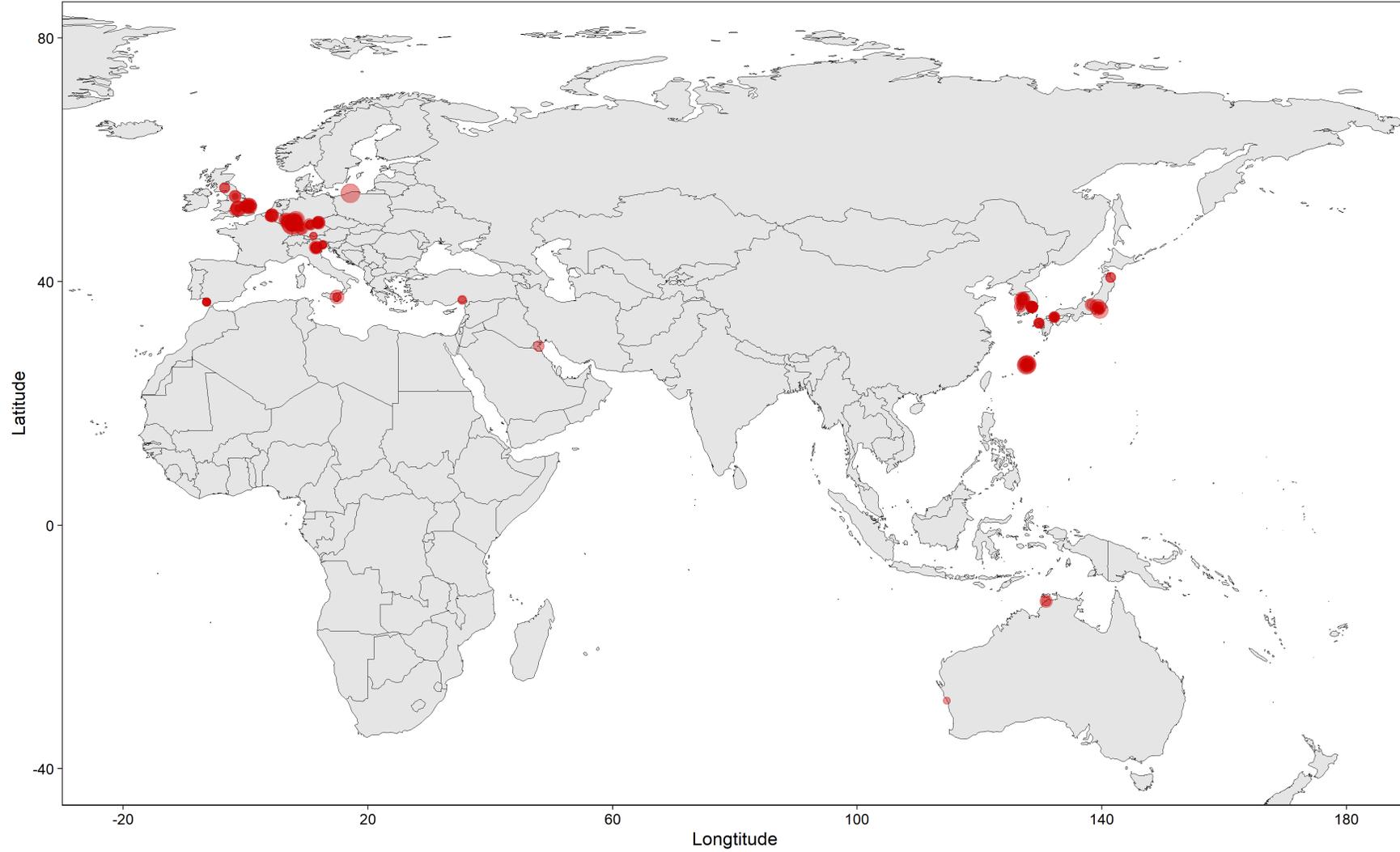


Figure 2: U.S. troop deployments, 2008.

US military construction spending, 2008-2018





NATO Headquarters. Creative commons image by Utenriksdept

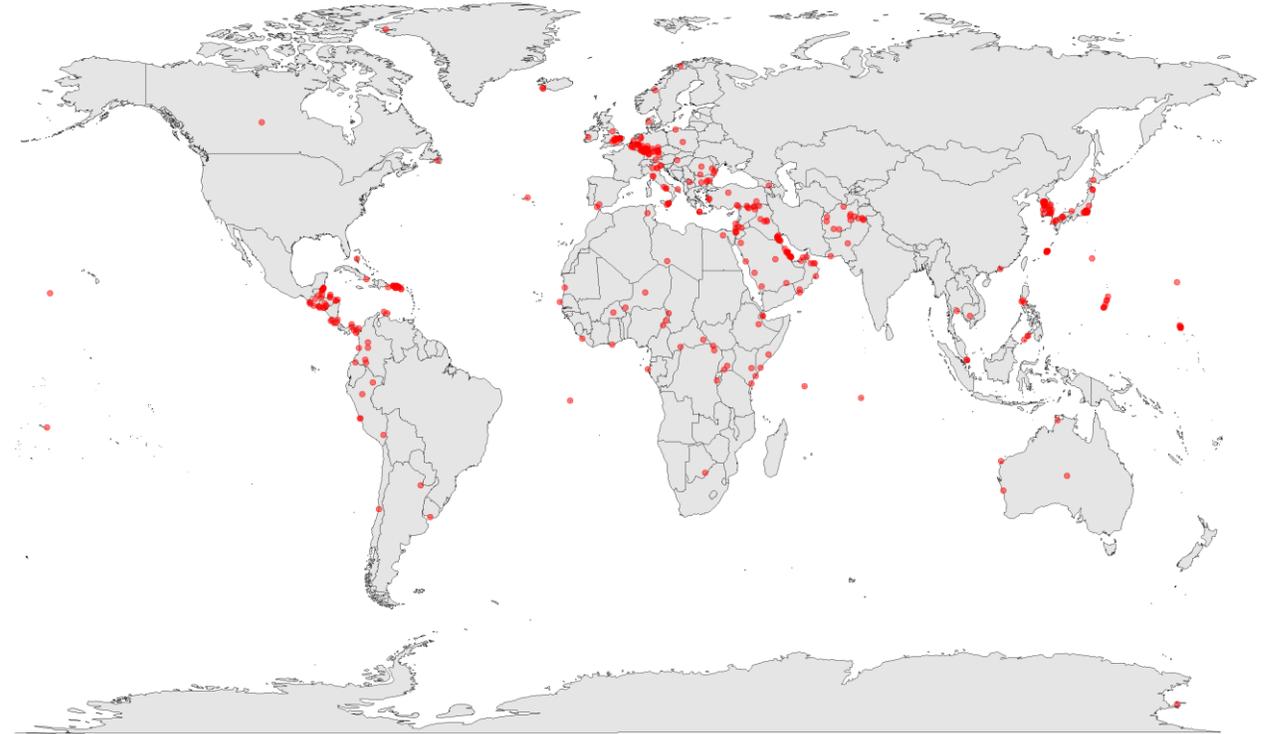
Why Deployments Matter

- U.S. leadership in international order based on hierarchy (Lake 2009, Ikenberry 2011, Nieman 2016)
- Fundamental component of U.S. power projection
- Threaten to and be able to react regionally, globally
- Stability and deterrent for weaker allies

The Problem

- Bases are contentious
 - U.S. pursued mixed regimes
 - Democratic transitions have been a historical issue (Spain, Philippines)
 - Base portfolio heavy in democratic polities

