Parliament at War:
Partisan conflict in parliamentary systems of government during periods of national crisis

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Author's Declaration

All submitted versions of this thesis (regardless of submission type) are identical.

Chapter Two, page 16 paragraph 4 to page 19 paragraph 3, was partially submitted as a preliminary research design paper for the course POLS4011 - Research Training: Scope and Methods at the Australian National University, June 2015.

I hereby declare that, except where it is otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis represents my own original work.

Harrison Miller
October 2015
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Abstract

The official parliamentary Opposition serves an important accountability function when it scrutinises the actions of the Government. Yet during periods of national crisis, such as war, the expectations surrounding how the Opposition ought to perform this role seem altered. In response, this thesis examines how periods of national crisis influence the partisan conflict of parliamentary discourse in the context of the Australian Commonwealth Parliament. Partisan conflict is initially quantified by House of Representatives voting divisions, with a mean comparison analysis comparing the frequency of divisions during periods of known crisis. A significant diminution of partisan conflict is observed during these periods of crisis. This inverse relationship between crises and partisan conflict is further examined in two case studies: the First World War and the Second World War. Media content analysis of the Sydney Morning Herald, and qualitative content analysis of parliamentary debate is undertaken. The outcome of this multi-method approach is to demonstrate a robust inverse relationship between national crises and partisan conflict, such that, as the sense of national crisis increases, the degree of partisan conflict decreases. It is concluded that this relationship reflects a positive capacity for bipartisanship when the situation requires.
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Introduction

The official parliamentary Opposition is a well established and respected institution of Westminster systems of government. Indeed, Robert Dahl has suggested that the existence of an Opposition party is perhaps ‘the most distinctive characteristic of a democracy itself’, the absence of which necessarily questions the existence of democracy. The parliamentary Opposition serves an essential accountability function when it seeks to amend, examine, scrutinise, and criticise the actions of the Government.

Yet, during periods of crisis, the expectations concerning how the Opposition exercises its role seem altered. Scrutiny and criticism of the Government during periods of crisis can lead to the Opposition being accused of ‘lacking bipartisanship’, ‘playing party politics’ or invoking ‘party strife’. This thesis examines this phenomenon by asking: ‘How do periods of national crisis alter the partisan conflict of parliamentary discourse?’ For the purposes of this study, the independent variable is national crises and the dependent variable is partisan conflict. It is hypothesised that the two exist in an inverse relationship, such that, as a sense of national crisis increases, the degree of partisan conflict decreases.

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Introduction

In order to test this theory, this thesis initially operationalises partisan conflict by parliamentary voting divisions, as voting divisions are constant across time and quantifiable through Hansard. A mean comparison analysis is employed in order to compare the mean frequency of voting divisions during periods of known crisis as compared to the absolute historical average. The product of this initial analysis is consistent with the hypothesis, demonstrating a diminution of partisan conflict in five of the six periods of crisis evaluated. Informed by this initial analysis, two case studies of the First World War and the Second World War are selected for further analysis. Within the context of these two case studies, partisan conflict is secondarily evaluated by contemporary media coverage and parliamentary debate. Through this multi-method approach of mean comparison analysis, media content analysis and qualitative content analysis, this thesis finds a robust inverse relationship between national crises and partisan conflict.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter One offers a survey of the literature surrounding both national crises and partisan conflict. It considers the various ways both concepts have been understood in the literature and establishes the conceptual definitions which will inform the current thesis. In surveying the vast crises literature, it is found that multiple studies have anecdotally observed the relationship between crisis and partisan conflict, yet none have empirically demonstrated the existence of a relationship. Studies of the relationship between national crises and Executive popularity are identified as the closest quantitative equivalent and their methodology is examined at length. Specifically adopted is John Mueller’s theory, that for crises to be operative as an independent variable, they must be: i. international, ii. involve the
subject country and iii. be sharply focused. The literature review also considers the various methodologies which have been employed to quantify partisan conflict. Each of these existing methodologies are found to be variously deficient, hence the chapter concludes in arguing that a new methodology is required in order to quantify partisan conflict.

Chapter Two details the methodology which will be employed in the study. It establishes the tri-fold operationalisation of partisan conflict by: i. House of Representatives voting divisions, ii. Australian newspaper articles indicative of partisan conflict and iii. the substance of parliamentary debate. It also establishes the means by which the independent variable of national crises will be informed: first, a priori during periods of known crisis and, second, by Australian newspaper articles referencing the particular threat. A mean comparison analysis of parliamentary voting divisions – first, across the entire federal parliamentary history, 1901-2014, and, second, during a priori periods of crisis – is established as the initial point of analysis. Informed by this initial analysis, two case studies of the First World War and Second World War are adopted for further media content analysis and qualitative content analysis.

Chapter Three presents and critically evaluates the data and results. House of Representatives voting divisions are graphed longitudinally and, via the application of a mean comparison analysis, a priori crises are seen to correlate with a significant diminution of partisan conflict. The First World War and the Second World War, being the two crises with the largest, sustained diminution of partisan conflict are adopted

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as case studies for further analysis. Within the context of these case studies, the independent variable of crisis is empirically quantified for the first time - while partisan conflict is secondarily quantified – by a media content analysis. By operationalising both variables by the frequency with which they are evident in *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper articles, variation in either variable may be observed at a micro-level across the span of the case studies. This media content analysis further confirms the hypothesised inverse relationship between national crises and partisan conflict. At key turning points within the case studies - such as i. the outbreak of war, ii. the entry or exit of a combatant nation, or iii. the declaration of victory, - variation in the independent variable of crisis correlates with an inversely proportional variation in the dependent variable of partisan conflict. The robustness of these findings is further reinforced by the final analytical tool of qualitative content analysis. Critical examination of parliamentary debate in the House of Representatives affords three conclusions. First, the most significant partisan debates occurred outside the most critical stages of the crises. Second, where partisan debate did occur, it largely concerned financial provisions rather than management of the crises proper. Third, where debate was explicitly partisan and the crisis still imminent, the legislature self-censored and partisan conflict was suppressed.

In light of these findings, Chapter Four closes with a discussion and conclusion. The key findings are summarised and it is concluded that national crises influence parliamentary discourse by facilitating a quiescence of partisan conflict. The existence of the relationship having been established, the thesis concludes with some implications, both democratic and electoral. Democratically, it is observed that national crises have a stifling effect on the ability of parliamentary Oppositions to fulfil their crucial accountability functions. It is suggested, however, that the threat posed by some crises is so great as to warrant a constraint upon regular party politics in the
name of national unity. Secondly, it is observed that the duration of crises is often so episodic as to not pose an ongoing risk to the viability of parliamentary Opposition. Electorally, it is observed that the demonstrated existence of a relationship between national crisis, partisan conflict, and popularity of the Executive may provide an incentive for an incumbent Executive to exaggerate or manufacture a crisis in the ultimate hope of prompting an increase in Executive popularity. It has been alleged that this practice, termed the politics of fear, has been practised by Australian leaders. The principle informing the theory having been demonstrated here, it is concluded that this is fruitful ground for further inquiry.

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Literature Review

Both national crises and partisan conflict are well established concepts in the political science literature. This review of that literature proceeds in three sections. The first section addresses the independent variable of national crises; establishing a conceptual definition of crisis and examines those studies which have taken it as the dependent variable. Emphasis is drawn to studies between crisis and presidential popularity - termed the ‘rally-around-the-flag’ phenomenon - though ultimately it is concluded that the relationship between crisis and partisan conflict has long been observed, but never empirically demonstrated. The second section of this literature review is oriented towards the dependent variable of partisan conflict. It too begins with a conceptual definition, drawn from studies which have traced the development of the party system and particularly the institutionalisation of the parliamentary Opposition. Particular focus is also drawn to various studies which have sought to quantify partisan conflict, in each case evaluating the respective strengths and limitations of the methodologies employed. Ultimately, it is argued that no methodology presently existing within the literature is sufficient, a gap which will be filled by the methodology of quantifying voting divisions, which is discussed in the subsequent method chapter. The third and final section summarises the theory which

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has been drawn from the literature review, restating the hypothesis to be evaluated by the method chapter.

**Independent variable of crisis**

The concept of crisis has been the subject of considerable academic inquiry, to the point of existing as an independent sub-literature termed disaster and crisis studies. While crisis has been variously defined within this sub-literature, three attributes feature in most definitions: crises are unexpected, they threaten injury or harm, and they often necessitate prompt decision making. Herman emphasised the second aspect of decision making when he offered his classic definition of crisis as:

> a situation that threatens high-priority goals of the decision-making unit, restricts the amount of time available for response before the decision is transformed and surprises the members of the decision-making unit by its occurrence.

This definition was influential, though perhaps too narrowly defined in terms of elite decision making. Rosenthal, t’ Hart, and Charles offered a significantly enlarged definition when they defined crisis as:

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a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a social system, which - under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances - necessitates making critical decisions.\textsuperscript{15}

While Rosenthal and Kouzmin have defined crisis more generally still by emphasising its `un-ness'. A crisis, they offered, is:

unpleasantness in unexpected circumstances, representing unscheduled events, unprecedented in their implications and, by normal routine standards, almost unmanageable.\textsuperscript{16}

It is in these terms that crises will be understood in this study: as an unexpected event, disrupting a social system, threatening injury or harm, and often necessitating prompt decision making. In specifying \textit{national} crises as the independent variable this concept is enlarged to one that operates on a national scale.

There exists within the political science literature many studies which have sought to explain the connection between the interrelated variables of national crises, political leadership popularity, and partisan conflict.\textsuperscript{17} As early as 1911, German sociologist Robert Michels observed that, ‘Never are the forces of political parties of opposition less effective than at the outbreak of war’.\textsuperscript{18} Rather than being an organic and popular response, however, Michels theorised that the diminution of partisan conflict could be attributed to an enlargement of the power of the State and a diminished

\textsuperscript{17} John M. Mathews, “Political Parties and the War,” \textit{The American Political Science Review} 13, no. 2 (1919); Mueller, “Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson.”; \textit{War, Presidents, and Public Opinion}; Lee, “Rallying around the Flag.”; Brody, “The Rally Phenomenon in Public Opinion.”
toleration of dissent.\textsuperscript{19} This theory of state suppression is consistent with Michels’ context of pre-war German autocracy. Contemporary observance of the phenomenon in modern liberal democracies, however, requires alternative explanation. John Mathews offered such an alternative counter explanation in his 1919 study ‘Political Parties and the War’.\textsuperscript{20} Reflecting on the conduct of political discourse in the United Kingdom, United States and France during the First World War, Mathews anecdotally attributed the ‘quiescence of partisanship’ to an emergence of national patriotism.\textsuperscript{21} This theory of patriotism is premised upon the established principle that ‘threats from outside a system promote cohesion within the system’.\textsuperscript{22} Mathews thus proposes patriotism as an intervening variable between the independent variable of crisis and dependent variable of partisan conflict. Mathews’ theory holds that a positive relationship exists between crisis and patriotism and an inverse relationship between patriotism and partisan conflict. Moreover, Mathews offers the proximity of the conflict, the extent of a nation’s involvement and the relative threat of invasion as important explanatory variables.\textsuperscript{23} Unfortunately, Mathews stops short of testing these theorised relationships. Thus, the relationship between national crises and partisan conflict has been often observed but not empirically demonstrated.

A greater quantitative focus has been afforded to a number of studies which adopt an independent variable of crisis and dependent variable of presidential popularity.\textsuperscript{24}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{} \textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 236.
\bibitem{} \textsuperscript{20} Mathews, “Political Parties and the War.”
\bibitem{} \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 213.
\bibitem{} \textsuperscript{22} Sigelman and Conover, “The Dynamics of Presidential Support During International Conflict Situations,” 303.
\bibitem{} \textsuperscript{23} Mathews, “Political Parties and the War,” 213.
\bibitem{} \textsuperscript{24} Mueller, “Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson.; War, Presidents, and Public Opinion; Lee, "Rallying around the Flag.;” Sigelman and Conover, “The Dynamics of Presidential Support During
\end{thebibliography}
Pre-eminent in this sub-literature is John Mueller’s 1970 study ‘Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson’. Mueller takes presidential popularity as his dependent variable, as informed by responses to the Gallup Poll question, ‘Do you approve or disapprove of the way (the incumbent) is handling his job as president’? Against this longitudinal data of presidential popularity Mueller sought to observe the predictive power of four independent variables, amongst them the so-called “rally around the flag variable” which anticipates that international crises and similar phenomena will give a President a short-term boost in popularity. These so-called ‘rally moments’ are operationalised around three criteria: they must, i. be international, ii. involve the US, and iii. be sharply focused. They must be international so they confront ‘the nation as a whole’, for domestic crises are equally as likely ‘to exacerbate internal divisions as they are to soothe them’. Finally, they must involve the subject nation because unrelated events ‘are less likely to seem relevant to the average [citizen]’ and prompt a domestic response. Mueller applied logistic regression analysis to examine the predictive power of periods of national crisis on the dependent variable of presidential popularity. The product of this analysis was to demonstrate a positive relationship between the independent variable of crisis and dependent variable of presidential popularity, such that, as the degree of crisis increases, presidential popularity likewise increases.
Subsequent studies have sought to account for the relationship between national crises and presidential popularity. Similar to Mathews, the first school of thought posits patriotism as the causal mechanism between crisis and presidential popularity. In his 1977 paper ‘Rallying around the Flag’, Jong Lee writes that during periods of crisis ‘the average man’s reaction will include a feeling of patriotism’ and ‘the President becomes the focus of national attention’; an anthropomorphic symbol of national unity. Lee categorises periods of known crisis under six variables: i. war and military crisis, ii. peace and reconciliation, iii. summit conferences, iv. policy initiatives, v. international setback, and the miscellaneous vi. personal. Lee calculates the variation in presidential popularity across each of these categories vis-à-vis a mean comparison analysis and finds wars and military crisis are ‘the events that tend to have relatively lasting impacts on presidential popularity’. Lee’s conclusions are consistent with the patriotism thesis.

