

Do Foreign Publics Really Care About IO Approval?

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“We need your help with our public opinion.”

Then Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar to President George W. Bush, from the Crawford Transcript of February 22, 2003.

Why do powerful countries often attempt to channel coercive military action through international organizations (IOs)? Thompson (2006) provides a novel answer to this question. In this paper we provide an empirical test of Thompson’s hypothesis that the type of coercive military action that is chosen will shape the level of support among foreign publics. According to Thompson’s theory, support for unilateral and ad hoc multilateral coalitions will be lower than support for military actions approved by large, formal, and representative IOs. Thompson further suggests that the UN Security Council plays a “uniquely important role” in this regard. Support for military action within foreign public opinion matters because it shapes the policy choices of potential allies and thus the costs paid by the great power considering the use of military force. Spanish Prime Minister Anzar revealed a similar sentiment in the quote above when he asked

Bush to go through the UN Security Council in early 2003; he clearly hoped that this procedure would boost public support for the use of military force in Iraq.

In this paper we analyze the results of a survey experiment conducted on July 11th and 12th 2008 in the United Kingdom. We make three contributions to the extant literature. First, we develop a research design that improves upon and complements Thompson's initial case study of the 1991 buildup to the Gulf war. Second, the analysis of our survey results provides empirical support for Thompson's hypothesis: formal IOs with larger memberships (representative of the international community) tend to increase support for coercive action by foreign publics. Finally, contrary to Tomz (2008), we provide indirect evidence that the "legalization" of the action through UNSC approval does not have a significant effect on support for military action, suggesting that the major benefit of UN approval may have less to do with its status as "legal" under international law, but that it signals broad support from a diverse set of states.

We organize the paper into four sections. First, we describe Thompson's initial theory and discuss the relevant literature on IOs and the use of military force. Second, we describe our research design and discuss the costs and benefits of our survey-experiment method. Third, we include a section on legality as a factor driving public support of coercion that draws primarily upon Tomz (2008). Fourth, we present the results of our survey and interpret our findings in light of the hypotheses suggested by Thompson and Tomz.

Not all Multilateral Military Interventions are Created Equal

Thompson's theory has three main components: the role of IO neutrality in conveying information, how military action approved by an IO conveys information to foreign leaders, and how military action approved by an IO conveys information to foreign publics. Thompson's theory is an effort to explain why powerful states act through IOs. Powerful states—hegemon or other major powers—are, by definition, able to act without military support from other states or IOs. They are able to impose their will on their own so acting through an IO is not a necessary condition for employment of coercion, but a choice made by the coercing state.

If a powerful state is able to act without the support of other states or can act in concert with an ad hoc "coalition of the willing," why would it ever seek IO approval? Thompson argues support is desirable "because it determines the political costs of a given policy and may affect its long-term success." (p.3) IO approval enables great powers to signal their intentions and solve commitment problems.¹ Thompson argues that IOs are able to limit coercers and thus the choice of acting through an IO provides a signal reflecting the limited ambitions of the military intervention. Much like Schelling's discussion of credible commitments, the powerful state knowingly "weakens" its position in an effort to credibly signal its intentions.² The key factor, and most important for Thompson, is that properly large IOs are representative of diverse interests within the international community. The approval of a representative IO generates positive—or

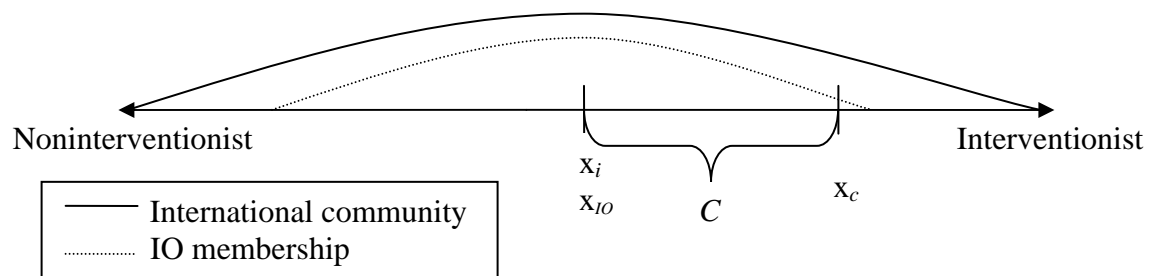
¹ Ikenberry, G. John. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major War*. Princeton, Princeton University Press. 2001. Martin, Lisa L. 1992. "Institutions and Cooperation: Sanctions During the Falkland Islands Conflict." *International Security* 16, No. 4 Spring 1992. and Martin, Lisa. "International Institutions: Weak Commitments and Signals" prepared for the International Political Economy Society conference. Stanford University. November 2007.

