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Veterans and Bipartisanship

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Abstract

Scholars and media outlets that cover the U.S. Congress devote substantial attention to the rise in partisanship and polarization over the past few decades. The steady increases in partisanship and polarization coincide with a comparable decline in veteran representation in Congress. While there are many factors that influence a congressperson's behavior, an understudied issue is whether these trends suggest that veterans are more likely to exhibit bipartisanship than their nonveteran colleagues. Using two different measures of bipartisanship, this article draws on data from 12 different Congresses to examine whether veterans are more likely to be bipartisan than nonveterans. Utilizing difference in means tests, the results provide only modest evidence that increasing veteran representation would lead to more bipartisanship when controlling for generational differences. This article suggests a research agenda to further assess these findings and discusses the implications of increasing veteran presence in Congress on civil–military relations.

Keywords

bipartisanship, polarization, civil–military relations, veterans, Congress

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Recent research demonstrating that fewer congresspersons reach across the aisle to cooperate with members of the other party (Andris et al., 2015) is one example among several studies that document partisan behavior within an increasingly polarized Congress over the past several decades (Poole & Rosenthal, 1997, 2007). Polarization is frequently faulted as the culprit for the declining functionality of Congress as evidenced by increased gridlock and a decline in subcommittee meetings (Binder, 2014). While a significant amount of research focuses on the sources of polarization (Jacobson, 2000; Theriault, 2008; Thomsen, 2014) and its relationship with partisanship (Aldrich & Rohde, 2001; Layman, Carsey, & Horowitz, 2006), scholars have few suggestions regarding methods to increase bipartisanship in Congress. The steady rise of partisanship and polarization in Congress coincides with a decline in the proportion of veterans serving in Congress from over 70% in 1950 to about 20% today. Is the correlation between the decline in the number of veterans in Congress and a rise in partisanship and polarization indicative of a greater likelihood for veterans to be bipartisan? Stated another way, is it plausible that electing more veterans to Congress would lead to greater bipartisanship and decrease polarization?

This article examines bipartisanship among veterans compared to nonveterans in recent Congresses to determine whether evidence supports efforts to increase the percentage of veterans in Congress to help reverse the trends of rising partisanship and polarization. After presenting some initial evidence of an emerging narrative that veterans may be less partisan than nonveterans, we first examine the causes of polarization to determine the potential for increasing veteran representation within Congress to address this problem. With a firmer grip on the causes of polarization and its relationship with partisanship, we next employ two different measures of bipartisanship to determine whether veterans in the 104th through 115th Congresses displayed more bipartisan behavior than their nonveteran colleagues.¹ Based on these data, we discuss the implications for initiatives to increase the veteran presence in Congress.² We find only modest evidence for increasing veteran presence to generate more bipartisan behavior in Congress after controlling for generational factors. We conclude with a suggested research agenda to explore potential theoretical explanations for our results and discuss the implications of our findings for civil–military relations.

Initial Evidence of Veterans and Bipartisanship

As more veterans who served after 9/11 seek elected office in the U.S. House in the current election cycle compared to past campaigns, many of these candidates cite dysfunction in Congress as a source of their motivation to run (Sevastopulo, 2018). These veterans have the support of Political Action Committees and other groups that contend increasing veteran representation in Congress can provide a means to increase bipartisanship (Barcott & Wood, 2017; Mullen & Ackerman, 2018). While there is little scholarship that examines why veterans would be more bipartisan than nonveterans, recent evidence from the U.S. House suggests a positive correlation

between veteran status and bipartisanship that supports an emerging narrative that veterans may be less partisan than nonveterans (McCormick, 2018; Tyson, 2018).

We draw upon data from the 104th (1995–1997) through 115th (2017–2019) Congresses to compare veterans³ and nonveterans on two measures of bipartisanship. Figure 1 below demonstrates that the number of veterans declined over this period with fewer veterans identifying as Democrats compared to Republicans.

The first measure of bipartisanship, a member's DW-NOMINATE score, focuses on voting behavior.⁴ DW-NOMINATE scores place members of Congress on a common ideological space that permits researchers to measure degrees of ideological (partisan) or moderate (bipartisan) voting. A member with a DW-NOMINATE score of -1 is considered an extreme liberal, a DW-NOMINATE score of 1 is considered an extreme conservative, and a DW-NOMINATE score of 0 is considered a moderate. As Figure 2 below demonstrates, evidence from recent Congresses demonstrates that veterans of both parties display more moderate voting than their nonveteran colleagues.

The second measure of bipartisanship, the Lugar Bipartisan Index score, focuses on member behavior during policy formulation by examining bill sponsorships and cosponsorships. Lugar Bipartisan Index scores for the U.S. House are available for the 113th and 114th Congresses. Since voting decisions may be influenced by different contextual situations such as logrolling, bill sponsorship/cosponsorship measures another dimension of bipartisanship by quantifying this important signal on where a member stands on a particular issue. For this measure, a higher Bipartisan Index score indicates greater bipartisanship. Bipartisan Index scores for veterans are noticeably higher than their nonveteran colleagues as shown in Figure 3.

There are three possible explanations for the association between veteran status and bipartisanship that we see in Figures 2 and 3. This association could be due to chance, a spurious relationship between an antecedent condition that affects both veteran status and bipartisanship or a causal relationship between veteran status and bipartisanship. In this article, we primarily address the first two possibilities, using statistical methods to evaluate whether this association is due to chance and assess a few variables that could produce a spurious relationship between veteran status and bipartisanship.

Explaining Partisanship and Polarization in Congress

Two trends are evident regarding partisanship and representation of veterans within Congress. Figure 4 below based on research by Andris et al. (2015) depicts the steady rise in partisanship over the past six decades as the percentage of veterans in Congress progressively declined. Past Congresses featured cooperators (represented by Republicans, the red dots, and Democrats, the blue dots) that would cross party lines on roll call votes, but such bipartisan behavior is rare as veteran representation in the U.S. House declined to historic lows.

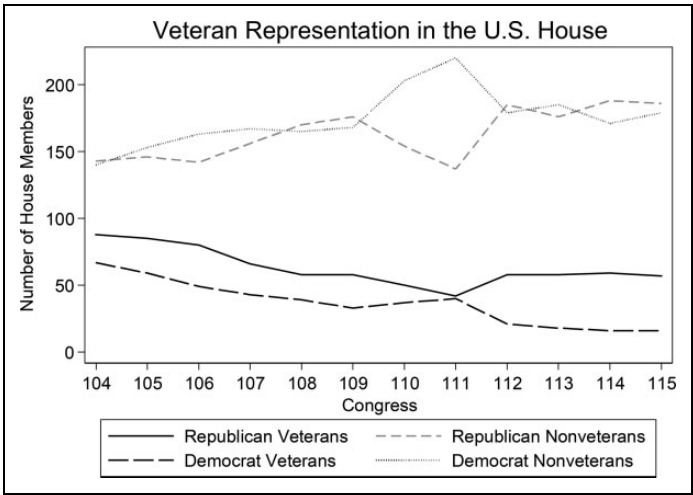


Figure 1. Number of veterans in the U.S. House.

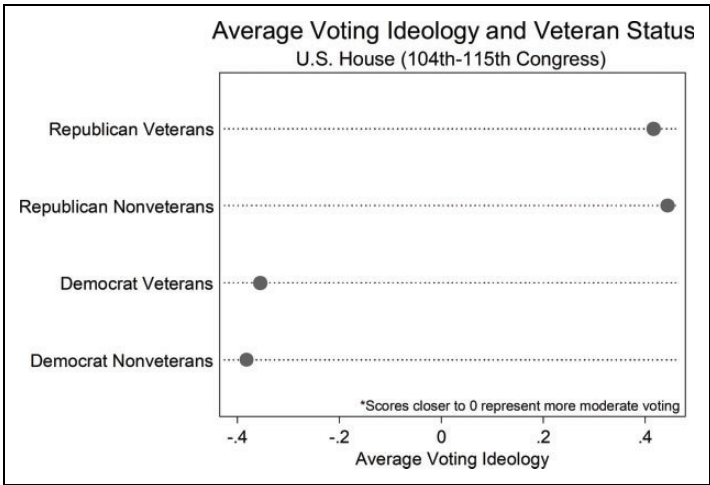


Figure 2. Average DW-NOMINATE scores in the U.S. House.

