Sanctions and Public Opinion: Experimental Evidence from Turkey

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Abstract

The research into economic sanctions effectiveness has highlighted the importance of public opinion. Yet the effect of sanctions on public opinion has attracted relatively limited scholarly attention. The few recent studies on this question report mixed findings. In this essay, I investigate the role of uncertainty over intentions in influencing public support for policy change in the target state. Studies in crisis bargaining have identified asymmetric information as a key problem. Studies on sanctions also highlight how sanctioning states (i.e. senders) often have unclear goals. Yet we do not have any firm evidence about how such uncertainties would affect public opinion. How do uncertainties about the intentions of the sender affect public support for policy change in the sanctioned (i.e. target) country? I argue that individuals would be less supportive of policy-change when they suspect that the sender has ‘ulterior motives’ or a ‘hidden agenda’. I field an online survey experiment in Turkey using the recent U.S. sanctions to test this claim. The findings suggest that uncertainty has a negative impact on support for policy change, but only among certain subgroups. The main analysis is complemented by automated text analysis of respondents’ answers to an open-ended question.
1 Introduction

States often misrepresent private information in international relations. What happens when the deceit is revealed? Some studies highlight how deception may help a state reach more favorable bargaining outcomes, while paradoxically increasing the risk of conflict outbreak (e.g. Fearon (1995)). Some focus on the long-term impact of cheating on reputation (e.g. Tomz (2012)). How do suspicions over deceit affect public opinion, which plays a key role in inter-state interactions (e.g. Fearon (1994), Schultz (1998), Weeks (2008))? More specifically, how does uncertainty over the true intentions of another state affect public attitudes towards their own government’s bargaining strategy? I address this question in the context of economic sanctions.

Economic sanctions are meant to alter the behavior of another state by showing the cost of maintaining the disputed policy. Yet this foreign policy instrument still suffers from the problem of uncertainty that is prevalent in crisis bargaining. While governments generally declare certain official goals, or publicize demands that need to be met before the sanctions can be lifted, there may still be ambiguity over the “true intentions” of the sender. Is the sender using the disputed policy as an excuse to pursue other objectives? For example, what is the goal of the U.S. sanctions against Iran? Experts have debated whether the “real aim” of the U.S is to prevent Iranian nuclearization (official goal) or overthrow its regime (e.g. Fisher (2020), Yazdani and Hussain (2006)). During the failed nuclear-swap negotiations in 2009, uncertainty about the intentions of the Obama administration played a role in disincentivizing the Iranian leadership to “take a risk by making conciliatory moves” (Parsi (2012), 38). Yet we lack systematic empirical evidence regarding the effect of such uncertainty on public opinion. How does uncertainty over intentions affect support for policy change in the target state?

Previous research indicates that public opinion is key to understanding the effectiveness of economic sanctions. More comprehensive sanctions do not always reach their goals, because economic costs may not translate into political costs for the targeted leaders (Kirshner (1997)). “Without political costs, there is no reason for targeted states to comply” (Allen (2008b), 918). Whether sanctions generate domestic political costs for the target, in turn, depends heavily on how sanctions affect public opinion. While some have argued that sanctions can turn the public against the leader (Grauvogel, Licht and von Soest (2017)), others have suggested that they can spark a rally-round-the-flag effect (Galtung (1967), Pape (1997)). Few studies that directly test this relationship report mixed findings (Grossman, Manekin and Margalit (2018), Frye (2019),
Alexseev and Hale (2020), Gueorguiev, McDowell and Steinberg (2020), Sejersen (2020)). Further, none of them examine the effect of uncertainty over intentions, which is a pervasive feature of economic sanctions (Barber (1979), Lindsay (1986)). This study seeks to address this gap. I hypothesize that greater uncertainty over sender intentions can lead to reduced support for policy change in the target. This is mainly because ambiguity over goals heightens the risk that the target’s compliance with the officially proclaimed goals will not result in lifting of sanctions. To test this argument, I employ an original online survey experiment in Turkey using the recent U.S. sanctions that were announced in December 2020 as part of the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

The results show that uncertainty over sender intentions have a negative impact on support for policy change, but only among certain sub-groups. More specifically, government supporters show a strongly negative reaction. This is consistent with previous studies which find sanctions’ divergent effects on different groups (e.g. Gueorguiev, McDowell and Steinberg (2020)). But unlike previous studies (Grossman, Manekin and Margalit (2018)), I find that the information about economic costs does not influence respondents’ reaction in a significant way. In general, treatments do not seem to have a direct, unmediated effect on support for policy-change. However, the text analysis of the responses to an open-ended question reveals that individuals in the uncertainty treatment exhibited more negative sentiments. This suggests that while the treatments were insufficient to move individuals’ policy preferences on average, information about uncertainty did spark a negative reaction. Taken together, the findings indicate that uncertainty over intentions can be detrimental for sanction effectiveness. The effect of the treatments on pro-government respondents is particularly important given that the opinions of this group are likely to have a stronger influence on a government’s decision-making than that of the opponents. This is especially true in competitive authoritarian regimes like Turkey where the opposition actors face significant hurdles in influencing policy-decisions. The findings also suggest that sanctioning states may be able to soften the public backlash in the target state by reducing uncertainty about their goals by, for example, avoiding sending mixed signals. This strategy would be even more effective if the targeted governments, which have greater influence over the domestic messages, avoid fomenting confusion and ambiguity about what the goals of the senders are.