² Schelling, Thomas. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Boston, Harvard UP. 2nd ed. 1980. p. 47-52.

disinterested—expectations on the policy consequences of a proposed use of military force, which are then disseminated to foreign leaders and publics.

Coercion brings about third-party costs for states outside the coercer-coerced relationship. These costs can come in the form of short-term or long term sanctions, labeled S below. As seen in figure 1, the model assumes the ideal median preference of the IO, x_{IO} , is the same as the ideal median preference of the international community, x_i , while the ideal point for the coercing state is closer to a policy of intervention. The solid line and the dotted line represent the distribution of preferences of the international community and IO membership, respectively. A coercing state must modify its policy enough to appeal to x_{IO} , which will cost C , or the value of the preferred strategy less the value of the new strategy. This leads Thompson to claim, “*When powerful coercers work through IOs, they do so strategically to lower the international political costs of coercion.*” (p.9 italics in original) Implicit in Thompson’s argument is that the perceived value of S is greater than C .

Figure 1:³



Thompson assumes that the information an IO approval provides works differently for the two target audiences. First, foreign leaders are assumed to be well

³ Rebuilt from Thomson page 8.

informed about politics, and therefore the IO does not have an information advantage over them. The true intentions of a coercing state cannot be known, and an act of coercion may be a first step in a larger plan which has negative externalities for these third-party states. For example, a US unilateral invasion of an oil-rich country may be done under the guise of protecting a vulnerable ethnic group. However, the invasion may be the first step in a larger plan to gain control of oil supplies. By controlling the oil supply on the global market would be reduced, and this would increase costs of all oil consuming third-party states. Alternatively, and more directly, a US invasion might be the first step toward additional attacks in the region or might be the first step toward establishing permanent military bases in the region, which might reduce the security of neighboring states or other great powers. Without knowing how threatening or costly unannounced or unilateral action might be, third-party states will try to limit the actions of a coercer.

Thompson argues that IOs are able to pose real constraints on powerful states because of the procedures required for the approval of any use of force. Further, to mobilize support for their action, a coercer must pay significant transaction costs when acting through an IO. Last, by taking a case to an IO, the coercer gives up any chance of the action being a surprise to the coerced or to third party states, which may delay any military action approved through IO procedures. Therefore, acting through an IO requires the coercer to pay substantial costs in a public forum in order to credibly signal its intentions.

Second, and most important for our empirical test below, IO approval transmits information to foreign publics. Thompson argues that publics are unable to tell if a

coercive action will serve the collective interest, and whether or not the policy is a reasonable means to accomplish the proposed goal. Building on Popkin (1991), Thompson argues that the public seeks “information shortcuts” to evaluate foreign policy issues.⁴ IOs can provide this shortcut, or signal.⁵ Because IOs are neutral and have a median preference closer to or equal with that of the international community, publics understand that actions receiving IO approval must appeal to at least the median member of the international community. As Wedgwood puts it, IO approval “can be seen as an impartial certification that an adversary does indeed pose a threat to international peace and security, and that the use of force is not intended to serve the narrow interests of a single country.” (p. 12 in Thompson) Thompson further argues that after the foreign public is more supportive of the action, the leaders of that country will more readily support coercion.

Of course, Thompson is not alone in explaining how or whether IO approval of coercive force will have any impact on support among foreign publics or on outcomes in IR more generally. Debates about why powerful states act through IOs break down into three approaches: realist skepticism about the role of IOs, a constructivist focus on norm transmission, and the liberal alternative of IO information transmission and signaling.

For realists power is the dominant factor in state decisions and states are the relevant units of analysis in IR (Waltz 1979). Thus, realists ignore variation in public support for war, whether domestic or foreign.⁶ As important, international institutions are devices strong states employ to maintain or increase their power. In the words of

⁴ Popkin, Samuel L. *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*. University of Chicago 2d edition.