These two trends are likely to continue, although the recent election of post-9/11 veterans slowed the decline in veteran representation compared to recent years (Binder, 2014; Lynn, 2016). While partisanship and polarization are well-researched topics among scholars of American politics, scholars have not examined the correlation between the decline in veteran representation and the rise of partisanship. Before addressing whether increasing veteran presence in Congress could lead to more bipartisanship and decrease polarization, it is important to first understand

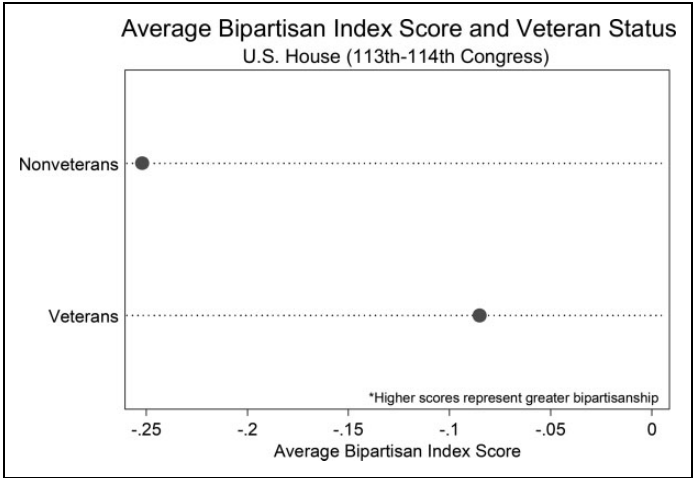


Figure 3. Average Bipartisan Index scores in the U.S. House.

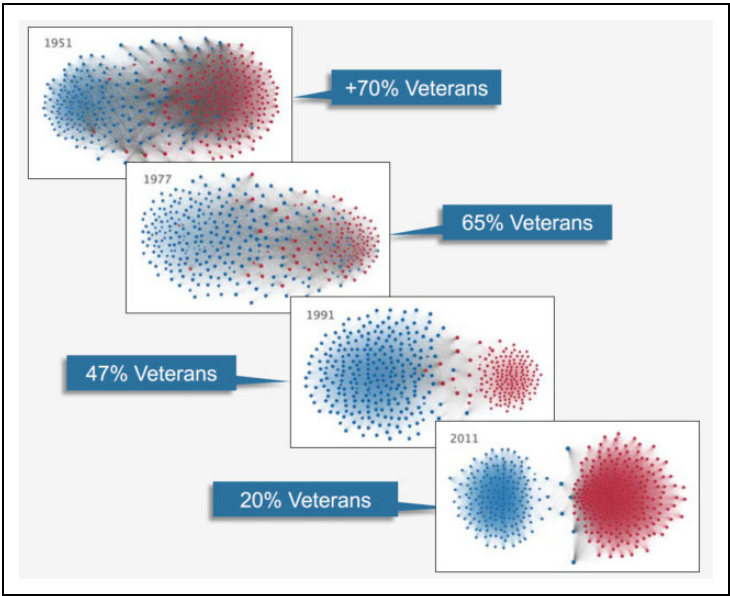


Figure 4. Veteran representation and bipartisanship in the U.S. House. Adapted from Andris et al. (2015).

the causes of polarization and its relationship with partisanship. Scholars of congressional politics focus on two main sources of polarization: increasing partisan preferences within the electorate and institutional changes within Congress.

Many scholars point toward changes in the electorate as the culprit for the polarization we see within Congress (Bartels, 2000; Jacobson, 2000, 2004; Weinschenk, 2013). An increase in the partisan preferences of party activists is often cited as a reason for increased polarization in the electorate since these party members contribute time and money to campaigns, are more likely to vote in primary elections, and are more likely to be energized by the partisan behavior of those they elect (Layman & Carsey, 2002; Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, & Cooperman, 2010). Other research suggests polarization is also increasing in larger segments of the public than just among party activists (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008). A possible explanation for greater polarization in American society is that higher levels of education generated greater political awareness. This increase in politically aware citizens coincided with a proliferation of media choices in recent years. With so many media outlets to choose from, many citizens choose to consume news from sources that reinforce their preexisting beliefs, resulting in an increase in the share of partisan voters compared to previous years (Kinder & Iyengar, 1989; Prior, 2013; Zaller, 1992).

If one places the electorate as the source of polarization, should we still cast the blame on politicians for reflecting this polarization within Congress? According to some assumptions of congressional behavior, polarization in the electorate should naturally lead to polarization among congressional members. In one of the most influential studies of congressional behavior, Mayhew (1974) assumes that congressmen are “single minded seekers of reelection,” thus their preference for reelection overrides any ideological commitments or other goals, a point further emphasized by Fenno (1978). From this viewpoint, the rise in polarization is a function of congressional members appealing to portions of the electorate that generate the greatest chance for their reelection (Trubowitz & Mellow, 2005).

This view is not unchallenged as others assert that most Americans are relatively uninformed about politics and do not hold strongly ideological views (Fiorina, Abrams, & Pope, 2011; Shea, 1999). The evidence is therefore unclear on two important fronts. First, it is unclear whether the public is highly polarized or if this polarization exists primarily among those that are most active and informed about politics. Second, even if it is accurate to characterize the public in general as highly polarized, it is unclear whether parties contributed to this polarization or if politicians responded to the polarization they see in the electorate. Assuming the research pointed definitively to changes in the electorate as the root cause of a more polarized Congress, the policy options to moderate ideological extremes in the electorate would surely be limited.

Other scholars (Aldrich, 2011; Aldrich & Rohde, 2001; Rohde, 1991; Theriault, 2008) move beyond the focus on the electorate to examine whether actions by members of Congress contribute to polarization. Theriault (2008) focuses on the utilization of special rules to shape what legislation is placed on the agenda and the terms of the debate. Such procedural votes constitute an increasing share of roll call votes and are far more partisan than votes on amendments or final passage of

legislation. Party leaders also use committee assignments and other legislative procedures to assert their will (Cox & McCubbins, 2005; Sinclair, 2006, 2017). As a result of these factors, in a highly polarized Congress “much more of the lawmaking process occurs in the majority-party-dominated committees and particularly the committees with disproportionate influence over the rules” (Jordan, Quaille Hill, & Hurley, 2017, p. 130).

This research suggests that increased polarization incentivizes the parties to construct institutional barriers to guard against the influence of the minority party, but these decisions also perpetuate high levels of partisanship. Further compounding the polarization in Congress is the recent trend of more polarized legislators succeeding outgoing members (Carmines, 2011; Fleisher & Bond, 2004), possibly because high levels of partisanship in Congress discourage moderates in each party from running (Thomsen, 2014). The recent literature on issue ownership is an additional cause for concern since issue ownership leads parties to pursue policies that are more extreme than desired by the public (Egan, 2013).

The evidence therefore points to a cycle between partisanship and polarization. The first aspect of this cycle, partisanship leading to polarization, is a function of greater cohesion within parties leading members to cede more power to party leaders. These party leaders have ideological positions that are distinct from the other party and therefore use institutional rules to widen the ideological distance between the two parties (Layman et al., 2006). The second aspect of this cycle, polarization leading to partisanship, is a function of the greater ideological distance between the parties strengthening political identities and partisan bias among the electorate (Mason, 2015) which may dissuade more moderate candidates from running.

It is difficult to envision a proposal that would change the incentives of those currently in Congress to engage in more bipartisan behavior, so a more realistic approach may be to use the electoral process to increase the share of members that are willing to engage in bipartisan behavior. More frequent bipartisanship may reduce the ideologically extreme bills characteristic of a polarized Congress and forge a return to the “textbook” Congress in the less polarized era of the mid-20th century in which both parties had opportunities to influence the debate and amendments (Jordan et al., 2017; Shepsle, 1989). Electing more veterans provides a plausible narrative to break down the barriers to bipartisanship and have some effect on the level of polarization within Congress.