U.S. Military Facilities Around the Globe from the Cold War to the Present

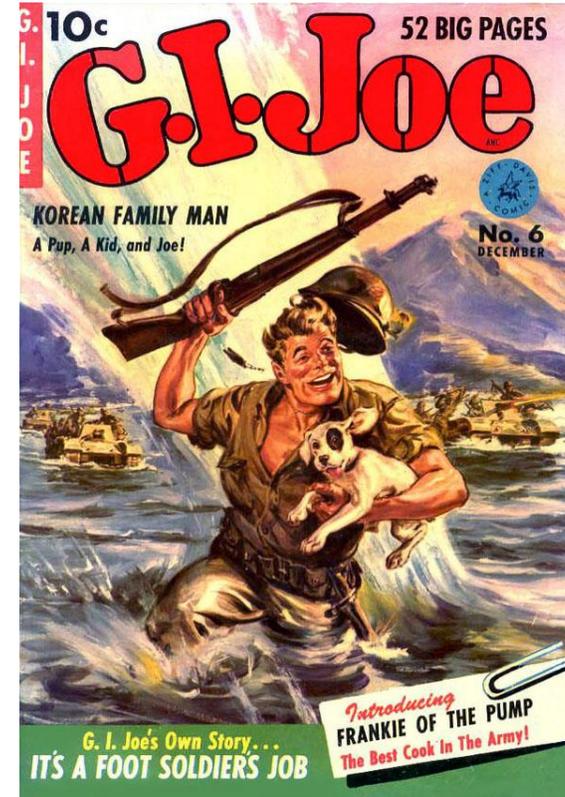


Data obtained from Vine (2015) and updated by graduate research team.

Data from Vine 2009 and supplemented by us.

The Problem

- Bases are contentious
 - Traditional allies face tough choices (Germany, Japan, South Korea)
 - State-to-state diplomacy is declining
 - The U.S. monopoly is ending



Ziff Davis, December 1951. Public Domain. Wikipedia.org

[They are] muscular men waving the flag and yelling about Liberty and Democracy.” – Peruvian interview subject describing perceptions of U.S. military

Expectations

Research Questions

- How do non-combat deployments affect how individuals in the host country view the United States?
- Does this extend to the government/people of the United States?

Primary Argument

- People's contact with/reliance upon the U.S. military will increase their support of the U.S. presence, the U.S. government, and the U.S. people



Contact Theory

- Military deployments as public diplomacy (Atkinson 2014)
- Overcome stereotypes (Allport 1954)
 - Media focus on negative
- Increased information
- Environment of tolerance (Pettigrew et al 2007; Liebkind and McAlister 1999)



Interpersonal Contact

- U.S. military personnel frequently interact with host-state residents
- Other contact is more routine and less formal
 - Friendship
 - Children
 - Shopping
 - Routine socializing

"When they see that they're just as human as you are, people like them [the US military] more."

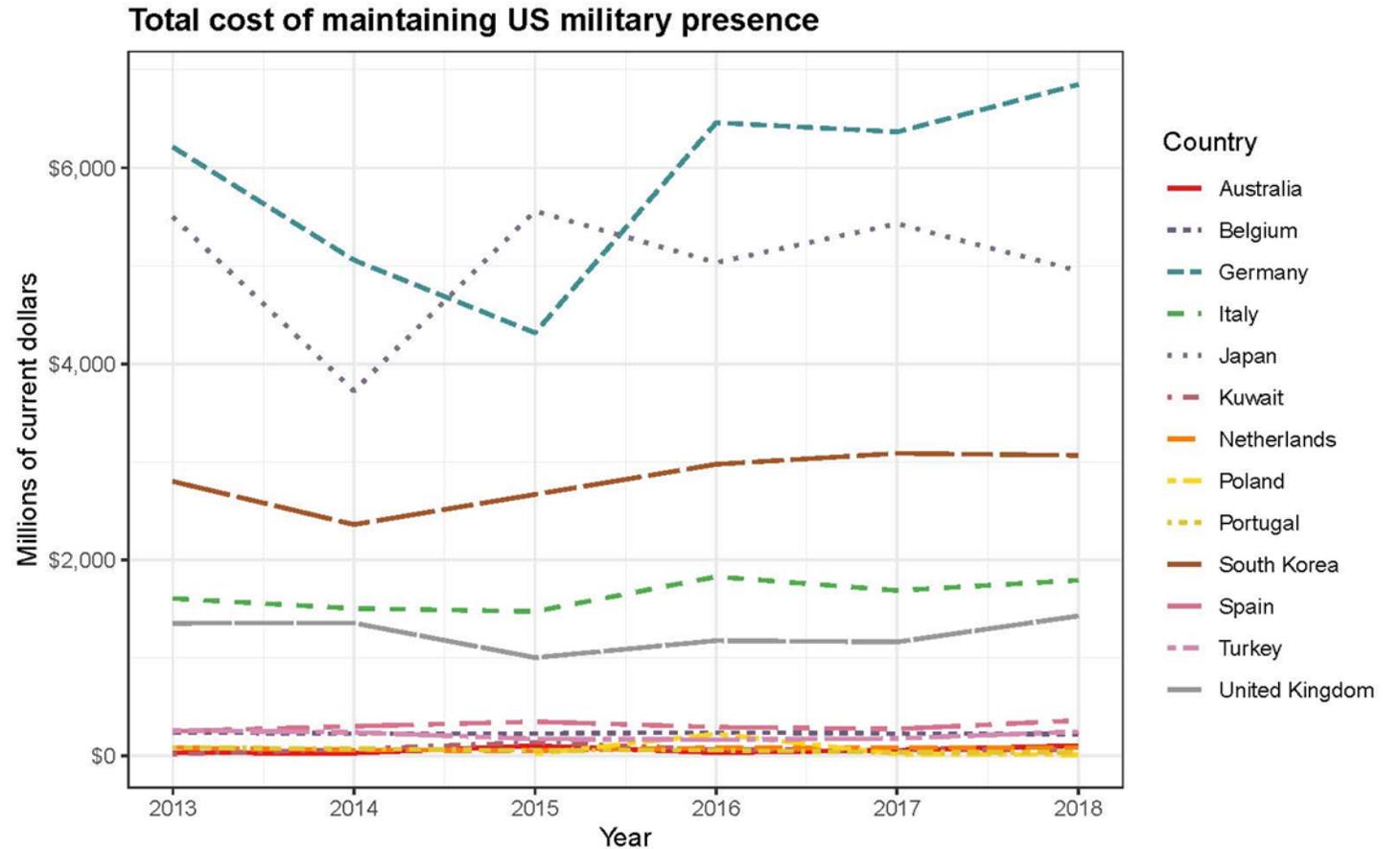
-English Parish Council member in Lakenheath, England

Economic Benefits

U.S. military presence can come with enormous financial flows

“The contracts we have, we always try to get the local economy. One of the main contracts we have is the movers. The contractor is an English contractor.”

-American NCO at Lakenheath, England





Economic Benefits

- This money works its way into local economies through several channels:
 - Personal spending/consumption
 - Contracts with/ sourcing from local firms
 - Employing local residents as contractors
 - Benefits at various income levels
- Overcome attribution problems of aid (Goldsmith, Horiuchi, and Wood 2014)

“Let me put it this way. We are the best tippers. We eat out a lot. We shop a lot.”

-American government relations officer in Germany

Hypotheses

Variable	Expected Relationship with views of US
Personal Contact	+
Network Contact	+
Personal Benefit	+
Network Benefit	+

Other Questions

- How do minority populations abroad respond to the presence of U.S. forces?
- What is the relationship between troops and protests abroad as well as the correlates of protesting the United States or bases?
- What is the relationship between crime offending and victimization in affecting attitudes?

Protests: A Brief Introduction

We expect the presence of U.S. troops in host-states to create unique positive and negative externalities that motivate the grievance and greed causal paths towards mobilizing protests

- Macro: All else being equal, the number of U.S. servicemembers in a country correlates with a higher likelihood of protests within a country.
- Micro: Experiential events and ideology significantly contribute to whether people report attending Anti-American/base protests.