⁵ Gelpi et al. use NATO and UN approval as a signal of elite opinions.

⁶ Waltz, Kenneth. *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York. Columbia UP. 1959. More to the point see *Theory of International Politics*, 1979.

John Mearsheimer, “NATO provides a good example of realist thinking about institutions... (It) was essentially an American tool for managing power in the face of the Soviet threat.”⁷ Realists suggest that IOs are the tools of great powers and will not affect outcomes in the international system, rather they will be employed if there is no cost, and ignored if they impede the will of a powerful state. Hence, regardless of public opinion, no third party state should change its position of support/opposition based on the sentiments of their own public and certainly the potential coercing state should not concern itself with public support/opposition in foreign countries.

Although the test we develop below cannot help prove/disprove the validity of realist claims—since it only measures public opinion rather than state behavior—it is an important and oft cited alternative explanation. What we could say (following Drezner 2007) is that if the public thinks like realists, then they should not care much about whether the proposed military action is unilateral, ad hoc multilateral, approved by a regional IO (like NATO), or approved by the UNSC. What matters is the relative power of the coalition doing the coercing. So, if people think like realists they may well be concerned with burden sharing and victory, but if the size of the interventionist military force is similar, it should not matter whether the operation is approved by the UN, NATO, the OAS, or just an ad hoc coalition of the willing.

A second group of scholars, social constructivists, argue that shared norms and beliefs drive outcomes in the international system.⁸ Some agree that the realist theory may accurately describe how states perceive the world at a particular time or in a

⁷ Mearsheimer, John. “The False Promise of International Institutions”. *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3. (Winter, 1994-1995)

⁸ Adler, Emanuel, "Constructivism in International Relations: Sources, Contributions, Debates, and Future Directions," in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons, Editors, *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

particular context.⁹ However, constructivists claim that these perceptions are subject to change based on the practices and shared beliefs of actors within the international system. With regard to IOs specifically, many constructivists argue that IO approval has become or is becoming an internalized norm, rather than a rational calculation.¹⁰ States work through IOs because they believe it to be the appropriate way to act. As Ruggie puts it, “there seems little doubt that multilateral norms and institutions have helped stabilize their international consequences. Indeed, such norms and institutions appear to be playing a significant role in the management of a broad array of regional and global changes in the world system today.”¹¹ Finnemore and Sikkink suggest that these norms are rooted in the domestic or sociological base. Thus, counter to realists, they stress the importance of domestic opinion in shaping leader’s (state’s) beliefs about appropriateness. This mechanism also distinguishes constructivists from the strategic informational argument advanced by Thompson as well.

For the specific application to Thompson’s question, constructivists would argue that the residents and leaders of the coercer may internalize the norm of IO approval so that support for military action that is approved by the UNSC increases as a matter of principle, rather than as a matter of strategic calculation. The degree to which the norm had been internalized would determine the willingness of the coercer to act within or outside an IO when using military force and could even specify which IOs were appropriate for approving the use of force. As Barnett and Finnemore argue, “(IOs) also create actors, specify responsibilities and authority among them, and define the work

⁹ Wendt, Alexander. “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”. *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring, 1992)

¹⁰ See Risse; Adler;

¹¹ John G. Ruggie, "Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution," *International Organization*, Vol. 46, 3 Summer 1992. p. 561.

these actors should do, giving it meaning and normative value. Even when they lack material resources, IOs exercise power as they constitute and construct the social world.”¹² If true, an IO’s role in evaluating coercive actions is not one of strategically providing information, but rather defining the appropriate behavior of all actors within a particular context. If the norm has been internalized, then it will be appropriate to support military action if sanctioned by the UNSC, but inappropriate to support an identical military action if undertaken unilaterally. If the results of the test below show support for coercion regardless of IO approval, this would provide disconfirming evidence to the constructivist explanation.