Why Partisanship and Polarization Matter

Congressional history and the influence of institutional rules demonstrate that partisanship and polarization have important implications for legislative outcomes. Some of the nation’s most significant legislation required bipartisanship to include Social Security reform, welfare reform, enactment of the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2018). Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates underscored the importance of

bipartisanship in national security and foreign affairs in his statement that “when we have been successful . . . it has been because there has been bipartisan support” (Hilley, 2008, p. 229). As such, bipartisanship provides a practical means by which to achieve consensus and resolve political differences. Conversely, heightened partisanship and polarization increase hostility between the two parties (Sinclair, 2001).

Examining increases in polarization in the context of the institutional rules within Congress helps explain how partisanship complicates the process of constructing majorities to pass legislation. Krehbiel (1998) emphasizes the importance of what he calls the filibuster pivot (the policy preferences of the sixtieth senator) and the veto pivot (the policy preferences of a member at the two-thirds point on a policy spectrum) in determining whether gridlock will occur. Greater polarization increases the difficulty of accommodating the policy preferences of the filibuster or veto pivot, especially in a highly partisan Congress (Binder, 2014). Similarly, the model of legislative stalemate created by Binder (2003) highlights the challenge of overcoming the multiple veto points required for lawmaking with polarized parties that are also highly partisan. Understanding the reasons for polarization and developing solutions to decrease partisanship is therefore a pursuit with important scholarly and practical implications.

With the presence of a highly polarized electorate as seen today, one may ask why a polarized electorate would reward moderation in Congress and actually elect candidates that campaign on bipartisanship. We suggest that the answer may lie within the desire of the public to see their government produce results. Overwhelming majorities of voters consistently think Congress is performing poorly and is incapable of seriously addressing the important problems facing our nation (Rasmussen Reports, 2018). Some studies also demonstrate the electorate is willing to “punish” members of Congress for strict party-line voting (Clark, 2015). Bipartisanship can be the key to settling political differences, producing results on significant national issues, and increasing the people’s faith in their governmental institutions. We therefore think the relationship between veterans, bipartisanship, and polarization is an issue worth studying and focus in this article on the association between veteran status and bipartisanship.

Veterans and Bipartisanship

The key question we seek to address is whether there is a difference in the behavior of veterans on two measures of bipartisanship compared to nonveterans. Modeling the preferences for members of Congress is complex with many leading studies of Congress taking the preferences of congressional representatives as a given instead of attempting to establish a causal relationship between a member’s characteristics and his or her behavior (Binder, 2003; Krehbiel, 1998; Stewart, 2001). This study follows in this tradition as we make the important distinction between testing a causal relationship between veteran status and bipartisan behavior and testing for differences in the observed behavior of veterans and nonveterans. The latter focus

allows for an assessment of whether veterans and nonveterans statistically differ in their bipartisan behavior while stopping short of asserting that a specific characteristic of veterans causes a difference in bipartisan behavior.⁵

Since we seek to understand whether there is a difference in the bipartisanship of veterans and nonveterans, we use a difference in means test to determine whether the results for veterans are statistically different than nonveterans. To test statistical significance, we first compare the veteran and nonveteran populations to determine whether the means (averages) of the voting behavior of the two populations are equal, accounting for the dispersion of voting behavior around the mean for each group. If veterans are more bipartisan in their voting behavior, the average DW-NOMINATE scores for these two groups should be unequal with veterans scoring closer to 0 (moderate) than nonveterans. We also use Bipartisan Index scores to assess whether veterans have higher scores than nonveterans. We evaluate the averages of these two populations at a 95% confidence level for both measures of bipartisanship, a common metric in statistical analysis. Statistically significant results ensure that there is a low probability that a difference in the bipartisan behavior between veterans and nonveterans is due to chance, thereby instilling confidence that any observed differences are attributable to the characteristics of the two groups.

On both measures of bipartisanship, the initial results provide some evidence that veterans may be more bipartisan than nonveterans, but the variability in the data does not close off a conclusion that bipartisan behavior is equally likely from a veteran or a nonveteran. In 9 of the 12 Congresses examined, Republican veterans in the U.S. House had average DW-NOMINATE scores closer to zero (moderate voting) than nonveterans. Veterans were more bipartisan than nonveterans in 7 of the 12 Congresses for Democrats. While these results demonstrate that veterans were *usually* more bipartisan than their nonveteran colleagues, this outcome was not always the case and none of the differences are statistically significant.

The results for Bipartisan Index scores also indicate that there may not be a clear difference in the partisan behavior between veterans and nonveterans. Republican veterans displayed more bipartisan behavior in both cases but the opposite outcome occurred with Democrat veterans. As with the DW-NOMINATE measure, the results utilizing Bipartisan Index scores were not statistically significant.

To evaluate whether the partisanship of the electorate within each district might influence the results, we controlled for this factor utilizing the Cook Partisan Voter Index (PVI) but found similar results. The results were also not significantly influenced by eliminating outliers, or more extreme congresspersons, by using the interquartile range for each measure of bipartisanship for veterans and nonveterans. In the aggregate, these results suggest veterans are *usually* more bipartisan in their voting than nonveterans, but this evidence is based on correlations that are not significant; therefore, one could not rule out that a nonveteran is equally likely to be as bipartisan as a veteran.

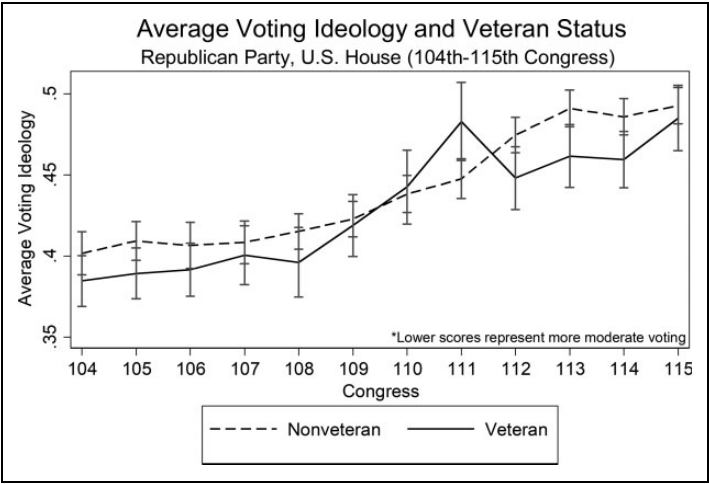


Figure 5. DW-NOMINATE scores for veterans and nonveterans, U.S. House.

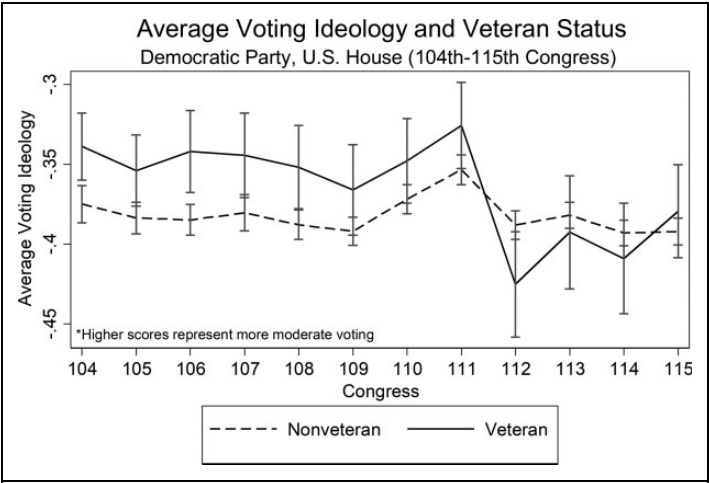


Figure 6. DW-NOMINATE scores for veterans and nonveterans, U.S. House.

