

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.

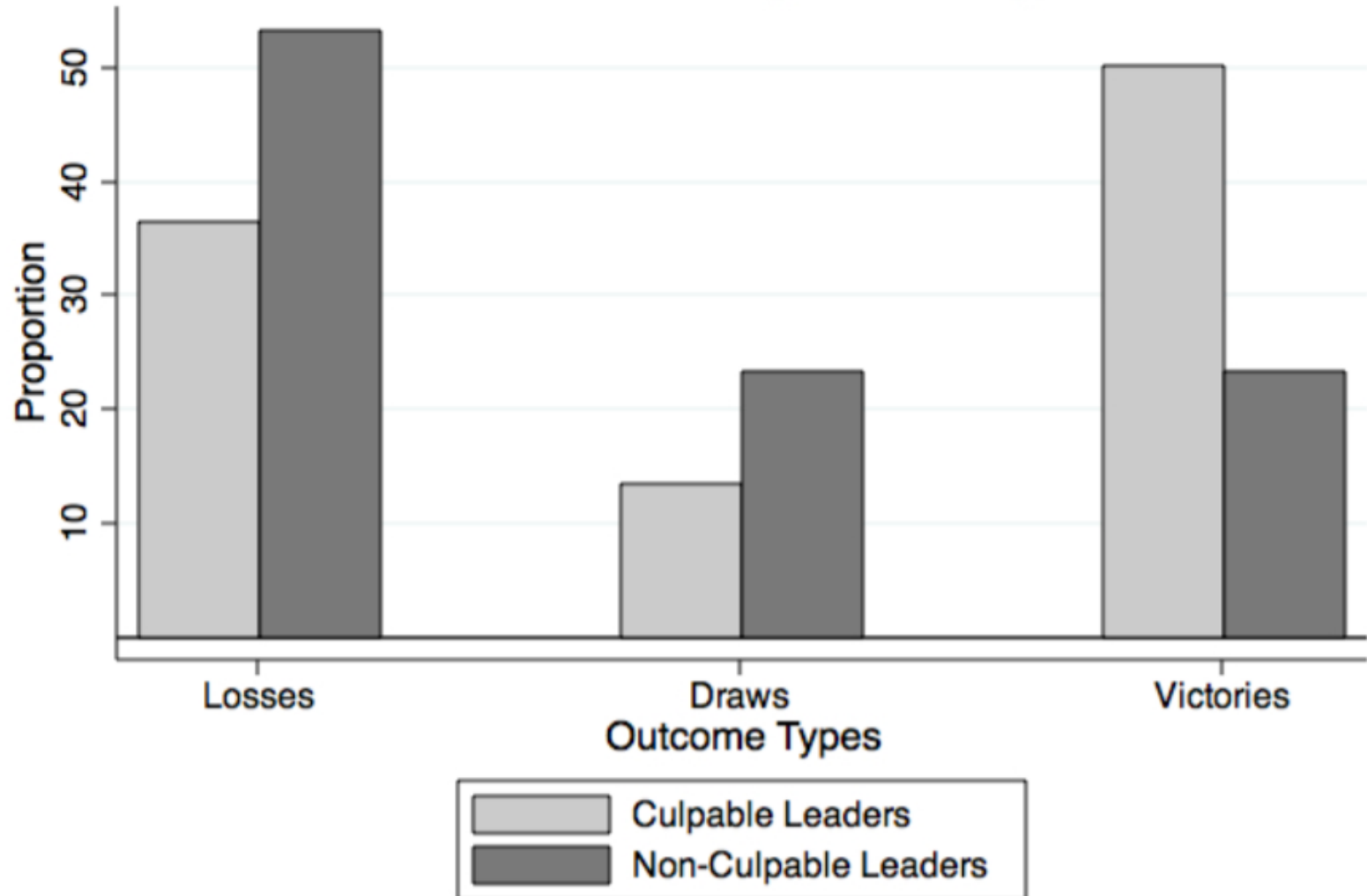
Leader Choices

- 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

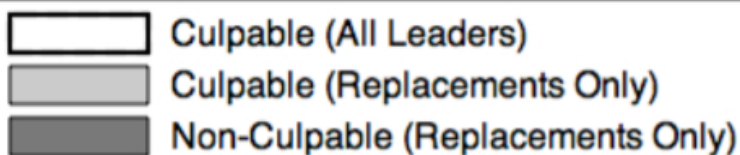
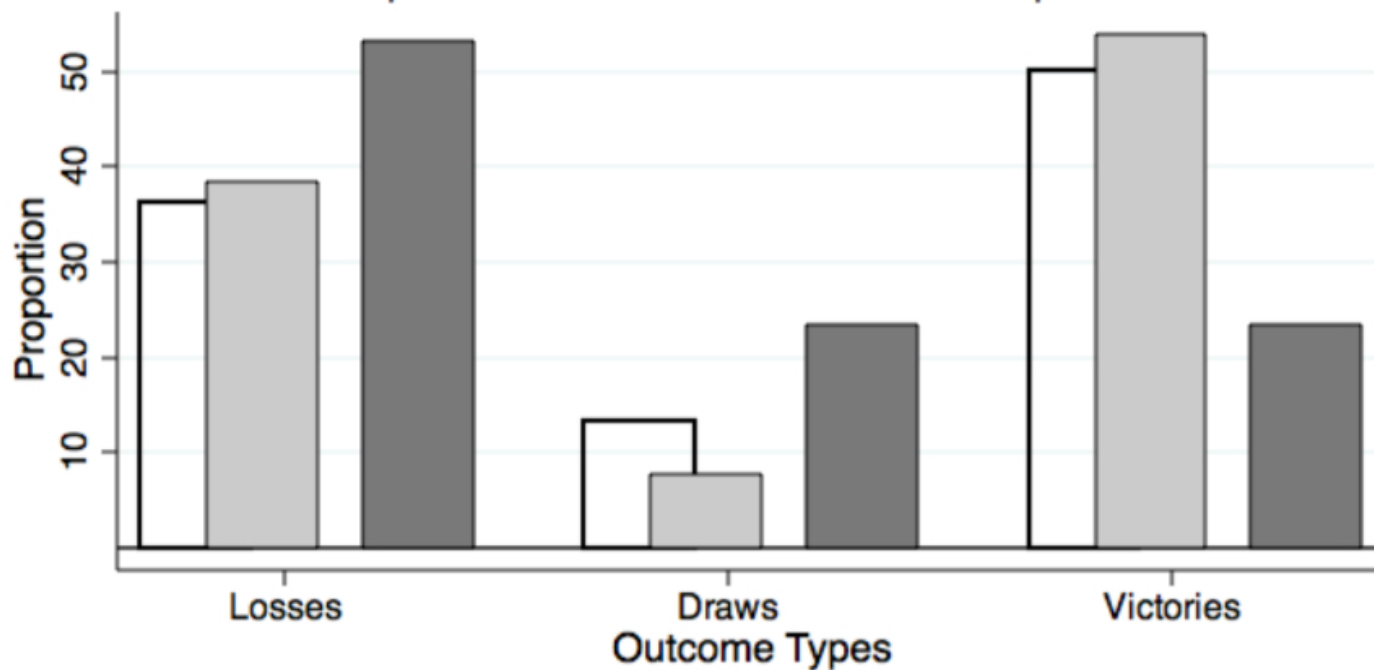