This essay advances our understanding of the relationship between sanctions and target public opinion. While the link between the two has long been considered to be crucial in understanding sanction effectiveness, it hasn’t been systematically tested directly until recently. This study also contributes to the crisis bargaining literature, which has overwhelmingly focused on uncertainty over resolve as a key obstacle to peaceful settlement. This study demonstrates that uncertainty over intentions can also shape bargaining through its effect on public opinion, and that communicating goals could potentially improve the efficiency of bargaining by averting public backlash. The chapter proceeds as follows. The first section reviews the most relevant studies on the relationship between sanctions and public opinion, and highlights the contributions of this study. Next, I describe the problem of uncertainty over intentions during sanction cases and likely sources for this uncertainty. In the following section, I present my theory and hypotheses. Then I briefly discuss the U.S. sanctions against Turkey, before I introduce the research design and the main findings. The last section concludes.
2 Research on Sanctions and Public Opinion

How do economic sanctions affect public opinion in the target state? Scholarship on sanctions has long posited an effect on public opinion, though without directly testing this link. Earlier studies asserted that sanctions lead to political integration (rather than disintegration) and increase the citizens’ support for the target government by heightening the sense of nationalism (Galtung (1967)). “External pressure is more likely to enhance the nationalist legitimacy of rulers than to undermine it” Pape (1997), 107). More recent studies, on the other hand, proposed that sanctions can diminish the popularity of the targeted leaders and lead to greater support for policy change (Marinov (2005), Lektzian and Souva (2007), Allen (2008b), Grauvogel, Licht and von Soest (2017)). It is argued that the economic hardships caused by the sanctions lead individuals to withdraw their support from the government and pressure their leaders to change their behavior. As a result, sanctions succeed against democracies because of the leaders’ sensitivity to public opinion (Lektzian and Souva (2007)). They also lead to more anti-government activity such as protests and riots (Allen (2008a), Grauvogel, Licht and von Soest (2017)), and increase the risk of leaders’ losing office (Marinov (2005)). These studies, however, do not directly test the effect of sanctions on public opinion. The increased likelihood of mass protest, for example, may be driven by the fact that sanctions embolden government opponents and increase their willingness to mobilize (Kaempfer and Lowenberg (1999)), and not necessarily because it causes a shift in the opinion of the government and its policies.

A number of recent studies aim to fill this gap by directly testing the effect of sanctions on public opinion. One group of studies shows that sanctions can have a backlash effect. In the context of Israel, Grossman, Manekin and Margalit (2018) find that, on average, sanctions result in increased support for contested policy in the target state. They show that European Union’s decision to label goods produced in occupied territories as ‘made in settlements’ led to higher support for settlements, more hawkish politicians, as well as more negative views of the EU. In a second survey, they examine the effect of sanction type and sender identity on public opinion using a hypothetical scenario. They similarly find that hypothetical sanctions generally led to a ‘rally-round-the-flag’ effect. Only the information about a comprehensive boycott of Israeli goods by the U.S. was effective in generating support for a policy-change, and even then the effect is significant only among the supporters of the political opposition. Similarly, in a pooled survey analysis, Alexseev and Hale (2020) find that sanctions lead to increased support for President Putin in Russia, and this effect is stronger among respondents with higher incomes.

Another group of studies, on the other hand, report null effects. For example, in a survey experiment in Russia, Frye (2019) finds that information about the US and EU sanctions has no statistically significant effect on the approval rate of the Russian government. Yet, contrary to the rally effect, he finds that among respondents who hold negative views of President Putin, the treatments lead individuals to withdraw their support from the government. Importantly, information about the reasons for imposing sanctions elicit strong reaction in the target public. More specifically, the respondents who were primed that the sanctions were imposed due to the annexation of Crimea exhibit significantly higher support for the Russian leadership. This finding highlights the importance of further exploring the role of sender goals and potential uncertainty surrounding them. Similarly, Gueorguiev, McDowell and Steinberg (2020) finds that sanctions have no statistically significant effect on support for policy change. In a survey experiment in China, they show that the information about the threat of U.S. sanctions concerning China’s...
exchange rate policy does not, on average, move Chinese respondents’ support for allowing Chinese currency—renminbi—to appreciate. Only among a certain sub-population (individuals who initially hold negative view of the U.S.), do the treatments have a backlash effect, resulting in reduced support for currency appreciation.

Finally, Sejersen (2020) highlights the importance of issue area in determining the effect of sanctions on public opinion. More specifically, sanctions that enforce human rights are more likely to be accepted by the target public. In an online survey experiment in Venezuela, he finds that individuals are more supportive of sanctions when they are given the information that sanctions are imposed to stop human rights violations. Yet this study is silent on sanctions that are imposed for other reasons, such as nuclear proliferation, alliance choices, military behavior or economic policy. This highlights the need to develop a broader theory on the relationship between sanctions and public opinion that is not dependent on a particular issue area.

Taken together, the existing literature provides valuable insights into the relationship between economic sanctions and target public opinion. The present article seeks to advance our understanding on this question in three main ways. First, I investigate the effect of sanctions on support for policy change, as opposed to leader popularity. While the latter is a relevant measure, the former is more closely related to the question of sanction effectiveness. Secondly, previous studies either investigate whether sanctions have a universally positive or negative effect (e.g. Frye (2019), Gueorguiev, McDowell and Steinberg (2020)) or focus on certain “fixed” characteristics, such as sanction type (e.g. targeted vs. comprehensive), issue area (e.g. human rights), or sender identity (e.g. friendly vs. unfriendly) (e.g. Grossman, Manekin and Margalit (2018), Sejersen (2020)). I build on these studies by showing that senders may still have a degree of control over the kind of reaction sanctions elicit in the target state. Thirdly and mostly importantly, this study investigates the role of uncertainty over intentions, which, despite being a pervasive feature of economic sanctions, has remained unexplored in the sanctions literature.

This article also has non-trivial policy implications. The findings from the previous studies suggest that certain types of states should refrain from imposing certain types of sanctions in certain issue areas in order to avoid public backlash. These should provide a cautionary note for policy makers. Heeding these warnings, however, may not always be practical. For example, states generally end up imposing sanctions on adversaries, mainly because they are able to get their allies to change their policies through non-coercive ways. Therefore, that sanctions are more likely to increase support for policy change only when they are imposed against friendly countries (Grossman, Maneckin and Margalit (2018)) may be less useful from a policy standpoint. It is also not realistic to expect states to impose sanctions only on human rights matters (Sejersen (2020)). The present study suggests that independent of certain fixed characteristics, leaders still have control over how sanctions affect the public opinion in the target state. In other words, given that a certain sanction is imposed, the sender can soften a potential backlash effect if steps are taken to reduce uncertainty over goals.