Generational Differences and Bipartisanship

The results differ when bringing generational differences into the analysis. Fundamental changes took place in the Armed Forces following the Vietnam conflict, most notably the shift from a conscripted Army to an all-volunteer force (AVF). Veterans born in the latter years of the baby boomer generation through Generation X served during the time of these fundamental changes.⁶

In addition to the changes wrought by the transition to an AVF, the education and experiences of service members in the early years of the baby boomer generation differed significantly from those that followed them. The older generation of veterans served in a time when Huntington's concept of objective control shaped the definition of what constituted healthy civil-military relations. Through this lens, military leaders are at their best when they are knowledgeable of the political context surrounding a policy but limit their advice to expertise within their field (Huntington, 1957). Similarly, objective control requires politicians to determine policy regarding the use of force but leave the actual management of violence to the military. The experiences of older veterans largely comported with this view through service in Vietnam as intrusions into the military sphere of autonomy by politicians led to unhealthy civil-military relations.

The younger generation of veterans grew up with an understanding that the boundary between military and civilian expertise under objective control is not obvious but rather highly subjective and contested (Cohen, 2002; Feaver, 1996; Janowitz, 1960). This more nuanced understanding of the civil-military relationship was also reflected in practice. In many cases, the service of younger veterans reflected an increase in autonomy to lower echelons as doctrine and employment of the Armed Forces shifted away from platoons and companies being directly employed with their brigades and divisions, especially in support of missions such as peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and humanitarian support (Cox, Park, Sondheimer, & Wilson, 2011). While earlier generations of veterans sought clear boundaries for military affairs, later generations served in a time when their institution was not the sole source of expertise in theory or practice.

Ascribing a dominant culture of objective or subjective civil-military spheres to particular generations does not in and of itself explain why one would expect differences between these generations regarding bipartisanship. We suggest this link exists in the manner in which members of the Boomer-Huntingtonian generation were educated, trained, and mentored on matters and manners of behavior as military professionals when it came to their proper roles (advisory, force planning, force execution, etc.) in politics and policy shaping and making, vice later generations. Along with the shift in theory and practice noted above, the professional military education system for this younger generation of veterans was much more devoted to the formal training and coaching on the legal, normative and ethos-governed requirements and reasons for maintaining a nonpartisan (if not entirely agnostic) professional mind and manner in the conduct of their roles and responsibilities regarding matters of war-policy. While the explanation is hard to pin down as we discuss later, the results for bipartisanship among younger veterans are appreciably different than the results with older veterans.

To capture these generational differences and focus on post-Vietnam veterans, we narrow the analysis of veterans to only include those that were younger than 50 at the start of the 109th Congress. Since the draft ended in January 1973 and marked the end of significant U.S. troop levels in Vietnam, this designation ensures that the

younger veterans we include in our analysis were younger than 18 in the beginning of 1973 and thus did not serve in Vietnam. We refer to this generation as AVF veterans. While we later compare AVF veterans to nonveterans of the same generation, we think it is important to first compare AVF veterans to all nonveterans to understand how this younger group of veterans compares to all of their nonveteran colleagues. Controlling for generational factors resulted in only one case against the predicted direction as illustrated in Table 2 as opposed to five cases against the predicted direction over the same time period when generational factors are not included in the analysis.⁷

The most striking result from Table 2 is that in three of the six Congresses examined, the results are statistically significant for AVF Democrats. The results using Bipartisan Index scores are more robust for AVF Democrats. Both Republican and Democrat AVF veterans in the 113th and 114th Congress are more bipartisan than their nonveteran colleagues with the difference being statistically significant for Democrats in both Congresses.

These results suggest that in some cases AVF Democrats are more bipartisan in their voting than nonveterans, but they are statistically more likely to engage in bipartisan bill sponsorship and cosponsorship as evidenced by the results from the 113th and 114th Congress.

Examining only AVF veterans provides a narrow sample size in some cases in the House where the 113th, 114th, and 115th Congresses only had 4, 6, and 8 AVF Democrat veterans, respectively. We therefore performed several robustness checks to ensure that the differences we see in bipartisanship among AVF veterans compared to their nonveteran counterparts in the House capture a true difference in the behavior of these two populations. First, we analyze veterans 50 and older as of the 109th Congress, which we term pre-AVF veterans, to examine the bipartisanship of this generation of veterans that served in the Vietnam conflict or earlier. There is greater partisanship among pre-AVF veterans compared to their nonveteran counterparts than was the case with the AVF veterans examined in Table 2.

The results comparing pre-AVF veterans with nonveterans using Bipartisan Index scores also support the notion that generational differences may influence a veteran's likelihood to be more bipartisan than a nonveteran. As Table 5 demonstrates, the differences between veteran and nonveteran bipartisanship are no longer significant when considering only older veterans, and in one Congress Democrat pre-AVF veterans are less bipartisan than nonveterans.

These results increase our confidence that generational factors are important to consider in explaining the association between veteran status and bipartisanship. In summary, there is some evidence that Democrat AVF veterans are more likely to be more bipartisan in their voting than nonveterans. Although Lugar Bipartisan Index scores are only available for two Congresses, these results suggest that Democrat AVF veterans show a greater willingness to engage in bipartisan bill sponsorship and cosponsorship. In both measures of bipartisanship, there are notable differences in the results between pre-AVF and AVF veterans.

Table 1. Average Bipartisan Index Score by Party for Nonveterans and Veterans, U.S. House (Higher Bipartisan Index Scores Indicate Greater Bipartisanship).

Congress	Republicans		Democrats	
	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans
113th (2013–2015)	-.293 (<i>n</i> = 168)	-.078 (<i>n</i> = 55)	-.382 (<i>n</i> = 185)	-.393 (<i>n</i> = 18)
114th (2015–2017)	-.171 (<i>n</i> = 180)	-.099 (<i>n</i> = 57)	-.393 (<i>n</i> = 171)	-.409 (<i>n</i> = 16)

Note. Shading indicates greater bipartisanship among nonveterans than veterans.

Table 2. Average DW-NOMINATE Score by Party for Nonveterans and AVF Veterans, U.S. House (Scores Closer to Zero Indicate Moderate Voting).

Congress	Republicans		Democrats	
	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans
109th (2005–2007)	.423 (<i>n</i> = 175)	.421 (<i>n</i> = 5)	0 AVF veteran Democrats in the 109th congress	
110th (2007–2009)	.438 (<i>n</i> = 154)	.421 (<i>n</i> = 5)	-.372* (<i>n</i> = 203)	-.199* (<i>n</i> = 3)
111th (2009–2011)	.448 (<i>n</i> = 137)	.439 (<i>n</i> = 9)	-.353** (<i>n</i> = 220)	-.203** (<i>n</i> = 6)
112th (2011–2013)	.475 (<i>n</i> = 185)	.418 (<i>n</i> = 26)	-.389 (<i>n</i> = 179)	-.253 (<i>n</i> = 2)
113th (2013–2015)	.491 (<i>n</i> = 176)	.458 (<i>n</i> = 28)	-.382* (<i>n</i> = 185)	-.271* (<i>n</i> = 4)
114th (2015–2017)	.486 (<i>n</i> = 188)	.455 (<i>n</i> = 35)	-.393 (<i>n</i> = 171)	-.324 (<i>n</i> = 6)
115th (2017–2019)	.493 (<i>n</i> = 186)	.498 (<i>n</i> = 37)	-.392 (<i>n</i> = 179)	-.331 (<i>n</i> = 8)

Note. Shading indicates greater bipartisanship among nonveterans than veterans.

*Significant at $p < .05$. **Significant at $p < .01$.

Table 3. Average Bipartisan Index Score by Party for Nonveterans and AVF Veterans, U.S. House (Higher Bipartisan Index Scores Indicate Greater Bipartisanship).

Congress	Republicans		Democrats	
	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans
113th (2013–2015)	-.293 (<i>n</i> = 168)	-.085 (<i>n</i> = 27)	-.262** (<i>n</i> = 175)	.667** (<i>n</i> = 4)
114th (2015–2017)	-.171 (<i>n</i> = 180)	-.098 (<i>n</i> = 34)	-.286* (<i>n</i> = 166)	.330* (<i>n</i> = 6)

*Significant at $p < .05$. **Significant at $p < .01$.