In contrast to both realists and constructivists, neo-liberal institutionalist’s (NLI), like Thompson, argue that IOs are specifically able to help overcome coordination and collaboration problems. While the substantive claims of NLI arguments vary, they often focus on the way in which IOs influence transaction costs and information flows for a variety of strategic actors in world politics. The standard story from Keohane suggests that IOs minimize transaction costs and allow states to overcome problems of asymmetric information.¹³ But once we move from Keohane’s world, where IOs serve as structural constraints on rational unitary states, into a world where IOs have agency and domestic politics matters to policy makers, then the impact of IOs on information and transaction costs varies in interesting ways. For example, Milner argues that states work through IOs because their domestic publics have less information about actions conducted through

¹² Barnett and Finnemore, ‘The Politics, Power and Pathologies of International Organizations,’ *International Organization* 53 (Autumn 1999). p 700.

¹³ Keohane, Robert. *After Hegemony*. 1984.

IOs.¹⁴ Thus, delegation to an IO can be a strategic choice by the state to hide information from their public, rather than to provide it to a foreign state (or a group of voters within that state). Voeten argues against the constructivist view that a “logic of appropriateness” drives coercers to act through IOs; instead, he argues that approval of any military action by an IO will signal the observance of limits to power, “which are defined not by legal, moral, or efficiency standards, but by an undemocratic political process that seeks to achieve compromise among elite actors.”¹⁵ In this regard, Voeten and Thompson agree that signals to leaders are important. However, Voeten does not theorize any effect on foreign publics.

Testing Hypotheses about the Use of Force

Thompson suggests that public polling should reflect the intuitions of his theory. Past studies use survey data in an attempt to quantify the role of IOs in signaling to the American public.¹⁶ However, efforts to quantify this effect are plagued by various types of question bias and survey bias.¹⁷ Questions are most often framed in the form of conditionals: “would you prefer U.S. unilateral action or multilateral,” or alternatively studies ask two questions within the same survey, “Would you support U.S. unilateral action? Would you support multilateral action?” These designs raise three potential problems. First, because they are “within subject” tests, it is impossible to know whether

¹⁴ Milner, Helen. “Why multilateralism? Foreign aid and domestic principal-agent problems”. in Hawkins et al. eds. *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*. Cambridge UP. 2006.

¹⁵ Voeten, Erik. “The Political Origins of the UN Security Council’s Ability to Legitimize the Use of Force”. *International Organization*. (2005). 59.

¹⁶ Grieco, Joseph et al. “Let’s Get a Second Opinion: International Institutions and American Public Support for War.” Working paper. August 2007. <http://www.duke.edu/~gelpi/GGRFSecondOpinion.pdf>. Maliniak et al. “The View from the Ivory Tower: TRIP Survey of International Relations Faculty in the United States and Canada”. Also, Tierney, “Delegation Success and Policy Failure,” in *Law and Contemporary Problems*.

¹⁷ For one example of research that may suffer from these problems see Tierney 2008.

the prior question (or the respondent's answer to the prior question) will influence the respondent's answer on the subsequent question. In an effort to remain consistent the respondent may adapt her second answer in a way she would not have if she had never seen the first question. Second, respondents who see both answers might "trade off" between the two answers in a way that would be impossible if they only received one of the two treatments. Third, such research designs are unable to isolate the substantive effect of IO approval from referenda on U.S. actions more generally. Put in a specific and contemporary context, can we truly know if any answer in favor of multilateralism is not merely a criticism of the Bush administration's handling of the lead up to Iraq?

Thompson argues his second hypothesis, that IOs provide information to foreign public, "is the most empirically challenging. It is impossible to know precisely how and why individuals updated their beliefs about a given policy."¹⁸ He suggests three possible strategies to evaluate this hypothesis. First, one could look at support levels before IO approval, and compare them with post-approval levels. This design is weak because it is at risk of historical and maturation threats. The many events that occur between measurements of public opinion add countless confounds to any results. In addition, the release of information between measurements, assuming this issue is in the news, could drive the results. Second, he suggests that one could compare levels of support among many cases where the level of IO involvement varies. However, this design relies on assumptions about the correlation of unobserved errors. This is the standard critique of the experimental approach compared to large-n approach. Given that the number of cases of coercion may be small, and the variation around IO involvement was also limited, statistically, these inferences are hard to make at best and likely wrong at worst. His last

¹⁸ Thompson 13.

strategy is one of measuring not the level of support, but the strategic nature of political actors and how they use IO involvement to communicate information. While he discusses this as two parts, here one relies on political actors to use the theory to then produce an observable side-effect. This method, however, cannot rule out the logic of appropriateness as the mechanism that increases support for military action that proceeds through an IO. If the effect of IO involvement is completely normative, without variation on the information that political actors provide, and there is little variation in the success of observed actors attempting to signal using the theory's logic, then there is no way to rule out this alternative. Finally, no single case study, however strong, can firmly establish any theory or hypothesis, but can only suggest the plausibility of the hypothesized mechanism. To Thompson's credit, he is conscious of these problems and attempts to draw upon multiple strands of evidence and to multiply the number of observations within his case study. However, with one case it is difficult to completely rule out possible confounds.