Despite these studies, however, the patriotism thesis has not found universal acceptance. Scholars suggest it is ‘unlikely that the public rallies behind the president because of a reflexive patriotic response’. In seeking to account for the positive relationship between national crisis and presidential popularity a second school of thought has posited partisan conflict (our dependent variable) as an intervening variable. Termed the opinion leadership school, this second explanation is premised upon the hypothesis that ‘the public works with available information’ and ‘crisis can substantially alter the normal partisan character of the political information

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34 Lee, “Rallying around the Flag,” 254-55.
36 Brody, ”The Rally Phenomenon in Public Opinion,” 62.
the public is offered.\textsuperscript{37} Richard Brody argues that during crises events change at a rapid pace and the government retains an effective ‘monopoly on information about the situation.’\textsuperscript{38} In such an environment, opposing partisans are likely to either refrain from comment or offer ‘cautiously supportive statements’.\textsuperscript{39} Devoid of a counter narrative highlighting the president’s deficiencies, the public ‘rally around the president’ as reflected by a boost in presidential approval ratings. Seeking to evaluate this theory, Brody’s study examined the media coverage of known crises using least square regression analysis of two weekly news content variables within a sample of \textit{The New York Times} and CBS-TV News.\textsuperscript{40} Observing media coverage in this way, Brody’s analysis found that during periods of known crisis there were ‘fewer than usual commenting and even fewer commenting negatively’, consistent with his hypothesis that crises alter the partisan composition of news information.\textsuperscript{41} This finding led Brody to declare his results to be ‘generally supportive’ of the opinion leadership hypothesis.\textsuperscript{42}

A number of intermediary observations may be made about the existing crisis literature. Periods of prolonged national crisis - namely wars - have long been suggested to influence the conduct of domestic politics by prompting a ‘quiescence of partisanship’.\textsuperscript{43} The reality of this phenomenon, however, remains tangentially observed rather than empirically demonstrated.\textsuperscript{44} Greater qualitative data exists in the related research area of the relationship between national crisis and presidential

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 63.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 55.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 66.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 55.
\textsuperscript{43} Mathews, “Political Parties and the War,” 213.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
popularity. The following section, therefore, attempts to bring greater quantitative focus to partisan conflict by examining the state of the literature which attempts to quantify partisan conflict.

**Dependent variable of partisan conflict**

Conflict is an inherent reality of politics, wherever power exists its possession will be contested and its exercise challenged. As an inseparable feature of politics, therefore, conflict has been the subject of considerable academic inquiry. Political conflict - broadly defined as difference of opinion over policies, principles and ends - is a prevalent phenomenon in democratic discourse. In nations with established party systems, such political debate is often shaped by voter’s various partisan affiliations, with voters taking their cues from, and subsequently arguing, a ‘party position’. Transcending more general political debate, therefore, it is conflict of this variety, where adversaries - informed by partisan affiliations - divide along party lines, that may be termed partisan conflict. Ramirez articulated this in his definition of partisan conflict as ‘disagreement and contention concerning policies, core

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48 Ramirez, "The Dynamics of Partisan Conflict on Congressional Approval." 682.  
principles, courses of action, and desired end states that are split along partisan lines.\textsuperscript{50}

While partisan debate may be a mass phenomenon, engaged in by affiliated members at many levels of society, legislative partisan conflict is an elite phenomenon existing within the national legislature. Legislative partisan conflict is a product of institutionalised oppositions within the legislature. Canadian academic and politician Thomas Hockin has traced the development of Opposition partisan conflict within the context of the Westminster parliament.\textsuperscript{51} Such criticism of the Government, records Hockin, was once considered treacherous, an act of sedition against the monarch with whom the Government was synonymous.\textsuperscript{52} Once the legitimacy of opposition was recognised, however, its effective functioning continued to be hampered by institutional constraints. Reid and Forrest have surveyed the institutionalisation of the Opposition in the Australian context, noting the institutional and financial constraints upon early Leaders of the Opposition, then lacking the additional trappings of office.\textsuperscript{53} Australia’s first Leader of the Opposition, George Reid, for instance, faced the nearly insurmountable task of:

maintaining his home and family (in Sydney), travelling thence in Session weekly to Melbourne, sustaining himself there for three or four days a week, and doing at least minimal entertaining as leader of his party and as “alternative Prime Minister” round the year - all on a salary of £8 a week!\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{50} Ramirez, "The Dynamics of Partisan Conflict on Congressional Approval," 682.
\textsuperscript{51} Hockin, "The Roles of the Loyal Opposition in Britain’s House of Commons: Three Historical Paradigms."
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 52.
\textsuperscript{53} Reid and Forrest, "The Official Opposition."
\textsuperscript{54} L. F. Crisp cited in ibid., 51.
In subsequent decades, however, the belief that ‘there is virtue in opposition per se’ gained greater currency as partisan opposition grew to be, in the words of Robert Dahl, ‘the most distinctive characteristic of a democracy itself.’

Within this thesis, the term partisan conflict is used in the following way and in accordance with three criteria: first, as conflict it concerns disagreement and dispute over matters of policy, principles or means; second, as partisan conflict adversaries assume party positions and divide over party lines; third, this conflict is an elite phenomenon occurring within the federal legislature. Existing attempts at measuring partisan conflict of this kind have variously utilised three distinct methodologies: mass poll data, media coverage, and expert surveys.

Multiple studies have attempted to demonstrate potential for partisan conflict by appeal to mass poll data of voter’s disparate ideological affiliations. Recent studies by the Pew Research Centre, for example, highlight political polarisation as something of a proxy indicator for partisan conflict. Polling reports by Gallup similarly seek to reflect partisan distinctions within the electorate via public approval ratings for prominent politicians. While a certain comparability exists between partisan conflict and political polarisation, an important difference exists in the spheres in which they operate. While political polarisation operates at a broad societal level, partisan conflict is an elite phenomenon, which is primarily operative

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55 Barker, Studies in Opposition, 2.
56 Dahl, Political Oppositions in Western Democracies, xvi.
57 Ramirez, "The Dynamics of Partisan Conflict on Congressional Approval," 682.
60 Pew Research Centre, "Beyond Red Vs. Blue: The Political Typology".
61 Jones, "Obama Approval Ratings Still Historically Polarized".
within the legislature. Thus, while polarisation may both respond to, and inform, partisan conflict, for research purposes the concepts are necessarily distinct. Studies which attempt to leverage mass poll data to quantify partisan conflict fail to appreciate this limitation. A similar disconnect between the intended variable of analysis and the actual variable of analysis exists with regard to the second methodological approach of media analysis.

Textual analysis of media reportage has been an additional method adopted in the literature to quantify partisan conflict. Such media analysis was applied in Azzimonti’s 2014 study, ‘Partisan Conflict’, which measured the frequency of newspaper articles containing select search terms indicative of disagreement about government policy.62 In analysing newspaper articles for the period 1891-2013, the study established a longitudinal partisan conflict index, observing that partisan conflict ‘declined between 1891 and the early 1920s, remained relatively stable until 1965, and exhibited an increasing trend thereafter.’63 A limited attempt is then made to account for short-term fluctuations, though Azzimonti’s principal research concerned partisan conflict as merely the independent variable to explain economic policy uncertainty. It can be argued that Azzimonti’s study, and others employing media analysis as the primary methodology, have two main limitations: observational frequency and validity. Azzimonti’s study features monthly observation values for the period 1981-2013, though only annual observations for the greater period 1891-1980.64 While this is an understandable limitation of the chosen methodology, a higher observational frequency for an extended period of time would greatly aid in drawing meaningful inferences regarding micro fluctuations in partisan conflict. Historic media coverage

62 Azzimonti, “Partisan Conflict.”
63 Ibid., 2.
64 Ibid., 4.
is rarely as easily accessible and searchable as source documents of parliamentary proceedings themselves. Secondly, media coverage must be acknowledged to be an imperfect indicator of the subject being reported. It is true that when a phenomenon intensifies, it is more likely to result in media coverage of that phenomenon. Yet the relationship is not perfect and the media agenda is determined by a plethora of external variables for which it is difficult to entirely control. Thus, while media analysis may reveal helpful trends as part of a broader multi-methods approach, in isolation it is poorly suited to measure partisan conflict.

A final methodological approach present in the literature seeks to measure partisan conflict through expert surveys of legislators themselves. This method avoids the potential disconnect of the former two methodologies by engaging directly with the subject of analysis - legislators. A 2013 study by Adam Bonica, for instance, attempts to measure the ideology of candidates and legislators using financial contribution data; contributions from political action committees with readily knowable agendas informing evaluations of the ideology of candidates themselves. The study produced a method for developing a typology of legislators according to political ideology, enabling comment upon the possible ideological tensions present within the legislature. Yet the study fell short of observing actual partisan conflict. In considering this method, it is felt the definition of partisan conflict necessarily transcends ideological animosities (which behavioural or institutional considerations may suppress) to require behavioural manifestation. That is, partisan conflict is a behavioural phenomenon evidenced by actualised argument, dispute and disagreement. The mere potential for such conflict, no matter how great that potential

65 Bonica, "Ideology and Interests in the Political Marketplace."
may be, ought not be considered partisan conflict proper until it successfully manifests as such.

To summarise, there exists within the literature three different methods of quantifying partisan conflict: mass poll data, media content analysis and expert surveys. It has been argued, however, that each of these existing methodologies is variously deficient: mass poll data suffers from a validity issues, measuring popular polarisation rather than partisan conflict; media content analysis, employed in isolation, is open to random reliability errors; and expert surveys invalidly measure ideological differences rather than partisan conflict. In light of these deficiencies, the following method chapter establishes a new methodology of quantifying parliamentary voting divisions.

Theory

It is hypothesised that a national crisis diminishes the degree of partisan conflict within a parliamentary discourse, and that the two variables exist in a proportionally inverse relationship. Partisan conflict is here defined as disagreement, along partisan lines, within the national legislature, over the policies, principles and ends of political action. Crisis, meanwhile, is defined as an unexpected event, disrupting a social system, threatening injury or harm, and often necessitating prompt decision making.\textsuperscript{66} Appropriating Mueller, it is argued that a crisis is a necessary but insufficient condition to prompt a diminution of partisan conflict.\textsuperscript{67} That is, in order to prompt the hypothesised diminution of partisan conflict a national crisis must satisfy an


\textsuperscript{67} Mueller, "Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson," 209.
appropriation of Mueller’s three criteria: i. be international, ii. involve Australia and iii. be specific, dramatic and sharply focused.68 The logic informing these three criteria is contested.69 One explanation suggests that where an event involves Australia in an international setting there is a capacity for it to arouse a unifying patriotism to which the public and legislators alike respond.70 This unification is manifested both in the diminished partisanship of the legislature and increased popular support for the incumbent Executive. The second explanation holds that, because the event positions Australia on the international stage against some ‘other’, it is intuitively more difficult for opposing partisans to criticise and take a position against the Government of the day without appearing to criticise the nation itself in a manner akin to treachery.71 Whilst sensitive to these theoretical debates, however, the principle query of this research is the nature of the empirical relationship itself. In light of the identified limitations of the methodologies in the existing literature, it is suggested that meaningful evaluation of partisan conflict necessitates direct observation of the parliamentary process. This thesis will thus contribute to the literature a new methodology of quantifying partisan conflict via parliamentary voting divisions. Further, in adopting national crisis as the independent variable, the scope of the crisis literature will be similarly expanded. The quantification of both of these variables is discussed in Chapter 3.

68 War, Presidents, and Public Opinion, 209.
70 Lee, “Rallying around the Flag.” 37.
71 Brody, "The Rally Phenomenon in Public Opinion."
Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to develop an indicator of partisan conflict against which the independent variable of crisis may be evaluated, and then to explain the process by which that evaluation will be achieved. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section one explains the adoption of House of Representatives voting divisions as the proxy indicator for partisan conflict. It argues that House voting divisions are tangible, quantifiable, reliable and consistent. It also explains the process by which House voting divisions will be quantified and constructed into a monthly index spanning the history of the federal parliament. Section two explains how a mean comparison analysis will be utilised to observe the influence of the independent variable of crisis. Section three concludes by detailing the methodology of the case studies. It explains how media content analysis will be employed to inform independent evaluations of both the independent variable of crisis and the dependent variable of partisan conflict at a micro-level within the case studies. In doing so it explains in detail the search queries which inform the media content analysis and the manner in which they were developed.

Operationalising partisan conflict

Partisan conflict has been defined in the introduction as disagreement, along partisan lines, within the national legislature, over the policies, principles and ends of political action.\(^{72}\) This thesis argues that evaluation of partisan conflict ought to be centred upon the legislature itself; and therefore, adopts the frequency of House of Representatives voting divisions as a proxy indicator of partisan conflict.

