

# Domestic Distributional Roots of National Interest

## Online Appendix

Soyoung Lee

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## A Study 1 Supplementary Analyses

### A.1 Regression Results for Figure 2

#### A.1.1 Main Regression Table for Figure 2

Table A1

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Support Military Use	Proud to Have	Unhappy to Lose	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Beneficiary: Alaskan Residents	-0.448*** (0.079)	-0.372*** (0.083)	-0.365*** (0.087)	-0.219** (0.086)	-0.099 (0.081)	-0.200** (0.082)
Beneficiary: Occidental Oil	-0.758*** (0.083)	-0.706*** (0.086)	-0.643*** (0.086)	-0.454*** (0.086)	-0.211*** (0.080)	-0.450*** (0.080)
Economic Benefit	0.156** (0.068)	0.110 (0.071)	0.204*** (0.072)	0.111 (0.072)	0.087 (0.067)	0.053 (0.067)
Constant	4.026*** (0.062)	3.837*** (0.065)	3.295*** (0.069)	3.264*** (0.068)	3.801*** (0.064)	2.565*** (0.065)
Observations	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196
R <sup>2</sup>	0.073	0.058	0.053	0.026	0.007	0.027

Note: Coefficients are estimated using ordinary least squares. Robust standard errors in parentheses.  
\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A1 presents regression estimates for each national interest dependent variable. The explanatory variables are *Benefit Diffuseness* and *Benefit Type*, with the baseline category for comparison being "All Americans" for the benefit diffuseness condition and "Security Benefit" for the benefit type condition. This means that the regression coefficients represent how the value of the dependent variable changes relative to when all Americans benefit, and when security benefits were provided. As seen in Figure 2, support declines for all dependent variables as the beneficiaries become more concentrated. It is also worth noting that respondents reacted more positively to the economic benefits condition in this survey scenario. While the effect of economic benefit would depend on the exact survey scenario and thus should be interpreted with caution, the results do show that economic benefits are not always considered inherently less important than security benefits.

### A.1.2 Regression Table for Figure 2 (with covariates)

Table A2

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Support Military Use	Proud to Have	Unhappy to Lose	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Alaskan Residents	-0.427*** (0.085)	-0.344*** (0.088)	-0.296*** (0.095)	-0.215** (0.089)	-0.152 (0.095)	-0.246*** (0.086)
Occidental Oil	-0.716*** (0.092)	-0.664*** (0.093)	-0.585*** (0.097)	-0.429*** (0.089)	-0.194** (0.089)	-0.403*** (0.081)
Economic Benefit	0.070 (0.075)	0.062 (0.076)	0.182** (0.080)	0.042 (0.074)	0.026 (0.076)	0.020 (0.069)
pid: Indep	0.082 (0.100)	0.020 (0.101)	-0.157 (0.102)	-0.199** (0.097)	0.007 (0.102)	-0.051 (0.091)
pid: Rep	-0.026 (0.088)	-0.024 (0.090)	-0.064 (0.098)	-0.137 (0.091)	-0.108 (0.090)	-0.0002 (0.084)
Income	0.006 (0.026)	-0.002 (0.026)	-0.005 (0.027)	0.026 (0.025)	0.058** (0.025)	0.084*** (0.024)
College	0.191** (0.088)	0.150* (0.089)	0.096 (0.089)	0.154* (0.082)	0.016 (0.084)	0.168** (0.080)
Female	-0.192** (0.084)	-0.186** (0.082)	-0.183** (0.085)	-0.197** (0.078)	-0.062 (0.082)	-0.230*** (0.079)
Russia Friendly	-0.026 (0.130)	-0.159 (0.135)	-0.333** (0.141)	0.080 (0.127)	-0.310** (0.131)	0.275** (0.118)
Militant	0.356*** (0.050)	0.450*** (0.049)	0.594*** (0.047)	0.547*** (0.049)	0.237*** (0.047)	0.392*** (0.041)
Nationalist	0.233*** (0.060)	0.182*** (0.059)	0.071 (0.055)	0.281*** (0.054)	0.215*** (0.055)	0.241*** (0.048)
Constant	2.107*** (0.252)	1.933*** (0.251)	1.498*** (0.247)	0.607*** (0.217)	2.369*** (0.229)	0.235 (0.198)
Observations	830	830	830	830	830	830
R <sup>2</sup>	0.255	0.267	0.284	0.348	0.126	0.314

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

The survey was conducted on 1196 respondents, but the full model is estimated on 830 respondents due to some missing data on the demographics or attitudes of the participants. The baseline category for Beneficiaries is "All Americans", and "Security Benefits" for Benefit Type. Robust standard errors are shown in parentheses.

### A.1.3 Regression Table for Figure 2 (passed attention check)

Table A3

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Support Military Use	Proud to Have	Unhappy to Lose	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Alaskan Residents	-0.591*** (0.090)	-0.499*** (0.094)	-0.411*** (0.100)	-0.218** (0.098)	-0.082 (0.090)	-0.308*** (0.094)
Occidental Oil	-0.863*** (0.093)	-0.819*** (0.097)	-0.682*** (0.097)	-0.471*** (0.097)	-0.206** (0.090)	-0.517*** (0.089)
Economic Benefit	0.218*** (0.078)	0.133* (0.080)	0.276*** (0.081)	0.121 (0.081)	0.115 (0.075)	0.055 (0.075)
Constant	4.044*** (0.069)	3.867*** (0.073)	3.183*** (0.079)	3.178*** (0.075)	3.811*** (0.072)	2.583*** (0.073)
Observations	928	928	928	928	928	928
R <sup>2</sup>	0.098	0.078	0.064	0.028	0.009	0.036

Robust SEs \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Regression results run only on the sample who passed attention checks. As expected, results are stronger in the hypothesized direction.

### A.1.4 Regression Table for Figure 2 (Baseline Condition: Alaskan Residents)

Table A4

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Support Military Use	Proud to Have	Unhappy to Lose	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
All Americans	0.448*** (0.079)	0.372*** (0.083)	0.365*** (0.087)	0.219** (0.086)	0.099 (0.081)	0.200** (0.082)
Occidental Oil	-0.311*** (0.093)	-0.335*** (0.094)	-0.278*** (0.094)	-0.235** (0.093)	-0.112 (0.086)	-0.250*** (0.084)
Economic Benefit	0.156** (0.068)	0.110 (0.071)	0.204*** (0.072)	0.111 (0.072)	0.087 (0.067)	0.053 (0.067)
Constant	3.579*** (0.072)	3.465*** (0.074)	2.930*** (0.075)	3.045*** (0.075)	3.703*** (0.071)	2.365*** (0.069)
Observations	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196
R <sup>2</sup>	0.073	0.058	0.053	0.026	0.007	0.027

Robust SEs \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Baseline condition is Alaskan Residents and Security Benefits. The table shows that the three conditions are significantly different for all six DVs at  $p < 0.05$ , except for "Unhappy to Lose". Speculated reason for why is elaborated in Footnote 14 of the main text.