While it is impossible to directly observe policy beliefs, the process of information updating or strategic trade-offs that are entailed by the Thompson hypothesis, the experimental design is able to control for other confounds such that only the introduced treatment causes the observed effect. We use an experimental research design which focuses one question per respondent on a survey of a sample public in the UK. The key dependent variable is the public's level of support for the proposed coercion. The key independent variable is how a coercing state (in this case the U.S.) chooses to conduct the action. We employed five distinct treatments that corresponded to unilateral military action, an ad hoc coalition, NATO approval, UN Security Council approval, and

UN Security Council approval with a reminder that such approval is consistent with international law.

To conduct the survey, we contracted a British polling firm, YouGov, to administer two distinct public opinion surveys of British citizens from July 11th to July 12th, 2008. A sample of 2000 was drawn from of their omnibus pool of respondents for each day. YouGov produces a representative sample based on prior information about the respondents. The online polls are used for political questions, along with market research. The series of five Sudan questions was run on July 11th and the five Iran question on July 12th. No respondent was allowed to answer more than one treatment of the question and no respondent was allowed to answer more than one survey per week; therefore, we know that no respondent answered both surveys.

In each of the two surveys respondents were first asked:

Please choose the DATE of your birthday from the drop-down list. (For example, if your birthday is on Christmas Day, the 25th of December, please choose “25”).

Depending on their response, they were split into one of 5 groups. Assuming that the day of the year on which one is born will be randomly distributed, we had a random sample.

Each respondent in group 1 was then asked the following question:

If Sudan continues to perpetrate human rights abuses within its borders, would you support or oppose the United States taking unilateral military action against Sudan?

Definitely support
Probably support
Neither support nor oppose
Probably oppose
Definitely oppose
Unsure/ don't know

Respondents in the remaining four groups received separate cues on what type of military action the U.S. might take against Sudan. Those who saw the “unilateral” option, as seen above, received the zero dosage of IO involvement. In Thompson’s terms, at this level the respondent only knows the action is no more hawkish than the most hawkish the U.S. might be. Rather than simply dichotomizing multilateral and unilateral action, the first factor tests what effect increasingly diverse coalitions (and later organizations) have on foreign domestic opinion. Thompson claims the institution must be a formal IO and it must be sufficiently large such that it represents a diverse number of opinions in order to send a meaningful signal to a foreign public. To address this portion of the claim, and thus get some leverage on the alternative explanations, we vary the type of IO and the composition of the necessary winning coalition by asking, in addition to unilateral action, if one would support a coalition of willing nations (ad hoc alliance, informal), a NATO action (formal, but limited in size), and UN approved invasion (formal, large and diverse).

Thompson’s model suggests the lowest level of support for unilateral action, since a foreign public would know that the coercing country’s actions have not been approved necessarily by any other countries, and thus there is no signal, positive or negative, on the consequences of this action. Moreover, evidence on the effectiveness of a formal but small IO compared to a group of countries in an informal alliance may help to shed light on whether or not it is important to work through a formal organization or whether or not information is actually passed on to the public by including a large number of states in the decision to use force. Formal IOs generally employ institutionalized rules in their decision process that are known to foreign leaders and known to at least some subset of

the public (UNSC require 9 of 15 votes plus no veto by any member of the P5; NATO requires “consensus of all members; etc...”). Such formal rules do not apply to ad hoc coalitions of the willing. Hence, such coalitions may simply be composed of those states with preferences closely aligned to the coercer and thus should not represent any credible signal about the intentions of the coercer.

The remaining treatments read as follows:

If Sudan continues to perpetrate human rights abuses within its borders, would you support or oppose a U.S.-led coalition of willing countries taking military action against Sudan?