Explaining AVF Veteran Bipartisanship: Possible Spurious Relationships

We next examine three variables to determine whether they contribute to a spurious relationship between AVF veteran status and bipartisanship: age, gender, and partisanship of the district. Regarding age, we check to see whether younger nonveterans

Table 4. Average DW-NOMINATE Score by Party for Nonveterans and pre-AVF Veterans, U.S. House (Scores Closer to Zero Indicate Moderate Voting).

Congress	Republicans		Democrats	
	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans
109th (2005–2007)	.423 (<i>n</i> = 175)	.419 (<i>n</i> = 53)	–.392 (<i>n</i> = 167)	–.366 (<i>n</i> = 33)
110th (2007–2009)	.438 (<i>n</i> = 154)	.445 (<i>n</i> = 45)	–.372 (<i>n</i> = 203)	–.361 (<i>n</i> = 34)
111th (2009–2011)	.448 (<i>n</i> = 137)	.495 (<i>n</i> = 33)	–.353 (<i>n</i> = 220)	–.348 (<i>n</i> = 34)
112th (2011–2013)	.475 (<i>n</i> = 185)	.473 (<i>n</i> = 32)	–.389 (<i>n</i> = 179)	–.443 (<i>n</i> = 19)
113th (2013–2015)	.491 (<i>n</i> = 176)	.465 (<i>n</i> = 30)	–.382 (<i>n</i> = 185)	–.427 (<i>n</i> = 14)
114th (2015–2017)	.486 (<i>n</i> = 188)	.466 (<i>n</i> = 24)	–.393 (<i>n</i> = 171)	–.460 (<i>n</i> = 10)
115th (2017–2019)	.493 (<i>n</i> = 186)	.461 (<i>n</i> = 20)	–.392 (<i>n</i> = 179)	–.428 (<i>n</i> = 8)

Note. Shading indicates greater bipartisanship among nonveterans than veterans. AVF = all-volunteer force.

Table 5. Average Bipartisan Index Score by Party for Nonveterans and pre-AVF Veterans, U.S. House (Higher Bipartisan Index Scores Indicate Greater Bipartisanship).

Congress	Republicans		Democrats	
	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans
113th (2013–2015)	–.293 (<i>n</i> = 168)	–.071 (<i>n</i> = 28)	–.262 (<i>n</i> = 175)	–.403 (<i>n</i> = 11)
114th (2015–2017)	–.171 (<i>n</i> = 180)	–.099 (<i>n</i> = 23)	–.287 (<i>n</i> = 166)	–.266 (<i>n</i> = 9)

Note. Shading indicates greater bipartisanship among nonveterans than veterans. AVF = all-volunteer force.

are also more bipartisan than their older colleagues which would indicate that it is not just AVF veterans, but members from this generation in general, that are more likely to be bipartisan. The results suggest that generational differences may be especially prevalent for Democrats. We refer to members that were too young to register for the draft and do not have military service as AVF nonveterans. From the 109th to 115th Congress, AVF nonveteran Republicans were actually less likely to vote in a more bipartisan manner than their older colleagues in all but one Congress (although none of the results were statistically significant). With pre-AVF nonveteran Democrats, however, AVF nonveterans were more likely to engage in bipartisan voting than pre-AVF nonveterans in each of the seven Congresses at a statistical level of significance.

The results using Bipartisan Index scores also suggest generational differences are especially prevalent for Democrats. The results were mixed for Republicans with pre-AVF nonveterans demonstrating a higher likelihood of engaging in bipartisan bill sponsorship and cosponsorship than their younger colleagues at a statistical level of significance in the 113th Congress. In the 114th Congress, AVF nonveteran Republicans were more likely to be bipartisan, although not at a statistical level of significance. For Democrats, however, AVF nonveterans were more likely to

engage in bipartisan bill sponsorship and cosponsorship at a statistically significant difference in both Congresses.

In order to test whether it is status as a younger veteran or just a younger member in general that leads to bipartisanship, we did an “apple to apples” comparison of AVF veterans to AVF nonveterans. If age is a spurious variable that accounts for bipartisanship, we would expect to see a difference in bipartisanship between AVF veterans and all nonveterans compared to AVF veterans and AVF nonveterans. As Tables 6 and 7 demonstrate, with the exception of one Congress for Republicans, AVF veterans are consistently more bipartisan than their AVF nonveteran counterparts.⁸

While there is no difference in the predicted direction of bipartisanship comparing Tables 2 and 3 (AVF veterans to all nonveterans) and Tables 6 and 7 (AVF veterans to AVF nonveterans), there is a difference in statistical significance. Comparing voting behavior for AVF veterans and AVF nonveterans, there is only one Congress with statistically significant results for Republicans with none for Democrats. The evidence is therefore weak that there is a difference in bipartisan voting between AVF veterans and AVF nonveterans. The results using Bipartisan Index scores are more robust. Both Republican and Democrat AVF veterans in the 113th and 114th Congress are more bipartisan than their AVF nonveteran colleagues with the difference being statistically significant for both parties in the 113th Congress. The results therefore demonstrate that age may contribute to a spurious association between AVF veteran status and bipartisanship.

Despite this evidence of age as important factor that may affect bipartisanship, both comparisons provide some evidence that increasing the presence of AVF veterans in Congress could have some effect on partisanship. For the comparison of AVF veterans to all nonveterans (Tables 2 and 3), the results suggest that AVF Democrats may be more bipartisan across both measures of bipartisanship. The results were statistically significant in three of six Congresses for bipartisan voting and two of two Congresses for bipartisan bill sponsorship/cosponsorship. For the second comparison of AVF veterans to AVF nonveterans (Tables 5 and 6), the evidence was weak for bipartisan voting with one Congress of seven for Republicans as the only statistically significant result. However, for bipartisan bill sponsorship/cosponsorship, there was a statistically significant difference for both parties in the 113th Congress.

The evidence for spuriousness was much weaker for the other two factors we examined, gender and district partisanship. Regarding gender, some scholars cite evidence that women approach their work differently as legislators (Bratton, 2002; Carroll, 2001; Dodson, 2006; Kathlene, 1994; Reingold & Harrell, 2010), thus the association we see between AVF veterans and bipartisanship may be due to an increase in the number of women veterans. We found little variation in the gender diversity of veterans in Congress over this time period with each party containing two or fewer women veterans. We compared the average DW-NOMINATE and Bipartisan Index scores for women Democrat veterans to men Democrat veterans to

Table 6. Average DW-NOMINATE Scores by Party for AVF Veterans and AVF Nonveterans, U.S. House (Scores Closer to Zero Indicate Moderate Voting).

Congress	Republicans		Democrats	
	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans
109th (2005–2007)	.440 (<i>n</i> = 62)	.421 (<i>n</i> = 5)	0 AVF veteran Democrats in the 109th Congress	
110th (2007–2009)	.453 (<i>n</i> = 61)	.421 (<i>n</i> = 5)	−.314 (<i>n</i> = 66)	−.199 (<i>n</i> = 3)
111th (2009–2011)	.463 (<i>n</i> = 62)	.439 (<i>n</i> = 9)	−.295 (<i>n</i> = 81)	−.203 (<i>n</i> = 6)
112th (2011–2013)	.490* (<i>n</i> = 109)	.418* (<i>n</i> = 26)	−.344 (<i>n</i> = 62)	−.253 (<i>n</i> = 2)
113th (2013–2015)	.506 (<i>n</i> = 112)	.458 (<i>n</i> = 28)	−.347 (<i>n</i> = 78)	−.271 (<i>n</i> = 4)
114th (2015–2017)	.484 (<i>n</i> = 128)	.455 (<i>n</i> = 35)	−.366 (<i>n</i> = 74)	−.324 (<i>n</i> = 6)
115th (2015–2019)	.493 (<i>n</i> = 131)	.498 (<i>n</i> = 37)	−.367 (<i>n</i> = 84)	−.331 (<i>n</i> = 8)

*Significant at *p* < .05.
Note. Shading indicates greater bipartisanship among nonveterans than veterans.