Research Design and Strategy

Fieldwork

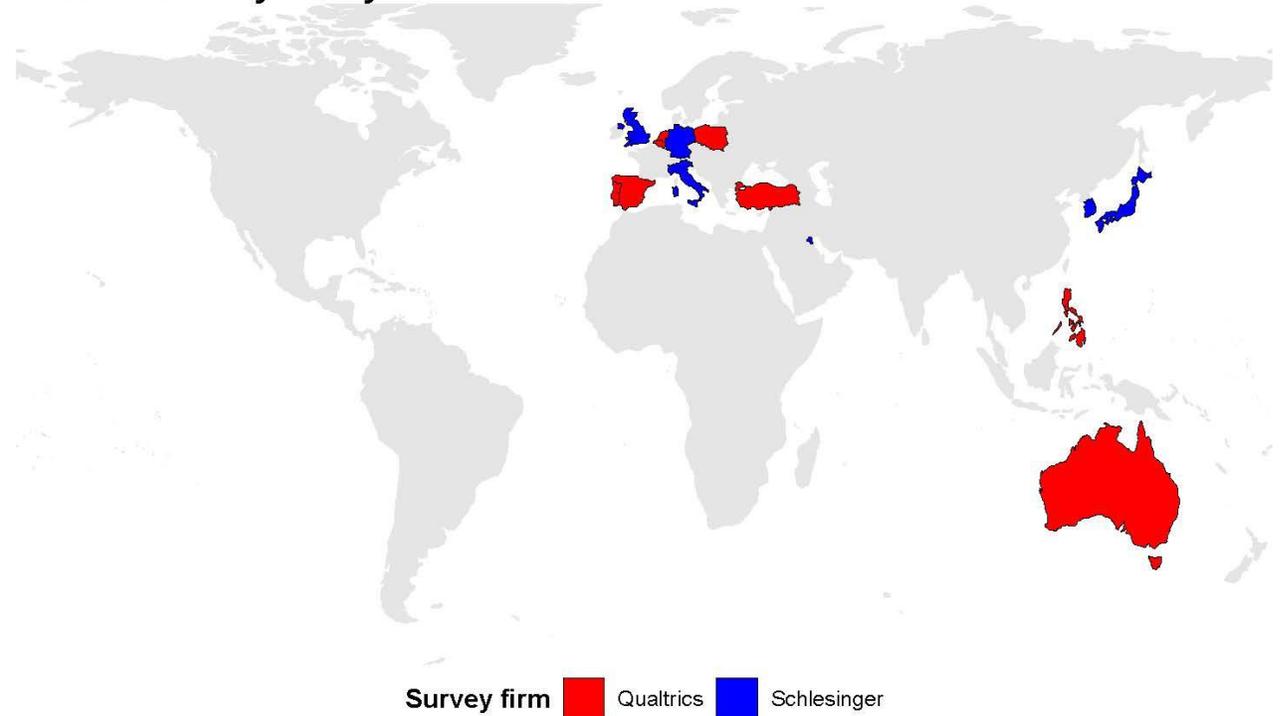
- Panama (2018)
- Peru (2018)
- England (2019)
- Germany (2019)
- South Korea (2021)
- Japan (2021)



Survey Sample

United Kingdom
Turkey
Spain
South Korea
Portugal
Poland
Philippines
Netherlands
Kuwait
Japan
Italy
Germany
Belgium
Australia

Countries covered by survey



Other Data Collection

Data collection

- Overseas military spending
- Anti-US protest events
- Crime events involving US personnel (as perpetrators or as targets)



Survey Design

- 14 countries
- ~ 1,000 respondents per country
- 50 questions
- Nationally representative on age, income, and gender
- Repeated every year for 3 years (2018, 2019, 2020)
- Translated into local languages

Research Design

Outcome of interest

- Assessment of three groups
 - US troops within referent country
 - US government
 - US people

Research Design

Questions:

“In general, what is your opinion of the presence of American **military forces** in (**blank country**)?”

“In general, what is your opinion of the American **government**?”

“In general, what is your opinion of the American **people**?”

Answer options:

- Very favorable
- Somewhat favorable
- Neutral
- Somewhat unfavorable
- Very unfavorable
- Don't know/decline to answer

Research Design

- Responses grouped into four categories
 - Positive
 - Negative
 - Neutral
 - Don't know/Decline to answer

Research Design

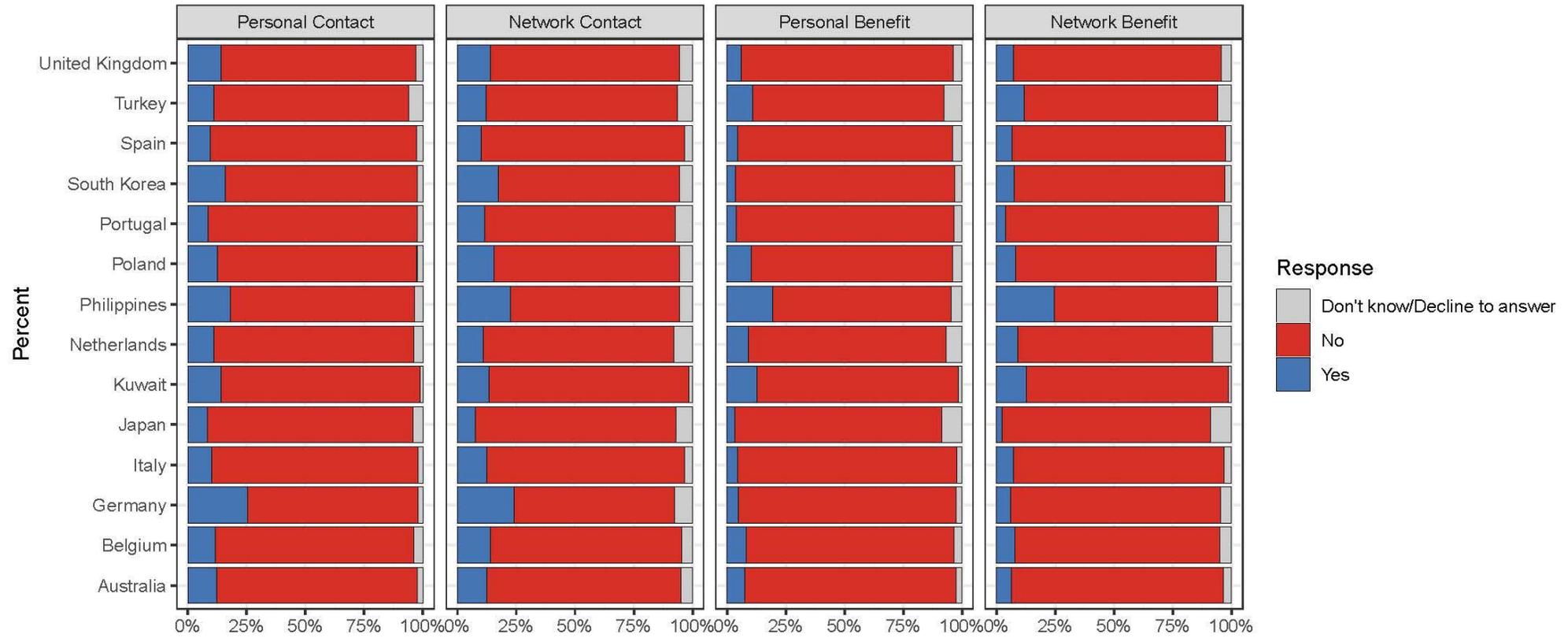
- Explanatory Variables
 - Personal/Network Contact
 - Have you personally had direct contact with a member of the American military in (blank country)?
 - Has a member of your family or close friend had direct contact with a member of the American military stationed in (blank country)?