If Sudan continues to perpetrate human rights abuses within its borders, would you support or oppose a NATO-approved force, led by the U.S., taking military action against Sudan?

If Sudan continues to perpetrate human rights abuses within its borders, would you support or oppose a UN Security Council-approved force, led by the U.S., taking military action against Sudan?

Key to these rewordings is the inclusion of “U.S.-led” or “led by the U.S.,” since it ensures each group of respondents is reminded that the action is, at heart, an American-led operation.

The second part of our design varies the target country. In addition to Sudan, we chose Iran as a possible realistic target for coercion. We vary the target country because some respondents may have preconceptions about what a war with any particular country will entail. Because Iran is next door to Iraq (and sounds similar to many members of the public), we wanted to guard against the possibility that respondents would infer too much about the test case from some analogous or ongoing conflict and thus have the results driven by factors other than our treatments. Further, by including more cases, it serves to increase the external validity of the claim, or point out situations in which the theory may not hold. The inclusion of Sudan is important because it would likely be viewed as a

more humanitarian action as compared to a strictly security one. One can imagine that action to stop genocide in Sudan is more popular with the British public than stopping potential WMD proliferation in Iran. Perhaps Thompson's signaling model holds more strongly in security cases than in humanitarian cases or vice versa. This variation helps to increase the external validity of hypothesized changes as we vary the treatments.

For Iran the questions take the following form:

If Iran continues to produce material that can be used to develop nuclear weapons, would you support or oppose the United States taking unilateral military action against Iran?

The level of IO approval varies in the same way as in the Sudan case. One group receives unilateral while the remaining groups receive COW, NATO, and UNSC. We chose Iran and Sudan because they are possible targets of future coercion by the U.S. We chose real cases over hypothetical to increase the external validity. Gelpi et al. use East Timor in their survey, because it is small enough that most respondents will not know the particulars regarding a hypothetical Indonesian invasion, while those sophisticated respondents would know enough to consider the case believable. Because Iran and Sudan have received greater attention, we believe these cases more closely mimic conditions in the real world.

In a second experiment, we added a vignette to the UNSC question explaining that military actions approved by the UNSC were in fact legal under international law.

The two variants of the UNSC question are reproduced below.

If Iran continues to produce material that can be used to develop nuclear weapons, would you support or oppose a UN Security Council-approved force, led by the U.S., taking military action against Iran?

Military actions approved by the UN Security Council are legal under international law. If Iran continues to produce material that can be used to develop nuclear

weapons, would you support or oppose a UN Security Council-approved force, led by the U.S., taking military action against Iran?

This experiment allows us to isolate the effect of how additional information on the legality of the action shapes public opinion. Tomz (2007) pioneered experimental work on the effect of international legal commitments on public support for various foreign policy goals. In this case, evidence supporting Tomz's contentions would show a significant increase in the support for military action if the respondent was provided with information that the act was legal. Tomz's research design focuses on the negative, where respondents are given information that a suggested action is illegal under international law. Our design instead adds a positive cue, informing the reader that some action or process is "legal." If Tomz's findings were due to an internalization of the norms of international law, we would expect comparable effects; an increase in support in our study to a decrease in support in his.

Results of the Two Surveys:

The first claim we test is Thompson's proposition that increasingly formal IOs with broader representation tend to increase foreign public support for coercive action. As the design is experimental, we analyze the results with a simple analysis of variance (ANOVA) test.¹⁹ As seen in Table 1.1 below, more formal institutions (UN and NATO) have higher approval rates than either unilateral action or an ad hoc coalition. All three of the subsequent treatments after "unilateral" show monotonic increasing support. Not a single measure is inconsistent with the hypothesized expectations. Excluding the 5th treatment ("UN-legal") from the analysis, the overall results are consistent with the

¹⁹ These results retain the same levels of significance for a Kruskal-Wallis test, where we do not need the assumption of a normal distribution of the population.

predictions of the Thompson hypothesis for both Sudan and Iran. Interestingly, the largest step jump for the Sudan case is 11.6% between the support of a coalition of willing nations (45.7%) and NATO (57.3%). Using a t-test, this change is significant at the .005 level. For Iran, the largest jump in support is 4% between NATO (40.1%) and UN (44.1%). However, this change is not statistically significant.

