

# Understanding Leader Behavior

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# The Way Things Used to Be

- Rudimentary understanding of leader incentives.
- Assume they are all very similar in terms of goals and constraints.
- Regard particularly notable leaders as “exceptions”.

# Modern Practices

- Know far more about how key elements of a leader's environment and choices shape her decision making calculus.
- Individual leaders rarely seen as exceptions.
- Instead, general patterns emerge once we consider leaders systematically.

# Leader Environment

- Democracy dichotomy
- Systematic study of all leaders reveals interesting heterogeneity within regime types
  - Variation in democracies
  - Variation in non-democracies
  - The importance of “mixed regimes”
- Think about the leader’s group of critical supporters, not the “type” of leader they are.

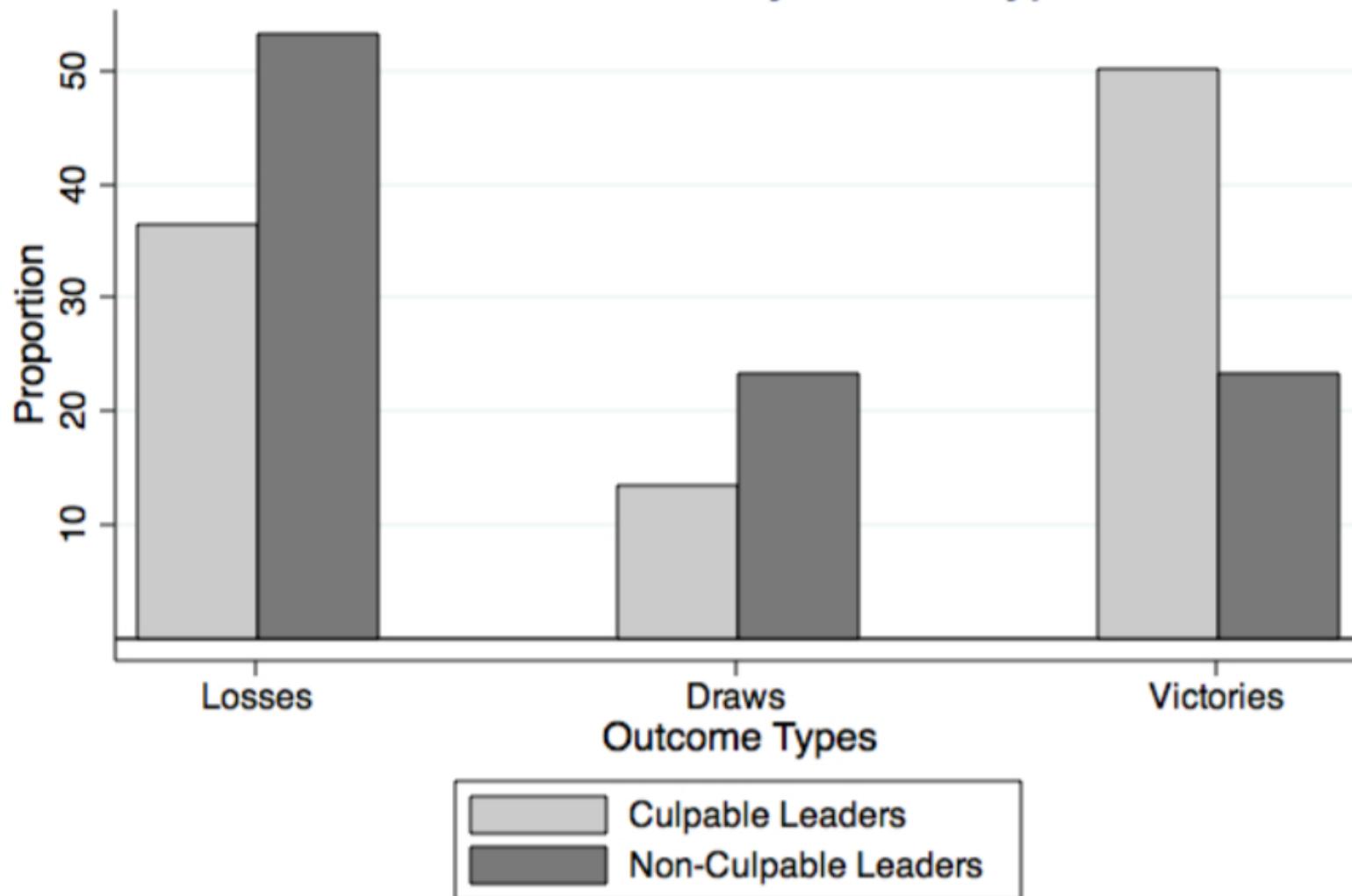
# Leader Choices

- Old way: things just sort of happen to leaders, they react, the public responds.
- Critical supporters *care* about attributing blame.
- Attributing blame is not as difficult as is typically assumed, especially in matters of security.
- Being “culpable” for something has powerful effects on leader behavior.

# Leader Choices and War Outcomes

- Analyzed an original dataset, comprised of:
  - 85 wars
  - 291 warring states
  - 396 warring leaders
- Key Variables of Interest
  - Leader culpability
  - Regime
  - Controls
    - Adversary War Aims
    - Voluntary Participant
    - Balance of Forces