3 Uncertain Intentions in Economic Sanctions

Uncertainty has been a perpetual feature of international relations. Since Thucydides, scholars have grappled with the causes and consequences of uncertainty. Uncertainty over intentions has been viewed by the realist school of thought as one of the main obstacles to cooperation
(Waltz (1979), 105; Grieco (1988), Mearsheimer (1994)). Similarly, rationalist explanations of war highlight how incomplete information about the actors, as well as the incentives to misrepresent private information, may cause bargaining breakdowns (Fearon (1995)). Yet the research on uncertainty in international relations “has been limited to militarized disputes”, whereas its effect during economic sanctions has been “largely overlooked” (Bas, McLean and Whang (2017), 167).

This omission is surprising given that uncertainty over intentions is pervasive in economic sanctions. “Very few sanctions strategies are crafted with a clear sense of purpose”. (O’Sullivan (2010), 8). In many cases, sanctions are imposed to achieve a goal that is “unclear” or “ever-changing” (Remack and Shuey (1998), 9). Senders may pursue multiple goals and the priorities attached to these objectives may evolve over time (Barber (1979), 384). Most importantly, senders can pursue objectives beside the officially-proclaimed ones (Lindsay (1986)). In fact, in many cases, ensuring target compliance might not be the most important goal of a sender, or it may not even feature among its objectives (Jones and Portela (2014)).

I argue that uncertainty over intentions may have several (though not mutually exclusive) sources. Ambivalence over goals may be strong when sanctions are used as a ‘stopgap’ measure, and not as part of a comprehensive policy. This may happen when there is a foreign policy crisis that requires urgent attention such as military coups, uprisings or foreign aggression. The use of sanctions in such a manner increases the risk that sender will be unclear about its goals, and what is required of the target government before the sanctions can be lifted. For example, the sanctions against Yugoslavia in 1990s suffered from such confusion. According to some, “sanctions were meant to punish Milosevic and lead to his overthrow” (Stedman (1998), 178). The U.S. intended for sanctions to stigmatize Milosevic and wanted to “help push the Serbian people to turn on their leader” (ibid, 186) Others viewed the sanctions as a “bargaining chip to persuade Milosevic to alter his policies and to support a negotiated settlement to the war in Bosnia” (ibid).

The problem of uncertainty over real intentions may be particularly severe when sanctions are imposed mainly for domestic political reasons. By imposing sanctions, governments may be responding to interest-group pressures (Baldwin (1985), Lowenberg and Kaempfer (1998), Whang (2011)) or using sanctions as a way to demonstrate their willingness and capacity to act and avoid criticism of ineptitude (Barber (1979), 380). In other words, sanctions may be used more as a signal to voters than a strategic tool to extract concessions from the target based on publicly-declared demands. This would aggravate the uncertainty about whether the sanctions would be lifted if the target meets the sender demands. In the U.S., many sanctions, including the ones against Cuba and Vietnam, were heavily influenced by narrower electoral interests (e.g. Hatipoglu (2014)).

The ambiguity over intentions may be due to the mixed signaling by the sanctioning state. This, in turn, may spark suspicions over the sender’s “hidden agenda”. Sender’s “hidden agenda” can include containment or weakening of a rival, or the outright subversion of another leader or regime (Lindsay (1986)). The U.S. sanctions against Iran have been shrouded in such uncertainty. This was the reason behind President Obama’s recognition of ‘Islamic Republic of Iran’ in 2009– to dispense doubts that the United States was still seeking regime change in Tehran (O’Sullivan (2010), 10; Parsi (2012), 64). However, the appointment of certain hawkish figures, who advocated for harsher sanctions and isolation of the Iranian regime, to the foreign policy team caused confusion. This, along with certain statements by President Obama highlighting the importance of “tightening the screws on” Iran, aggravated uncertainty over the objectives of the U.S. administration (Parsi (2012), 38). Likewise the U.S. has sent mixed signals about its objectives against
North Korea in recent years. While the U.S. stated that it is “not seeking regime change” (BBC (2017)), there has been considerable ambiguity. For example, a Trump administration official reportedly stated that while the “priority” of the U.S. was to address the nuclear threat, regime change may be the U.S.’ long-term goal. “If and when regime change comes to the northern part of the peninsula, we’ll deal with that then, but for now we are focused on the shorter-term threat.” (Rogin (2017)) Further, then Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Mike Pompeo said:

“It would be a great thing to denuclearize the peninsula ... but the thing that is most dangerous about it is the character who holds the control over them today. So from the administration’s perspective, the most important thing we can do is separate those two...As for the regime, I am hopeful we will find a way to separate that regime from this system. The North Korean people...would love to see him go.” (Klinger (2017))

Finally, in some cases, uncertainty may be deliberately stirred by the targets. Portraying the sender as a nefarious actor harboring ulterior motives can help the targeted leader to mobilize support in favor of non-compliance. For example, in the recent U.S. sanctions against Turkey, it was primarily President Erdogan who fomented uncertainty by publicly questioning the sincerity of declared U.S. objectives. Regardless of its source, uncertainty over intentions has been a prevalent feature of many sanction regimes. For example, in the early 1980s, the U.S. imposed aid sanctions on Nicaragua demanding that the latter stops sending arms to guerillas in El Salvador. Yet, officials in Washington were “divided over the ultimate aim of US economic sanctions” (Leogrande (1996), 332). As a result, even though Nicaragua verifiably halted the arms transfers, the sanctions were not lifted. Instead, the U.S. permanently cut the aid, leading some Democratic politicians to claim that “the real objective of the policy [was] to overturn the Nicaraguan revolution” (Leogrande (1996), 331). The Western pressure on Iraq in the 1990s was also overshadowed with uncertainty. While the official goal was disarmament, it was believed that U.S.’ “true intention” in Iraq was removing Saddam Hussein. China, Russia and France sought to partially lift sanctions against Iraq in response to Baghdad’s compliance with some of the UN Security Council resolutions. The United States and Britain, on the other hand, argued in private meetings that sanctions should remain in place as long as Saddam Hussein did (Bosco (2009), 199). Even though the U.S. was suspected of pursuing regime change, it was “never an official...requirement for the removal sanctions” (Mazaheri (2010), 256). Similarly, in 2008, Russia threatened to employ sanctions against Georgia, officially in order to prevent Tblisi’s encroachment into the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. But Russia’s real goal was presumably to economically strangle Georgia in order to spur regime change (Asmus (2010)).