## A.2 Mediation Analysis for Survey 1

### A.2.1 Multiple Mediation Analysis

The theory predicted that people would prefer issues providing diffuse benefits for both reasons of self-interest and normative appropriateness. While the two reasons are not mutually exclusive, I examine if one reason has a stronger effect on people's willingness to escalate military conflict over the issue than others using multiple mediation analysis.

To investigate how much of the effect of benefit concentration is explained through each of the mediators, I first estimate the effect of *Benefit Concentration* (T) on each of mediator. The mediators were measured as respondents' answers to "Taking control of Seal Island benefits me personally" (*Benefit Me*: Self-interest mediator) and "Taking control of Seal Island benefits the American people" (*Benefits Americans*: Normative mediator) respectively. The regression coefficient of this equation is noted in the second column of Tables A5-6 as  $\alpha$ .<sup>1</sup>

Next, I estimate the effect of the mediators on the dependent variables: *National Interest* and *Support Military Use*. The mediators are tested jointly rather than one at a time in order to avoid bias arising from certain pathways from being counted twice when the mediators are not independent of another (VanDerWeele & Vansteelandt 2013). Since the mediators are not randomized, I also control of other variables (party identification, income, education, gender) that can affect the estimated relationship between the mediators and support for military escalation in this estimation stage. The regression coefficient of the second stage regression is noted in the third column of the tables as  $\beta$ . Finally, I combine the results of the two regressions to calculate how much of *Benefit Concentration*'s effect is transmitted through each of the mediators. The mediation effect for each mediator is calculated as the product of  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  (Mascha *et al.* 2013).

Both *Benefit Me* and *Benefit Americans* are shown to be significant mediators in the two tables. This result indicates that the negative effect of *Benefit Concentration* (T) on the dependent variables are explained by both rational and normative mechanisms. However, *Benefit Americans* has a stronger mediating effect ( $\alpha \times \beta$ ) compared to *Benefit Me* in both cases, providing some suggestive evidence that the normative mechanism may play a bigger role than concerns of self interest.

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<sup>1</sup>The confidence intervals were calculated using bootstrap methods from `lavaan` R. I use the Structural Equation Modeling approach to estimate mediation effect because of its convenience in comparing mediators when considered jointly, but results are identical when using the Causal Inference framework.

Table A5: Mediation Effect of Mediators (DV: National Interest)

Mediator	T → M Effect of Concentration on Mediator ( $\alpha$ )	M → Y Effect of Mediator on National Interest ( $\beta$ )	Mediation Effect $\alpha \times \beta$
Benefit Americans	-0.976*** (0.071)	0.537*** (0.033)	-0.525*** (0.050)
Benefit Me	-1.072*** (0.079)	0.114*** (0.029)	-0.122*** (0.033)
-----			
Direct Effect of Benefit Concentration			0.086 (0.057)
Total Effect (Direct + Mediated)			-0.561*** (0.061)
Difference in Mediation Effect Size			0.402*** (0.066)

\* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . Treatment is Benefit Concentration; Mediators are Benefit Americans and Benefit Me, each proxying for the normative and rational mediators; DV is National Interest. Negative Total Effect indicates that Benefit Concentration, on the whole, has a negative effect on the DV. The last column demonstrates the mediation effect of each mediator, and shows that both mediators have significant explanatory power. The last row demonstrates difference in the mediation effect size of the two mediators and whether the difference is statistically significant.

Table A6: Mediation Effect of Mediators (DV: Support Military Use)

Mediator	T → M Effect of Concentration on Mediator ( $\alpha$ )	M → Y Effect of Mediator on Military Support ( $\beta$ )	Mediation Effect $\alpha \times \beta$
Benefit Americans	-0.976*** (0.071)	0.642*** (0.056)	-0.626*** (0.071)
Benefit Me	-1.072*** (0.079)	0.386*** (0.054)	-0.414*** (0.067)
-----			
Direct Effect of Benefit Concentration			0.107 0.112
Total Effect (Direct + Mediated)			-0.934*** (0.121)
Difference in Mediation Effect Size			0.212* (0.111)

\* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . Treatment is Benefit Concentration; Mediators are Benefit Americans and Benefit Me, each proxying for the normative and rational mediators; DV is Support for Military Use. Negative Total Effect indicates that Benefit Concentration, on the whole, has a negative effect on the DV. The last column demonstrates the mediation effect of each mediator, and shows that both mediators have significant explanatory power. The last row demonstrates difference in the mediation effect size of the two mediators and whether the difference is statistically significant.

## A.2.2 Open-Ended Responses

Table A7 shows some selected open-ended responses to “Please type a few sentences about why you [approve/disapprove/neither approve nor disapprove] of a using the U.S. military to take control of Seal Island.” The most common reason for approval in the All Americans condition was that everyone in the U.S. was expected to benefit, while the most common reason for disapproval in the Alaskan Residents and Occidental Oil conditions were that only a selected few would benefit especially when the costs were diffuse. The second most common reason for disapproval was a normative concern against using the military to benefit only a small part of the population. "Benefit(s)" was also the most commonly used word in the entire open-ended responses (used 119 times).

Table A7: Open-Ended Responses for Military Operation Approval or Disapproval

<b>Beneficiary: All Americans</b>
Increase security of usa citizen
It. Is in the. Benefit. Of. All Americans
Because it benefits americans
It will be of benefit to all Americans as a whole
This will prove to be really beneficial to the American citizens as a whole by providing more revenue from the reduced gas price in the long run
Because it will benefit national security and to have more control over pacific ocean
Economic benefit to everyone is most beneficial.
Economic benefits for all Americans
It can lead to providing security for all Americans
Think in long run it will benefit the United States
<b>Beneficiary: Alaskan residents</b>
Because its loss with the USA with 10,000 jobs and economic but it helps the Alaska
Because it only helps Alaska!
because only Alaska resident get the benefits but not for all American
This is because the cost comes on all Americans but the benefits goes to only Alaskans
Does not benefit enough Americans
Economic cost outweighs benefits to Alaskans only.
I don't think the benefit outweighs the outcome for all Americans
The Alaskans get more than the majority of Americans
Military should be used for things that are beneficial to at least most or all of Americans, – not just one set of people.
If it does not benefit all US states, then US military is out of the question.
<b>Beneficiary: Oil companies</b>
Because it will only benefit the people working in the oil region and it would be a disaster for the remaining of americans
Because it would cost too much and only benefit employees of one company
Because it would only benefit a small percentage of the US population and harm the majority
You would only be helping one group of people while all others would suffer the consequences.
It's to benefit an oil company at the expense of other Americans
The entire nation would suffer as a result, and the only people benefit work for the oil company.
The loss of money and jobs for many is not worth the profit and jobs of a few.
I believe our military should be used to benefit all Americans, not just making pnr company and its employees richer.
I don't care for using military action. The only benefactor would be big oil.
The military should not be used to benefit a private company
We should only use military force when it is beneficial to "ALL" americans