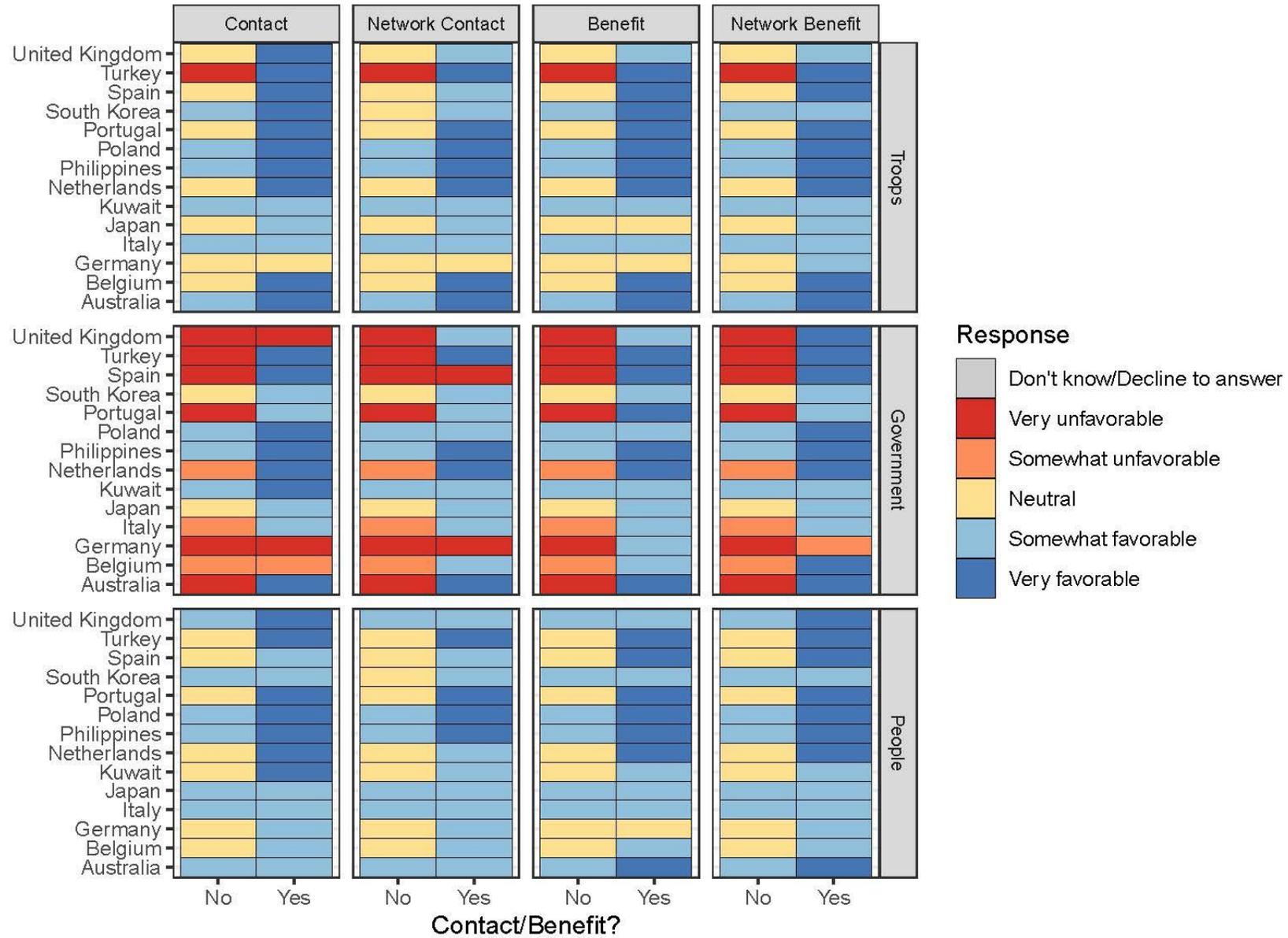
Research Design

- Explanatory Variables
 - Personal/Network Economic Benefit
 - Have you personally received a direct economic benefit from the American military presence in (**blank country**)? Examples include employment by the US military, employment by a contractor that does business with the US military, or ownership/employment at a business that frequently serves US military personnel.
 - Has a member of your family or close friend received a direct economic benefit from the American military presence in (**blank country**)? Examples include employment by the US military, employment by a contractor that does business with the US military, or ownership/employment at a business that frequently serves US military personnel.

What we have learned

Country-Level Distribution of Primary Independent Variable Responses





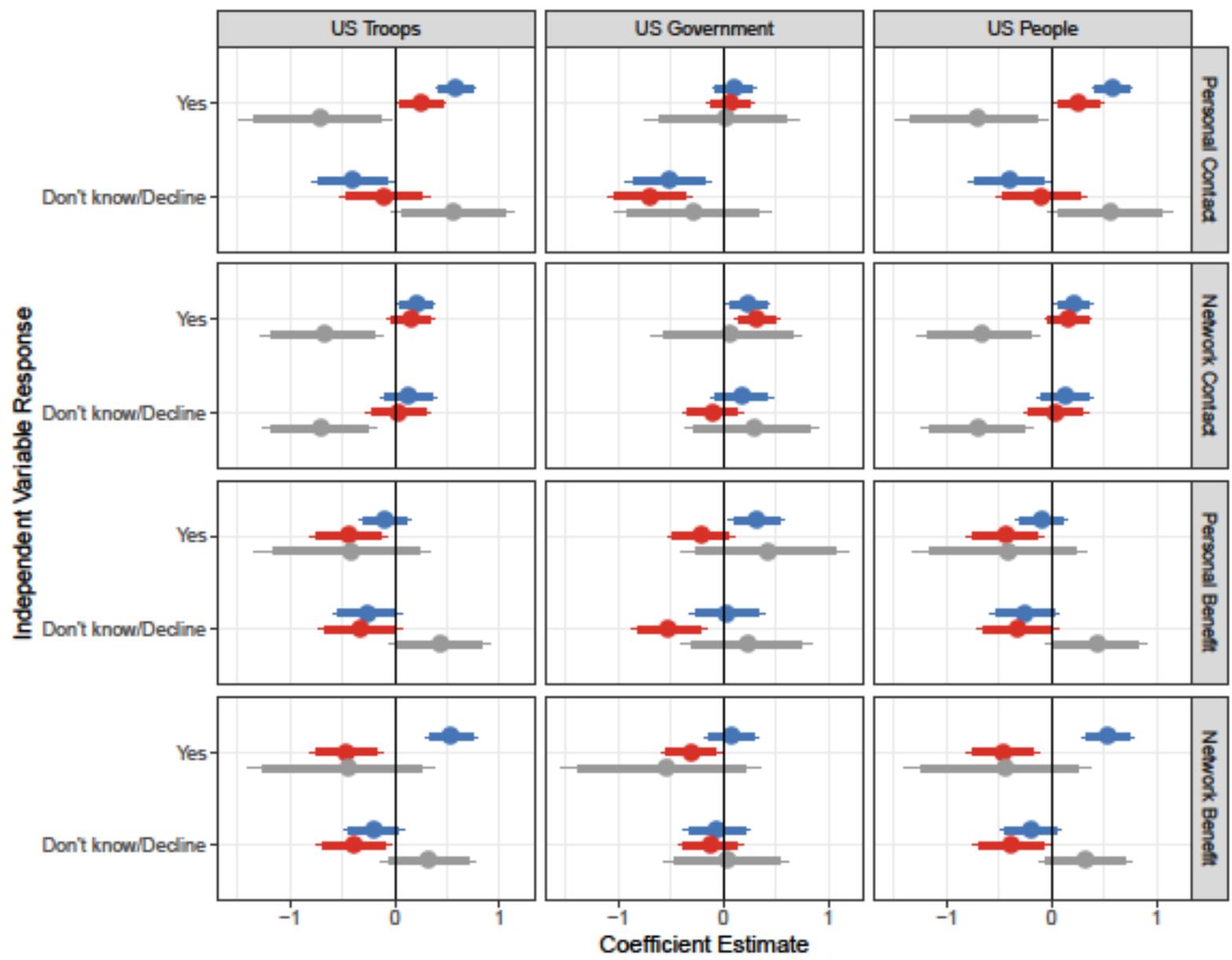
Modal response towards reference group (row) by respondent country and type of contact with U.S. military (column headers)