It should be noted that while uncertainty over intentions is prevalent, it is not a constant. On the contrary, I argue that there is meaningful variation in terms of the level of uncertainty across sanction cases. For example, the U.S. sanctions against China over the latter’s role in nuclear proliferation in 1980s and 1990s were a lot less shrouded in mystery in terms of what its goals were. China was suspected of transferring nuclear-related equipment and sensitive technology to countries like Pakistan, Iran and Algeria (Zhao (2010)). In response, the U.S. imposed sanctions against dozens of Chinese entities, and banned satellite exports to China. However, Beijing understood that the U.S. “did not bear hostile intentions” (Zhao (2010), 270) and that sanctions were a genuine attempt to curb nuclear proliferation. Likewise, there was little uncertainty over intentions when the European Union suspended aid to Niger in July 2009 following the latter’s...
decision to hold a constitutional referendum that aimed at increasing the executive powers in a new presidential system (Del Biondo (2015)). There was little indication that the goal of the sanctions was anything other than the prevention of democratic backsliding. In fact, few months before the sanctions, France had signed a uranium agreement with the incumbent President Tadj and was criticized for giving “tacit support to the constitutional referendum” (Del Biondo (2015), 79).

In addition to variation across cases, uncertainty over intentions can increase or decrease within a sanction episode depending on the behavior of the actors. This was why President Obama recognized Iran with its official name—the Islamic Republic of Iran—in 2009 in order to reduce such uncertainty by signaling that “the days of actively seeking U.S.sponsored regime change in Iran were past” (Parsi (2012), 64). In short, there is frequent uncertainty over intentions during sanctions. However, sanctions also vary substantially in terms of how much uncertainty there is, both across cases and over time. I argue that such uncertainty, which may have multiple sources, would likely have an effect on how the target public views the sanctions and whether they support or oppose policy change.

4 Uncertain Intentions and Public Opinion

How and why does uncertainty over sender intentions affect public opinion in the target state? I argue that uncertainty can undermine support for policy change in the target state for two main reasons. First, it heightens the risk that a potential target compliance with sender demands will not be reciprocated with the lifting of sanctions. This, in turn, would diminish support for policy change. This is due to both rational cost-benefit calculations and social psychological aversion to being cheated (Vohs, Baumeister and Chin (2007)). Because the target would receive the ‘sucker payoff” if it cooperates without reciprocation, individuals would likely be more resistant to policy change. They would also oppose target capitulation because of higher risk of getting cheated. Studies in behavioral economics show that individuals tend to punish defectors, even though “the punishment is costly for them and yields no material gain” (Fehr and Gächter (2002), 137). In other words, backlash against sanctions would be tantamount to punishing a suspected ‘cheater’.

Researchers have offered both psychological (Vohs, Baumeister and Chin (2007)) and neurological (Rilling et al. (2008)) explanations for aversion to getting cheated. They have also highlighted that situations with asymmetrical information (e.g. when one actor has private information about its intentions) are particularly conducive to activating the fear of ‘being duped’ (Vohs, Baumeister and Chin (2007)). Thus it could be argued that economic sanctions cases where there is significant uncertainty over the real aims of the sender would be amenable to triggering a backlash among individuals in the target state. This argument is in line with findings from studies in international relations which show that leaders face heightened risk of removal from power when they “over-cooperate” or “cooperate without reciprocation” (Huth (1996), Colaresi (2004)). Individuals tend to oppose international cooperation unless they are confident that “any cooperation will not be taken advantage of by the rival” (Colaresi (2004), 557). For example, during the 2009 nuclear-swap negotiations, some in Iran believed that the government was unjustifiably putting its trust in the hands of the U.S. As a result, “no Iranian politician wanted to come across as soft or naïve when dealing with the West” (Parsi (2012), 149). The behavior of the senders during the Iraqi sanctions, such as the constant “moving [of] the goalpost”, similarly
magnified the fears that “even if you comply, [they’re] not going to lift the sanctions anyway” (Mazaheri (2010), 266).

Secondly, the uncertainty over intentions is likely to heighten the sense of threat among the target public. This is especially likely to be the case when the uncertainty is driven by the fear that the sender is harboring a ‘hidden agenda’. Are the publicly-declared goals and official demands simply the tip of the iceberg? Is the sender using the contested policy as an excuse to pursue other objectives? I argue that such suspicions about a larger, looming threat could cause a siege mentality (Bar-Tal and Antebi (1992)) among the target public leading to a greater backlash against the sender and depressing support for capitulation. Studies in both international relations (e.g. Mueller (1973)) and social psychology (e.g. Wohl, Branscombe and Reysen (2010)) show that external threats can result in greater in-group cohesion and more negative attitudes towards the source of the threat. Individuals may also respond to threats by “opposing policies” that favor the source of external threat (Stephan and Stephan (2017), 50). In short, I expect greater uncertainty over sender intentions to depress support for policy change because it 1) triggers the fear of getting cheated and 2) heightens the perception of external threat.

**Hypothesis 1:** The public support for policy change in the target declines when there is uncertainty over the intentions of the sender.

### 4.1 Moderating Factors: Partisanship

While I expect uncertainty over sender intentions to have a negative effect in public opinion on average, such a shift is unlikely to be homogeneous. Particularly, information about uncertainty would likely have a stronger impact on pro-government individuals. I argue that this is mainly because the supporters of the ruling party would associate themselves more closely with the potential losses of the government. Previous studies have shown that external interventions in domestic affairs can have heterogeneous effects on the public opinion. More specifically, party identification is found to be an important factor that predicts who approves and who opposes the foreign involvement. For example, Frye (2019) finds that information about Western sanctions against Russia had a negative effect on support for the government among Putin skeptics, while it had no statistically significant effect on the Putin supporters. Studies that examine other forms of interventions, such as electoral meddling (Corstange and Marinov (2012), Tomz and Weeks (2020), Bush and Prather (2020)), reach similar conclusions. More specifically, the supporters of the targeted actors oppose the intervention, the opponents have more positive views.