Table 7. Average Bipartisan Index Score by Party for AVF Veterans and AVF Nonveterans, U.S. House (Higher Bipartisan Index Scores Indicate Greater Bipartisanship).

Congress	Republicans		Democrats	
	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans
113th (2013–2015)	−.407* (<i>n</i> = 106)	−.085* (<i>n</i> = 27)	−.126* (<i>n</i> = 76)	.667* (<i>n</i> = 4)
114th (2015–2017)	−.153 (<i>n</i> = 120)	−.098 (<i>n</i> = 34)	−.167 (<i>n</i> = 73)	.330 (<i>n</i> = 6)

Note. AVF = all-volunteer force.
*Significant at *p* < .05.

see whether the addition of two women Democrat veterans in the 113th Congress contributed to the statistically significant bipartisanship effects we see in this sample.⁹ We found that the average DW-NOMINATE and Bipartisan Index scores for Democrat women veterans were more bipartisan than Democrat male veterans, but not to a statistically significant degree. This analysis suggests that an increase in the number of women is not responsible for the effects we see between veteran status and bipartisanship, but it does present an interesting finding for future research as more women veterans run for Congress.

Third, we examine whether partisanship of the district influences the results, especially in the case of AVF veteran Democrats since the sample sizes are small for that population in comparison to the others in this study. In short, we check to ensure that it is not just a handful of moderate Democrats that are causing the significant results in bipartisanship that we see for veterans versus nonveterans. One could argue that veteran members exhibit more bipartisan voting behavior

Table 8. Cook Partisan Voting Index for AVF Veteran Democrats in the 110th–111th Congresses.

110			111		
District	Cook PVI	Member	District	Cook PVI	Member
PA 8	D+3	Murphy	PA 8	D+2	Murphy
PA 10	R+9	Carney	MI 9	D+2	Peters
MN 1	R+20	Walz	MN 1	R+1	Walz
			OH 16	R+4	Bocchieri
			NY 29	R+5	Massa
			PA 10	R+8	Carney

Note. AVF = all-volunteer force.

Table 9. Cook Partisan Voting Index for AVF Veteran Democrats in the 112th–115th Congresses.

112			113		
District	Cook PVI	Member	District	Cook PVI	Member
MI 14	D+2	Peters	MI 14	D+29	Peters
MN 1	R+1	Walz	HI 2	D+21	Gabbard
			IL 8	D+8	Duckworth
			MN 1	R+1	Walz

114			115		
District	Cook PVI	Member	District	Cook PVI	Member
HI 2	D+21	Gabbard	MD 4	D+28	Brown
AZ 7	D+16	Gallego	AZ 7	D+23	Gallego
CA 33	D+11	Lieu	CA 20	D+23	Panetta
IL 8	D+8	Duckworth	HI 2	D+19	Gabbard
MA 6	D+4	Moulton	CA 33	D+16	Lieu
MN 1	R+1	Walz	CA 24	D+7	Carbajal
			MA 6	D+6	Moulton
			MN 1	R+5	Walz

Note. AVF = all-volunteer force.

because they represent districts that demand a more centrist approach to legislating. For instance, it is often assumed that veterans are more conservative than nonveterans, especially regarding national security and defense policies which are issues prioritized by Republicans (Hayes, 2008). Therefore, the results we see for AVF Democrat veterans could reflect their status as more conservative Democrats,

representing moderate or conservative-leaning districts, rather than their status as AVF veterans. We find support for this explanation in some, but not all, of the Congresses we examined which suggests that partisanship of the district does not consistently contribute to a spurious association between veteran status and bipartisanship.

We first examine the years where the average DW-NOMINATE score for AVF veteran Democrats indicates significantly more moderate voting behavior than non-veterans (110th–111th Congresses). We define a competitive district according to the Cook PVI metric of a score between D+5 (leans Democrat) and R+5 (leans Republican). Of the nine AVF veteran Democrats that influence the results from these Congresses, six members represented conservative-leaning districts, as measured by the Cook PVI.

However, when evaluating the 112th–115th Congresses, 14 of the 20 AVF veteran Democrats represented solid, liberal-leaning congressional districts. District partisanship therefore does not seem to be a cause for the statistically significant results we see for AVF Democrat veterans in the 113th Congress (statistically significant difference in DW-NOMINATE and Bipartisan Index scores) and the 114th Congress (statistically significant difference in Bipartisan Index scores).

As a result, we cannot determine with certainty or consistency whether the partisan makeup of a district explains the significant finding of bipartisanship in AVF Democrat veterans.

Additionally, we go beyond exploring the impact of partisan districts on the discrete, AVF veteran Democrat population to determine what correlation, if any, exists between veteran bipartisanship and the partisan nature of districts in the aggregate. If a strong correlation exists, one could argue that any perceived bipartisan behavior by veteran members is linked to the partisan nature of district constituencies. In order to characterize the partisanship of districts, we use the Cook PVI for the 106th–115th Congressional Sessions.¹⁰ We assume veterans representing competitive districts are more likely to legislate in a bipartisan manner to appeal to an equally divided constituency. We compare the number of veterans representing competitive districts to the average DW-NOMINATE score for veteran representatives across the 106th–115th Congresses to determine any correlation. The result is a fairly weak, negative correlation that is not statistically significant (Pearson correlation: $r = .37$, $p = .29$). In the absence of a statistically significant correlation, we conclude that in the aggregate, the partisan nature of veteran members' districts does not fully explain veteran tendency toward bipartisan behavior. Figure 7 further demonstrates that there is not a clear correlation between the bipartisan voting behavior of AVF veterans and the change in the number of competitive districts.

To summarize, there is little evidence that gender or district partisanship leads to a spurious association between AVF veteran status and bipartisanship, but age does have an effect on this relationship. When comparing AVF veterans to all nonveterans, the results indicate Democrat AVF veterans are more likely to be bipartisan in both voting and bill sponsorship/cosponsorship, although the evidence for bill

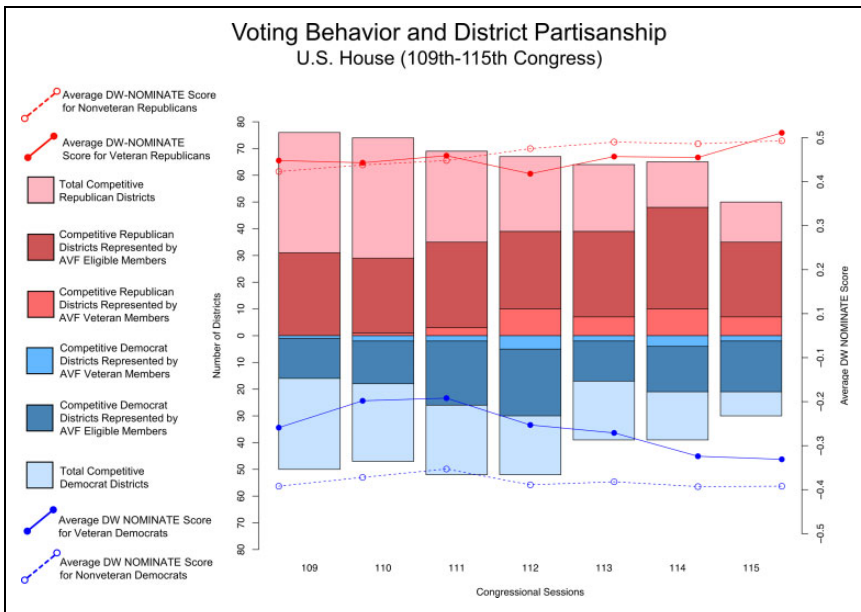


Figure 7. Competitive districts and DW-NOMINATE scores.

sponsorship/cosponsorship is much more convincing. Controlling for age in the comparison of AVF veterans to AVF nonveterans, there is some evidence that AVF veterans engage in more bipartisan bill sponsorship/cosponsorship, but this evidence is modest since the results are statistically significant in only half of the cases examined. While we are careful not to overstate our claims based on the small sample sizes of AVF veterans and the mixed nature of the results, we also suggest that these findings should not be dismissed due to the differences we note.