\(^{72}\) Ramirez, "The Dynamics of Partisan Conflict on Congressional Approval," 682.
The Australian House of Representatives is a deliberative assembly. As such, the business of the House is advanced by motions 'moved' by individual Members suggesting a particular course of action. Standing Orders - being the procedures governing the House's proceedings - dictate that in the first instance the House is called upon to vote audibly by saying either 'Aye' or 'No' according to whether they support or oppose a particular motion. The Speaker then rules upon what they believe to be the expressed opinion of the House. Where there is bipartisanship upon a proposal, such rulings are straightforward. If, however, the vote is split and the Speaker's ruling on a motion is challenged, House Standing Orders require the issue be decided by a formal division. The occurrence of a voting division thus suggests two things: first, that there is disagreement in the House regarding a particular motion and, second, that the ruling of the Speaker regarding the motion has been 'challenged by more than one Member'. In both respects, the occurrence of a formal voting division is a valid indication of partisan conflict.

There are a number of additional criteria which establish voting divisions as a robust indicator of conflict. First, voting divisions represent a tangible and quantifiable expression of disagreement between the parties. Conflict is expressed in a variety of forms, but none as absolute nor as fundamental to the business of government as voting divisions on the floor of the House of Representatives. Second, parliamentary voting divisions are a consistent and non-contextually contingent expression of conflict. That is, voting divisions are an established and stable indicator of conflict.

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75 Ibid., s. 125.
76 House of Representatives Practice, 274.
unchanged across time. This consistency affords the opportunity for both temporal and interjurisdictional comparisons. Third, voting divisions constitute a dataset which exists for the entirety of Australia’s federal parliamentary history, 1901-2015, enabling longitudinal comparison. Fourth, this data is readily available and processable within federal parliamentary Hansard.

Legislative proceedings, including formal voting divisions, are recorded in a variety of official parliamentary documents.\(^77\) The official record of the proceedings of the House of Representatives is the Votes and Proceedings.\(^78\) Authored by the Clerk of the House as the head of the Department of the House of Representatives, the Votes and Proceedings are the authoritative minutes of the proceedings of the House. Issues arise, however, from the inconsistent manner in which the Votes and Proceedings record divisions of the House. The business of the House is dually comprised of formal sittings of the House proper overseen by the Speaker as presiding officer, and miscellaneous ‘committees’ chaired by various chairpersons.\(^79\) The inconsistency concerns whether the proceedings of committees are incorporated into the official Votes and Proceedings, or excluded on the basis of not being proceedings of ‘the House’ proper. Clerks of the House have adopted both positions in compiling Votes and Proceedings over the history of Australia’s federal parliament. During the first parliament, 1901-1903, committee business was excluded from the official record, with the Votes and Proceedings merely reading ‘The Speaker left the chair’, followed by, ‘The Speaker resumed the chair’, with the intervening


\(^79\) House of Representatives Practice, 359-61, 74.
proceedings omitted. Votes and Proceedings for 11 June 1901, for example, features just those same words, yet Hansard records that two divisions occurred during the intervening sitting of the Committee of the Whole.\textsuperscript{80} By the sixteenth parliament, 1940-1943, committee proceedings are incorporated in-full under a subheading of ‘In Committee’.\textsuperscript{81} This inconsistency, of either including or excluding committee proceedings - in which a considerable portion of divisions occur - would frustrate longitudinal evaluation and result in Votes and Proceedings being an unreliable source of data on divisions.

The second source of data on divisions, \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, is commonly known as Hansard. Produced by the Department of Parliamentary Services, Hansard is a transcription of parliamentary debate rather than a mere record of proceedings.\textsuperscript{82} Nevertheless, it records the full details of voting divisions and retains the authority of an official record of the parliament. Importantly, Hansard also maintains consistency in its reporting of voting divisions. Across the history of Australia’s federal parliament all voting divisions - in both committees and the House proper - are recorded in full, with formal divisions indicated by the procedural phrase ‘The House/Committee divided’ followed by an itemised list of the ‘Ayes’ and ‘Noes’. This consistency of reporting both justifies the use of Hansard as the source of division data and affords the utilisation of a keyword search methodology to quantify this data.

Voting divisions, then, will be quantified by a keyword search of Australia’s federal parliamentary Hansard for the period 1901-2014. Consistent with Hansard’s status as an official record, the phraseology by which divisions are reported is uniform across

\textsuperscript{80} V&P, 11 June 1901; Deb, 11 June 1901.
\textsuperscript{81} V&P, 1 October 1941.
\textsuperscript{82} Parliament of Australia, “House of Representatives Hansard”.

the period allowing for the methodology of a keyword search. Any occurrence, therefore, of either ‘The House divided’ or ‘The committee divided’ within Hansard will be taken to indicate the occurrence of a division. Hansard’s format as a comprehensive transcript of debate presents the slim possibility that either of these phrases could be used by a Member of the House in a rhetorical sense, rather than the procedural sense which indicates a division. It is believed, however, that any such rhetorical rather than procedural usages would be so few as to pose no meaningful threat to the validity of the chosen methodology.

The full archive of federal Hansard will be accessed from the Australian Parliament House website, while the keyword search will be executed via the ParlInfo Search functionality of the same.\footnote{Ibid.; Department of Parliamentary Services, “Parlinfo Search,” http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au.} ParlInfo Search is a searchable database aggregator of various parliamentary publications both contemporary and historical. Within the search engine a query of: “‘The House divided’ OR ‘The committee divided’” will be utilised to find all occurrences of either phrase.\footnote{Within the actual query the ‘OR’ operator is replaced by the sheffer stroke.} User defined search parameters will be employed to contain such results to the intended population of House of Representatives Hansard documents, eschewing other usages beyond this intended population. A monthly iterative sample will be adopted - the search being repeated with an iterative monthly sample of $n+1$ - from January 1901 through to the present day. In each instance the number of observations will be recorded in order to construct a monthly index of voting divisions in the House of Representatives, 1901-2014.
The first section of this method chapter has established House of Representatives voting divisions as a robust proxy indicator of partisan conflict. It has also detailed the utilisation of a keyword search of federal parliamentary Hansard in order to construct a monthly index of House voting divisions spanning the life of the federal parliament. Having quantified the dependent variable of partisan conflict, this second section explains how the influence of the independent variable of crisis will be assessed.

**Mean comparison analysis**

The research question of this thesis is ‘How do periods of national crisis alter the partisan conflict of parliamentary discourse?’ In considering the relationship between the independent variable of national crises and dependent variable of partisan conflict it has been hypothesised that the two exist in an inverse relationship. That is, that as the perception of national crisis increases the degree of partisan conflict is expected to decrease. If this hypothesis is to be confirmed, periods of known crisis in Australian history will be expected to display a diminution in the degree of partisan conflict when compared to the historical average.

In order to evaluate the existence of this hypothesised relationship, a mean comparison analysis will be adopted to compare the degree of partisan conflict during periods of known national crisis as compared to the historical average. The process of this mean comparison analysis will be as follows. First, the mean frequency of voting divisions per sitting will be calculated across the entire dataset to establish an effective baseline. Second, the mean frequency of voting divisions per sitting day will be calculated for each of the selected periods of known national crisis. Third, the historical mean will be compared to the mean of each crisis in order to observe any variation.
The periods of known crisis to be analysed have been selected for their particular resonance in the public consciousness. That is, they are each *a priori* periods of crisis at which the independent variable of national crisis can be assumed to have a high positive value. Each of the crises self-evidently satisfy the established definition of crisis in that they are: unexpected events, disrupting the social system, threatening injury or harm, and necessitating prompt decision making. Six crises have been identified for analysis. Four of these six are wars or military crises: the First World War, 1914-1918; the Second World War, 1939-1945; the Korean War, 1950-53; and the Vietnam War, 1962-1973. The final two crises are economic: the Great Depression, 1929-1932 and the Global Financial Crisis, 2000-2009. These crises and their respective durations are reproduced in Table 1. The mean frequency of voting divisions during the period of each of these crises will be calculated and compared to the decadal and absolute historical mean. The development of a decadal mean is detailed later in this chapter.

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86 One potential limitation of the crises selected concerns their contemporaneity. Of the six periods of crisis evaluated in this thesis only one, the Global Financial Crisis, occurred within the past forty-years. There exists the opportunity, therefore, for subsequent studies to extend the scope of this research to more contemporary crises such as the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars. The outcome of this potential future analysis would either complement these findings, or else provide the opportunity for yet further exploration and nuance. Evaluation of terroristic crises would be particularly timely given the tragic prevalence of acts of terrorism in contemporary society.


Methodology

Table 1: Periods of known crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wars and Military Crises</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914/8 - 1918/11</td>
<td>The First World War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939/9 - 1945/9</td>
<td>The Second World War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950/6 - 1953/7</td>
<td>The Korean War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962/7 - 1973/1</td>
<td>The Vietnam War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Crises</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929/10 - 1932/12</td>
<td>The Great Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/9 - 2009/03</td>
<td>The Global Financial Crisis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the hypothesised inverse relationship between crises and partisan conflict, it is expected that each of these periods of heightened crisis will correlate with corresponding diminutions in partisan conflict. If this relationship is able to be observed it will contribute towards confirming the hypothesis. In order to further strengthen the findings achieved by this method a series of case studies will also be adopted. The method of these case studies is detailed in the following section. The episodic and limited duration of modern acts of terrorism, however, expose potential limitations in the method which has been outlined here.\(^8\) The method of this thesis evaluates partisan conflict via parliamentary voting divisions, comparing the frequency of divisions between periods of crisis. This methodology is contingent, therefore, not only upon parliament sitting, but also requires parliament to sit with sufficient frequency to produce a representative sample size. The Lindt Café Siege of 15-16 December 2014, for instance, occurred during a ten-week end of year parliamentary recess – thus denying the ability for partisan conflict to be evaluated by

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\(^8\) Ramón Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no. 9 (2010).
the present methodology. Thus, while this method is appropriate for the present research where the selected crises have a prolonged duration, it is less well suited to evaluating episodic crises. This limitation provides the opportunity for future studies to develop additional methods to complement those employed here.

**Media content and qualitative content analysis**

Up to this point, the independent variable of national crises has been assumed from a *priori* knowledge rather than being independently quantified. That is, wars and periods of economic tumult have been adopted as self-evident crises rather than being identified by a quantitative evaluation of crisis. Where the dependent variable of partisan conflict varies, this has been attributed to the contemporary crisis. Given the uncontested status of each of these periods as bona fide crises, this approach has been appropriate. Within the more limited scope of case studies, however, it is both desirable and possible to quantify the independent variable of crisis directly. The methodology of media content analysis will, therefore, be used to quantify both the dependent and independent variables. By independently quantifying the independent variable of crisis *a posteriori*, it will then be possible to evaluate the existence of the hypothesised relationship at a micro-level within the case studies.

Adapting a methodology developed by Azzimonti, the media content analysis will be premised upon a keyword search of Australian newspaper articles with a view to identifying the relative frequency of articles reporting, in-turn, national crisis or

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partisan conflict.\textsuperscript{80} The assumption informing this methodology is that the frequency of media reports on a given phenomenon bear a close correlation to the actual occurrence of the phenomenon being reported; that is, that an increase in media reports indicative of partisan conflict suggests an increase in partisan conflict proper. Of interest, therefore, is not the exact number of relevant articles in a given month, but rather the relative variation in the number of articles over a series of months. In explaining the execution of this media content analysis, evaluation of the dependent variable of partisan conflict will be described first.

The media content analysis will be conducted by a keyword search of Australian newspaper articles. The search query developed to execute the keyword search is conceived around the combination of two separate indices: a structural index directed towards the structural variable of ‘politics’, and a substantive index capturing the substantive variable of ‘conflict’, a method taken from Azzimonti.\textsuperscript{91} Articles must satisfy both indices in order to be returned as a positive result. The construction of the two indexes is as follows. The index of structural variables, intended to identify articles which take ‘politics’ as the topic of comment, is populated by what may be considered ‘political nouns’. The occurrence in an article of such terms as ‘Prime Minister’, ‘Government’ or ‘Parliament’, for example, strongly suggest that the article involves reportage or comment which may be considered ‘political’. The exact terms which populate the structural index were selected after extended rounds of beta searches conducted using terms from a much more populous index. A variety of search terms were progressively trialled and evaluated on the basis of the validity of the results returned. Terms like ‘Opposition’ or ‘the

\textsuperscript{80} Azzimonti, “Partisan Conflict.”
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 4-5.
House’, for example, whilst having an independent political meaning, were found to return far too many invalid search results and were consequently excluded from the final index. An attempt to incorporate the surnames of prominent political figures - ‘Menzies’, ‘Curtin’, ‘Chifley’, et cetera. - was also abandoned owing to difficulties in limiting the results to the intended individuals and not their namesakes. The preliminary terms considered and final index employed are shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Index</th>
<th>Final Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Chifley</td>
<td>1 Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Curtin</td>
<td>2 House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Fadden</td>
<td>3 Leader of the Opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Forde</td>
<td>4 Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Government</td>
<td>5 Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 House of Representatives</td>
<td>6 Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Hughes</td>
<td>7 Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Lyons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Menzies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Minister</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Opposition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Parliament</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Prime Minister</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Senate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar elimination process was adopted in the construction of the index of substantive variables. The substantive variables contain keywords indicative of conflict such as: censure, disagree, divide, and scandal. The initial index of search terms along with the final list of search terms adopted, are displayed in Table 3.
Table 3: Media Content Analysis of Partisan Conflict – Substantive Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Index</th>
<th>Final Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 irresponsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16 lack of confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17 lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18 objection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>19 offensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>20 oppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>21 polarise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>22 scandal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>23 suspend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>24 tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>25 traitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>26 untrue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>27 virulent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>28 want of confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final search query is premised upon the interaction of these two indices, in that an article must contain at least one term from both the structural and substantive indices in order to be returned as a positive result. In this way an article which mentions ‘Parliament AND repeal’ or ‘Government AND lack of confidence’ will be returned; while another article which mentions any of these terms in isolation will not.