## War Outcomes by Leader Type

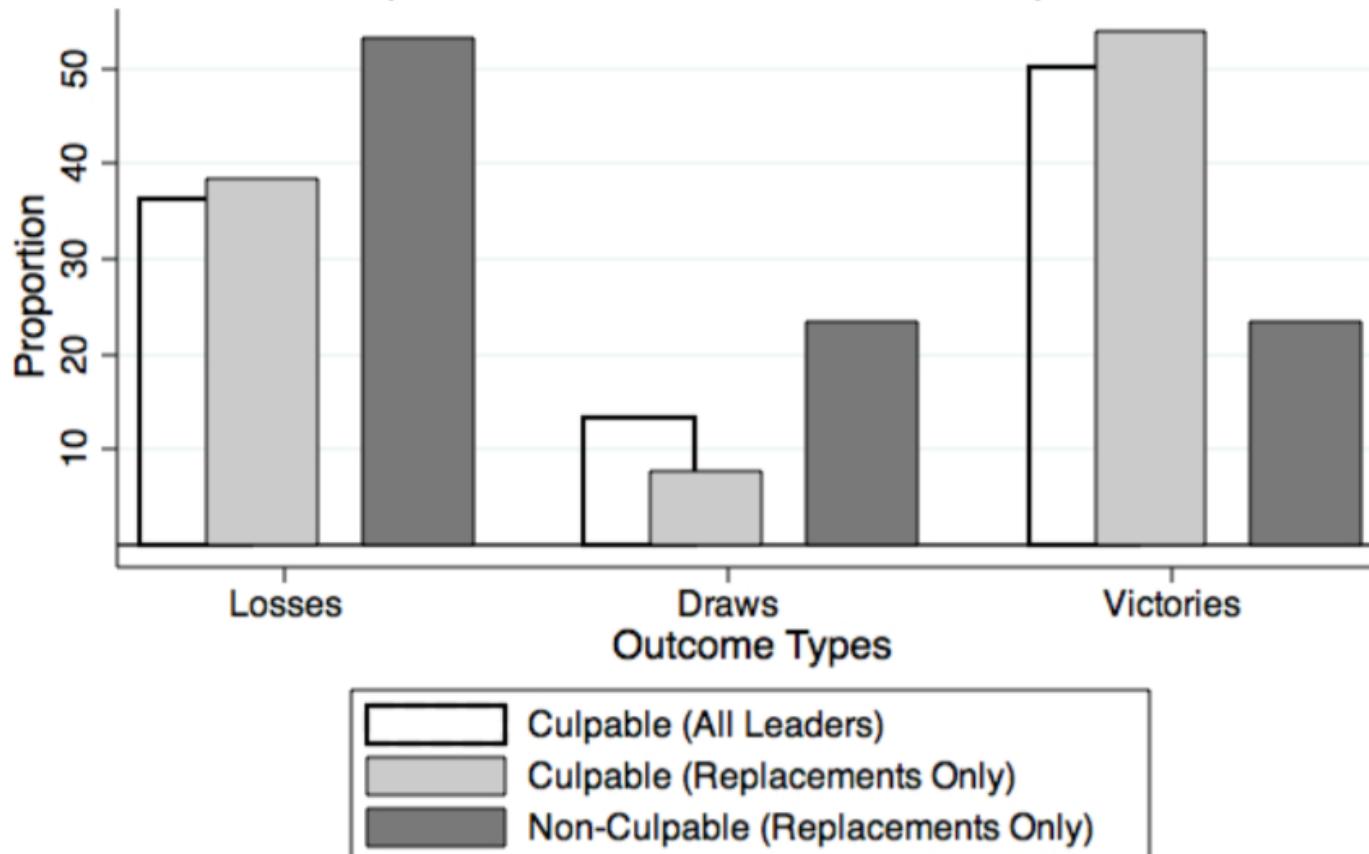


# Wartime Leader Changes

<b>Leader Position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
First	291
Second	56
Third	24
Fourth	14
Fifth	5
Sixth	3
Seventh	2
Eighth	1