The effect of partisanship can be driven by the calculations of political cost and benefit. Individuals who support the government would be opposed to sanctions because of the expectation that it could undermine their political fortunes. Conversely, the supporters of the opposition would be motivated to back sanctions in the hopes that the government would be weakened. The partisan divide can also be driven by more symbolic reasons (Tomz and Weeks (2020)). Even if individuals do not expect the sanctions to affect themselves or their party, they may still react harshly. This is mainly because they find outside actors’ expression of disapproval of their party objectionable, like when “[in sports] people disapprove when fans cheer for the opposition” (Tomz and Weeks (2020), 860).

**Hypothesis 2:** The negative effect of uncertain intentions will be more pronounced among the supporters of the target government.
4.2 Moderating Factors: Economic Costs

Another important factor that may moderate the effect of sanctions is the extent to which they will damage the economy. Priming individuals on the economic costs of sanctions would likely lead to increased support for policy change. This suggests that economic cost treatment would dampen the negative effect of uncertainty over intentions. I argue that information about the cost may increase individuals’ willingness to take risks. This expectation is line with the findings by Grossman, Manekin and Margalit (2018) who show that Israelis were more supportive of changing government policies when the sanctions were more comprehensive, rather than targeted, and were imposed by the United States, Israel’s key ally. That individuals would be more accommodating of concessions when the status quo is costly to maintain is also in line with studies in the conflict literature which have found that higher war costs can undermine public support for war (e.g. Gartner and Segura (1998), Karol and Miguel (2007)). Similarly, individuals are found to be more accommodating of negotiated settlements in inter-state disputes when the economic costs are high. For example, Quek and Johnston (2018) find that, Chinese respondents who were told that a war with Japan would derail China’s economic development exhibited higher support for China’s backing down in a hypothetical crisis with Japan.

Building on these studies, I argue that individuals who are primed to think about the economic costs of sanctions exhibit greater support for policy change than individuals who are not. For example, between 1961-65 the U.S. imposed sanctions against Sri Lanka in response to the expropriation of the assets of US and UK oil companies. After a period of resistance by the left-leaning Bandaranaike government which concluded deals with the U.S.S.R in response to U.S suspension of aid, the target government signaled its intention to acquiesce to sender demands. But before it could do so, it was replaced in elections by a pro-compliance conservative United National Party who campaigned during the elections that it would settle the dispute with the oil companies “within 24 hours” (Olson (1977), 217). The new government gave in to the US demands as soon as it came to power, and the sanctions were lifted. The severity of the sanctions likely undermined any potential opposition to concessions to the sender. The sanctions intensified the economic crisis that had already been engulfing Sri Lanka, which, by 1964, had “reserves sufficient for only forty-five days’ worth of normal imports” (Olson (1977), 214).

**Hypothesis 3:** The information about economic cost of sanctions will have a positive impact on support for policy change.

5 CAATSA Sanctions against Turkey

Turkey declared its intention to purchase Russian S-400 long-range surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) in 2017, after reversing its decision to buy Chinese missiles in 2015 under Western pressure (Reuters (2015)). Yet the warnings by Washington failed to influence Ankara’s decision to buy Russian weapons. In 2019, Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu said Turkey would not “bow down to those who show animosity”. The first components of the S-400 arrived in Turkey in July 2019. Then Turkish air force personnel were sent to Russia for training (Kasapoglu (2020)). The final components of the missile system arrived in January 2020, despite the continued threats of sanctions. For example, White House National Security adviser said in 2019 that “there’s no place in NATO for the S-400. There’s no place in NATO for significant Russian military purchases...Turkey will feel the impact of those sanctions” (Reuters (2019)).
In response to Turkey’s defiance of these threats, the U.S. first removed Turkey from the F-35 Lightening II stealth fighter program – a project in which Turkey has been a cost-sharing partner since 2001 (BBC (2019)). Then in December 2020, the Trump Administration imposed sanctions against Turkey’s Directorate of Defense Industry (SSB) and four of its officials pursuant to the CAATSA sanctions provisions enacted by Congress against Russia in 2017. CAATSA sanctions are imposed against any individual who “engages in a significant transaction with a person that is part of, or operates for, or on behalf of, the defense or intelligence sectors of the Government of the Russian Federation”. The Trump administration added four Turkish officers of the SSB to the Office of Foreign Assets Control’s Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (OFAC SDN) List. It also prohibited granting of U.S. licenses or other authorizations for exports or re-exports to SSB of goods or technology, forbade loans or credits by U.S. financial institutions to SSB, and banned U.S. Export-Import Bank assistance for exports of any kind to SSB.

The main goal of CAATSA is to isolate Russia and prevent Moscow from expanding its sphere of influence. This Congressional Act aims to achieve this by deterring third parties from cooperating with Russian defense and intelligence sectors. The U.S. claims that sanctions imposed at third parties are not aimed at weakening them. For example, in September 2018, the U.S. imposed sanctions against China for its purchase of SU-35 fighter jets and S-400 missiles from Russia (Reuters (2018)). But the U.S. was careful to highlight that sanctions were “not intended to undermine the defense capabilities of any particular country” and that they “aimed at imposing costs upon Russia in response to its malign activities” (ibid). Likewise, following the December 2020 sanctions against Turkey, the U.S reitreated that the real target of sanctions is Russia, and not Turkey. The State Department underscored that the goal of the sanctions was to deny the Russian defense sector access to funds, and protect U.S. military technology and personnel. Former Secretary of State Pompeo reiterated that the intention of the U.S. is not to undermine the military capabilities or the combat readiness of the Turkish army (StateDepartment (2020)). President Erdogan, on the other hand, has insisted that the ‘real objective’ of the sanctions is “more malevolent”. It is purported to undermine Turkey’s efforts to become self-sufficient in the defense sector. “The real goal of the sanctions is to cripple the leap forward we have achieved in the defense industry, so as to keep us dependent” (DeutscheWelle (2020)). Some Turkish commentators have further suggested that the ‘real reason’ for sanctions has nothing to do with the S-400 missiles. The sanctions aim to undermine Turkey’s military operations in Iraq and Syria against the armed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). “The real problem is that Turkey hasn’t allowed the U.S. to establish a teror state in northern Syria,” one commentator is quoted saying by the TRT, a state-owned news channel. “If Turkey had kept silent about the planned terror state in Syria, the U.S. would not have made much fuss about the S-400.” (TRT (2020)).