A representative article captured by this query is attached as Appendix 4. The assumption of this approach is that when these terms occur together the substantive variable is being applied to the structural variable. Articles which satisfy the search query will thus be taken to be indicative of partisan conflict, and the relative frequency of positive matches indicative of the degree of partisan conflict. The structural and substantive indices are displayed side by side in Table 4. When parsed as a formatted search query terms *within* each index are separated by the OR operator, while the two indexes are conjoined by the AND operator.
### Table 4: Media Content Analysis of Partisan Conflict Search Query

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural variables</th>
<th>Substantive variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>allegation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Representatives</td>
<td>censure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>conspiracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>disunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>divide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>scandalm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Query: (fulltext:"Government"~0 OR fulltext:"House of Representatives"~0 OR fulltext:"Leader of the Opposition"~0 OR fulltext:"Minister"~0 OR fulltext:"Parliament"~0 OR fulltext:"Prime Minister"~0 OR fulltext:"Senate"~0) AND (fulltext:"allegation"~0 OR fulltext:"censure"~0 OR fulltext:"conspiracy"~0 OR fulltext:"disagree"~0 OR fulltext:"disunity"~0 OR fulltext:"divide"~0 OR fulltext:"guilty"~0 OR fulltext:"irresponsible"~0 OR fulltext:"lack of confidence"~0 OR fulltext:"want of confidence"~0 OR fulltext:"objection"~0 OR fulltext:"oppose"~0 OR fulltext:"repeal"~0 OR fulltext:"scandal"~0)

The search query designed to evaluate the independent variable of crisis is similarly structured, consisting of the interaction between structural and substantive variables.

Unlike partisan conflict, however, the search terms which could be indicative of crisis are highly contingent upon the particular crisis at hand. That is, search terms which bear a close relationship to one particular variety of crisis may be completely ineffective in measuring another unrelated variety of crisis. Thus, while the search terms informing the analysis of partisan conflict may remain constant, the index of crisis search terms must be independently developed for each period of crisis. Yet, in order to demonstrate how the media content analysis of crisis will operate, a hypothetical query constructed around the crisis of the Second World War is displayed in Table 5.
Table 5: Media Content Analysis of National Crisis, 1934–1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural variables</th>
<th>Substantive variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Axis</td>
<td>attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fascist</td>
<td>battle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>bomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitler</td>
<td>conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mussolini</td>
<td>defeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazi</td>
<td>war</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Query: (fulltext:"Axis"~0 OR fulltext:"fascist"~0 OR fulltext:"Germany"~0 OR fulltext:"Hitler"~0 OR fulltext:"Japan"~0 OR fulltext:"Mussolini"~0 OR fulltext:"Nazi"~0) AND (fulltext:"attack"~0 OR fulltext:"battle"~0 OR fulltext:"bomb"~0 OR fulltext:"conflict"~0 OR fulltext:"crisis"~0 OR fulltext:"defeat"~0 OR fulltext:"defence"~0 OR fulltext:"enemy"~0 OR fulltext:"fight"~0 OR fulltext:"invasion"~0 OR fulltext:"threat"~0 OR fulltext:"war"~0)

As with partisan conflict, the crisis search query is structured around the interaction of both structural and substantive variables. Structural variables will here be directed toward the source of the perceived threat, while substantive variables span the nature of the threat itself. In periods of military crisis, therefore, the terms populating the structural index will be the names of combative nations or their leaders, while the substantive variables will incorporate terms indicative of military threat - ‘bomb’, ‘war’, ‘invasion’, etc. An article must contain at least one search term from both the structural and substantive indices in order to be returned as a positive result.

The resultant queries will be executed in Trove, a database, hosted by the National Library of Australia, containing digitised and text searchable copies of Australian newspapers. The Sydney Morning Herald has been adopted as the population for analysis. The justification for this choice is two-fold. First, the Trove database is expansive though not complete, most newspapers not being archived for the full span of their print history. The Sydney Morning Herald, however, has been archived

for the period 1842 - 1954, providing the most comprehensive data available.\(^{93}\) Second, *The Sydney Morning Herald* exists as an established and respected broadsheet newspaper, consistently reporting on issues of politics, business and current affairs. As such, *the Sydney Morning Herald* may be said to be a reasonable sample of the general media environment.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* will thus be comprehensively analysed for the period of the case studies. As with the quantification of voting divisions, this media content analysis will also adopt an iterative monthly sample, generating monthly counts of articles satisfying the respective search queries. Consistent with the hypothesised inverse relationship between national crisis and partisan conflict, it will be the intention of the case studies to observe this relationship at a micro-level within the case study via the media content analysis. That is, it is expected that as the frequency of media reports indicative of crisis increase, media reports suggestive of partisan conflict correspondingly decrease. Confirmation of this trend at a micro-level within the case studies will strengthen trends observed in the initial analysis of House voting divisions.

Finally, in addition to the media content analysis, the case studies will also observe the frequency of voting divisions at a monthly rather than annual scale. In doing so the case study will observe any apparent peaks at which partisan conflict re-emerged. These peaks of partisan conflict will be significant for being the most divisive issues debated by the House during a period of otherwise considerable unity. Where they occur, therefore, the case study will consider their timing, intensity and substance. That is, Hansard will be consulted to discern the nature of the legislation

in debate of which the divisions were prompted. This will be instructive in informing the tenor of issues over which the House is still willing to divide during a period of national crisis.
Data and Results

The official parliamentary Opposition is a well-established and respected institution of Westminster systems of government. It performs a valid and valuable accountability function when it seeks to amend, examine, scrutinise, and criticise the actions of the Government. Yet, during periods of crisis, the expectations concerning how the Opposition exercises its role seem altered. Scrutiny and criticism of the Government during periods of crisis can lead to the Opposition being accused of ‘lacking bipartisanship’, ‘playing party politics’ or invoking ‘party strife’. This research examines this phenomenon by asking: ‘How do periods of national crisis alter the partisan conflict of parliamentary discourse?’ It is hypothesised that national crises and partisan conflict exist in an inverse relationship.

Believing existing methods of quantifying partisan conflict to suffer from issues of reliability or validity, a new proxy of House of Representatives voting divisions has been adopted here. Occurring only when the House disagrees on a given motion, voting divisions are a literal, tangible and quantifiable expression of partisan conflict. Consistent with the above methodology, quantification of House voting divisions has been achieved by a keyword search of federal parliamentary Hansard. An iterative monthly sample has developed a monthly index of partisan conflict across the entirety of the period 1901-2014. For greater clarity in the observation of longitudinal macro trends, these monthly figures have been re-binned as yearly figures in the initial charts below.

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94 Barker, Studies in Opposition; Reid and Forrest, "The Official Opposition."
95 Kaiser, "Parliamentary Opposition in Westminster Democracies."
96 Gerken, "The Loyal Opposition."
98 Parliament of Australia, "House of Representatives Hansard".
Chart 1 displays the raw count of voting divisions observed in the House of Representatives for each year of Australia’s federal parliamentary history. This initial dataset demonstrates considerable variability in the number of House voting divisions across the period of the study. While the average across the dataset is 121 divisions per year, prominent peaks occur in 1935 (269) and 1975 (346), while the fewest divisions are observed in 1916 (11) and 1941 (16).

Chart 1: House of Representatives gross voting divisions per year, 1901-2014

These raw trends are consistent with the hypothesis that partisan conflict exists in an inverse relationship with national crisis, in that the two minimum values - 1916 and 1941 - each occur during periods of preeminent crisis, the First World War and Second World War respectively. Yet, in order to ensure the validity of House voting divisions as a proxy indicator of partisan conflict this initial dataset requires a degree of normalisation. This normalisation is required in order to control for variation in both the number of sitting days of the House and the House’s general workload.

While the index of House voting divisions adopts a consistent sample size of monthly intervals throughout, the population of these monthly samples varies considerably according to the frequency of sitting days. That is, while monthly totals are adopted across the entire period of the study, the number of sitting days within each month is

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Australian War Memorial, "First World War"; "Second World War".
variable. It is readily apparent that a month in which the House sat more frequently is likely to feature a greater number of divisions. The importance of normalising for this variation in the number of sitting days is further underscored by the reasonable probability that the House may resolve to sit less frequently during periods of crisis, in light of the additional demands placed upon the Executive in such periods. In order to demonstrate this possibility, Chart 2 displays the correlation between the number of sitting days and number of divisions by overlaying each in a longitudinal chart.

**Chart 2: House voting divisions and sitting days per year, 1901-2014**

This analysis reveals the dependent variable of voting divisions to correlate with the frequency of House sitting days, such that when the frequency with which the House sits declines, the rate of voting divisions likewise declines. Within Chart 2, sitting days and voting divisions may each be seen to relatively decline in the periods 1916 and 1941, such that the observed decrease in the frequency of voting divisions for these periods may potentially be attributed merely to the decline in sitting days rather than a true decline in the intended variable of partisan conflict.

In order to normalise the dataset in light of this unintended variable, a new figure of House of Representatives voting divisions *per sitting day* has been developed. This controlled variable is achieved by dividing the gross number of divisions for a period by the number of sitting days within that same period. By controlling for the number of sitting days in this way, variation in the frequency of House sittings will not inadvertently impact observation of the intended variable of partisan conflict. Chart 3
displays this controlled variable of House of Representatives voting divisions per sitting day per year overlaid with a linear trend line across the period of the study, 1901-2014.

The range of this normalised dataset is considerably reduced from 346 to just 5.47 divisions per sitting day, yet the periods of maximum and minimum values remain consistent. The greatest number of voting divisions per sitting day occur in 1935 (5.47) and 1975 (4.93); while the fewest divisions per sitting day are observed in 1916 (0.31) and 1941 (0.28). Analysis reveals the mean of this normalised dataset to be 1.88 divisions per sitting day. Observation of the linear trend line in Chart 3, however, reveals the average number of divisions per sitting day has increased across the period of the study from 1.25 in the first decade of federation to 2.7 in the present incomplete decade. Preliminary examination could lead an observer to conclude the upward trend in voting divisions to reveal an increasingly conflictual federal parliament. This conclusion should be considerably qualified, however, in light of the second aspect by which the dataset of voting divisions ought to be normalised: the variable workload of the House.

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100 For a brief explanation of the 1935 and 1975 peaks see Appendix 3.
The Australian House of Representatives has undergone considerable development since its inauguration.\textsuperscript{102} The first Parliament, elected in 1901, had just 75 Members of the House of Representatives.\textsuperscript{103} In the 44th Parliament, elected in 2013, the number of Members has grown to 150.\textsuperscript{104} While the membership of the House has doubled, however, the average number of constituents per Member has increased by a factor of 7.7 - from 12,102 constituents per Member in the 1st Parliament to 93,922 in the 44th.\textsuperscript{105} This increase in electoral responsibilities of Members has coincided with a commensurable increase in legislative obligations. In 1901 just 28 Bills were presented to the House for deliberation.\textsuperscript{106} In 2014 the total number of Bills presented to the House numbered some 222.\textsuperscript{107} It stands to reason that the greater the number of issues on which the House is called to deliberate the greater the opportunity for disagreement to arise and the more likely voting divisions will occur. Chart 4 displays the number of Bills presented to the House of Representatives across each year of the study, 1901-2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart 4: Bills presented to the House of Representatives, 1901–2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Graph showing the number of Bills presented to the House of Representatives, 1901–2014." /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{102} House of Representatives Practice.  
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 87.  
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 816.  
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
Observation reveals the upward trend of voting divisions per sitting day (Chart 3) to correlate with the upward trend in Bills presented to the House of Representatives for deliberation (Chart 4). It will be difficult, therefore, to conclude in isolation that partisan conflict has increased across the period of the study. The intention of this study, however, is to observe not longitudinal trends but periodic fluctuations. The upward trend of the dataset is significant, however, in that it complicates the methodology of adopting a single absolute mean against which episodic deviations will be assessed. Whilst the absolute mean across the entirety of the dataset is 1.88 divisions per sitting day, since 1970 three-quarters of observed values have exceeded this average. As a result significant troughs, such as 1976, which are no-doubt significant within their context, fail to achieve statistical significance within the dataset as a whole when calculated by deviation from the absolute mean. In order to observe more reliably episodic variation in the frequency of divisions, variance will be observed both from an absolute mean and from a contextual mean. Contextual variation will be assessed according to a decadal average, achieved by calculating the mean for the period five years preceding an event to five years succeeding it. Events will thus be evaluated not only for the extent to which they are historical outliers, but also whether they are contextual outliers. Dually evaluating variance from both the absolute and decadal mean improves the reliability with which variation in the frequency of voting divisions may be assessed. Chart 5 displays House voting divisions per sitting day, overlaid with decadal averages.