Research Design

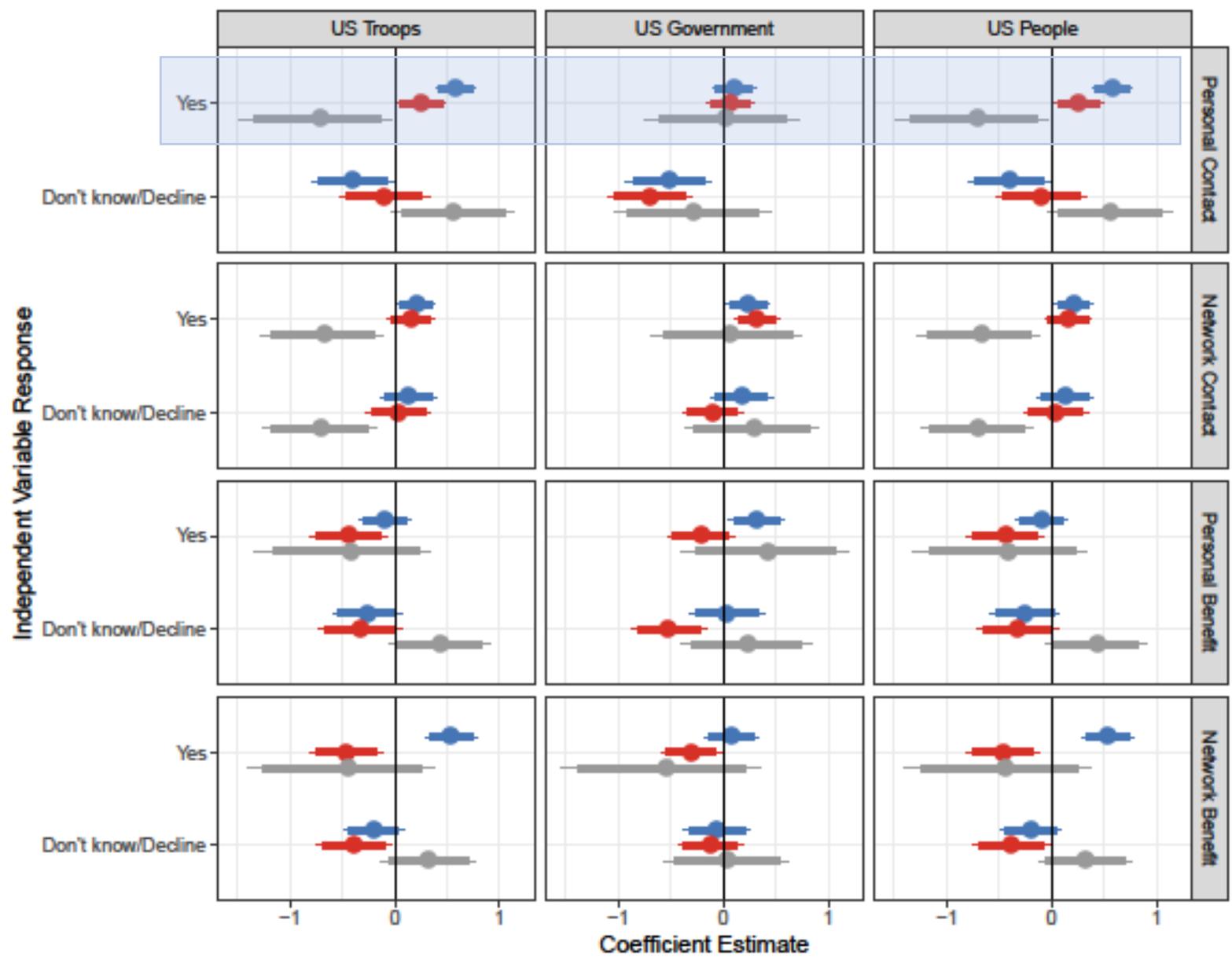
Estimation Strategy

Multilevel Bayesian categorical logistical regression

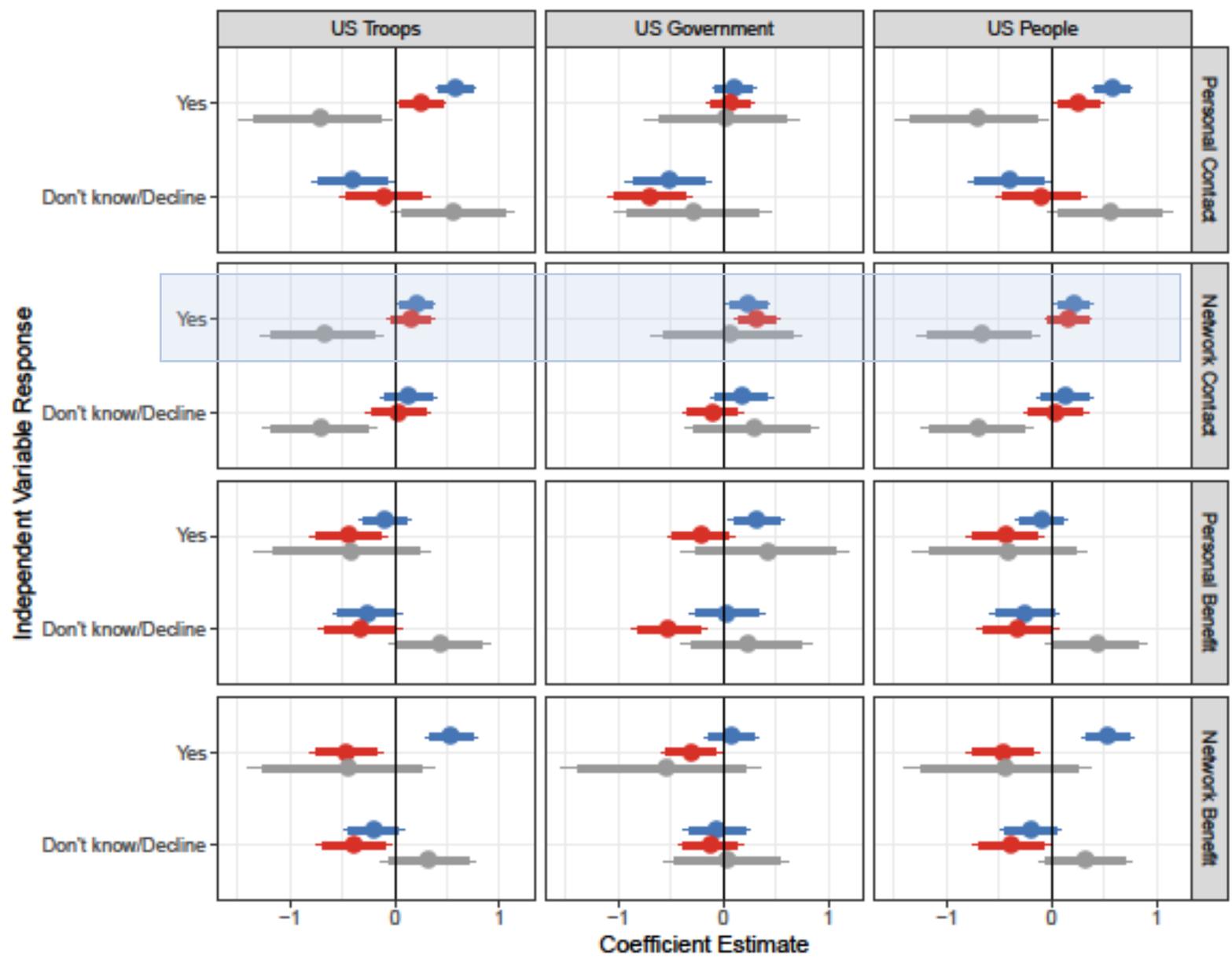
- Adjust for:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Income
 - Education
 - Ideology
 - Religious self-identification
 - Minority self-identification
 - Province-level US military spending
 - Military facility in province
 - Defense pact with US
 - Government type
 - GDP
 - Total bilateral trade with US