6 Research Design

I fielded an online survey experiment in Turkey on 1,218 adults to investigate the effect of uncertainty over sender intentions on support for policy change in the target state.12 The respondents were recruited through Facebook ads, which have been increasingly used by political scientists

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1 This survey received IRB approval by the University of Pittsburgh’s Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) on March 3, 2021. The IRB approval number is: STUDY21010024
2 The survey design pre-registered at Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) registry prior to the implementation
to conduct surveys in non-U.S. contexts (Boas, Christenson and Glick (2020)). This tool is especially convenient given that Facebook has over 50 million users in Turkey (approximately 60% of the country’s entire population). The advertisement asked viewers to provide their opinions about an important recent current event. The ad was clicked 4,954 times taking the users to the survey hosted on the Qualtrics platform. Approximately 25% of those who clicked the ad completed the survey. The survey contained ten questions. The average response time was 279 seconds, signaling that respondents were generally attentive.

A major drawback of using recruitment tools such Facebook or Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) is that it is extremely difficult to build nationally representative samples. The sample can be skewed towards a certain demographic group. In my sample, the respondents were older and predominantly male. The median age in Turkey is 24, while the median age in this survey was 46. Approximately 49% of the Turkish population is female, while only 21% of the respondents were female. In terms of education, however, my sample was very close to the national average. While 35% of Turkish citizens have post-secondary education, in my sample this was 39%. It should still be noted that a number of studies that conduct comparisons across population-based and convenience samples on a wide array of issues and topics (e.g. Mullinix et al. (2015)) show that the results of experiments using convenience samples largely replicate the results from population samples. Similarly, Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) conclude that Mturk samples are more diverse than typical experimental samples (e.g. internet panels, undergraduate volunteers, recruits off the street) and not substantially different on many demographic and political variables from nationally representative samples.

This case provides a unique opportunity to investigate the effect of sanctions on public opinion. First, it allows me to prioritize realism of the experiments. Providing realistic scenarios to the subjects is important as the hypothetical scenarios that are “abstract and devoid of contextual information” can weaken the external validity of surveys (Weiss and Dafoe (2018), 11) As such, recent studies highlight the importance of asking survey respondents questions about “real, salient issues”, instead of fictitious scenarios about fictitious actors (e.g. Kreps and Wallace (2016), Chapman and Chaudoin (2017)). As discussed above, the imposition of U.S. sanctions against Turkey is a recent and highly salient event. By investigating the effect of real sanctions, the present research builds on studies that investigate public opinion during real sanction episodes (Grossman, Manekin and Margalit (2018), Frye (2019)). It also contributes to the literature on sanctions and public opinion by examining an issue area that has not been explored before. The relationship between sanctions and public opinion has been studied in the context of human rights (Grossman, Manekin and Margalit (2018), Sejersen (2020)), military aggression (Frye (2019)) and economic policy (Gueorguiev, McDowell and Steinberg (2020)). However, no research has examined the public opinion effect of sanctions that are imposed for international arms sales or alliance choices.

6.1 Survey

The main independent variable in the study is the experimental treatments. I manipulate information about 1) uncertainty about sender intentions, 2) economic cost. I adopt ‘between-subject’ survey design where each participant is subjected to one treatment, and the comparisons are made

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3 The language is kept deliberately generic in order avoid priming the respondents.
4 Figure A1b in the Appendix shows the ad the viewers saw. Figure A1a shows the English translation.
5 The ad was live nine days between March 5-14, 2021.
Experimental Group | Treatment
--- | ---
Control | Official U.S. goals
Treatment 1 | Official goals = real goals
Treatment 2 | Treatment 1 + economic cost
Treatment 3 | Official goals ≠ real goals
Treatment 4 | Treatment 3 + economic cost

Table 1: **Summary of Experimental Conditions**

across individuals. I randomly assigned respondents to one of five experimental groups (Control + four treatment conditions). The control group only receives the following neutral background information about the imposition of U.S. sanctions. The other groups receive varying information about the intentions of the sender and the cost of sanctions. Table 1 summarizes the experimental conditions. Individuals in each group read the following texts:

**Control**: Last December, the U.S. imposed economic sanctions on Turkey in reaction to the purchase of S-400 missiles from Russia. In this respect, a number of restrictions has been placed on the Directorate of Defense Industry, making the importation and exportation of military equipment more difficult.

The first treatment group receives additional information about U.S. objectives. Specifically, after reading the neutral background text, the respondents are given the information that experts agree that the U.S.’ ‘real objective’ reflects the officially proclaimed goals.

**Treatment 1**: Control + The US has stated that its goal is to prevent Russia from gaining influence and funds. Some experts agree that the real objective of these sanctions is indeed to weaken Russia.

The second treatment group receives the same information as the first treatment. Additionally, they read about the potential economic damage the sanctions are likely to impose on the Turkish economy, if the government does not reverse its policy.

**Treatment 2**: Treatment 1 + Some experts highlighted that additional sanctions would further damage the Turkish economy.

The third treatment group reads the same information as the control group, but receives additional information about uncertainty about the U.S. intentions. More specifically, after reading the neutral background information, the respondents are given the information about doubts raised by experts over the true goals over the sender.

**Treatment 3**: Control + The US has stated that its goal is to prevent Russia from gaining influence and funds. Some experts, however, raise doubts that the real objective of the U.S. is to limit Turkey’s autonomy in defense industry and weaken Turkish military capabilities.

Remember that I expect the subjects in this experimental group to exhibit lower support for policy-change than the control and first treatment groups. If the goal of the U.S. is to weaken Turkey militarily—and not merely about containing Russia—then this introduces the possibility that even if Turkey decides not to buy the S-400 missiles, the U.S. may not lift the sanctions.
Finally, in order to test the moderating effect of the cost of sanctions, the fourth treatment group receives additional information about the potential damage of the sanctions on the Turkish economy, if the U.S. ramps up its sanctions program. I expect the average support for policy change to be higher than the third treatment group.