Chart 5: House voting divisions per sitting day with decadal averages, 1901-2014
Mean Comparison Analysis

The dependent variable of partisan conflict has been operationalised and quantified by the normalised dataset of House of Representatives voting divisions per sitting day. A methodology of mean comparison analysis was then adopted to evaluate the relationship of the independent variable of national crisis. This has been achieved by comparing the mean frequency of voting divisions during periods of known crisis with both the absolute and decadal mean. Six periods of known crisis were selected for analysis. Four were wars or military crises: the First World War, 1914-1918; the Second World War, 1939-1945; the Korean War, 1950-1953; and the Vietnam War, 1962-1973.108 Two were economic crises: the Great Depression, 1929-1932 and the Global Financial Crisis, 2008-2009.109

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>Absolute Variation</th>
<th>Decadal Variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1914/8 - 1918/11</td>
<td>The First World War</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>-56%</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(257)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1939/9 - 1945/9</td>
<td>The Second World War</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>-63%</td>
<td>-44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(352)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1950/6 - 1953/7</td>
<td>The Korean War</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>+46%</td>
<td>+49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(197)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1962/7 - 1973/1</td>
<td>The Vietnam War</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>+6%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(672)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1929/10 - 1932/12</td>
<td>The Great Depression</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>-15%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(279)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2008/9 - 2009/03</td>
<td>The Global Financial Crisis</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>+12%</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(50)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

108 Australian War Memorial, "First World War"; "Second World War"; "Korean War"; "Vietnam War".
The results of this mean comparison analysis is displayed in Table 6, while each of the periods of crisis are annotated against the dependent variable of partisan conflict in Chart 6 below.

![Chart 6: House voting divisions per sitting day per year with crises marked, 1901-2014](chart)

The results of the mean comparison analysis are varied. Three of the selected crises – the First World War, the Second World War, and the Great Depression – displayed a diminution of partisan conflict below the absolute historical mean, while the final three – the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Global Financial Crisis – remained above this historical mean. Brief consideration, however, reveals that these results split between the pre-war and post-war period. As has been established, the post-war period skews toward a greater legislative workload and a consequently greater capacity for voting divisions to occur.\(^{110}\) Considering, then, each of these periods of crisis with regard to the more contextually aware decadal average, reveals that five of the six crises demonstrated a diminution of partisan conflict, the Korean War being the sole exception. The reason for the Korean War being an outlier is not immediately apparent, and likely requires investigation beyond the scope of this thesis. Evaluating the respective effect of different types of crisis, it may be seen that wars and military crises displayed an average absolute decrease of 17% and a contextual

\(^{110}\) *House of Representatives Practice*, 816-18.
Data and Results

A decrease of 8%; while economic crises displayed an average absolute decrease of 2% and a contextual decrease of 8%. These categorised findings are summarised in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Absolute Variation</th>
<th>Decadal Variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wars and Military Crises</td>
<td>-17%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Crises</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To reiterate the first analytical approach of mean comparison analysis, House of Representatives voting divisions have been quantified for the period 1901-2014 by a keyword search of federal parliamentary Hansard. A mean comparison analysis found a diminution in the frequency of voting divisions during five of the six periods of known crisis selected for analysis. This diminution of partisan conflict during periods of national crisis is consistent with the stated hypothesis. The robustness of this relationship was further established within two case studies of i. the First World War, 1914-1918; and ii. the Second World War, 1939-1945.111 Three attributes contribute to these being appropriate case studies. First, the two World Wars were the two events which showed the largest, sustained, negative deviation from the absolute historical mean of partisan conflict. Second, the two World Wars most completely satisfy the three criteria of i. being international, ii. involving Australia, and iii. being sharply focused. Third, the duration of the Wars provides considerable substance for analysis.

111 Australian War Memorial, "First World War"; "Second World War"
Case Study 1: First World War

The First World War was one of the greatest conflicts in world history and the preeminent crisis faced by Australia in the first decades of Federation.\textsuperscript{112} Consistent with the hypothesis that periods of national crisis facilitate a diminution of partisan conflict, the period of the First World War also displays a significant quiescence of domestic partisanship. This case study considers the nature of partisan politics in Australia during the First World War. In doing so it first establishes the nature of the crisis the First World War presented to Australia. Second, it demonstrates the extent to which the period of the First World War represented a diminution of partisan conflict as informed by the primary indicator of parliamentary voting divisions. Third, it evaluates micro-level variation in the dependent variable of partisan conflict and the independent variable of crisis within the period of the case study. As indicated in the methods chapter, this more nuanced observation of the two variables is achieved by a media content analysis of contemporary Australian newspapers. Fourth, this case study identifies from within the larger First World War period those months evidencing heightened partisan conflict. In each instance it explores the nature of the legislation which inspired the increased conflict and the reasons for which it was conflictual.

Persisting for four years from August 1914 to November 1918, the First World War is a self-evidently significant crisis.\textsuperscript{113} In human terms around 420,000 Australians enlisted for service out of a total population still less than five million.\textsuperscript{114} Of those who enlisted over sixty thousand were killed in action, while a further one hundred and

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{112} E. Scott, \textit{Australia During the War: The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918}, Vol. Xi (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1941).
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Australian War Memorial, "First World War".
  \item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
fifty-five thousand were wounded; delivering Australia a casualty rate of 64.8% amongst the highest of the war.\textsuperscript{115} Economically the war is estimated to have cost Australia some £377 million, equivalent to roughly $31.8 billion today adjusted for inflation.\textsuperscript{116} The ongoing expenditure of repatriation and payment of pensions would see this number enlarged further still. Consistent with a crisis of this magnitude, the period of the First World War also displayed the hypothesised reduction in partisan conflict.

\textbf{Mean Comparison Analysis}

The House of Representatives sat 257 times during the four years and three months of the First World War from August 1914 to November 1918; 42\% less frequently than usual.\textsuperscript{117} During this period there occurred a total of 210 House voting divisions, equating to an average of 0.82 divisions per sitting day. The mean frequency of voting divisions per sitting day across the entire dataset being 1.88, this period of the First World War represents a 56\% reduction on the absolute historical average. In addition to being a historical outlier, the period of the First World War is also a contextual outlier. The decadal average from five years before the First World War to five years after - January 1909 to December 1923 - stands at 1.13 divisions per sitting day. The wartime average of 0.82 is thus a 27\% reduction on the contextual average. These results, in both absolute and decadal terms, clearly establish the period of the First World War as a period of diminished partisan conflict. Chart 7 displays this reduction in partisan conflict in the context of the decadal average of the First World War, 1909-1923.

\textsuperscript{116} Scott, Australia During the War, 495.
\textsuperscript{117} House of Representatives Practice, 813-15.
Media Content Analysis

The period of the First World War thus conforms to the hypothesised trend of diminished partisan conflict during a period of crisis. Within the broader period of the war, however, neither the independent nor dependent variables were static, but rather both varied in accordance with the developing state of the war. That is, the perceived degree of the crisis presented by the war varied as the war progressed. Observance of the frequency of voting divisions across the period of the case study reveals that partisan conflict also varied considerably within the case study. The robustness of the relationship already demonstrated between crisis and partisan conflict will be further strengthened if it can additionally be observed on a micro-level within the case study. For example, in the early months immediately preceding and incorporating the outbreak of war, as perceptions of the crisis increase, may partisan conflict be seen to correspondingly decrease? Likewise, at the end of the case study, as the crisis of war recedes does the degree of partisan conflict directly increase to fill the void? It will now be evaluated whether the observed relationship between partisan conflict and national crisis may be observed at a more micro-level.

Thus far in the study the independent variable of crisis has been treated in a manner reasonably termed a priori. Rather than attempting to directly quantify crisis, periods of known crisis have been selected as the subject of evaluation. Where the dependent variable of partisan conflict varies, this variation has then been attributed to the a priori conception of crisis present in the period. Given the research question...
has spanned the entire history of Australia’s federal parliament, this approach has been largely appropriate. These more confined case studies, however, provide a more manageable scope within which to directly measure the independent variable of crisis and dependent variable of partisan conflict, and evaluate the relationship between them.

While the dependent variable of partisan conflict is a primarily constant concept, quantification of crises is complicated by virtue of their being contextually contingent upon the particular crisis at hand. 118 No single observable variable could appropriately serve as a proxy indicator of ‘crisis’ across the wide period of our study. Rather, it is suggested that the measurement of crisis must be contextually contingent. 119 This case study will quantify the independent variable of crisis via a media content analysis of Australian newspapers across the period of the study, 1909-1923. The adaptability of media content analysis to the contextual sensitivities inherent in the quantification of crisis contribute to making it an appropriate methodology. The contextual sensitivity of the method has been achieved by the keywords selected to inform the analysis. The population for the analysis was the Sydney Morning Herald. As detailed in the method chapter, the Sydney Morning Herald was adopted as the chosen population in recognition of its status as a widely respected broadsheet newspaper, which reports on matters of politics and current affairs, and is comprehensively preserved in archives for the period of the case study. 120 The keyword search of the Sydney Morning Herald was conducted via a query conceived around the coexistence of both structural and substantive variables,

118 Ramirez, "The Dynamics of Partisan Conflict on Congressional Approval," 682.
119 Cook and Cook, "Evaluating the Rhetoric of Crisis," 635.
120 "Trove - Sydney Morning Herald".
a method adapted from Azzimonti. Reflecting the context of the crisis posed by the First World War, the index of structural variables was populated by the names of, and terms relating to, the belligerent countries: ‘Germany’, ‘Kaiser’ and ‘Quadruple Alliance’; while the substantive variables related to the threat posed by these subjects, for example: ‘attack’, ‘bomb’, ‘invasion’ or ‘war’. The search query populated by these structural and substantive variables was executed in the Trove database of historical Australian newspapers hosted by the National Library of Australia. In order to be returned as a positive result articles had to contain both a structural variable and at least one substantive variable, i.e. ‘Kaiser AND invasion’ or ‘Ottoman AND battle’. The matches resulting from this search query have been binned monthly to allow observation of the frequency with which these terms indicative of crisis occur on a month-to-month basis, in order that variation in the independent variable of crisis may be observed across the period of the case study. Assuming variation in the media reportage of a phenomenon to broadly correlate with the actual existence of a phenomenon, an increased frequency in terms related to the crisis will suggest an increase in the perceived degree of the crisis itself, while a decrease in such terms will suggest a decrease in the degree of the crisis. The search terms used in the quantification of crisis during the period of the case study are replicated in Table 8, while the result of the analysis is displayed in Chart 8.

121 Azzimonti, “Partisan Conflict.”
122 Australian War Memorial, “First World War”.
Table 8: Media Content Analysis of National Crisis, 1909-1923

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural variables</th>
<th>Substantive variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria-Hungary</td>
<td>attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>battle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Powers</td>
<td>bomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emperor</td>
<td>conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser</td>
<td>defeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottoman</td>
<td>war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadruple Alliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Query: (fulltext:"Austria-Hungary"~0 OR fulltext:"Bulgaria"~0 OR fulltext:"Central Powers"~0 OR fulltext:"Emperor"~0 OR fulltext:"Germany"~0 OR fulltext:"Kaiser"~0 OR fulltext:"Ottoman"~0 OR fulltext:"Quadruple Alliance"~0) AND (fulltext:"attack"~0 OR fulltext:"battle"~0 OR fulltext:"bomb"~0 OR fulltext:"conflict"~0 OR fulltext:"crisis"~0 OR fulltext:"defeat"~0 OR fulltext:"defence"~0 OR fulltext:"enemy"~0 OR fulltext:"fight"~0 OR fulltext:"invasion"~0 OR fulltext:"threat"~0 OR fulltext:"war"~0)

Chart 8: Media content analysis of Crisis and Partisan Conflict, 1909-1923

Within Chart 8 the independent variable of crisis may be seen to increase exponentially at the outbreak of war in August 1914, fluctuate throughout the period of the war, and then decrease as it approaches the pre-war average after the cessation of hostilities, and ultimately the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919. Also displayed within Chart 8, indicated by the grey line, is the media content analysis of partisan conflict. Informed by the search query replicated in Table 4, the media

Australian War Memorial, "First World War".
content analysis of partisan conflict observes the frequency with which newspaper articles in the Sydney Morning Herald contain keywords indicative of partisan conflict. As with the crisis query, the partisan conflict query is conceived around the interplay of structural variables which indicate ‘politics’ as the topic of comment, and substantive variables which indicate conflict. Chart 8 thus displays both the independent variable of crisis and dependent variable of partisan conflict, as quantified via media content analysis, for the period of the case study, 1909-1923.

Observation of Chart 8 reveals that the previously identified inverse relationship between crisis and partisan conflict is replicated within the case study in that as the independent variable of crisis increases the dependent variable of partisan conflict decreases. Examining July and August 1914, the months preceding and succeeding the outbreak of war, reveals the frequency of articles reporting the independent variable of crisis increased 308.7%, from 92 matching articles in July to 376 in August. Examining the dependent variable of partisan conflict for the same period reveals a 62.1% decrease, from 124 in July to just 47 in August. Thus, while crisis increased 308.7%, partisan conflict decreased 62.1%, confirming the previously observed inverse relationship. This inverse relationship remains robust across the span of the case study, noticeable variations such as July 1916 and September 1917 display the expected inverse movements.

**Qualitative Content Analysis**

The case study of the First World War allows two observations. First, during the *a priori* crisis of the war the frequency of House voting divisions declines from the

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126 Ibid.
Data and Results

The historical average of 1.88 per sitting day to a period average of just 0.82 per sitting day, a reduction of some 54%. Second, when both the independent variable of crisis and dependent variable of partisan conflict are quantified *a posteriori* vis-à-vis a media content analysis, they may be seen to exist in an inverse relationship. Both of these observations confirm the hypothesis that periods of national crisis facilitate a quiescence of partisan conflict. It has already been observed, however, that partisan conflict was not static within the period of the First World War but rather varied across the entire span of the case study.