### A.3 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

Diffuse Benefits is a binary variable, coded as 1 if Beneficiary Condition is "All Americans" and 0 if Beneficiaries are Alaskan Residents or Employees of Occidental Oil. The following tables examine whether there are heterogeneous effects by Party ID or Political Ideology. We see that the interaction term is rarely significant and that respondents' preference for Diffuse Benefits is strongly positive, even if individual characteristics may influence respondents' baseline support for the dependent variables.

#### A.3.1 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects by Party ID

Table A8

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Support Military Use	Proud to Have	Unhappy to Lose	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Diffuse Benefits	0.631*** (0.112)	0.581*** (0.116)	0.439*** (0.120)	0.292** (0.119)	0.108 (0.111)	0.261** (0.109)
PID: Rep	0.421*** (0.101)	0.428*** (0.104)	0.427*** (0.108)	0.470*** (0.107)	0.136 (0.100)	0.444*** (0.098)
Economic Benefits	0.126 (0.080)	0.066 (0.082)	0.132 (0.085)	0.024 (0.084)	0.109 (0.079)	0.014 (0.077)
Diffuse×PID Rep	-0.111 (0.165)	-0.098 (0.169)	-0.026 (0.176)	-0.003 (0.174)	0.063 (0.163)	0.128 (0.160)
Constant	3.303*** (0.080)	3.184*** (0.082)	2.731*** (0.085)	2.873*** (0.084)	3.623*** (0.079)	2.159*** (0.077)
Observations	889	889	889	889	889	889
R <sup>2</sup>	0.079	0.067	0.054	0.045	0.010	0.060

*Note: Robust SEs*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

For simplicity of presenting and understanding interaction terms, Party ID is shown as a binary variable (0 if Democrats, 1 if Republican). Results however are the same (no heterogeneous treatment by party; significant preference for diffuse benefits) when Independents and Others are included.

#### A.3.2 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects by Political Ideology

Political ideology is measured on a 5-point scale from Liberal (1) to Conservative (5) based on respondents' answers to the question "Which of the following best describes your political views?"



Table A9

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Support Military Use	Proud to Have	Unhappy to Lose	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Diffuse Benefits	0.696*** (0.168)	0.679*** (0.173)	0.478*** (0.176)	0.663*** (0.175)	0.180 (0.163)	0.321** (0.163)
Pol Ideology	0.095*** (0.031)	0.104*** (0.032)	0.091*** (0.032)	0.146*** (0.032)	0.090*** (0.030)	0.105*** (0.030)
Economic Benefits	0.149** (0.069)	0.101 (0.071)	0.197*** (0.072)	0.095 (0.071)	0.078 (0.067)	0.044 (0.067)
Diffuse×PolID	-0.026 (0.051)	-0.041 (0.052)	0.014 (0.053)	-0.104** (0.053)	-0.005 (0.049)	0.007 (0.049)
Constant	3.129*** (0.108)	2.978*** (0.111)	2.509*** (0.112)	2.484*** (0.112)	3.373*** (0.104)	1.919*** (0.105)
Observations	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196
R <sup>2</sup>	0.073	0.057	0.057	0.037	0.017	0.036

Robust SEs \*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

## A.4 Balance Tests for Study 1

Table A10: Balance Tests for Study 1

Treatment Condition Variable	Oil Company-Security			Oil Company-Economic			Alaskans-Security			Alaskans-Economic			Americans-Security			Americans-Economic			Test
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Gender	205	0.52	0.5	188	0.5	0.5	178	0.56	0.5	178	0.52	0.5	210	0.5	0.5	231	0.51	0.5	F= 0.315
Age	206	45.05	16.6	188	44.46	17.09	180	44.2	17.62	178	44.22	16.78	212	45.4	16.78	232	44.62	16.61	F= 0.159
Party ID	206			188			180			178			212			232			X2= 10.438
.. Democrat	82	40%		81	43%		66	37%		66	37%		86	41%		94	41%		
.. Independent	47	23%		42	22%		52	29%		36	20%		48	23%		54	23%		
.. Other	7	3%		4	2%		3	2%		7	4%		3	1%		4	2%		
.. Republican	70	34%		61	32%		59	33%		69	39%		75	35%		80	34%		
Ideology	206			188			180			178			212			232			X2= 21.53
.. Conservative	40	19%		41	22%		31	17%		47	26%		47	22%		46	20%		
.. Liberal	41	20%		37	20%		37	21%		29	16%		45	21%		50	22%		
.. Neither lib. nor con.	65	32%		49	26%		51	28%		42	24%		67	32%		79	34%		
.. Slightly conservative	27	13%		32	17%		30	17%		35	20%		23	11%		25	11%		
.. Slightly liberal	33	16%		29	15%		31	17%		25	14%		30	14%		32	14%		
College	206	0.44	0.5	188	0.47	0.5	180	0.47	0.5	178	0.54	0.5	212	0.47	0.5	232	0.45	0.5	F= 0.908
White	206	0.75	0.43	188	0.74	0.44	180	0.77	0.42	178	0.78	0.41	212	0.79	0.41	232	0.76	0.43	F= 0.402
Black	206	0.11	0.32	188	0.15	0.36	180	0.12	0.32	178	0.13	0.34	212	0.1	0.31	232	0.14	0.35	F= 0.695
Asian	206	0.06	0.24	188	0.05	0.21	180	0.05	0.22	178	0.03	0.18	212	0.06	0.24	232	0.05	0.22	F= 0.435
Hispanic	206	0.08	0.28	188	0.07	0.25	180	0.07	0.26	178	0.04	0.19	212	0.04	0.2	232	0.03	0.18	F= 1.593
Russia Friendliness	148	0.34	0.28	129	0.31	0.31	125	0.35	0.3	131	0.39	0.31	151	0.38	0.3	162	0.35	0.29	F= 1.15
Militantism	206	2.85	0.93	188	2.85	0.93	180	2.89	0.97	178	3.01	0.92	212	2.98	1	232	2.98	0.92	F= 1.2
Nationalism	206	4.02	0.89	188	3.97	0.88	180	3.88	0.96	178	4.14	0.87	212	4.03	0.84	232	4.06	0.91	F= 1.807

Statistical significance markers: \* p&lt;0.05; \*\* p&lt;0.01

The insignificant F-test results on the last column show that respondents were evenly distributed across all survey conditions on dimensions of gender, age, partisanship, ideology, education, race, attitudes toward Russia, level of militantism, and level of nationalism.