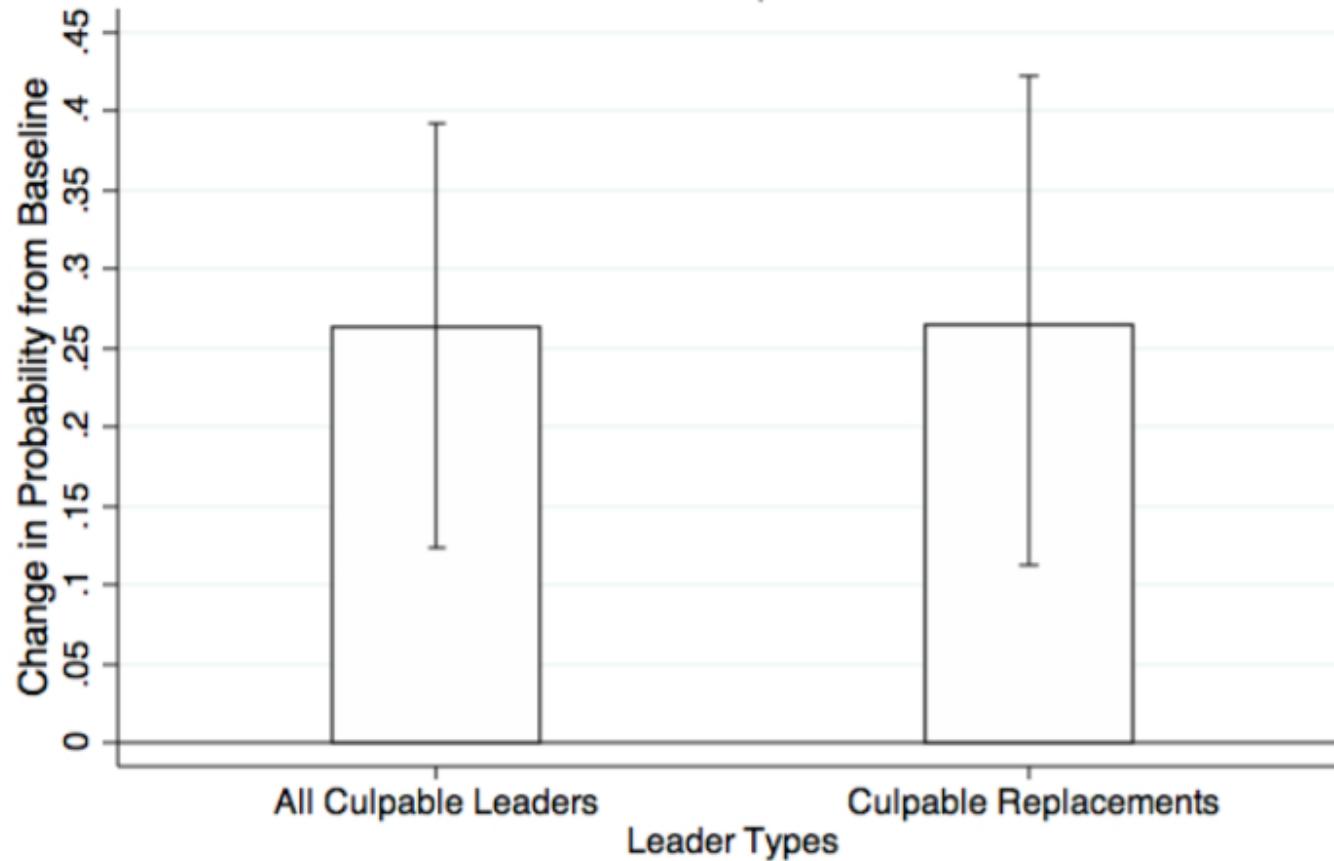
## War Outcomes by Leader Type

### Replacement Leaders vs. Full Set Comparison



## The Effect of Culpability on the Probability of Presiding Over an Extreme Outcome

Baseline: Non-Culpable Leaders



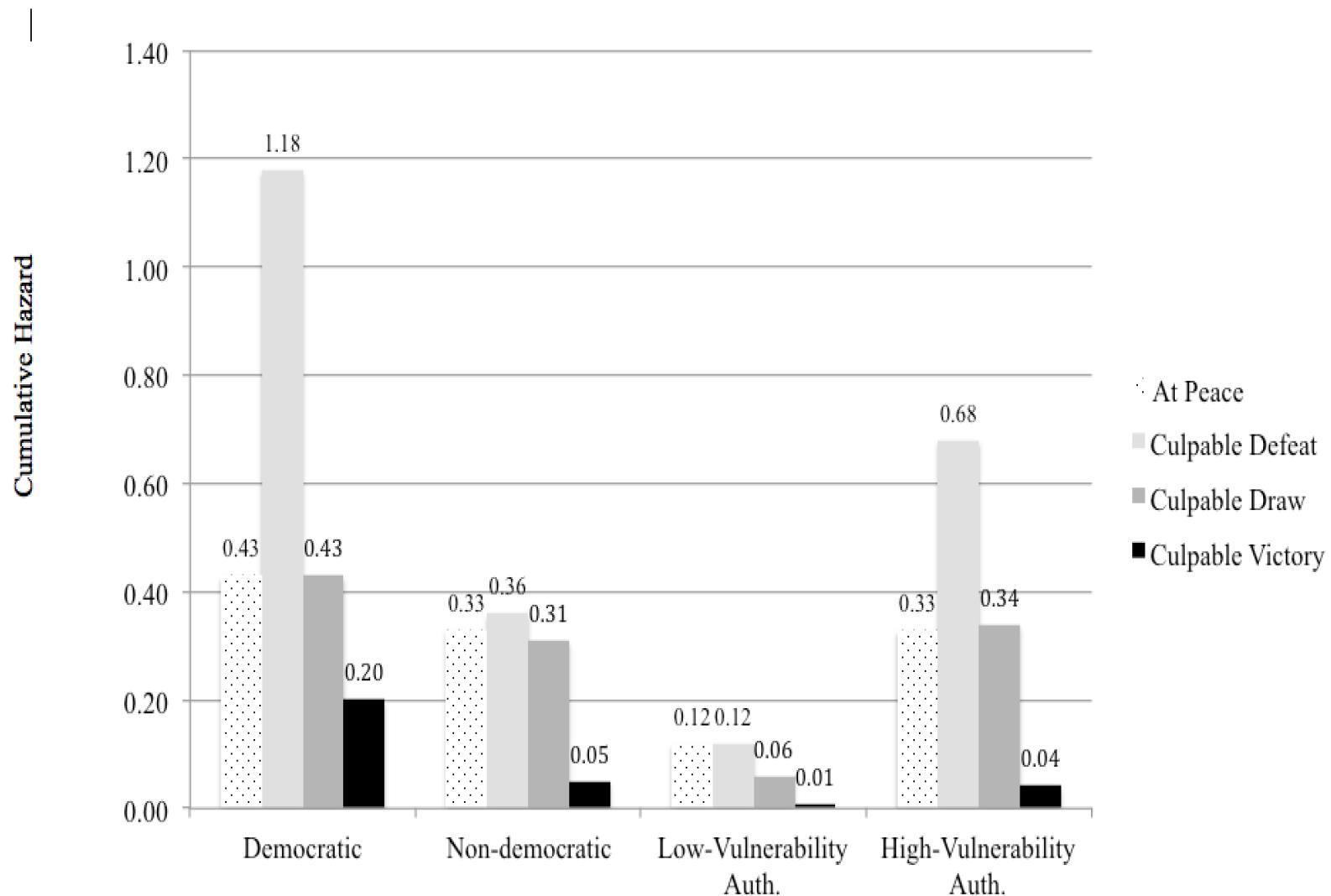
# Leader Choices and Post-War Tenure

- In a co-authored piece, that uses a hazard analysis of all warring leaders from 1945-present, we combined what we know about environment and culpability.
- Sought to address a debate in the literature regarding the sensitivity of leaders to poor war outcomes.

# Leader Choice and Post-War Tenure

- Key Variables of Interest
  - Culpability \* Regime
- Controls
  - Founding Leader
  - Civil War
  - Change in GDP (lagged)
  - Age of leader at Entry