Chart 9 displays House of Representatives voting divisions per sitting day per month, 1914-1918. Viewing partisan conflict in this more micro-fashion reveals that only four times during the greater five-year period of the war did the frequency of voting divisions exceed the historical average of 1.88. These outliers, labelled in Chart 9 below as A, B, C and D, occurred in May 1914, June 1915, September 1917 and November 1918. In considering the tenor of partisan conflict in periods of crisis, these outliers are significant for being the most divisive issues debated by the House during a period of otherwise considerable unity. They reveal the nature of issues which continued to evoke partisan conflict during the preeminent crisis of the First World War.

**Chart 9: House voting divisions per sitting day per month, 1914-1918**
The first point in the greater five-year period of the war where voting divisions exceeded the historical average occurred in May 1914. During the month of May, the House divided a total of twenty-eight times over a period of twelve sitting days, representing 2.33 divisions per sitting day. Of the twenty-eight divisions a full twenty occurred in the debate of the Government Preference Prohibition Bill.\(^\text{127}\) A domestic Bill unrelated to the impending war, it sought to prohibit the granting of preference to members of trade unions for employment in the Australian public service.\(^\text{128}\)

The Bill was opposed by the Labor Opposition who insisted that no such preference to trade unionists existed. Believing it to be introduced ‘merely … to arouse party passions and divide the community into warring factions’, the Opposition denounced it as a ‘prostitution of the function of government’.\(^\text{129}\) Adding to the conflict of the Bill was the fact that, after it had been twice passed by the House and twice rejected by the Senate, the Government used the Bill as the trigger for a Double Dissolution of both houses of parliament under the provisions of section 57 of the Constitution.\(^\text{130}\)

Sawer reflects the Labor argument at the time when he writes ‘the crisis between the Houses over this particular legislation was “manufactured”, since the legislation was not essential to effect the government’s policy on union preference’.\(^\text{131}\) Ultimately, the parliamentary debate aroused by the Bill was so heated that unknown Labor members attempted to disturb proceedings by hiding the Speaker’s mace and

\(\text{\textsuperscript{127}}\) Commonwealth, Government Preference Prohibition Bill 1914.
\(\text{\textsuperscript{129}}\) Deb, 8 May 1914.
\(\text{\textsuperscript{130}}\) Australian Federal Politics and Law, 1901-1929, 117.
\(\text{\textsuperscript{131}}\) Ibid., 122.
stealing the keys to the chamber, in order that the doors could not be locked during divisions.\textsuperscript{132}

Despite the considerable conflict of this debate, however, it is important to note that it pre-dated the declaration of war on 4 August 1914.\textsuperscript{133} Recourse to the media content analysis of Chart 8 confirms the low value of the independent variable of crisis at the time of this May 1914 debate. The conflict of this pre-war period thus does not undermine the previously observed phenomenon of diminished partisan conflict during periods of national crisis.

The second point of the greater First World War period with higher than average partisan conflict occurred in June 1915. Across thirteen sitting days, the House divided a total of twenty-seven times, representing 2.08 divisions per sitting day. Of these twenty-seven divisions a full twenty-four occurred in debate of the Government’s decision to hold five concurrent referendums in late 1915.\textsuperscript{134} Like the Preference Prohibition Bill, the referendums proposals were entirely unrelated to the crisis at hand. Rather the referendum questions sought to further the Labor Party’s long-held preference for centralisation, transferring legislative jurisdiction from the states to the Commonwealth. The particular referendum proposals sought to expand the Commonwealth Labor Government’s ability to legislate in the areas of corporation law, industrial matters, railway disputes, trusts and monopolies.\textsuperscript{135} A significant contributor to the conflict associated with this debate was the fact that the proposals

\begin{multicols}{2}
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{134} Sawer, Australian Federal Politics and Law, 1901-1929, 143-45.
\textsuperscript{135} Commonwealth, Constitution Alteration (Corporations) Bill 1915; Constitution Alteration (Industrial Matters) Bill 1915; Constitution Alteration (Railway Disputes) Bill 1915; Constitution Alteration (Trusts) Bill 1915; Constitution Alteration (Nationalization of Monopolies) Bill 1915.
\end{multicols}
had already been defeated.\textsuperscript{136} On both 26 April 1911 and 31 May 1913 the same referendums were put to the public and defeated.\textsuperscript{137} That the proposals had twice already been unsuccessfully put by the Labor Party under Andrew Fisher reinforced the issues as explicitly partisan ones. While persisting with proposals which the Labor Attorney-General - and future Prime Minister - Billy Hughes, acknowledged were ‘practically identical with the bills which were submitted in 1913’, also opened up the Government to criticisms of defying expressed public opinion.\textsuperscript{138}

Far more substantial to the substance of the conflict aroused by the referendum proposals, however, was the alleged impropriety of debating partisan political issues during the crisis of the war.\textsuperscript{139} At the time the six Constitution Alteration Bills were introduced into the House in June 1915 Australia had been at war for nearly a full year.\textsuperscript{140} The iconic and devastatingly costly Gallipoli Campaign was still in progress, and contemporary newspapers were daily reporting the casualties which would eventually total 26,111 for that campaign alone.\textsuperscript{141} The media content analysis of Chart 8 reveals the sense of crisis in June 1915 to be 200\% higher than the pre-war norm.

The debate of this explicitly partisan issue during the extreme crisis of the war thus gave rise to thoughtful and impassioned articulation of the interrelationship of national crisis and partisan conflict, and the alleged impropriety of debating a party

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{136} Sawer, \textit{Australian Federal Politics and Law, 1901-1929}, 143. \\
\textsuperscript{137} House of Representatives Practice, 807. \\
\textsuperscript{138} “Referendum Bills to Be Introduced Today,” \textit{The Argus}, 18 June 1915. \\
\textsuperscript{139} “Stirring Opposition Protest - Stormy Scenes in Parliament - Ministry Applies the Gag,” \textit{The Argus}, 19 June 1915. \\
\textsuperscript{140} Deb, 18 June 1915. \\
\end{flushright}
political issue during a period of such crisis. Foremost in articulating the alleged impropriety of partisan debate during a period of crisis was the former Prime Minister, Joseph Cook, who called repeatedly for ‘the ceasing of party strife until the war is over’ when ‘all these matters will fall into their proper place, and we may resume our former relations, dividing ourselves on party lines.’ To engage in such ‘paltry and insignificant’ debate at such a time of crisis, Cook argued, was akin to debating the arrangement of living-room furniture ‘while the house is burning’. The Labor Government sought to respond to such criticisms by contending that the present crisis ought not to mean that ‘we should cease work in this Parliament’. However, this rejoinder was unsuccessful in quelling the public resentment toward the referendum proposal and in November 1915, when Fisher resigned as Labor leader to be replaced by Billy Hughes, the Labor Government instructed the Governor-General to rescind the writs issued just two weeks earlier. In closing the debate, Opposition Leader Joseph Cook opined that in rescinding the proposals the parliament had ‘save[d] this country from what undoubtedly would have been, in this time of war, a national scandal.’ It may be concluded that the debate over the six Constitution Alteration Bills was both an anomaly and a confirmation. It was an anomaly that, during a crisis as great as the First World War, the Labor Government persevered in an explicitly partisan political debate. Yet, that the debate was eventually prorogued in light of the enduring crisis, confirms the tendency of periods of crisis to quell partisan conflict. Ultimately, the resolution of the debate conforms

\[\text{142} \quad \text{Stirring Opposition Protest - Stormy Scenes in Parliament - Ministry Applies the Gag.}
\]

\[\text{143} \quad \text{Deb., 18 June 1915.}
\]

\[\text{144} \quad \text{Ibid.}
\]

\[\text{145} \quad \text{Ibid.}
\]

\[\text{146} \quad \text{Ibid., 11 November 1915.}
\]

\[\text{147} \quad \text{Ibid.}
\]
with the hypothesised relationship between the independent variable of crisis and the dependent variable of partisan conflict.

The most conflictual stage of the greater First World War period was September 1917. Over thirteen sitting days, the House divided thirty-three times representing a war-time high of 2.54 divisions per sitting day. Yet this period of heightened partisan conflict is different from the preceding two in two significant ways. First, while the heightened conflict of May 1914 and June 1915 was aroused by a singular divisive issue, the thirty-three divisions of September 1917 substantially arose in debate of four distinct pieces of legislation: the *Income Tax Bill*, the *War Loan Bill*, the *War-Time Profits Tax Assessment Bill* and the *Australian Soldiers Repatriation Bill*. 148 The second manner in which the partisan conflict of September 1917 is distinct from other periods of conflict during the war is that the substance of conflict related directly to the crisis at hand, namely the War.

The *Australian Soldiers Repatriation Bill*, for instance, empowered the Governor-General, on the advice of a seven-member Repatriation Commission, to grant assistance and benefits to returned soldiers or the dependents of deceased soldiers. 149 While the initiative gained the expected bipartisan support the Opposition felt at liberty to cause divisions over amendments. The four divisions of the debate primarily concerned attempts to increase the role of recognised returned servicemen's associations, both in recommending Commissioners and referring

soldiers in need of assistance.150 Other Bills equally related to the war effort were the subject of yet greater conflict. The War Loan Bill, for instance, explicitly facilitated the financing of the war effort by authorising the Government to issue war bonds to the value of £80 million.151 Individual Labor members, however, argued the war bonds scheme offered inappropriate financial incentives to rich investors.152 Nine divisions, therefore, occurred in the second reading debate when individual Labor members sought to move amendments reducing the interest paid on war bonds from seven per cent to five per cent, and removing the tax exemptions offered on such interest payments.153 A second financial Bill, the War-Time Profits Tax Assessment Bill, also aroused considerable debate.154 The Bill constituted a new tax upon profits which were deemed to be in excess of ‘peace-time’ rates of profit.155 Excessive profits were then to be taxed at a rate of between 50 and 75 per cent as determined by an appointed Board of Referees.156 The initiative received support in principle yet six divisions occurred in debate, first over the composition of the Board and, second, over concerns some industries with seasonal rates of profit could be bankrupted by the proposal.157 While amendments to the Income Tax Bill also incurred nine divisions, in part arising from provisions for currently enlisted servicemen and their dependents.158

Thus, with respect to each of the first three Bills which incurred debate in this period, their status as Bills fundamentally concerned with the conduct of the War was

150 Deb, 26 September 1917.
151 Commonwealth, War Loan Bill 1917.
152 Deb, 7 September 1917.
153 Ibid.
154 War-Time Profits Tax Assessment Bill 1917.
156 Ibid.
157 Deb, 7 September 1917.
158 Commonwealth, Income Tax Bill 1917; Deb, 20 September 1917.
insufficient to exclude them from partisan conflict. Two comments may be made about this. First, in many respects the considerable threat posed by the war had been substantially mollified by the time of these debates in September 1917. Reference to the media content analysis of the crisis variable in Chart 8 reveals the perceived threat to be at its very lowest point in the war. Second, in each case the substantive objection concerned the financial provisions of the Bills. That is, debate arose, not over the merit of the Bills themselves, but in respect to the composition of the financial elements. More specifically the debate concerned the varied impact of the Bills on people of different socio-economic status. In a very real sense, therefore, the class-based nature of Australian politics may be seen to re-emerge during this late period of the war.

**Case Study 2: Second World War**

The Second World War presented the Australian polity with a truly existential crisis.\(^\text{159}\) Consistent with the hypothesis that periods of national crisis prompt a diminution of partisan conflict, the period of the Second World War also evidenced a significant reduction in domestic political strife. This second case study evaluates the nature of partisan politics in Australia during the Second World War, and is structured in a similar fashion to the case study of the First World War. It first details the nature of the crisis the Second World War presented to Australia. Second, it evaluates micro-level trends between the dependent variable of partisan conflict and independent variable of crisis, the latter being *a posteriori* quantified via a media content analysis of Australian newspapers. Third, it identifies those months during the war evidencing the greatest partisan conflict and explores the nature of the issues which evoked it.

Finally, comparisons between the two case studies are made in order to elucidate broader insights into the interrelationship of partisan conflict and national crisis, as evidenced in these two totemic crises of world history.

The period of the Second World War was the most catastrophic crisis in recorded human history, affecting hundreds of millions of lives.\(^{160}\) From Australia the war claimed the lives of 39,000 servicemen, though it also represented the most truly existential crisis in Australia’s post-colonial history.\(^ {161}\) The Northern Australian town of Darwin was bombed, Japanese submarines attacked Sydney Harbour, merchant ships and light cruisers were sunk in Australian waters, and Japanese vessels fired indiscriminately along the East Australian coast.\(^ {162}\) Within the definition of crisis detailed in the literature review - as an event disrupting national life and causing injury - the Second World War is pre-eminent. In addition to being a period of great crisis, however, the Second World War was also a period of greatly diminished partisanship, reflecting the hypothesised inverse relationship between national crisis and partisan conflict.

**Mean Comparison Analysis**

The House of Representatives sat 352 times during the six years of the Second World War from September 1939 to September 1945.\(^ {163}\) During this period there occurred a total of 248 House voting divisions, equating to an average of 0.70 divisions per sitting day. This frequency of 0.70 divisions per sitting day represents a 63%

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\(^{161}\) Australian War Memorial, "Second World War".


\(^{163}\) Australian War Memorial, "Second World War".
reduction on the historical mean of 1.88 across the dataset. The magnitude of this negative deviation from the historical mean is the largest sustained diminution of partisan conflict observed within the data. This finding, present within the absolute historical data, is confirmed by the more contextually sensitive decadal data. The frequency of voting divisions per sitting day across the period five years before the war to five years after - January 1934 to December 1950 - stands at 1.25. The wartime frequency of 0.70 thus represents a reduction of 44%. By either measure, therefore, the period of the Second World War is preeminent within the dataset as the period with the most substantial and sustained quiescence of partisan conflict. Having established that the period of the Second World War also represented the most severe existential crisis in Australia’s post-colonial history, this finding is a powerful confirmation of the hypothesis that national crises and partisan conflict exist in an inverse relationship. Australia’s greatest national crisis, the Second World War, corresponds with Australia’s most sustained period of quiescent partisan conflict. The frequency of House voting divisions per sitting day for the period 1934-1950 is displayed in Chart 10 below, visually demonstrating the diminution of partisan conflict during the period of the War.