Explaining AVF Veteran Bipartisanship: Causal Explanations

What should we make of the generational differences between veterans regarding their likelihood to be more bipartisan? While these measures show there are some differences between AVF and older veterans regarding bipartisan behavior, they do little to tell us why these differences exist. There is also little academic literature that describes possible causal explanations for why veterans may be more bipartisan than nonveterans which we observe in some Congresses. We suggest two possible causal explanations for why veterans may be more bipartisan than their nonveteran colleagues that we think are deserving of future research: nonpartisan socialization and institutional loyalty.

First, previous research finds that the opinions of civilian elites that are military veterans correspond closely with views of active duty military officers, suggesting

that military service is a powerful agent of socialization that shapes the attitudes of veterans (Feaver & Gelpi, 2004; Gelpi & Feaver, 2002). Since nonpartisanship is a long-standing tradition of military service (Department of the Army ADRP 1, 2015; Matthews, 2002), veteran legislators may be more likely to display nonpartisanship than nonveterans due to the effect of military service on their attitudes toward partisanship. Although studies demonstrate there is an increase in partisan identification among military officers (Golby, Cohn, & Feaver, 2016; Holsti, 1998), we stress there is a difference in partisan identification and partisan behavior. Urban (2017) finds some support for our suggestion that nonpartisan socialization is a plausible area for future study. She found that National Defense University (NDU) students (field grade officers) reported lower incidents of inappropriate comments against elected officials than West Point cadets to a statistically significant degree. She suggests this difference may be because of greater exposure to norms of nonpartisan behavior through professional military education and applicable regulations for the NDU students. While much more research is needed on the partisan behavior of active duty servicemembers over time, it is clear that unlike most of their civilian counterparts, military servicemembers face institutional constraints on their ability to engage in partisan activity. Since nonpartisanship was more fully institutionalized into the professional military education of AVF veterans,¹¹ nonpartisan socialization may account for the generational differences we observe.

Closely related to nonpartisan socialization is an explanation we term institutional loyalty that has roots in how these generations view the relationship between the soldier and the state. While arguably Huntington's conception of objective control is still prevalent today (Golby, 2017),¹² it especially shaped the understanding of the relationship between the uniformed professional and the state for military leaders born early in the baby boomer generation. The foundation of this relationship is based upon a "natural division of labor" (Huntington, 1957, p. 70) in which military professionals recognize the limits of their professional expertise but likewise enjoy significant autonomy in military operations. The early baby boomer generation grew up and practiced their military craft within this natural division of labor, instilling a sense of loyalty to the military institution and eschewing the complexities of politics. It is conceivable this sense of separate spheres carried over to service as a legislator for veterans of this generation whereby loyalty to institutions of authority, in this case the political party, served as guideposts for acceptable behavior.

The substantial scholarship regarding an erosion of civilian control of the military (Feaver, 1996; Kohn, 2002; Weigley, 1993) points out the problems in Huntington's theory of objective control as interactions between the military and civilian superiors are more frequent and complex than he makes them out to be (Davidson, 2013; Janowitz, 1960; Strachan, 2013). "Born" into the profession of arms during new times of growing complexities in the character, nature, and conduct of modern warfare, Gen-Xers and to a greater extent millennials experienced a learning and mentoring more critically aware of the increased blurring of lines between matters of

the military from those of the political (Matthews, 2002). The more nuanced education and practice of the military's role in politics informed a more complex understanding of loyalty for this generation of soldiers in which the terrain of what is acceptably a military versus a political sphere is up for debate.

It is plausible that this more subjective understanding of civil–military relations informed the loyalties of younger veterans as legislators. As opposed to earlier generations of veterans, the loyalties of younger generations are more ideational than institutional, thus commitments to party cues compete with other loyalties that manifest in greater bipartisan behavior in this generation. This explanation may be too simple for what is likely a complex set of variables that influences an AVF veteran's penchant for bipartisan behavior, but the suggestion here is that it should serve as a starting point for further analysis rather than a definitive reason for the generational differences observed in veteran bipartisanship.

Additional scholarship within these two possible causal explanations may also help explain the differences we observe in the bipartisan behavior of veterans in each party. The results for both parties were sensitive to age as the comparison between Tables 2 and 3 as well as Tables 6 and 7 indicates, but this was especially the case for the voting behavior of Democrats. Although the differences between AVF Democrat veterans and nonveterans are no longer statistically significant for voting when controlling for age, the results in each Congress are in the predicted direction. While these findings are consistent with other studies that establish some empirical support for the proposition that Democrat veterans are more moderate than Democrat nonveterans (Burbach, 2018; Dempsey, 2009), political ideology may not fully explain the difference in bipartisan behavior we observe. Our research demonstrates that there is little difference between the district partisanship of veterans and nonveterans, so we infer the differences we see between the parties may lie within the relationship of the parties to their members. We suggest that additional research should focus on explanations within the interaction of the parties with their members to help explain the differences noted in this study.

While these results lend some support to efforts to increase bipartisanship by electing more veterans to public office, two points of caution are in order. First, although we tested for the possibility of age, gender, and partisanship of the district influencing both veteran status and bipartisanship, the possibility exists that there are other antecedent conditions that may lead a person in the post-Vietnam generation to volunteer for military service and also engage in bipartisan behavior. If some antecedent condition such as a high level of prosocial motivation leads to both veteran status and bipartisanship, we may see similar effects on bipartisan behavior from veterans of other national service organizations that share this trait. This caution is especially important since veterans provide a compelling narrative as a solution to partisanship in Congress because of their high levels of public trust (Kennedy, 2016) and demonstrated self-sacrifice by committing to military service.

Second, the results for AVF veteran bipartisan behavior frequently rest on small sample sizes, especially for Democrats. Small sample sizes can provide misleading

results (Cohen, 1962), thus further assessment of the possible causal reasons explanations between veteran status and bipartisanship should build upon the initial findings in this study. Bearing these cautions in mind, the results do provide some modest evidence that electing AVF veterans may influence partisan behavior. This article concludes with other implications of increasing veteran presence in Congress by encouraging more veterans to seek elected office.

Implications of Increasing Veteran Presence in Congress

We focus on two implications of increasing veteran representation in Congress, potential effects on civil–military relations and possible consequences for the representativeness of Congress along other dimensions. Regarding civil–military relations, one concern is that active recruitment of veteran candidates for Congress may further increase the perception among the public that military officers are partisan figures. Recruiting veterans to run for Congress will undoubtedly involve highlighting the veteran candidate’s record while in uniform as evidence of fitness for public office. Such activity is likely to increase the recent trend of retired general officers engaging in partisan activity by endorsing candidates (Golby, Dropp, & Feaver, 2012) as veterans look to burnish their credentials through endorsements from other military leaders. The effect of more veterans campaigning for office may therefore contribute to a perception of a more politically active military. However, since our analysis points to the possibility that AVF veterans may be less partisan in their actual legislative behavior, an increase in activity of veterans in electoral politics may result instead in public perception of a politically informed but less partisan military.

Understanding the effects of increased veteran participation in electoral politics on civil–military relations should also account for how such activity would influence the interactions of active duty military servicemembers with political parties. Most military officers are active on social media and not surprisingly report that a large portion of their social media network are friends associated with the military (Urban, 2017). As veterans in these networks actively seek elective office, the potential exists for greater exposure to partisan politics through sharing of social media posts related to these campaigns. While servicemembers are prohibited from publicly endorsing a political party (Department of Defense Directive 1344.10, 2008), this regulation is difficult to enforce in the realm of social media where the line between public and private expressions is blurred. Public affairs guidance in recent elections stipulated that if a person’s social media profile enables them to be identified as an active duty servicemember, they should include the disclaimer that their views are those as an individual and not as a member of the Department of Defense (DoD) (Department of Defense General Counsel, 2016). This guidance is rarely followed (Urban, 2017), thus an increase in the number of veterans campaigning for office is likely to coincide with an increased

identification of servicemembers with candidates of political parties, at least on social media.