FIGURE 1: Cumulative Hazard of Losing Office Over Two Years

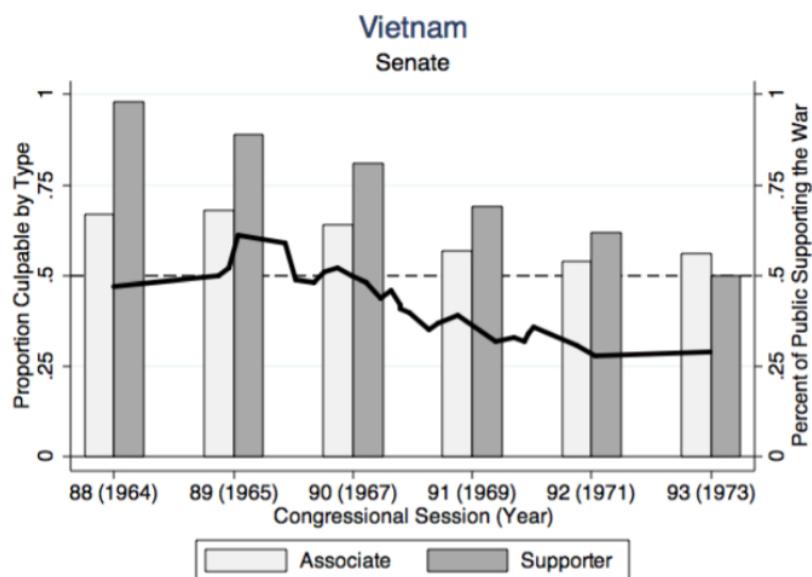