**Treatment 4:** Treatment 3 + Some experts highlighted that additional sanctions would further damage the Turkish economy.

The outcome of interest of this study is two-fold. The primary dependent variable is a categorical variable indicating support for policy change. Following the treatments, respondents are asked the extent to which they approve or disapprove of changing the government’s S-400 policy. It ranges from 1 (strongly oppose) to 5 (strongly support). The second outcome variable is derived from an open-ended question that is asked following whether they support policy change. The respondents are asked to provide more detailed explanation of the reasoning in their answer. Such questions have been asked by other studies, including Tomz (2007) and Weiss and Dafoe (2019), to gain deeper understanding of the thought-process of the respondents.

The polarity scores of these responses constitute the second outcome variable. I generate these scores by using a Turkish lexicon, which is a dictionary that matches each word or phrase with a sentiment score. By employing lexicon-based sentiment analysis, each individual response is assigned a score indicating its emotional tone and polarity (positive vs. negative sentiment). It should be noted that because Turkish is an agglutinative language, where “grammatical functions are indicated by adding various suffixes to stems” (Çakir and Güldamlasioğlu (2016)), language-independent methods that use English lexicons to code non-English texts (e.g. Kaity and Balkrishnan (2019)) would be ineffective. Thus the automated analysis of Turkish texts require its own lexicon. I rely on Turkish sentiment lexicon (SWNetTR++) developed by Sağlam, Genç and Sever (2019), which is, to my knowledge, the most comprehensive Turkish lexicon available.

### 6.2 Findings

Descriptively, 51% of the respondents said that they oppose policy-change. 30% said that they support the reversal of the S-400 policy, while 18.5% stated that they are neutral. Table A1 shows the descriptive statistics of the main variables. Table A2 in the Appendix, which reports the balance test, shows that the randomization was overall sound. Table 2 displays the main results from the ordered probit regression. I pool the first and second treatment groups on the one hand, and the third and fourth treatment groups on the other. Remember that the only difference between these two groups is that the latter introduces uncertainty about intentions. The first model tests Hypothesis 1. The second model, which includes the interaction term between the treatment and partisanship variable, tests Hypothesis 2. The respondents are asked about their political affiliation before the experimental treatments. Both models include a number of control variables. More specifically, I control for the gender, age, and education. I additionally asked respondents their opinion of the U.S. and Russia, both before and after the treatments on a 5-point scale that ranges from 1 (very unfavorable) to 5 (very favorable). The results show that women and individuals with college education are more likely to support policy change, even though these variables are not statistically significant at conventional levels (p<0.11 and p<0.14, respectively).
Expectedly, individuals who have more favorable opinion of the U.S. are more likely to support; while those who have more favorable opinion of Russia are more likely to oppose policy-change. The predicted probability of strongly supporting policy change increases from 2% to 55% when the individual’s favorability the U.S. increases from its minimum to maximum, other variables held at their means.

The coefficient plot in Figure 1 displays the main findings. Information that the officially declared goals reflect the U.S.’ real goals seem to have had a positive impact on respondents’ support for policy change. The effect becomes larger and statistically significant at $p<0.05$ level when individuals are told about the potential economic damage the sanctions would inflict. This seems to lend partial support to the Hypothesis 3. However, the uncertainty treatment did not seem to have a significant impact on support for policy change. Further, the effect is in the opposite direction. The results from Table 2 further indicate that there is no support for Hypothesis 1. Individuals who read information about uncertainty over U.S. goals do not display lower levels of support for policy change.

![Figure 1: The Effect of Treatments on Support for Policy Change](image)

I do, however, find strong support for Hypothesis 2. As mentioned previously, a number of studies have shown that outside intervention in domestic politics can have heterogeneous effects. As such, I expect the negative effect of uncertainty over intentions to be stronger among the supporters of the government. Model 2 includes the interaction term between the uncertainty treatment and government supporter variable. The sign of the interaction term is negative and statistically significant at $p<0.001$ level. Figure 2 shows this relationship visually. The black circles and error bars represent the coefficient values of the variables based on the full sample. The blue circles and the error bars represent the coefficient values of the variables among the government supporters. As can be seen, the negative effect of the uncertainty treatment is stronger among the supporters of President Erdogan and his coalition partner Nationalist Action.
Table 2: Sanctions and Target Public Opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty Treatment</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>0.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.070)</td>
<td>(0.075)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Supporter</td>
<td>-1.024***</td>
<td>-0.669***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.116)</td>
<td>(0.152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty*Government Supporter</td>
<td>-0.779***</td>
<td>(0.279)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.135</td>
<td>0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.086)</td>
<td>(0.086)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.003)</td>
<td>(0.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (Postsecondary)</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>0.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorability of the U.S.</td>
<td>0.519***</td>
<td>0.517***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorability of Russia</td>
<td>-0.176***</td>
<td>-0.176***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

It should be highlighted that the opinions of this group are particularly consequential in competitive authoritarian regimes like Turkey where the opposition actors have diminished capability to impose political costs on the government.

Hypothesis 3 regarding the moderating role of economic costs finds mixed support. On the one hand, individuals in the second treatment group exhibited higher support for policy change than the control group. The difference is statistically significant. Respondents in this group also exhibited higher support than the individuals in the first treatment group. On the other hand, economic cost did not move opinions for individuals in the uncertainty treatments. In Table 4, I compare the level of support for policy change across the third and fourth treatment groups. Remember that the only difference between these groups is that one of them receives information about the potential economic damage of possible U.S. sanctions. However, information about economic cost does not have any significant effect. Tables A3 and A4 in the Appendix further show this. But it should be noted that this non-finding does not mean that economic cost does not matter in affecting public opinion. It means that information about the likely economic impact was insufficient to move opinions in a significant way. Remember that the survey was conducted in early March right after the imposition of the sanctions, and before the sanctions had any discernible negative economic effect. It is possible that economic costs play a role in shaping individuals attitude only after they personally experience the impact.