## A.5 Interaction Effect between Economic Benefits and Concentration

Table A11

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Support Military Use	Proud to Have	Unhappy to Lose	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Economic Benefits	0.270*** (0.095)	0.168 (0.104)	0.469*** (0.110)	0.174 (0.111)	0.086 (0.105)	0.195* (0.110)
Concentrated	-0.521*** (0.099)	-0.503*** (0.103)	-0.298*** (0.109)	-0.293*** (0.105)	-0.159 (0.100)	-0.219** (0.098)
Economic × Concentrated	-0.175 (0.134)	-0.085 (0.141)	-0.417*** (0.145)	-0.095 (0.145)	0.004 (0.136)	-0.221 (0.139)
Constant	3.967*** (0.075)	3.807*** (0.078)	3.156*** (0.086)	3.231*** (0.082)	3.802*** (0.078)	2.491*** (0.079)
Observations	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196
R <sup>2</sup>	0.064	0.047	0.052	0.020	0.006	0.022

Robust SEs \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A11 explores whether the negative effect of benefit concentration is bigger for economic benefits than for security benefits based on Study 1. Concentrated Benefit is coded as ‘1’ when the Beneficiary condition is either Alaskan residents or employees of Occidental Oil, and ‘0’ if it is All Americans. The negative interaction term provides some preliminary evidence that people react more negatively toward concentrated economic benefits than concentrated security benefits. This result complements the findings from Study 2—which captures whether there is a difference in the *likelihood* that people think economic benefits will be concentrated—by showing that there is also more dislike for the concentration of economic benefits than security benefits *given* concentration.

## A.6 Moderating Effects by Pre-existing Perceptions

Results are from Study 1 and Diffuse Benefits is a binary variable: benefits to all Americans is coded as 1, and benefits to Alaskans and Oil company employees is coded as 0. Trust in Redistribution is on a five-point scale, with higher numbers indicating more agreement to the statement "In general, do you trust the U.S. government to appropriately redistribute wealth and income in the American society?"

The negative and significant interaction term between Diffuse Benefits and Trust in Redistribution indicates that the less skeptical the individual is about the government’s ability to redistribute

Table A12: Moderating Effect of Trust in Redistribution on Benefit Diffuseness

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Support Military Use	Proud to Have	Unhappy to Lose	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Diffuse Benefits	0.994*** (0.160)	1.044*** (0.172)	0.817*** (0.170)	0.391** (0.165)	0.364** (0.162)	0.420*** (0.153)
Trust in Redistribution	0.281*** (0.032)	0.277*** (0.033)	0.285*** (0.035)	0.371*** (0.032)	0.129*** (0.033)	0.346*** (0.028)
Diffuse×Redist.	-0.141*** (0.048)	-0.181*** (0.053)	-0.114** (0.056)	-0.025 (0.053)	-0.076 (0.053)	-0.039 (0.048)
Economic Benefits	0.141** (0.066)	0.096 (0.069)	0.186*** (0.069)	0.083 (0.066)	0.080 (0.066)	0.027 (0.062)
Constant	2.645*** (0.110)	2.530*** (0.110)	2.004*** (0.108)	1.910*** (0.100)	3.291*** (0.101)	1.289*** (0.089)
Observations	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196
R <sup>2</sup>	0.135	0.110	0.118	0.176	0.022	0.170

Robust SEs \*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

wealth, the less they care about distributional consequences. In other words, the negative effect of benefit concentration was stronger for individuals who had lower trust in government's ability to redistribute wealth, which speaks to how pre-existing levels of skepticism toward domestic elites could be an important moderator for the theory.

Table A13: Moderating Effect of Support for Oil Energy on Benefit Diffuseness

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Support Military Use	Proud to Have	Unhappy to Lose	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Diffuse Benefits	0.771*** (0.145)	0.767*** (0.155)	0.834*** (0.162)	0.615*** (0.166)	0.326** (0.139)	0.521*** (0.150)
Oil support	0.015 (0.044)	0.052 (0.045)	0.130*** (0.043)	0.089** (0.043)	0.029 (0.040)	0.073* (0.039)
Diffuse×OilSupp	-0.082 (0.064)	-0.112* (0.068)	-0.165** (0.069)	-0.139** (0.070)	-0.086 (0.061)	-0.097 (0.065)
Economic Benefits	0.157** (0.069)	0.113 (0.071)	0.212*** (0.072)	0.116 (0.072)	0.086 (0.067)	0.058 (0.067)
Constant	3.385*** (0.106)	3.186*** (0.110)	2.526*** (0.109)	2.746*** (0.110)	3.587*** (0.098)	2.089*** (0.095)
Observations	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196	1,196
R <sup>2</sup>	0.065	0.050	0.054	0.025	0.008	0.023

Robust SEs \*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

Oil Support takes a value between 1-5, with 5 indicating a response of "Strongly Disagree" for the statement "The U.S. should invest more into renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power, over traditional energy sources such as coal and oil." Results are from Study 1 and Diffuse Benefits is a binary variable: benefits to all Americans coded as 1, to Alaskans and Oil company employees as 0.

The table shows that respondents who displayed higher support for the coal and oil industry cared less about the benefits being concentrated on oil company employees. While there would be much more precise ways of capturing one's affinity toward the oil industry, this preliminary finding implies that pre-existing affinity toward beneficiaries would also moderate the effectiveness of the theory.