As agents of the federal government, active duty servicemembers should remain knowledgeable of political issues to inform their decisions (Babcock-Lumish, 2013). However, equally important is the norm for active duty officers to avoid active involvement with political parties. Remaining knowledgeable about politics while not participating in politics is a tough balancing act (Liebert & Golby, 2017), but there is strong evidence that avoiding partisan identification for military officers leads to less biased professional judgment. Party identification is a consistent predictor of political attitudes and viewpoints (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Converse, 1964; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002), and recent research demonstrates that party identification shapes the political views of military officers in similar ways to civilians (Golby et al., 2016). As agents charged with providing military advice to civilian superiors, increasing partisan activity by military officers carries the potential of biasing their judgment in accordance with partisan preferences. However, our study does suggest that AVF veterans may hold a more nuanced view of loyalty to party than pre-AVF veterans, a point that deserves further examination to understand the effects of increased veteran representation in Congress on civil–military relations.

Secondly, increasing veteran presence in Congress carries possible implications for the representativeness of Congress as an institution. If the electorate is as polarized as some argue (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008), then electing veterans that are willing to engage in bipartisanship would not be favorable for constituents from the standpoint of a delegate view of representation that holds members vote in line with their constituents' views (McCrone & Kuklinski, 1979). However, members may see themselves as trustees in which they vote for what they believe is in the best interests of their constituents, weighing other factors to include personal convictions, the nation's well-being, the party's position, and the position of the president in order to make decisions (Davidson, Oleszek, Lee, & Schickler, 2016).

Research demonstrates that legislators may assume very different styles of representation based on "the nature of the issue at hand, the availability of the information necessary for a decision, and the intensity of preference of the people concerned about the issue" (Cavanagh, 1982, p. 124). There is no overarching method by which to describe a member's representational style (Miller & Stokes, 1963) as legislators may employ different forms of representation simultaneously on different policy issues (Jordan et al., 2017). As a result, regardless of how representative Congress is to the constituents they represent, nearly all members of Congress are able to identify times during their career where they issued a "conscience" vote (Davidson et al., 2016).

While we think that the delegate view of representation is an important consideration, based on the scholarship concerning representation, we consider the implications for the representativeness of Congress of increasing veteran presence to be much less significant than the potential effects on civil–military relations. The likely

effects of increasing veteran presence in Congress on public perceptions of military partisanship and the partisan leanings of active duty servicemembers carry important implications for civil–military relations. These effects reinforce the importance of asserting nonpartisan norms within the military to maintain a healthy state of civil–military relations.

Concluding Thoughts: Past as Prologue?

As the United States entered the second half of the 20th century, Congress featured a significant number of legislators that would reach across the aisle and engage in bipartisan behavior. This period also featured substantial numbers of veterans. Could the past be prologue if more veterans seek public office and serve in Congress? The results of this analysis of 12 recent Congresses demonstrate the answer is not so simple. Veterans appear to be more bipartisan than their nonveteran colleagues but not to a degree that the results rise to a statistical level of significance that enables us to rule out that these observed differences are due to chance or circumstance. The results are more supportive for AVF Democrats that demonstrate a higher likelihood of engaging in bipartisan behavior than their nonveteran colleagues. However, when controlling for age, the results suggest that there is not a significant difference between the voting behavior of veterans and nonveterans in either party, but there is some modest evidence that AVF veterans of both parties may be more likely to engage in bipartisan bill sponsorship/cosponsorship.

The results therefore provide some support for the efforts of organizations that seek to stem the tide of partisanship in Congress by increasing the representation of veterans. However, they are not overwhelming and serve as initial evidence of an association between veterans and bipartisanship rather than the final word on this issue. An increase in the number of veterans running for public office is likely to have some effects on the state of civil–military relations. The potential benefits of increasing bipartisanship in Congress should therefore be weighed against the possible politicization, in both perception and reality, of the active duty ranks.

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Notes

1. We chose these Congresses because the Lugar Bipartisan Index, a key measure of bipartisanship in this study, begins with data from the 104th Congress (1995–1997). While DW-NOMINATE data are available for earlier Congresses, we focused on the 104th

Congress and later for three reasons: (1) we sought to include two measures of bipartisanship over the same time period, (2) generational factors were an important factor in our analysis and there are few post-Vietnam veterans in earlier Congresses, and (3) since the norms of Congress change over time, there may be limited external validity when applying findings from earlier Congresses to today. Due to small sample sizes in the Senate, we focused on the House for this analysis. In some Congresses, the Lugar Bipartisan Index resulted in a smaller sample size than the DW-NOMINATE scores. This is because the Lugar Bipartisan Index excludes members who have served partial terms of less than 10 months in a full Congress, does not score the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House, and excludes members who have sponsored fewer than three qualifying bills over the course of a full Congress.

2. Examples of such initiatives include the work of Political Action Committees to include With Honor (<https://www.withhonor.org>), VoteVets (<http://www.votevets.org>), and New Politics (<http://www.newpolitics.org>) whose core missions focus on identifying and supporting veterans to run for public office. With Honor and VoteVets focus specifically on supporting veterans running for Congress while New Politics supports veterans and alumni of national service programs like AmeriCorps or the Peace Corps.
3. Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations defines a veteran as “a person who served in the active military, naval or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable” (see 38 C.F.R. § 3.1 2017). Keeping with this definition, this study defines a veteran as a person with any amount of service, in any branch or component of the U. S. Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard). Recognizing that military service experiences are not all the same, veterans were further categorized by service on active duty or service in a designated combat zone. Neither of these additional classifications affected the results.
4. The DW-NOMINATE (Dynamic Weighted NOMINAI Three-step Estimation) procedure was developed by Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal to represent the voting behavior of legislators on a spatial map.
5. For a good discussion on causality in the social sciences, see Marini and Singer (1988). One could expect that given other factors such as a legislator’s personal history that he or she may be less likely to be bipartisan on any number of issues. Instead of testing whether veteran status causes bipartisanship, we examine whether veteran status and bipartisanship covary, or in other words, whether these two variables frequently appear together to the extent that an association is not due to chance.
6. The Pew Research Center defines the baby boomer generation with birthdates from 1946 to 1964 and Generation X defined with birthdates from 1965 to 1980.
7. For Tables 2 and 3, we compare all-volunteer force (AVF) veterans to all nonveterans to first identify any generational differences among the veteran population in Congress. Due to small samples sizes for AVF veterans in the 104th through 108th Congress, we dropped these observations from this analysis.
8. For Tables 6 and 7, we dropped all members eligible for service in the pre-AVF time period from the sample. For example, in the 110th Congress, we dropped all members aged 52 and over from the sample. This allowed us to compare AVF veterans to their

nonveteran counterparts in the same age-group. For the 111th Congress, we dropped all members aged 54 and over from the sample and so on to stay consistent with our definition of an AVF veteran.

9. In the 104th–115th Congress, each Congress contained one woman Republican veteran with the exception of the 104th, 111th, and 113th Congresses that had zero and the 107th Congress which had two. For Democrats, the 113th and 114th Congresses had two women veterans and the 115th had one. The 104th–112th Congresses had zero Democrat women veterans.
10. We excluded the 104th and 105th Congress since Cook Partisan Voter Index (PVI) data were not available for these Congresses.
11. Examples include the publication and training on Department of Defense Directive 1344. 10 (originally published in 1969 and updated in 1970, 1972, 1975, and 1986; republished in 1990 and further updated in 1994, 2000, 2004, and 2008) outlining guidelines for political activities of servicemembers, regulatory and administrative actions in the wake of the Iran-Contra Report (Muskie, Rush, & Thompson, 1986), and changes to service academy curriculums to include the addition of American government as a core course (Forsythe & Keith, 2004).
12. Army Regulations perpetuate the concept of objective control in defining the Army as a profession: “Professions are therefore granted significant autonomy and discretion in their practice of expertise on behalf of the society” (Department of the Army ADRP 1, 2015, p. 1).

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