Chart 10: House voting divisions per sitting day, 1934-1950

![House voting divisions per sitting day, 1934-1950](chart.png)

**Media Content Analysis**

The period of the Second World War thus conforms to the hypothesised inverse relationship, the highest value of the independent variable of national crisis correlating with the lowest value of the dependent variable of partisan conflict. These
already significant findings could be further strengthened if the same relationship could be additionally observed at a more micro-level within the present case study. Within this case study, as with the first, neither variable is static but rather both vary as the war effort progresses. The perceived degree of the crisis presented by the war, for instance, is expected to have inflection points at the outbreak and conclusion of the war as well as during key battles of 1942.\textsuperscript{164} Quantification of the crisis variable will again be achieved via a media content analysis of crisis terms in Australian newspaper articles. The methodology adopted for this media content analysis is identical to that detailed in the method chapter. The index of substantive and structural variables utilised for this analysis is replicated in Table 9, and the result of this media content analysis is displayed in Chart 11.

![Table 9: Media Content Analysis of National Crisis, 1934-1950](image)

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Within Chart 11 the independent variable of crisis may, as expected, be observed to increase at the outbreak of war in September 1939, fluctuate during key turning

\textsuperscript{164} Dean, Australia 1942: In the Shadow of War.
points of the war, and decrease at the conclusion of hostilities in August 1945.\textsuperscript{165} Also displayed in Chart 11 is the media content analysis of partisan conflict informed by the search query previously detailed in Table 4 of the method chapter. As with the media content analysis of national crisis, this search query of partisan conflict combines structural variables – Prime Minister, Government, Senate – with substantive variables – censure, scandal, oppose – to identify articles indicative of partisan conflict.

If the hypothesised inverse relationship between crises and partisan conflict is to be observed at a micro-level within the present case study the two lines representing each of the variables ought to be seen to converge and diverge in unison. Examining the outbreak of war in August 1939, a 147.8\% increase may be observed in the independent variable of crisis between the two months prior to the outbreak of war and the two months after.\textsuperscript{166} This demonstrates an increase from an average of 203 relevant articles in June and July to an average of 503 in September and October. Examining the dependent variable of partisan conflict reveals a 14.35\% decrease for the same period. Crisis and partisan conflict may thus be said to be acting in the hypothesised inverse relationship, partisan conflict decreasing when the degree of crisis increases.

\textsuperscript{165} Australian War Memorial, "Second World War".
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
The entry of Japan into the war in December 1941 exists as a second key turning point.\textsuperscript{167} Prompted by the Japanese bombing of the US Naval Fleet in Pearl Harbour, the entry of Japan into the war represented a significant increase in the threat the war posed to Australia.\textsuperscript{168} The Japanese Fleet brought hostilities much closer to the Australian mainland with the additional threat of potential invasion.\textsuperscript{169} This increase in crisis is captured by a 41.56\% increase in the number of relevant newspaper articles at the time of Japan’s entry into the war in December 1941; from 409 relevant newspaper articles in November to 579 in December. In further confirmation of the hypothesis, this increase in the independent variable of crisis correlates with a commensurable 47.17\% decrease in the dependent variable of partisan conflict; down from 53 relevant newspaper articles in November 1941 to 28 in December 1941.

A final point of significance worth observing is the final months of the war in mid-1945. On 7 May 1945, following the Fall of Berlin and death of Adolf Hitler, the Allies declared Victory in Europe.\textsuperscript{170} Hostilities continued with Imperial Japan, yet with the

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Media content analysis of Crisis and Partisan Conflict, 1934–1950}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart11}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{167} Churchill, \textit{The Second World War}, 491.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{169} Dean, \textit{Australia 1942: In the Shadow of War}.
defeat of Germany the entirety of the Allied military forces could be concentrated on the Pacific Theatre.\textsuperscript{171} May 1945, therefore, represented a key inflection point in the degree of the crisis the war presented to Australia. This is confirmed in the data with a 35.58% decrease in the independent variable of crisis, down from 385 relevant articles in May 1945 to 248 in June. Again, variation in the independent variable of crisis may be seen to prompt a correspondingly inverse variation in the dependent variable of partisan conflict. The average monthly count of newspaper articles indicative of partisan conflict in 1945 prior to the declaration of Victory in Europe in May stands at 48.5 articles per month. In the first full month after Victory in Europe, June 1945, this frequency had jumped to 86 articles suggestive of partisan conflict, an increase of 77.32%.\textsuperscript{172}

In each of the key turning points in this case study of the Second World War it has been possible to observe the hypothesised inverse relationship between the independent variable of crisis and dependent variable of partisan conflict. At the outbreak of the war crisis increased 147.8% while partisan conflict decreased 14.35%. Following the entry of Japan in December 1941, crisis increased 41.56% and partisan conflict decreased 47.17%; whilst following the defeat of Nazi Germany in May 1945, crisis decreased 35.58% and partisan conflict increased 77.32%.\textsuperscript{173}

**Qualitative Content Analysis**

This case study has already demonstrated the preeminent crisis of the Second World War to correlate with the largest sustained diminution of partisan conflict in

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\textsuperscript{172} Churchill, "The German Surrender."  
\textsuperscript{173} *The Second World War*, 491, 915.
Australia’s federal parliamentary history. As with the First World War, however, these prolonged periods of quiescent partisan conflict were at times punctuated by emergent party strife. Examining House of Representatives voting divisions per sitting day per month reveals that four times during the greater seven-year period of the Second World War the frequency of voting divisions exceeded the historical average of 1.88 divisions per sitting day. These periods of emergent partisan conflict arose in June 1939, June 1940, May 1945 and June 1945. Chart 12 displays the frequency of voting divisions per sitting day per month for the greater seven-year period of the war, with the four peaks of greatest partisan conflict marked as A, B, C, and D respectively.

**Chart 12: House voting divisions per sitting day per month, 1939-1945**

The first point in the greater seven-year period where the frequency voting divisions exceeded the historical average occurred in June 1939. During the month of June 1939 the House divided 45 times over a period of ten sitting days representing a frequency of 4.5 divisions per sitting day. It is necessary to note that this period of heightened partisan conflict predated the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939, Chart 11 revealing the variable of crisis to be relatively low at this pre-war stage.\(^{174}\)

\(^{174}\) Australian War Memorial, “Second World War”.
impending crisis of war. The *National Registration Bill*, for instance, in debate of which 25 of the divisions arose, authorised the taking of a census of all males aged between eighteen and sixty-five in order to assist in full mobilisation at the outbreak of war.\(^{175}\)

The then Labor opposition opposed the Bill arguing that it would ‘inevitably lead to conscription’.\(^{176}\) The issue of conscription occupies an interesting place in the present research of national crises and partisan conflict. First, it is an inherently conflictual political issue wont to inspire greatly impassioned debate but, second, it arises - almost by definition - most prominently during periods of national crisis, namely military crisis. Thus, of all political issues, it is conscription which is most intuitively likely to defy the otherwise unifying power of military crisis and prompt impassioned partisan conflict. Debate of the issue of Australian conscription featured in both World Wars, most infamously in 1916 when the Labor Party split over the issue under Prime Minister Billy Hughes.\(^{177}\) Yet, in examination of both the First and Second World War, only in this pre-war period of June 1939 did the issue of conscription rise to statistical significance, by evoking a frequency of voting divisions exceeding the historical average.

At first inspection a second peak of partisan conflict appeared to have emerged a year later, in June 1940. Closer examination of the data, however, reveals the peak to be an outlier. The House sat for just two days in June 1940 and, over these two days, divided a total of six times, resulting in a frequency of 3 voting divisions per sitting


\(^{176}\) Deb, 2 June 1939.

day. Given the small sample size of just two sitting days and anodyne procedural motions in which the divisions ultimately occurred, this apparent outlier offers nothing of substance to the research question at hand.

The third month of the Second World War where the frequency of voting divisions exceeded the historical mean did not occur until May 1945. During May 1945 the House sat for 18 days and divided a total of 34 times, resulting in a frequency of 1.89 divisions per sitting day. Of these divisions, a majority of twenty-three occurred in debate of the Re-establishment and Employment Bill.\textsuperscript{178} A debate self-evidently related to the crisis of the war, the Bill provided for ‘the rehabilitation of ex-service personnel’ by granting them preference in re-employment, assistance in vocational training, and access to loans for the purchase of agricultural land and the equipment required to cultivate it.\textsuperscript{179} Within the substance of debate the Opposition Liberal Party opposed the Bill on the basis that it went beyond its stated aims of merely reintegrating returned soldiers to instead construct an entire post-war social order in the Labor model.\textsuperscript{180} In particular, the Opposition objected to the granting of additional ‘preference to unionists’ over returned soldiers who were not trade union members.\textsuperscript{181} The Labor Government, meanwhile, spoke in the emotive terms of returned soldiers ‘crawling on their knees’, ‘starving’ and going ‘cap in hand’.\textsuperscript{182} Whilst the debate concerned the war, the true substance of the debate in fact concerned post-war society.

\textsuperscript{179} Deb, 16 May 1945; Sawer, Australian Federal Politics and Law, 1929-1949, 161.
\textsuperscript{180} Deb, 16 May 1945.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
The heightened partisan conflict of May 1945 was continued into June, which became the fourth and final peak at which partisan conflict exceeded the historical average. In June, the House sat for seventeen days and divided a total of thirty-four times resulting in a frequency of two divisions per sitting day. As with May, the pieces of legislation which prompted conflict were primarily those concerned with post-war society. Of particular salience in June were the Commonwealth Bank Bill and the Banking Bill, which together accounted for thirty of the thirty-four divisions. The two banking Bills significantly expanded the Government’s ability to manipulate the banking system. The Commonwealth Bank was established as the effective Central Bank, and the Bank Board - which had collectively governed the conduct of the Bank since 1924 - was abolished and replaced by a single Governor of the Bank who was directly answerable to the Commonwealth Treasurer. The legislation further required non-government banks to deposit a portion of their reserves within the Commonwealth Bank, and tie their own interest rates to those set by the Commonwealth. Finally, the legislation prohibited States and State authorities from conducting business with non-government banks, securing for the Commonwealth Bank a monopoly of public sector banking. The Liberal Party Opposition fervently opposed the intervention as ‘a fundamental assault on free enterprise’. At a time when the country was looking forward to being liberated from excessive wartime control, the banking legislation represented ‘a frightening entry into a whole new area of regulation’. Two years later when the Labor Party attempted to nationalise the

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186 Ibid.
188 Ibid.; Institute of Public Affairs, “The Banking Legislation”.

banking system entirely, the enabling legislation was declared invalid by the High Court.\textsuperscript{189} The observations of this case study warrant some more general comment.

**Conclusions from the case studies**

This case study has examined the nature of partisan conflict in the Australian federal parliament during the crisis of the Second World War. Consistent with the hypothesis that national crises and partisan conflict exist in an inverse relationship, the preeminent crisis of the Second World War has been demonstrated to correlate with the largest sustained diminution of partisan conflict in the history of Australia’s federal parliament. With a war-time frequency of 0.70 divisions per sitting day, the period of the Second World War witnessed a 61\% reduction in the historic rate of partisan conflict. It has also been possible to observe the same inverse relationship between crisis and partisan conflict at a micro-level within the case study. A monthly media content analysis of both crisis and partisan conflict has demonstrated the two variables to operate in the hypothesised inversely proportional way as the events of the war progressed. Further insight has also been garnered by examining the timing and substance of issues over which the House divided. During the period of the case study, the frequency of voting divisions exceeded the historical average in a statistically significant manner three times. The first of these - June 1939 - occurred prior to the outbreak of war, while the latter two - May and June 1945 - occurred after the defeat of Nazi Germany and declaration of Victory in Europe.\textsuperscript{190} That is, the degree of partisan conflict remained below the historical average for the entirety of the war, until the defeat of Germany. The media content analysis of the crisis variable

\textsuperscript{189} Howard, *The Menzies Era: The Years That Shaped Modern Australia*, 63.
\textsuperscript{190} Australian War Memorial, "Second World War"; Churchill, "The German Surrender."
in Chart 11 further reveals the perceived degree of crisis to be relatively diminished at the time of these increasingly partisan debates. Finally, the qualitative content analysis has demonstrated that where increased partisanship did occur it was not directly aroused by debate over the prosecution of the war, but rather concerned financial elements of war-time legislation or broader debates about post-war society.
Discussion

Reiteration of findings

This thesis has demonstrated a robust inverse relationship between the independent variable of national crises and the dependent variable of partisan conflict, such that periods of national crisis correlate with a diminution of partisan conflict. Partisan conflict has been operationalised in three ways: House of Representatives voting divisions, Australian newspaper articles containing keywords indicative of partisan dispute, and the substance of parliamentary debate. National crises, meanwhile, have been initially inferred a priori during periods of known crisis, before being empirically evaluated by the frequency of Australian newspaper articles containing keywords indicative of the particular threat. Three analytical methods were applied to evaluate the relationship between these two variables: mean comparison analysis, media content analysis and qualitative content analysis.