## B Study 2 Supplementary Analyses

### B.1 Changes in Variance of DVs by Benefit Type (Figure 4)

Table B1: Effect of Concentration Suggestion by Benefit Type (Change in Variance)

Benefit:	New oil fields			Important strategic locations			
DVs	Benefit Americans	Benefit U.S.	National Interest		Benefit Americans	Benefit U.S.	National Interest
<i>No Concentration Suggested</i>							
(A) n= 228	1.19	1.02	1.25	(B) n=195	1.19	0.89	1.06
<i>Concentration Suggested</i>							
(C) n= 200	1.66	1.44	1.46	(D) n= 202	1.31	1.05	1.18
<b>Diff in Variance</b>	<b>+0.47</b>	<b>+0.42</b>	<b>+0.21</b>		<b>+0.12</b>	<b>+0.16</b>	<b>+0.12</b>
<b>Significance</b>	<b>p=0.00</b>	<b>p=0.03</b>	p=0.12		p=0.08	p=0.56	p=0.39

The table shows the variance in responses for each of the four possible conditions (A through D) per dependent variable. Smaller variance indicates more convergence in opinions while larger variance indicates that opinion is more diverse. The summary row calculates how receiving suggestions of concentration changes the variance in responses. Whether the difference in variances is statistically significant is shown in the last row using Levene's test. Figure 4 in the main text shows the dispersion in answers for *Benefit Americans*. Results show that suggestions of concentration in the oil fields condition increases divergence in answers more than in the strategic location condition, both in terms of substantive magnitude and statistical significance.

## B.2 Regression Table with Interactions (Figure 3)

Table B2: Regression results used for Figure 3

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Benefit Americans	Benefit US	National Interest
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Concentration Suggested	-0.431*** (0.112)	-0.294*** (0.099)	-0.276*** (0.106)
Economic Benefits	0.139 (0.106)	0.031 (0.095)	-0.073 (0.104)
Concentration Suggested × Economic Benefits	-0.350** (0.162)	-0.298** (0.146)	-0.142 (0.155)
Constant	3.856*** (0.078)	4.062*** (0.068)	3.836*** (0.074)
Observations	825	825	825
R <sup>2</sup>	0.071	0.050	0.028
<i>Note: Robust SEs</i>		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table B3: Regression results for Figure 3 (passed attention checks)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Benefit Americans	Benefit US	National Interest
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Concentration Suggested	-0.498*** (0.125)	-0.322*** (0.108)	-0.312*** (0.118)
Economic Benefits	0.173 (0.117)	0.054 (0.104)	-0.069 (0.114)
Concentration Suggested × Economic Benefits	-0.409** (0.180)	-0.335** (0.162)	-0.192 (0.172)
Constant	3.871*** (0.085)	4.067*** (0.072)	3.859*** (0.080)
Observations	673	673	673
R <sup>2</sup>	0.092	0.061	0.039
<i>Note: Robust SEs</i>		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

### B.3 Regression Table with Interactions (other DVs)

Table B4: Interaction Results for DVs asked but not included in main text (All Respondents)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Support MilUse	Benefit Me	Proud to Have	Contribute Money	Unhappy to Lose
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Concentration Suggested	-0.286** (0.113)	-0.312** (0.123)	-0.111 (0.114)	-0.087 (0.112)	-0.105 (0.111)
Economic Benefits	-0.016 (0.114)	0.520*** (0.120)	0.043 (0.111)	0.164 (0.109)	0.050 (0.108)
Concentration Suggested × Economic Benefits	-0.064 (0.163)	-0.395** (0.177)	-0.198 (0.162)	-0.198 (0.157)	-0.108 (0.160)
Constant	3.262*** (0.079)	2.862*** (0.087)	3.067*** (0.079)	2.231*** (0.078)	3.749*** (0.077)
Observations	825	825	825	825	825
R <sup>2</sup>	0.019	0.063	0.011	0.010	0.005

Note: Robust SEs

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table B5: Interaction Results for DVs asked but not included in main text  
(Regression on sample who passed attention checks)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Support MilUse	Benefit Me	Proud to Have	Contribute Money	Unhappy to Lose
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Concentration Suggested	-0.339*** (0.123)	-0.431*** (0.134)	-0.118 (0.112)	-0.042 (0.121)	-0.053 (0.123)
Economic Benefits	-0.015 (0.126)	0.606*** (0.132)	0.101 (0.109)	0.236** (0.119)	0.182 (0.114)
Concentration Suggested × Economic Benefits	-0.075 (0.180)	-0.413** (0.194)	-0.316** (0.157)	-0.335** (0.170)	-0.299* (0.174)
Constant	3.202*** (0.085)	2.798*** (0.094)	2.982*** (0.078)	2.129*** (0.084)	3.730*** (0.084)
Observations	673	673	673	673	673
R <sup>2</sup>	0.026	0.091	0.020	0.016	0.013

Note: Robust SEs

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## B.4 Balance Tests for Study 2

Table B6: Balance Tests for Study 2

Treatment Condition	Economic-No Opp			Economic-Opp			Security-No Opp			Security-Opp			Test
Variable	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Gender	227	0.53	0.5	196	0.49	0.5	194	0.54	0.5	202	0.51	0.5	F= 0.29
Age	228	46.56	17.68	200	45.81	16.48	195	45.71	16.73	202	47.9	15.98	F= 0.729
Party ID	228			200			195			202			X2= 18.248*
.. Democrat	75	33%		85	42%		82	42%		80	40%		
.. Independent	50	22%		54	27%		57	29%		54	27%		
.. Other	17	7%		11	6%		5	3%		13	6%		
.. Republican	86	38%		50	25%		51	26%		55	27%		
Ideology	228			200			195			202			X2= 18.023
.. Conservative	53	23%		35	18%		32	16%		37	18%		
.. Liberal	35	15%		43	22%		32	16%		30	15%		
.. Neither lib. nor con.	70	31%		61	30%		78	40%		61	30%		
.. Slightly conservative	38	17%		26	13%		22	11%		28	14%		
.. Slightly liberal	32	14%		35	18%		31	16%		46	23%		
College	228	0.38	0.49	200	0.43	0.5	195	0.42	0.49	202	0.45	0.5	F= 0.72
White	228	0.76	0.43	200	0.77	0.42	195	0.77	0.42	202	0.82	0.39	F= 0.803
Black	228	0.11	0.32	200	0.12	0.33	195	0.13	0.34	202	0.06	0.24	F= 2.18
Asian	228	0.05	0.22	200	0.05	0.23	195	0.05	0.22	202	0.07	0.25	F= 0.26
Hispanic	228	0.07	0.26	200	0.06	0.25	195	0.1	0.3	202	0.05	0.23	F= 0.996
Russia Friendliness	176	0.31	0.26	167	0.33	0.27	156	0.34	0.28	176	0.34	0.27	F= 0.65
Militantism	228	2.19	0.67	200	2.15	0.72	195	2.23	0.65	202	2.19	0.71	F= 0.425
Nationalism	228	3.99	0.9	200	3.94	0.88	195	4.05	0.81	202	3.98	0.84	F= 0.574

Statistical significance markers: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Respondents were evenly distributed across all survey conditions on dimensions of gender, age, ideology, education, race, attitudes toward Russia, level of militantism, and level of nationalism, except for partisanship, where one treatment condition had more Republicans.

