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Reinforcements Arrival Time and Willingness to Fight: A Survey Experiment in Lithuania, Does knowledge of reinforcements' arrival time affect willingness to fight among members of the public?

Existing research has established that willingness to fight is linked to a wide range of individual-level factors such as age or socio-economic opportunities, as well as various country-level factors, including geographic proximity of conflicts. To date, little work has been done on the relationship between individual-level willingness to fight and military participation in collective defense structures. In most European contexts, security and resilience are linked to participation in NATO, built on the key principle is mutual assistance to counter possible attack. However, such assistance may come with delay due to geographical and logistical challenges to movement of soldiers as well as military equipment. This is particularly relevant in the Baltic countries which are the most vulnerable in terms of possible attack Russian attack. Accordingly, we examine the effects of NATO reinforcements' arrival time on individual-level willingness to fight in Lithuania. We hypothesize that willingness to fight increases with the knowledge of earlier reinforcements' arrival time, as well as with previous military service experience. To test our causal claims, we use an original experimental design fielded among a nationally representative sample of respondents in Lithuania (n = 1,000). We manipulate perceptions of NATO reinforcements' arrival time in the case of a potential Russian attack on the country.