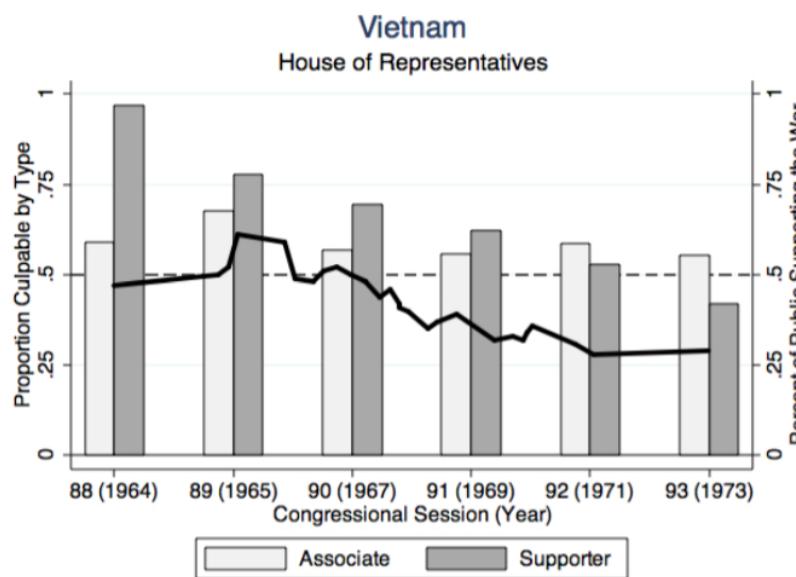
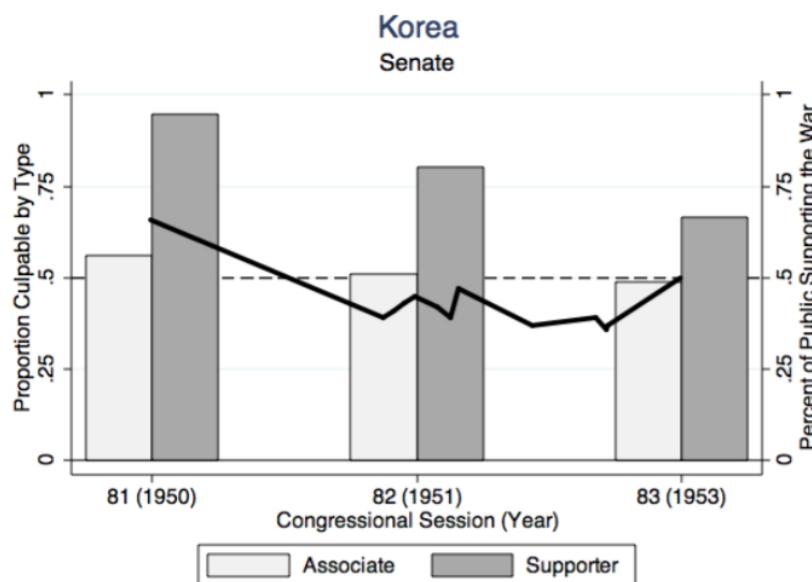
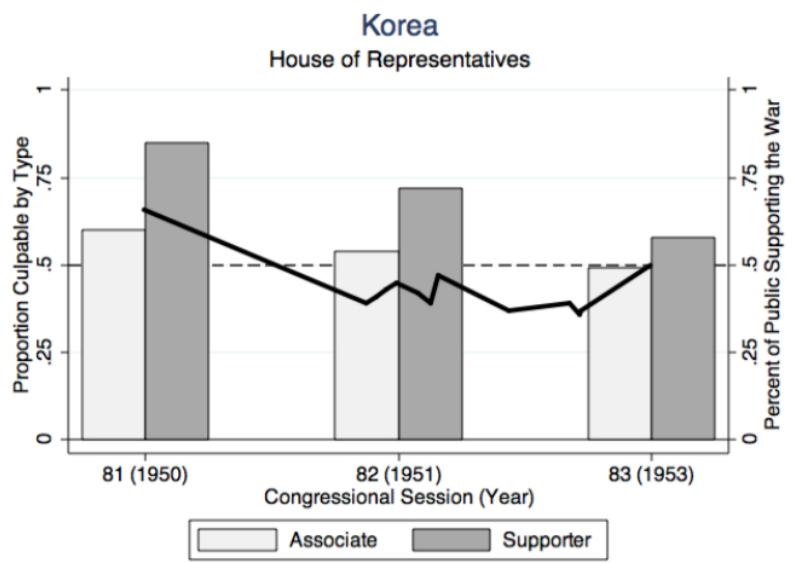