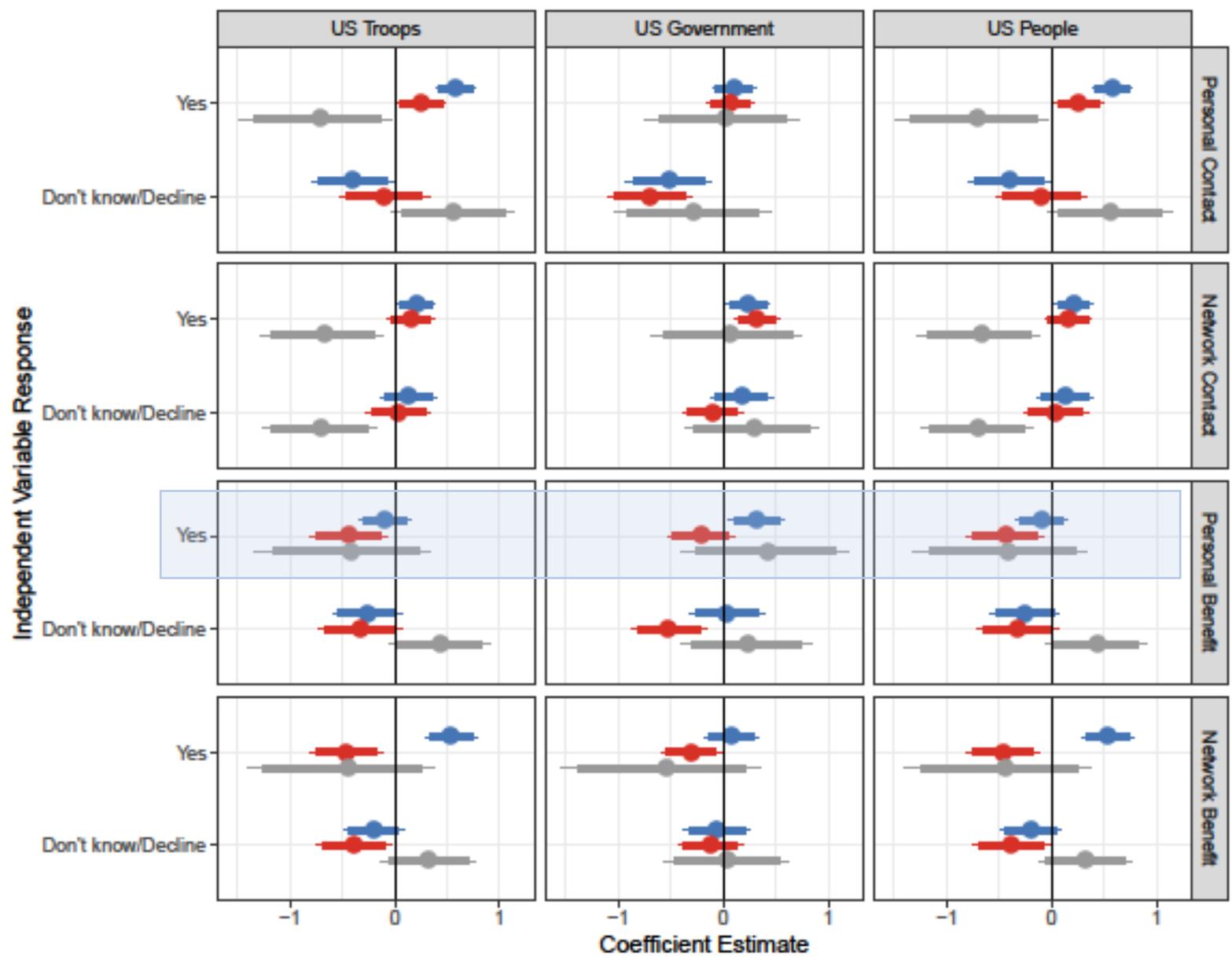
Dependent Variable Response — Don't know/Decline — Negative — Positive



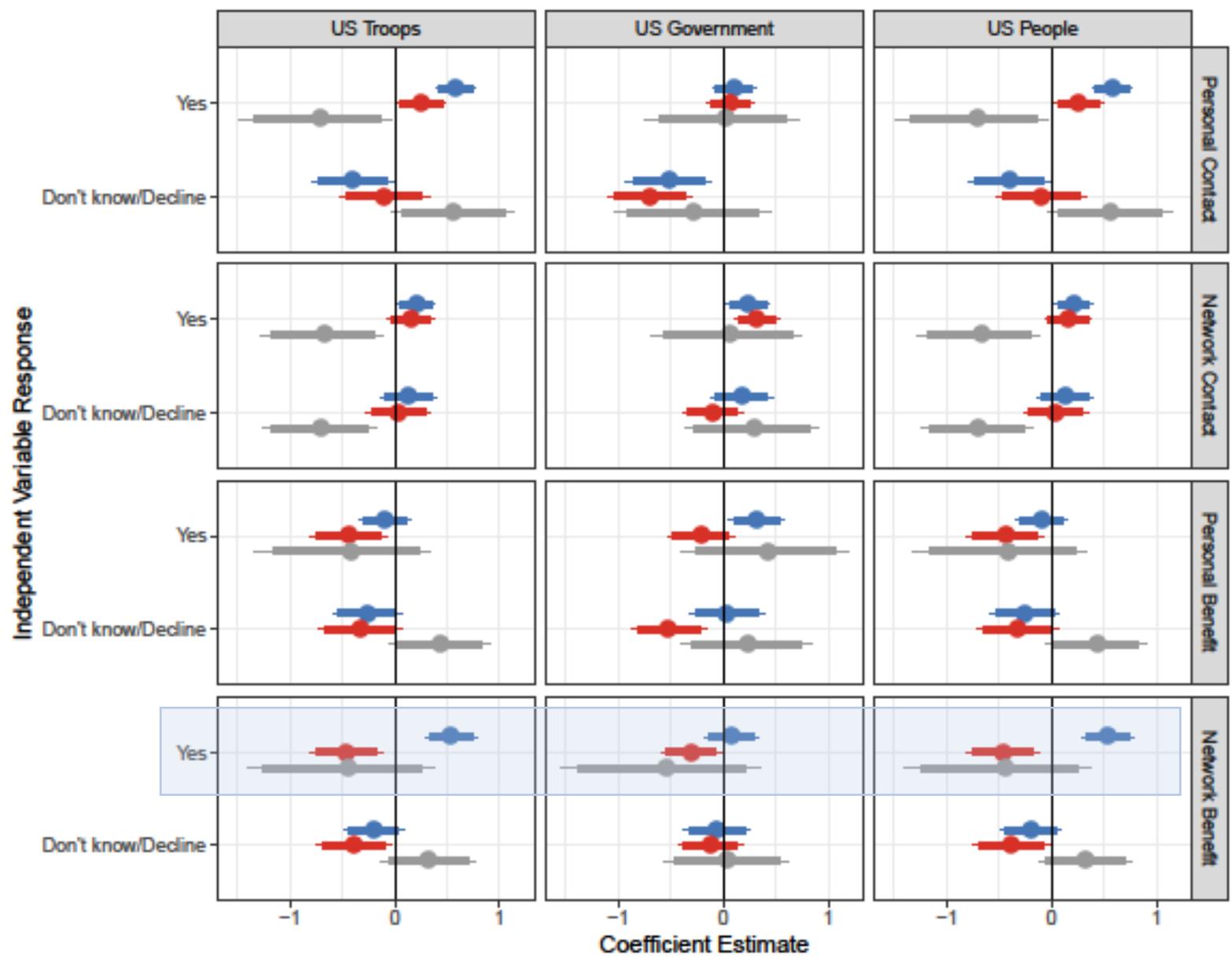
Dependent Variable Response — Don't know/Decline — Negative — Positive