To complement the main analysis that focuses on the effect of treatments on preferences of respondents regarding policy change, I explore if the treatments had a more subtle effect on individuals. To do so, I conducted automated text analysis using the responses to the open-ended question. Table 3 reports the results from the sentiment analysis. I use SWNetTR++ sentiment lexicon consisting of over 49,000 words, to categorize words into positive and negative classes. Then each individual’s response is assigned a sentiment score. I regress the binary variables indicating the treatment group on these sentiment scores. As can be seen, the individuals in the uncertainty treatments (Treatments 3 and 4) exhibit significantly more negative reaction

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Footnote:

7 Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been in an alliance with the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) since the July 2016 coup attempt.
Figure 2: The Moderating Role of Partisanship

compared to the control group. Individuals who are in the first and second treatment groups, on the other hand, do not significantly differ from the control group. This provides suggestive evidence that while treatments on average did not result in a significant change in the policy preferences, it may have had have some effect on individuals’ feelings.

Table 3: Sentiment Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment group</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 1</td>
<td>-0.416</td>
<td>(0.259)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 2</td>
<td>-0.383</td>
<td>(0.255)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 3</td>
<td>-0.650**</td>
<td>(0.255)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 4</td>
<td>-0.510*</td>
<td>(0.262)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-0.323*</td>
<td>(0.178)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>933</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

7 Conclusion

Sanctions have been widely used with the long-term decline in inter-state wars and the increasing preference for non-violent means of dispute settlement. Scholars have long suggested that how
economic sanctions affect public opinion in the target state plays an important role in whether sanctions succeed or not. More specifically, the public reaction to sanctions can influence the political costs for the target leader of a potential policy change. However, until recently, studies did not directly test this relationship. In this chapter, I explored the role of uncertainty over intentions, which is pervasive in sanctions cases. In many instances, the sanctioning states have unclear or conflicting goals. In others, there is considerable uncertainty about whether the officially declared demands reflect the ‘true intentions’ or whether the sender is harboring a ‘hidden agenda’. While incomplete information is believed to be one of the most significant problems during international bargaining, its effect on public opinion remains under-researched. The findings from this study show that such uncertainty can have an important influence on public support for policy change, at least among certain groups. The fact that the government supporters react negatively to uncertainty has non-trivial implications, given that they are particularly well-positioned to impose political costs on the targeted government, especially in competitive authoritarian regimes like Turkey.

The findings indicate that senders may have some control over whether sanctions trigger a backlash or lead to higher support for policy change in the target public. Thus strategies that minimize mixed signaling by the sender can help increase the probability of sanctions success. Nevertheless, it should be noted that no sender can completely control the message the target society receives. Domestically, the target governments would have far greater influence over the information about the sanctions and the likely intentions of the senders. As discussed above, targets can deliberately stir up uncertainty in order to justify not complying with sender demands. Thus there are limits to what the sender can do to minimize uncertainties. However, as the U.S. sanctions against Iran demonstrate, sender behavior often matters, even when the targets are non-democratic regimes.

The findings have implications beyond the case of Turkey. Other countries have faced threats or the imposition of sanctions for alliance choices or arms purchases. For example, the U.S. imposed targeted sanctions against China’s Equipment Development Department in 2018 for Beijing’s purchase of Russian weaponry (Reuters (2018)). Likewise, the U.S. has recently threatened India with sanctions if the latter continues with its planned acquisition of the Russian S-400
missiles (Reuters (2021)). In sum, by using the recent U.S. economic sanctions against Turkey over the latter’s purchase of Russian air defense systems, this article builds on a small but growing literature on the links between sanctions and public opinion (Grossman, Manekin and Margalit (2018), Frye (2019), Gueorguiev, McDowell and Steinberg (2020)). It contributes to this research by testing a novel hypothesis about the role of uncertain intentions in a new context. The findings demonstrate that holding certain characteristics (i.e. sender, issue area, economic cost) constant, sanctions may elicit different reactions from the target population. Future studies should further explore how various sender-target interactions can influence public opinion and the effectiveness of economic sanctions.
Appendix

Tables A3 and A4 report the results of the economic cost treatment. In Table A3, the comparison is made between the first and second treatment group. Both of these groups received information at the officially declared goals of the U.S. reflect its ‘real intentions’. The second group, however, additionally read that the U.S. sanctions would damage Turkey’s economy. In Table A4, the first and third treatment groups are pooled and compared with the second and fourth treatment groups. Remember that the only difference between these groups is that the former receives no information about economic cost, while respondents in the second and fourth treatment groups do. Overall, the results show that information about economic cost did not have a large impact on support for policy change.

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for Policy Change (DV)</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Female)</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>46.77</td>
<td>11.55</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (Post-secondary)</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government supporter</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion of the U.S. (pre-treatment)</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion of the U.S. (post-treatment)</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion of Russia (pre-treatment)</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion of Russia (post-treatment)</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A short academic research survey: We would like to hear your opinion on current affairs of Turkey.

(a) English Translation

Kısa bir akademik araştırma anketi: Güncel konular hakkında görüşlerinizi merak ediyoruz.

(b) Turkish Original

Figure A1: Facebook Advertisements
Table A2: **Balance Test** (One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Control (N=247)</th>
<th>Treatment 1 (N=249)</th>
<th>Treatment 2 (N=242)</th>
<th>Treatment 3 (N=244)</th>
<th>Treatment 4 (N=236)</th>
<th>Prob&gt;F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Female)</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (College)</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-government</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Favorability</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A3: Economic Costs and Public Opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Coefficient SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost Treatment</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>(0.099)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Supporter</td>
<td>-0.648***</td>
<td>(0.155)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorability of the U.S.</td>
<td>0.585***</td>
<td>(0.055)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorability of Russia</td>
<td>-0.251***</td>
<td>(0.059)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>(0.122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>(0.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (College)</td>
<td>0.130</td>
<td>(0.100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations 489

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$

Table A4: Economic Costs and Public Opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Coefficient SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost Treatment</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td>(0.070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Supporter</td>
<td>-1.025***</td>
<td>(0.116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorability of the U.S.</td>
<td>0.520***</td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorability of Russia</td>
<td>-0.177***</td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>(0.086)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>(0.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (College)</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations 969

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$
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