To correct for the uneven distribution of Party ID, I re-run the survey after weighting the survey responses by Party ID. The weighting of responses by party has the effect of ensuring that any differences in the results are not due to the uneven distribution of partisanship across conditions. Survey weights were created from the distribution of Party ID in the sample data collected for Study 2, where 39% of respondents identified as Democrats, 29% as Republicans, 26% as Independents, and 6% as Other. I present both the weighted survey results and the original results in Table B7. The table shows that the results from the weighted survey are very similar to the original results. (Original results refer to results used in the main manuscript to generate Figure 3 and Table B2).

Table B7: Survey 2 Results Weighted by Party ID

	Original Results			Corrected for Party ID Distribution		
	Benefit Americans	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Benefit Americans	Benefit U.S.	National Interest
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Concentration Suggested	-0.431*** (0.116)	-0.294*** (0.105)	-0.276** (0.112)	-0.432*** (0.112)	-0.295*** (0.099)	-0.277*** (0.106)
Economic Benefit	0.139 (0.113)	0.031 (0.102)	-0.073 (0.109)	0.138 (0.106)	0.029 (0.095)	-0.075 (0.104)
Concentration $\times$ Economic Benefit	-0.350** (0.161)	-0.298** (0.146)	-0.142 (0.155)	-0.347** (0.161)	-0.295** (0.146)	-0.139 (0.155)
Constant	3.856*** (0.083)	4.062*** (0.075)	3.836*** (0.080)	3.854*** (0.078)	4.060*** (0.068)	3.835*** (0.073)
Observations	825	825	825	825	825	825
R <sup>2</sup>	0.071	0.050	0.028			
Log Likelihood				-1,288.890	-1,208.941	-1,258.519

Note: Results produced using OLS/ Gaussian GLM

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## C Study 3 Supplementary Analyses

### C.1 Full Causal Mediation (Figure 5)

The treatment is whether or not Seal Island had oil suggested of concentrated benefits (*Economic Value*) and the Mediator is *Matter of National Security*, measured as respondents' level of agreement with the statement "policymakers are trying to take Seal Island for national security reasons" on a five-point scale. The first column shows regression results of the effect of *Economic Value* on *Matter of National Security* (Figure 5-a main text) and the second column shows regression results measuring the effect of *Matter of National Security* on each of the five DVs (Figure 5-b main text). The final column demonstrates the mediation effect of *Matter of National Security* for each dependent variable. The significant results in the last column lend support to the logic suggested in  $H_3$  ( $T \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$ ), that having economic value suggested of concentrated benefits decreases people's trust in the issue's other diffuse values, which in turn lead to a lower support for the issue as a national interest. The regression coefficients and standard errors are estimated using maximum likelihood through the `lavaan` package in R.



Table C1: Full Causal Mediation Analysis of Matter of National Security on DVs (Figure 5)

DVs	T → M	M → Y	Mediation Effect $\alpha \times \beta$
	Effect of Economic Value on Mediator ( $\alpha$ )	Effect of Mediator on DVs ( $\beta$ )	
Support Military Use		0.636*** (0.064)	-0.563*** (0.082)
Benefit Americans		0.431*** (0.042)	-0.381*** (0.053)
Benefit U.S.	-0.885*** (0.086)	0.438*** (0.042)	-0.388*** (0.055)
National Interest		0.469*** (0.043)	-0.415*** (0.057)
Contribute Money		0.374*** (0.042)	-0.331*** (0.048)

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01.

## C.2 Robustness Checks for Table 3

### C.2.1 Table 3 results (passed attention checks)

Table C2: Table 3 Results for respondents who passed attention checks

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Support Military Use	Benefit Americans	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Contribute Money
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Economic Value (Concentration Suggested)	-0.195* (0.102)	-0.661*** (0.116)	-0.233** (0.116)	-0.233** (0.118)	-0.364*** (0.121)
Constant	2.736*** (0.072)	3.102*** (0.082)	3.277*** (0.081)	3.315*** (0.082)	2.251*** (0.089)
Observations	466	466	466	466	466
R <sup>2</sup>	0.008	0.066	0.009	0.008	0.019

Note: Robust standard errors

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

### C.2.2 Table 3 results (with covariates)

Table C3: Table 3 results with covariates

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Support Military Use	Benefit Americans	Benefit U.S.	National Interest	Contribute Money
Economic Value (Concentration Suggested)	-0.296* (0.160)	-0.637*** (0.104)	-0.243** (0.099)	-0.237** (0.100)	-0.314*** (0.110)
PID: Independent	-0.612*** (0.183)	-0.189 (0.125)	-0.312** (0.121)	-0.328*** (0.119)	-0.458*** (0.129)
PID: Republican	-0.340 (0.215)	-0.008 (0.138)	-0.069 (0.129)	0.003 (0.130)	-0.214 (0.146)
Income	0.046 (0.057)	-0.004 (0.036)	0.030 (0.036)	0.028 (0.035)	0.059 (0.038)
College	-0.246 (0.183)	-0.159 (0.118)	-0.064 (0.115)	-0.056 (0.111)	-0.066 (0.119)
Female	-0.008 (0.166)	-0.033 (0.108)	0.001 (0.104)	-0.121 (0.106)	-0.027 (0.112)
Russia Friendly	-0.004 (0.322)	0.247 (0.210)	0.076 (0.201)	0.028 (0.196)	0.551** (0.218)
Militantism	0.762*** (0.102)	0.327*** (0.069)	0.366*** (0.067)	0.359*** (0.066)	0.465*** (0.074)
Nationalistic	0.137 (0.097)	0.164*** (0.063)	0.119* (0.062)	0.120* (0.067)	0.090 (0.065)
Constant	1.283*** (0.457)	1.653*** (0.296)	1.877*** (0.300)	1.958*** (0.328)	0.589** (0.275)
Observations	556	556	556	556	556
R <sup>2</sup>	0.150	0.160	0.120	0.129	0.143

*Note: Robust Standard Errors*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