The mean comparison analysis compared the mean frequency of House voting divisions across the entire period of the study, to the mean frequency of House voting divisions during periods of a priori known crisis. The result of this analysis was to demonstrate a considerable diminution in partisan conflict during these periods of known crisis. The absolute mean frequency across the period of the study was 1.88 divisions per sitting day. During the crisis of the First World War, August 1914 - November 1918, this mean dropped to a frequency of just 0.8 divisions per sitting day, marking a 54% reduction on the historical mean.\footnote{191 The crisis of the Second World War, September 1939 - September 1945, witnessed an even greater...}
quiescence of partisanship: a frequency of 0.7 divisions per sitting day representing a 61% reduction on the historical mean.\textsuperscript{192} The hypothesis that periods of national crisis correlate with a diminution of partisan conflict was thus confirmed by the methodology of mean comparison analysis.

Media content analysis and qualitative content analysis were secondarily employed within the context of case studies, in order to strengthen the robustness of these initial findings. The First World War and Second World War were adopted as the subject of these case studies by virtue of being the two events which demonstrated the largest, sustained, negative deviation from the absolute historical mean of partisan conflict. Within these case studies, a media content analysis of the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} observed monthly variation in both variables of crisis and partisan conflict, by observing the relative frequency with which they were alluded to within newspaper articles. This media analysis, of both the First World War and Second World War, confirmed national crises and partisan conflict to exist in the hypothesised inverse relationship, such that, as reports of crisis increased, reports of partisan conflict decreased. At the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, for example, reportage of crisis increased 308.7\%, while partisan conflict decreased 62.1\%.\textsuperscript{193} Likewise, at the outbreak of the Second World War in August 1939, crisis increased 147.8\% and partisan conflict decreased 14.35\%; while, following the defeat of Nazi Germany in May 1945, crisis decreased 35.58\% and partisan conflict increased 77.32\%.\textsuperscript{194} In both case studies, significant variation in the degree of crisis prompted a proportionally inverse variation in the degree of partisan conflict. The

\textsuperscript{192} Second World War.\textsuperscript{193} First World War.\textsuperscript{194} Second World War; Churchill, "The German Surrender."
outcome of the media content analysis thus further confirmed the established inverse relationship between national crises and partisan conflict.

Finally, a methodology of qualitative content analysis was employed in order to observe the substance of debate during the two case studies. This qualitative analysis made three observations. First, most significant partisan debates occurred outside the most militarily dangerous months of the Wars. During the Second World War, for instance, partisan debate declined at the outbreak of war, and remained below the historical average until after the defeat of Nazi Germany in May 1945.195 Second, where partisan debate did occur during the crises of the two World Wars, it largely concerned financial and post-war considerations, rather than issues central to the prosecution of the war itself. Third, where debate was considered to be of an explicitly partisan character, such as the proposed referendum debate of June 1915, the House self-censored; partisan conflict during such a period of crisis being likened to debating ‘the reconstruction of a house while the house is burning.’196 This multi-methods approach has demonstrated the inverse relationship between national crises and partisan conflict to be robust. The existence of this relationship having been demonstrated, this thesis concludes with some comments on the implications of this phenomenon, both for the academic literature and for politics as it is practised in the contemporary context.

Implications

To a large extent, the inverse relationship between national crises and partisan conflict is neither surprising nor unwelcome; demonstrating, as it does, the ability of

195 "The German Surrender."
196 Deb, 18 June 1915.
the federal parliament to unite in the face of a common foe. 197 A second interpretation, however, may attribute the diminution of partisan conflict not to a positive expression of bipartisanship, but rather to a negative suppression of dissent. 198

It has been established that the Opposition serves as a crucial accountability mechanism when it seeks to amend, examine, scrutinise, and criticise the actions of the Government. 199 Writing on the virtues of parliamentary Opposition, constitutional historian Alpheus Todd commented that:

The opposition exercise a wholesome influence upon parliamentary debate, and upon the conduct of the business of the crown in Parliament, for they are the constitutional critics of all public affairs; and whatever course the government may pursue, they naturally endeavour to find some ground for attack. It is the function of an opposition to state the case against the administration; to say everything which may plausibly be said against every measure, act, or word of every member of the ministry; in short, to constitute a standing censorship of the government, subjecting all its acts and measures to a close and jealous scrutiny. 200

If national crises were, therefore, thought to be suppressing this ‘close and jealous scrutiny’, considerable concerns could be raised regarding stifling the proper

198 Michels, Political Parties, 235.
199 House of Representatives Practice, 81-82.
functioning of the Opposition in parliament. Each of the crises evaluated in the substance of this thesis – the First World War, the Great Depression, the Second World War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Global Financial Crisis - are widely appreciated as bona fide crises, the response to which can rightly be understood as genuine bipartisanship rather than the mere suppression of dissent.

With respect to crises more generally, however, there is the potential for the phenomenon to be manipulated for electoral benefit. A further implication of the relationship demonstrated in this thesis, therefore, is the politics of fear.

The politics of fear is the manipulation of crises, in order to provoke fear from which the fear-monger may reap electoral benefit. This thesis has demonstrated a robust inverse relationship between national crises and partisan conflict. Further studies surveyed extend this to a relationship between national crises and support for the incumbent Executive, with the diminution of partisan conflict serving as an intervening variable. Given the interrelationship of these three variables - crises, partisan conflict and support for the Executive – there exists a potentially perverse incentive for fear mongering. That is, cognisant of, i. the ability of national crises to prompt a decrease of partisan conflict and, ii. the subsequent tendency for a diminution of partisan conflict to prompt an increase in popular support for the incumbent Executive, an incumbent Executive may face an incentive to either

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201 Menzies, "The Function of the Opposition in Parliament."
202 "Stirring Appeal for Political Unity," The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 May 1941.
manufacture or exaggerate a crisis in order to promote the desired increase in popular support.\textsuperscript{205}

It has been argued that the politics of fear is operative within contemporary Australian politics, particularly regarding issues of national security.\textsuperscript{206} The mandatory detention of irregular maritime arrivals, for instance – a bipartisan policy since it was introduced by the Keating Labor Government in 1992 – is regularly denounced by its opponents as being premised upon ‘weasel words and lies to keep the public ignorant and fearful about boat arrivals.’\textsuperscript{207} The Australian Government’s broader counter-terrorism measures have also been subject to allegations of fear mongering for electoral benefit.\textsuperscript{208} Tony Windsor, for instance, an independent Member of the House of Representatives from 2001 to 2013, alleged in August 2015 that the Abbott Government’s counter-terrorism initiatives were:

all part of a very sad agenda … to actually frighten people. I’ve got no doubt that some of these people in Abbott’s Government hope that something goes wrong domestically: that they can taunt a Muslim into doing something, so that they can say that “We’re the only ones that can protect you. The Labor Party are too weak to protect you. Vote for us.”\textsuperscript{209}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{205} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{206} Hogg, "The Khaki Election."; Ian McAllister, "Border Protection, the 2001 Australian Election and the Coalition Victory," \textit{Australian Journal of Political Science} 38, no. 3 (2003); Fitzgibbon, "Sky News Agenda 28 June 2015 - Transcript"; Jackson, "Operation Fortitude Part of an Agenda to Create Fear: Tony Windsor".
\item \textsuperscript{208} Rachel Baxendale and Jamie Walker, "Death Cult Is ‘Coming for Us’," \textit{The Australian}, 28 June 2015.
\item \textsuperscript{209} Jackson, "Operation Fortitude Part of an Agenda to Create Fear: Tony Windsor".
\end{enumerate}
Windsor’s claims were criticised at the time as a ‘malicious conspiracy theory’, which was, ‘unhinged, unbelievable and unsupported’.210 Yet the comments are illustrative of the fear some have regarding the sinister misuse of the inter-relationship of crises, partisan conflict, and incumbent popularity, detailed in this thesis. This implication of the politics of fear, and the earlier implication of potentially diminished democratic scrutiny, both provide the opportunity for further research.

In conclusion, while the opportunities for further research are vast, the findings of this thesis are both expected and encouraging. It reflects the axiomatic truth that a community unites when faced with a common foe, and demonstrates that the Australian polity – frequently bemoaned as needlessly combative – is able to achieve bipartisanship when the situation requires.211

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Department of the House of Representatives. Votes and Proceedings.


## Appendices

Appendix 1: House of Representatives voting divisions, 1901-2014

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*SD = Sitting Days; X = Divisions; X/SD = Divisions per sitting day*
Appendix 2: Frequency of divisions in each parliamentary term

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* all division figures are House of Representatives divisions per sitting day
Appendices

Appendix 3: Explanation of 1935 and 1975 peaks

The frequency of House of Representatives voting divisions per sitting day has dual peaks in 1935 and 1975. Whilst unrelated to the independent variable of national crisis, as it is used in the study, the magnitude of these two peaks warrant brief comment.

The 1935 peak of 5.47 divisions per sitting day represents a 191% increase on the absolute historical mean of 1.88 divisions per sitting day. Examination reveals nearly twenty per-cent of all of the divisions which occurred in 1935 occurred on a single day, 9 April 1935. On this date the Government sought from the House an extension of Supply for the first three months of the next financial year. The Labor Opposition, seemingly intent to make a spectacle of the situation, moved continual amendments that particular line items in the Supply Bill be reduced by paltry amounts - £1, 10s. - ‘as a direction to the Government’ that the House was displeased on particular issues. The issues cited by the Opposition were policy areas in which they differed from the Government of the day, and the tactic provided Opposition members the opportunity to make long and censorious speeches in attack of Government policy.

The 1975 peak of partisan conflict resulted from the Australian Constitutional Crisis of November 1975. Seeking to force the Whitlam Labor Government to an early election, the Opposition Liberal Party, led by Malcolm Fraser, blocked Supply in the Senate. Debate ensued for four weeks before the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, intervened, dismissing the Whitlam Labor Government and commissioning Fraser as care-taker Prime Minister. Partisan hostilities remained high until well after the subsequent election on 13 December 1975.
A WEEK OF TROUBLE.

OBSTRUCTIVE TACTICS.

An Incinerator Site.

BY OUR CANBERRA CORRESPONDENT.

Last week was troubled and disappointing for the Menzies Ministry. In Parliament, members of the Government were given clear indications that unless there is an unexpected change of feeling they must face the prospect of obstruction and restraint in the future; and outside they had to accept by-election defeats when victory appeared to be within the United Australia Party's grasp.

Members of the Ministry, however, regard these developments merely as setbacks and not as threats to the Ministry's essential stability. They are satisfied that the forces opposed to them will not strike even though they be willing to wound; and they are satisfied that, in spite of the handicaps, the Ministry, within the limits imposed by forces beyond its control, will fulfil the undertaking given by the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, that his Government will get on with the job.

BY-ELECTION RESULTS.

Government supporters do not take the by-election results too seriously. They contend that they were so close that the Government has suffered no serious blow. The Griffith result, they argue, might even be taken as a ground for optimism. In support of this, they point out that in a seat conceded as belonging to Labour the U.A.P. came within eight votes of winning, indicating that substantial gains have been made since the last election.

The Wilmot contest on this occasion, they contend, was an even chance for both parties, because, with the death of the late Prime Minister, the U.A.P. lost the advantage of his substantial personal following. Therefore, it is asserted, with a margin of only 69, there is little to choose between the results achieved by both parties and certainly there is no clear indication of a swing against the Government.

The elected member for Griffith, Alderman Conelan, made his appearance in the House last week. He is a quiet, middle-aged man with the air of a thinker.

COUNTRY PARTY TACTICS.

The situation in the House is causing far more dissatisfaction than the by-election results. Members of the Ministry, who are sincerely anxious to press on with the important work ahead, are convinced that they are being delibrately and unnecessarily harrassed and obstructed.

No objection is raised to the attacks and stonewalling by members of the official Opposition. They, it is conceded, are merely fulfilling their natural function. The complaint is against the Country Party, which has declared is not only embarrassing the Government without sound reason, but is deliberately extending the opportunities for Labour attacks.

Events in the last week suggest that there is a great deal of truth in this contention. This was particularly evident during the debate on the bill to create the Supply Department. Country Party members were prepared to accept the bill provided two amendments were included, yet they allowed the debate to drag weighty on for nearly a fortnight before they would give the Government the support that it needed to attend to business.

There appeared to be no reason for these tactics except to demonstrate the Country Party's power and how dependent the Government is on its goodwill. That is generally accepted as the interpretation.

SIR EARLE PAGE.

Probably relations will improve when Sir Earle Page resigns the leadership of the party. His opposition to Mr. Menzies is too deeply-seated to permit any harmony between the two parties. A move is on foot to unseat him, but he nevertheless retains an extraordinarily firm grip on rank and file members.

That was indicated by the fact that his return to Canberra converted a number of uncoordinated Country Party groups into a unified force.

One of the most unfortunate results of the obstructive attitude of the Country Party is the unsatisfactory condition that develops in Parliament. A flock of kittens at a knitting bee could not have caused more confusion than was apparent in the House of Representatives for most of last week. A stranger strolling into the galleries at almost any stage could have been pardoned for believing that he had stumbled on a bear garden. During the greater part of the Supply Department debate members either lolled inertly bored about the benches while one of their fellows droned on with about as much eloquence as a travel folder, or engaged in heated and noisy argument across the centre table while the chairman, Mr. Prowse, who is famous for his attacks on the red-legged pea mite (a humorous name in Canberra, but apparently a dangerous menace in Western Australia), appealed vainly for order.

If the guillotine had not been applied there is no knowing whether members would have been able to escape from the tangled skein of technicalities that their activities had woven.