Dependent Variable Response — Don't know/Decline — Negative — Positive



Dependent Variable Response — Don't know/Decline — Negative — Positive



Dependent Variable Response — Don't know/Decline — Negative — Positive

Results: Contact

- Personal contact correlates with positive attitudes of U.S. **military** and **people**
 - 15% increase in probability of positive response
 - No strong correlation with attitudes about U.S. government
- Less likely to say “I Don’t Know”
- Also a negative effect, but larger coefficient in predicting positive attitudes
- True even when taking economic benefits (subjective and objective) into account

Results: Contact

- Network contact correlates with positive attitudes of U.S. **military**, **people**, and **government**
- Smaller coefficients as compared to direct contact

Results: Economic Benefit

- Personal economic benefit correlates with positive attitudes of U.S. government
 - Reduced probability of a negative response about U.S. people or military
 - No strong correlation with positive attitudes about U.S. people or military
- Network economic benefit increases correlates with increased positive assessment of U.S. people or military
- Larger effect for network benefits

Protests

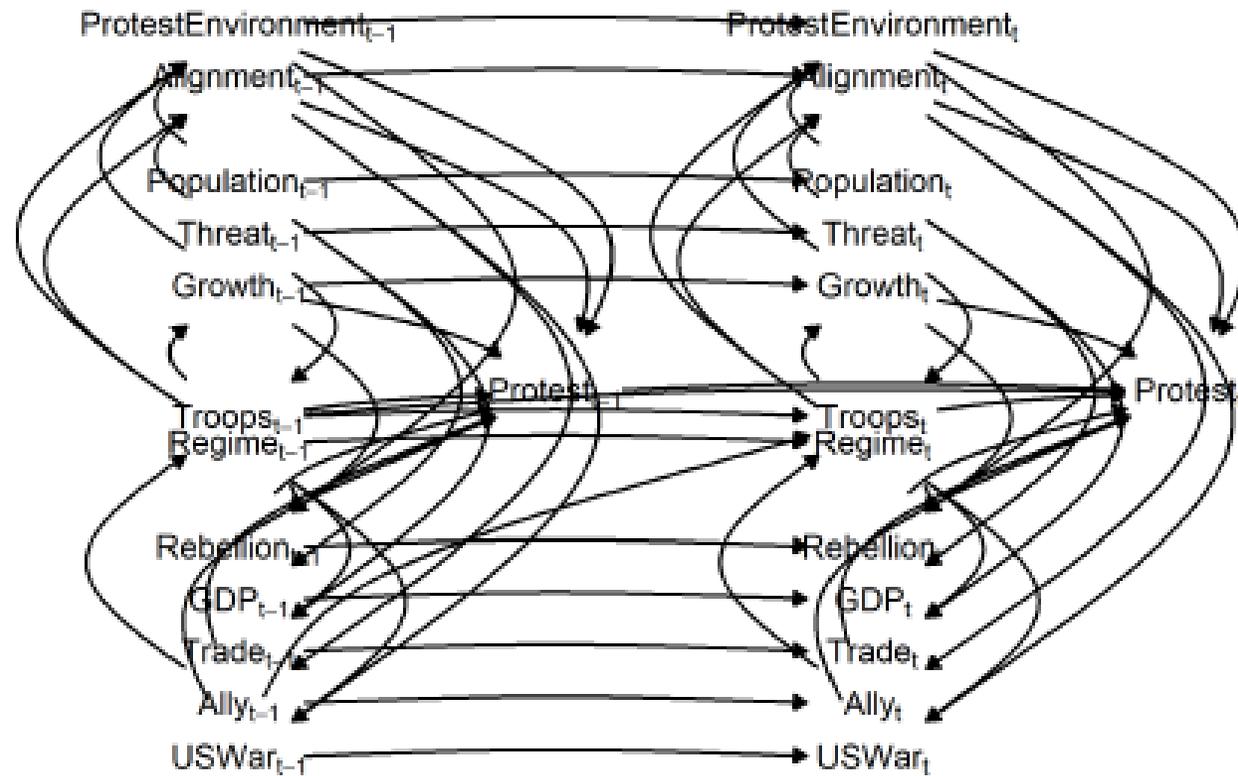
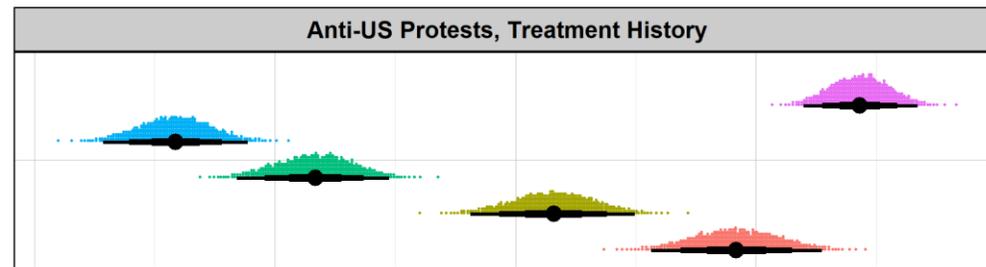
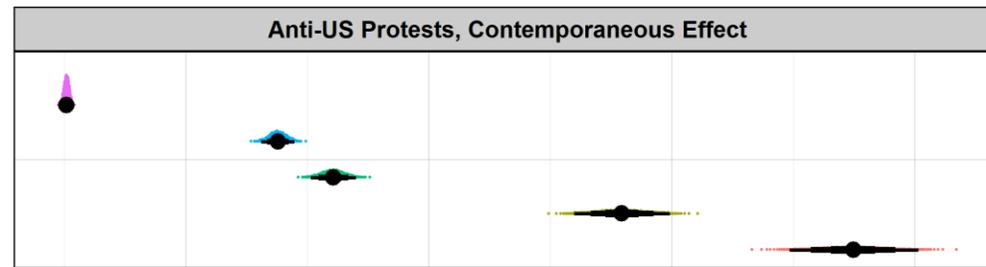
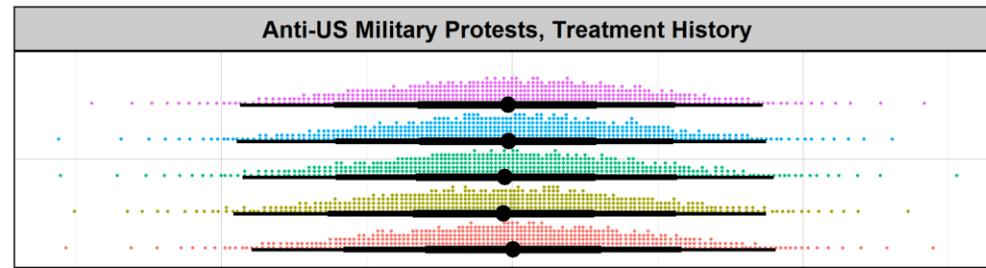
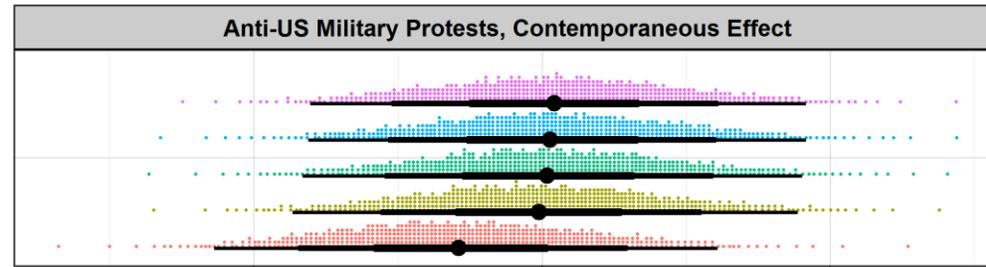


Figure 6.1: Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG) showing the theoretical model of protest across time periods.