### C.3 Balance Tests for Study 3

Table C4

Treatment Condition	No Oil			Oil			
Variable	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	Test
Gender	333	0.5	0.5	340	0.56	0.5	F= 2.456
Age	335	48.39	16.15	342	47.29	17.19	F= 0.742
Party ID	335			342			X2= 0.682
.. Democrat	134	40%		143	42%		
.. Independent	89	27%		92	27%		
.. Other	13	4%		10	3%		
.. Republican	99	30%		97	28%		
Ideology	335			342			X2= 0.229
.. Conservative	71	21%		73	21%		
.. Liberal	54	16%		59	17%		
.. Neither liberal nor conservative	111	33%		112	33%		
.. Slightly conservative	43	13%		44	13%		
.. Slightly liberal	56	17%		54	16%		
College	335	0.34	0.47	342	0.35	0.48	F= 0.017
White	335	0.79	0.41	342	0.77	0.42	F= 0.485
Black	335	0.09	0.29	342	0.14	0.35	F= 3.763
Asian	335	0.05	0.23	342	0.05	0.22	F= 0.056
Hispanic	335	0.06	0.24	342	0.06	0.24	F= 0.009
Russia Friendliness	279	0.33	0.27	281	0.31	0.26	F= 0.814
Militantism	335	2.97	0.87	342	2.86	0.92	F= 2.386
Nationalism	335	4.41	0.88	342	4.38	0.86	F= 0.205

Statistical significance markers: \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01

The insignificant F-test results on the last column show that respondents were evenly distributed across all survey conditions on dimensions of gender, age, partisanship, ideology, education, race, attitudes toward Russia, level of militantism, and level of nationalism.

## D Prompt & Scenario Justification

For conciseness purposes, I present the main text of the three survey experiments and the questions used to measure the DVs and covariates that appear in the main text. The full survey flow, including questions on other covariates, are available in the dataverse.

### D.1 Main prompt for Study 1

[Page 1]

The U.S. and Russia are involved in a territorial dispute over Seal Island, a small uninhabitable island off the coast of Alaska.

The island provides access to offshore oil fields.

The U.S. and Russia both claim Seal Island to be rightfully theirs, but neither has yet taken serious action to take control of the island.

[Page 2]

The U.S. could use its military to take control of Seal Island without any casualties.

But Russia would retaliate with economic sanctions, which would lead to a nationwide economic downturn of approximately \$80 billion, and a loss of around 10,000 jobs across various industries in the U.S.

[Page 3]

- Economic benefit:

Securing the island would lead to an economic benefit for [all Americans/ Alaskan residents/ employees of Occidental Oil, an American oil company operating in the region], [who would be able to save \$150 billion annually through reduced gas prices/ who would be able to save \$150 billion annually through reduced gas prices/ by providing the company with an additional annual profit of \$150 billion].

*\*Only if Beneficiary is Alaskan residents or employees of Occidental Oil:* [Other Americans, apart from [Alaskan residents/ employees of Occidental Oil] are not expected to benefit from taking Seal Island.]

- Security benefit:

Securing the island would lead to increased security protection for [all Americans/ Alaskan residents/ employees of Occidental Oil, an American oil company operating in the region] by allowing [the United States government/ the Alaskan state government/ Occidental Oil] to have greater control over the Pacific Ocean.

*\*Only if Beneficiary is Alaskan residents or employees of Occidental Oil:* [Other Americans, apart from [Alaskan residents/ employees of Occidental Oil] are not expected to benefit from taking Seal Island.]

## D.2 Main prompt for Study 2

[Page 1]

The U.S. and Russia are involved in a territorial dispute over Seal Island, a small uninhabitable island off the coast of Alaska.

The island provides access to offshore oil fields.

The U.S. and Russia both claim Seal Island to be rightfully theirs, but neither has yet taken serious action to take control of the island.

[Page 2]

The U.S. could use its military to take control of Seal Island without any casualties.

But Russia would retaliate with economic sanctions.

The sanctions would lead to a nationwide economic downturn of approximately \$80 billion, and a

loss of around 10,000 jobs across various industries in the U.S.

[Page 3]

Despite the costs, some policymakers argue taking Seal Island would benefit all Americans.

They say the U.S. would gain access to [offshore oil fields, reducing gas prices for all Americans/ important strategic locations, better protecting all Americans from security threats].

[Page 4] (*Read only by half of the respondents*)

However, other policymakers question the true motive behind trying to take Seal Island.

They say taking Seal Island to gain [new oil fields/ important strategic locations] would only benefit a small number of interest groups, at the expense of most Americans.

They argue the real motive for taking Seal Island is to help certain interest groups, not to [reduce gas prices for/ increase the security of] all Americans.

### D.3 Main prompt for Study 3

[Page 1]

The U.S. and Russia are involved in a territorial dispute over Seal Island, a small uninhabitable island off the coast of Alaska.

(The island provides access to offshore oil fields. / The island does not have any natural resources.)

The U.S. and Russia both claim Seal Island to be rightfully theirs, but neither country has yet made a serious attempt to take control of the island.

[Page 2]

The U.S. could use its military to successfully take control of Seal Island without any casualties.

Russia would not strike back with its military; there would not be war over Seal Island.

But Russia would retaliate with economic sanctions, leading to a nationwide economic downturn of \$80 billion, and a loss of around 10,000 jobs across various industries in the U.S.

[Page 3]

Despite the costs, some policymakers argue that taking control of Seal Island would be in the U.S. national interest.

They say taking Seal Island would provide access to important strategic locations.

The strategic locations could be used to better protect all Americans from foreign security threats.

[Page 4]

However, other policymakers doubt whether taking Seal Island would be in the U.S. national interest.

They claim the security benefits provided by Seal Island would not be as large as what some policymakers argue.

(NA / In fact, they say the real reason for trying to take Seal Island is to benefit certain oil companies, not to protect all Americans. Only some oil companies would benefit from taking the island, at the cost of other Americans.)

## D.4 Questions for Main DVs

After respondents read the main prompt, respondents were asked the following questions. The questions used to measure the dependent variables were nearly identical for Studies 1-3 and appeared in the order presented here.

- Given this information, how much would you approve or disapprove of using the U.S. military to take control of Seal Island?
  - Approve strongly (5)
  - Approve
  - Neither approve nor disapprove
  - Disapprove
  - Disapprove strongly (1)
- *For those who selected "Neither approve nor disapprove":*  
You selected "neither approve nor disapprove". Would you lean toward approving of using the U.S. military to take control of Seal Island, lean toward disapproving, or not lean either way?
  - lean toward approving
  - do not lean either way
  - lean toward disapproving

*Answers to this question allowed the measuring of support for military use on a seven-point scale as well, with 7 being Approve Strongly and 1 being Disapprove Strongly. Results are identical—often stronger—when using the 7-point measure.*
- Please type a few sentences about why you [approve/ disapprove/ neither approve nor disapprove] of a using the U.S. military to take control of Seal Island.