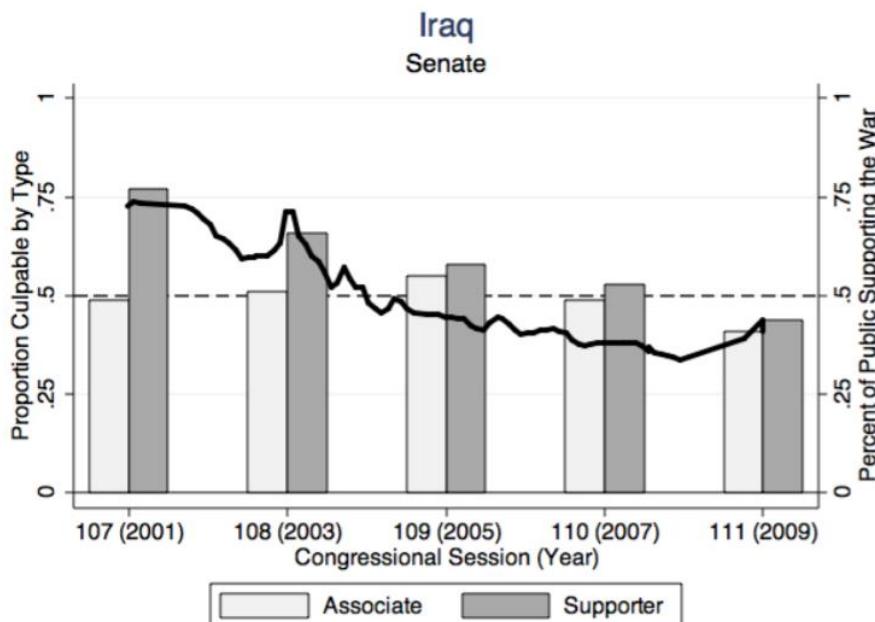
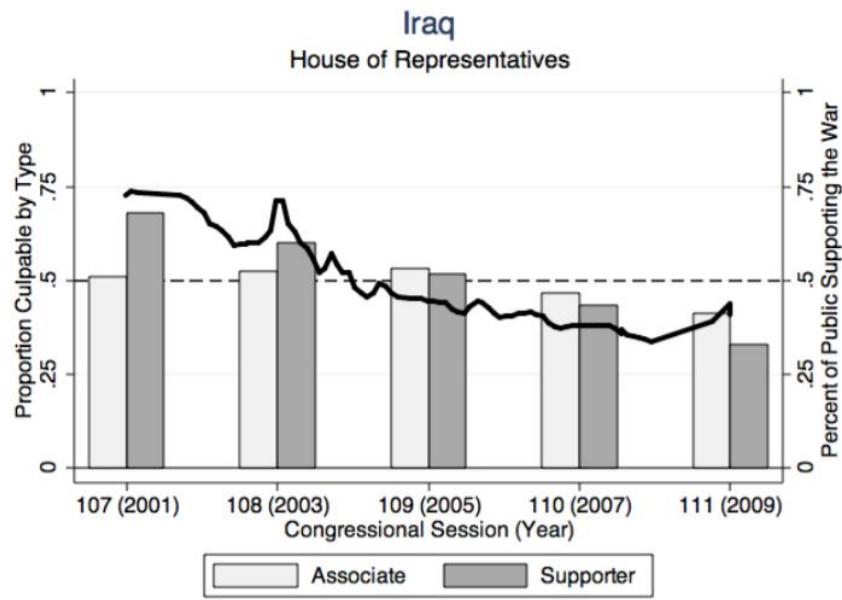
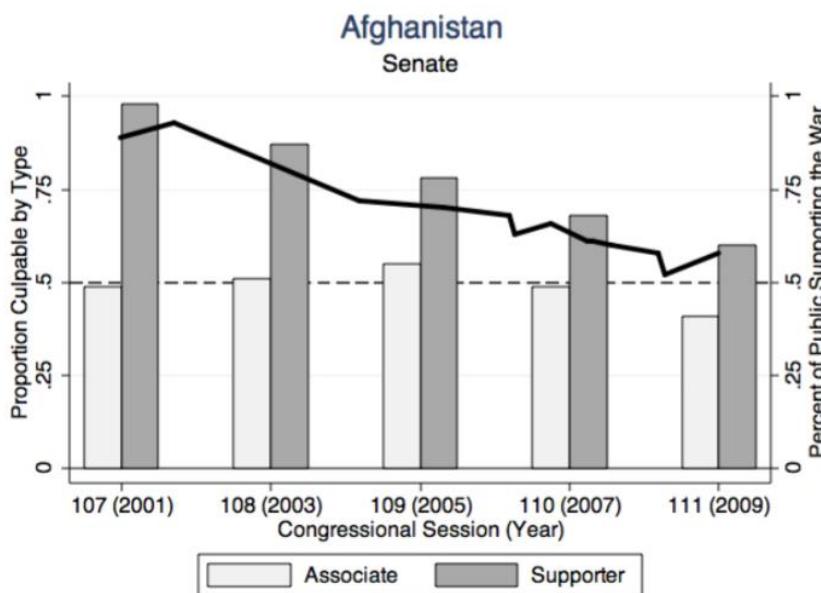
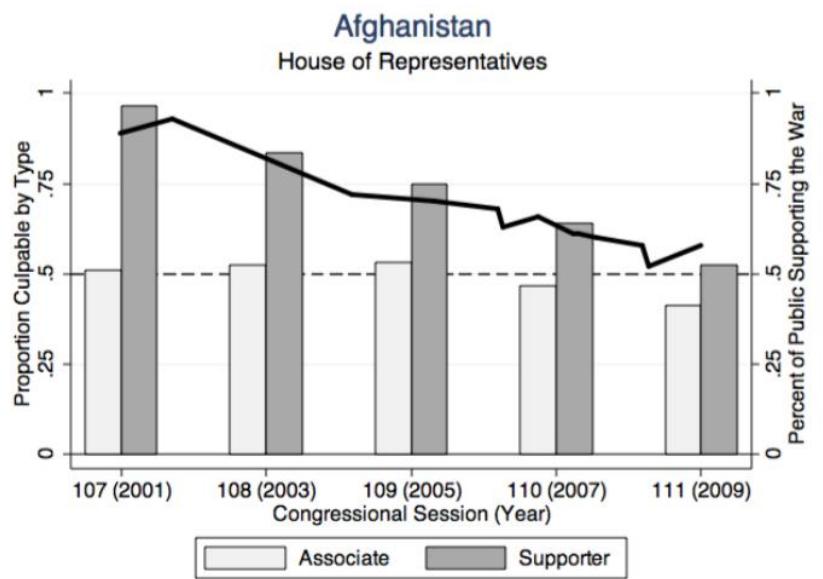
# Implications

- Helps us understand why some leaders defy public opinion.



- Bush is not exceptional in this regard...
- ....and it's not just a problem in the Executive Branch.





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- Helps us understand why some leaders defy public opinion.
- Helps us understand why some leaders are more prone to “information” or “commitment” problems.

# Two Leaders, One War



# Implications

- Helps us understand why some leaders defy public opinion.
- Helps us understand why some leaders are more prone to “information” or “commitment” problems.
- Helps us identify when conflicts are ripe for intervention and when leaders are more amenable to a lasting peace.