Average Treatment Effect Estimate for U.S. Troop Deployments



IPTW Truncation Point

- 100000
- 10000
- 5000
- 1000
- 500

ATE Estimate

Table 6.1: Predictive Model Specification

Intercept Only	Individual Demographics Only	Full Model w/Varying Intercepts	Full Model w/Varying Coefficients
	Age	Age	Age
	Education	Education	Education
	Ideology	Ideology	Ideology
	Gender	Gender	Gender
	Income	Income	Income
		Attitude towards U.S. military presence	Attitude towards U.S. military presence
		Personal contact	Personal contact
		Personal benefits	Personal benefits
		Personal experience with troops and crime	Personal experience with troops and crime
		Assessment of U.S. influence (Quantity)	Assessment of U.S. influence (Quantity)
		Assessment of U.S. influence (Quality)	Assessment of U.S. influence (Quality)
		GDP	GDP
		Population	Population
		Troop presence	Troop presence
Varying Coefficients			
			Age
			Gender
			Ideology

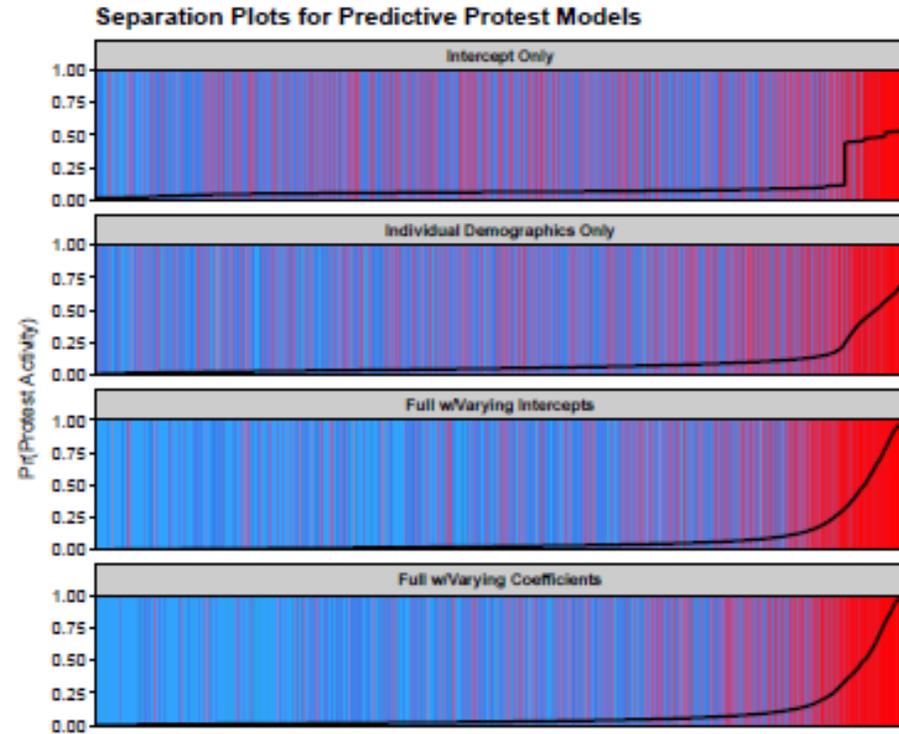


Figure 6.3: Separation plot from various models of individual-level protest behavior. The black line shows the in-sample predicted probabilities of protest-involvement. Observations are ordered according to low to high predicted values. The vertical red lines indicate observed “Yes” responses from the respondents. More red clustered towards the right side of the figure indicates more predictive power.

Table 6.3: Predictive Model Performance

Model	Correct	False Positive	False Negative	Sensitivity	Specificity
Intercept Only	91.6%	1%	82.1%	17.9%	99%
Individual Demographics Only	91.8%	1.6%	75.2%	24.8%	98.4%
Full w/Varying Intercepts	93.4%	1.5%	58.8%	41.2%	98.5%
Full w/Varying Coefficients	93.6%	1.4%	57.7%	42.3%	98.6%

¹ Correct predictions is the number of predicted values that match observed values divided by the total number of observations.

² False positive rate is the number of incorrect positive predicted cases divided by the total number of actual observed negative cases. Rather, the percent of negative cases incorrectly classified as positive.

³ False negative rate is the number of incorrect negative predicted cases divided by the total number of actual observed positive cases. Rather, the percent of positive cases incorrectly classified as negative.

⁴ Sensitivity is the number of predicted positive values divided by the total number of true positive values. Rather, the percent of positive cases that are correctly classified.

⁵ Specificity is the number of predicted negative values divided by the total number of true negative values. Rather, the percent of negative cases that are correctly classified.

Results: Protests

- U.S. Troops correlate with protests
- The most informative variables predicting protests are experiential (contact, crime, and economic reliance)
- Static characteristics (demographics) are less informative
- Policy matters

Conclusions

Conclusions

- Interactions with U.S. military strengthen perceptions of U.S. actors
- Both negative and positive effect, but positive effect is larger
- Host populations are sophisticated in distinguishing between different U.S. actors



Policy Implications



The Liberty Spouses Association is committed to serving the RAFL area through philanthropy and community involvement.

LIBERTY SPOUSES ASSOCIATION

Membership is open to all DOD ID card holders in the Tri-Base area.

Interested in membership?
Please contact us.

 LibertySpousesAssociation RAFLSA.ORG 

Did you know that the LSA gives back?
Our main focus is philanthropy.
We average over \$50k annually to the community.



Trips & Tours  Get out and explore all that the UK has to offer. Adult and family friendly events.

Socials
LSA hosts a monthly social, usually second Wednesday of the month. Come out, have fun and meet new friends.
Your first social is free!



Opening Hours
Tuesday-1000-1400
Wednesday-1200-1800
Thursday-1000-1400

Saturday Sales
1000-1400



Owned and operated by LSA, 80% of our proceeds go back into the community. Open for donations and sales.

LSA is a private organization, it is not part of the Department of Defense, or any of its components and has no governmental status.

- Question assumption of small military “footprint”
- Effectiveness of community engagement
- Relevance for protest movements and activists



Moving Forward

Next steps in the analysis:

- Effects of economic activity
- Micro-level experiences with crime
- Macro-level trends in reported crime

Long-term steps

- Analyze unique cases like Djibouti
- Survey experiments

Published Work

- Allen, Michael A., Michael Flynn, Carla Martinez Machain, and Andrew Stravers. *Forthcoming*. "[Outside the wire: U.S. troop deployments and public opinion in host states.](#)" *American Political Science Review*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000868>
- Martinez Machain, Carla, Michael E. Flynn, and Michael Allen. "[Relations between the U.S. and Allies are Souring. What Next for NATO?](#)" *The Political Quarterly*. Published 1/2/2020.
- Flynn, Michael E., Carla Martinez Machain, and Michael Allen. "[Why does the US pay so much for the defense of its allies? 5 questions answered.](#)" *The Conversation*. Published 12/1/2019.
- Flynn, Michael E., Michael Allen, and Carla Martinez Machain. "[Trump wants South Korea and Japan to pay more for defense: What does it cost to maintain the U.S. military presence in allied countries?](#)" *The Monkey Cage*. Published 12/1/2019.
- Allen, Michael A., Michael Flynn, Carla Martinez Machain, and Andrew Stravers. "[Understanding how populations perceive U.S. Troop Deployments.](#)" *Owl in the Olive Tree*. Published 3/27/2019.
- Martinez Machain, Carla, Michael Allen, Michael E. Flynn, and Andrew Stravers. "[The implications of 5000 troops to Colombia.](#)" *The Duck of Minerva*. Published 2/5/2019.

Thank you!

Q&A

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