After answering questions on support for military use, respondents were asked how much they agreed with each of the following statements. Answer choices ranged from Strongly Disagree (1) – Somewhat Disagree (2) – Neither agree nor disagree (3) – Somewhat Agree (4) – Strongly Agree (5)

- Given this information, how much would you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Studies 1-2)
  - *National Interest* Taking control of Seal Island is in the U.S. national interest
  - *Proud to Have*: Taking control of Seal Island would make me proud
  - *Unhappy to Lose*: I would be unhappy if Russia took control of Seal Island
  - *Benefit the U.S.*: Taking control of Seal Island benefits the United States
  - *Benefit Americans*: Taking control of Seal Island benefits the American people
  - *Benefit Me*: Taking control of Seal Island benefits me personally
- Given this information, how much would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Study 3)

- *National Interest*: Taking control of Seal Island is in the U.S. national interest
- *Benefit the U.S.*: Taking control of Seal Island would be beneficial for the United States
- *Benefit Americans*: Taking control of Seal Island would be beneficial for most Americans
- *Benefit Me*: Taking control of Seal Island would be beneficial for me personally
- *Matter of National Security*: The policymakers who support taking Seal Island are trying to take the island for national security reasons.

Finally, respondents were asked how willing they were to contribute money for a military operation over Seal Island. This variable was measured on a 4-point scale (Very Unwilling – Unwilling– Willing – Very Willing) for Studies 1 and 2, and on a 5-point scale (neither willing nor unwilling added) for Study 3. Below is the prompt and the question:

- In the end, the U.S. government decides to use its military to take control of Seal Island. To fund its military operation, the U.S. government asks each household to contribute \$20. How willing would you be to contribute the \$20?

## D.5 Questions for Attitudinal Traits

Attitude toward Russia, Militant characteristics, and Nationalist characteristics were calculated as the average of responses to the questions in the respective category. Larger values indicate friendlier attitude toward Russia, greater support for militant policies, and stronger nationalist attitudes. The numbers inside the parentheses indicate the numeric score assigned to each response. The order in which the questions were presented were randomized.

Now, please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- Russia
  1. Do you think Russia is an adversary, a serious problem but not an adversary, or not an adversary?
    - An adversary (0)
    - A serious problem but not an adversary (0.5)
    - Not an adversary (1)
    - Don't know
  2. Do you think the U.S. should pursue friendly cooperation with Russia or actively work to limit Russia's power?
    - The U.S. should pursue friendly cooperation with Russia (1)
    - The U.S. should actively work to limit Russia's power (0)
    - Don't know
  3. Do you think that Russia is trying to pursue friendly cooperation with the U.S. or working to undermine U.S. power and influence?

- Russia is trying to pursue friendly cooperation with the United States (1)
- Russia is trying to undermine U.S. power and influence (0)
- Don't know
- Militant (Strongly Disagree (1)– Strongly Agree (5))
  1. The use of military force only makes problems worse
  2. The U.S. should prioritize improving its military over other issues
  3. The best way to ensure peace is through military strength
- Nationalist (Strongly Disagree (1)– Strongly Agree (5))
  1. The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Americans
  2. I am proud to be living in the United States
  3. I would rather be a citizen of America than of any other country in the world

Finally, respondents were asked about their personal information:

- What is your gender?
  - Male / Female / Other/ Prefer not to say
- Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?
  - Republican / Democrat/ Independent/ Other
- Which of the following best describes your political views?
  - Liberal / Slightly liberal /Neither liberal nor conservative /Slightly conservative / Conservative
- Please give your best guess of your entire household income in 2019 before taxes.
  - Less than \$25,000 /\$25,000 to \$34,999 / \$35,000 to \$49,999 / \$50,000 to \$74,999 / \$75,000 to \$99,999 / \$100,000 to \$149,999 /\$150,000 or more
- Education: What is the highest degree of education you have completed?  
 (In the control variables used to generate appendix tables, education was transformed into a binary "College" variable, with '1' indicating any answer above "Currently Pursuing a Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)")
  - Less than a high school degree / High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)/ Some college but no degree/ Received an Associate degree in college (2-year)/ Currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) Received a Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)/ Currently pursuing or received a graduate degree (ex. MA, PhD, JD, MD)

## D.6 Attention Checks

The attention check questions were given at the end of each page so that respondents could view the prompt while answering the questions. The passing rate of the attention checks, calculated as



respondents who got all of the following questions correctly, were 78%, 82% and 69% for Surveys 1, 2, 3. The main text uses results from all survey respondents because those who passed attention checks could be systematically different from those who did not. Yet the results are identical and stronger (as expected) when using the sample who passed the attention check questions (see Appendix A1.3, B2, and C2). Some example of the attention checks are " Which countries are involved in a territorial dispute over Seal Island?" (Answer Choices: The U.S. and Russia / Angola and Namibia / Estonia and Latvia) or "Seal Island is..." (Answer Choices: A small uninhabitable island off the coast of Alaska / An active volcano in Ethiopia / An amusement park in Vietnam). The full set of attention checks is available in the survey script of the APSA dataverse.

## D.7 Consent Script and Ethical Concerns

As indicated in the main text, participants were recruited using the survey company Lucid and received payment for their participation. Participants were recruited from a nationally representative sample and always had the option to leave the survey if they wished to do so. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Stanford University (Protocol ID: 57330) and the full consent script and IRB approval is available as part of the dataverse files.

## D.8 Representativeness of Scenario

Seal Island is indeed a hypothetical scenario, but the scenario is representative of many modern conflicts today on several dimensions. First, many modern territorial conflicts involve disputes over small pieces of lands (Altman 2020; Altman & Lee 2022), with Schultz (2017) showing that almost 60% of territorial disputes post-1945 claim less than 5% of the opponent's territory. In fact, an analysis of the ICOW territorial dispute data below (Frederick *et al.* 2017) shows that 35 out of 105 (33.3%) of modern territorial disputes (1945-2001) were over small islands. The analysis also shows that democracies make up a big portion of states involved in territorial disputes, indicating that running a survey in the United States is not far-fetched. Between 1945-2001, 51% of dyads with territorial disputes involved at least one democracy (classified as a state with a polity score of 5 or higher). During the period of 1816-2001, 54% of dyads involved at least one democracy.

The U.S. and Russia have also been rivals since 1945 according to Thompson and Dreyer's Strategic Rivalry dataset (2012), and have had 64 MID events since 1945. Embedding a hypothetical territorial conflict within a bigger rivalry would have had three effects: First, it would have made the conflict itself and the option of using military force more plausible to survey respondents than if the conflict had been with a friendlier state (e.g. Canada). Second, the findings from this scenario would be more representative of many real-world disputes, since the majority of territorial conflicts are between rival states. Third, choosing a well-known rival as the opposing country would have made the scenario a harder test of the theory. This is because an ongoing rivalry would have increased the salience of security concerns, making security the more dominant concern above any economic benefits or distributional considerations.

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