Table 1.1

	Sudan		Iran	
	N	(Percent)	N	(Percent)
Unilateral action				
Oppose	147	(40.5)	183	(51.8)
Neither	68	(18.7)	46	(13.0)
Support	148	(40.8)	124	(35.1)
With support of a coalition of willing				
Oppose	140	(38.8)	176	(49.9)
Neither	56	(15.5)	44	(12.5)
Support	165	(45.7)	133	(37.7)
With NATO support				
Oppose	104	(30.9)	160	(47.9)
Neither	40	(11.9)	40	(12.0)
Support	193	(57.3)	134	(40.1)
With UN Support				
Oppose	78	(22.8)	135	(42.9)
Neither	62	(18.1)	41	(13.0)
Support	202	(59.1)	139	(44.1)

ANOVA

F (3, 12.42) p<0.0000 F (3, 2.25) p<0.0810

Despite the fact that the results all move in the expected direction, the substantive shifts are much smaller than the gaps between “unilateral” and “multilateral” questions on previous surveys. Our previous survey results on U.S. public opinion (Tierney 2008) and other public opinion surveys (Pew 2002) showed much larger gaps between support

for hypothetical multilateral operations and hypothetical unilateral operations. Without any additional evidence to the contrary, we assume the muted substantive effects of multilateralism in the current survey experiment are driven by the question bias issues that we discussed above.

The second test focuses on the effect of the legality on public support for coercive action. Tomz predicts that legality will have a positive effect on support for coercive action. As shown below in Table 1.2, the addition of the cue that UNSC approval makes military action “legal” under international law increases support marginally in both cases -- 0.3% for Sudan and 2% for Iran, as predicted. However, neither of these changes is substantively large and neither is statistically significant, and could be due to random error. One explanation for this lack of difference would be that respondents are already aware that UNSC approved coercive action is legal under international law. Thus, the boilerplate cue has little to no effect, informing only those respondents previously unaware of international legal standards. However, while we think it is not likely that random citizens understand the legal status of a UNSC resolution, only further testing can rule out this hypothesis. Even if it is the case that all citizens of the UK already know the special legal status of a UNSC resolution, the substantive change from NATO approval to UNSC approval is small and calls into question the “unique” status of the UNSC as a signaling device and also the relevance of “legality” for support of military action in international relations. Certainly the substantive shift from NATO to UNSC is much smaller than the shifts observed in Tomz’ within subject experiments on the WTO.

Table 1.2

	Sudan		Iran	
With UN Support	N	(Percent)	N	(Percent)
Oppose	78	(22.8)	135	(42.9)
Neither	62	(18.1)	41	(13.0)
Support	202	(59.1)	139	(44.1)
With UN Support/Law				
Oppose	89	(24.6)	154	(42.5)
Neither	58	(16.0)	41	(11.3)
Support	215	(59.4)	167	(46.1)
t-test		t(702, 0.2291)		t (675, -0.321)

While legality may be part of a complex calculation regarding the support for policy decisions, it cannot explain changes in levels of support between the first three treatments.

Discussion:

Our results are consistent with most of Thompson's expectations and compliment his qualitative empirical work which illuminates the pathways through which IO signaling works in practice. Primitive experimental work, as shown above, provides more focused evidence that the causal mechanisms advanced by Thompson are operative in the minds of foreign publics when great powers employ military force.

The purpose of this paper was to beta test a survey in one country and to get feedback on the questions, the research design, and whether we need to include more controls. While the Thompson hypothesis does receive support, we wonder whether the

differences between the treatments will increase as we vary the third party foreign public. If Dutch or German citizens demonstrate a much larger preference for multilateralism, this might suggest that some of the constructivist factors (internalized norms of multilateralism) are driving the results. It also seems advisable to include some non-NATO countries and some countries that are not traditionally in a U.S. led “coalitions of the willing.” As important, we think it important to poll citizens of a country that lacks a veto on the UNSC. If the public know their government has the ability to veto something in the UNSC, they may think that their views will necessarily be represented in the IO. The same logic holds for NATO membership where a consensus decision rule implies a unit veto system. Also, future work could include an experimental negative cue on International Law for the three non UNSC treatments.

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