Wartime Leader Changes

| Leader Position | Frequency |
|------------------------|------------------|
| First | 291 |
| Second | 56 |
| Third | 24 |
| Fourth | 14 |
| Fifth | 5 |
| Sixth | 3 |
| Seventh | 2 |
| Eighth | 1 |

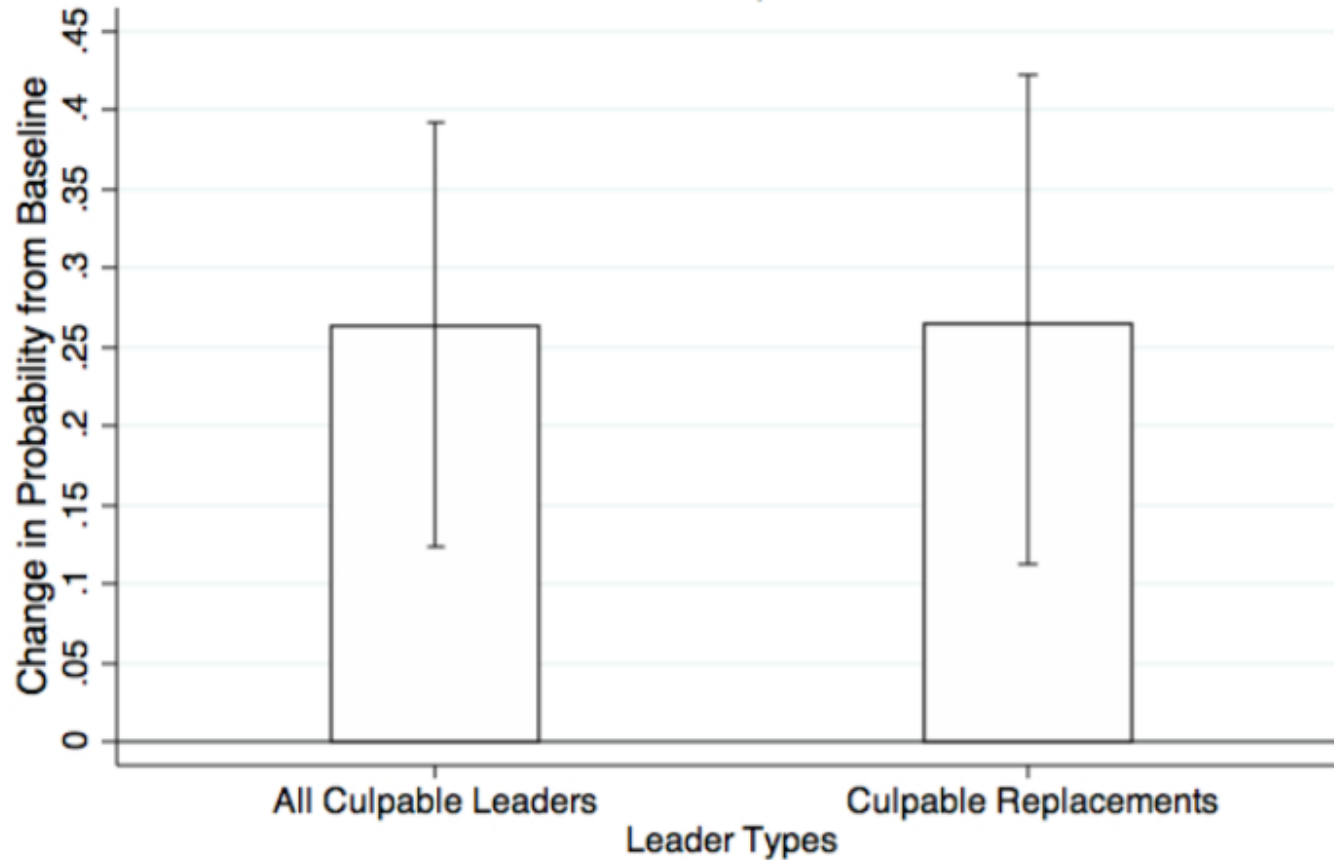
War Outcomes by Leader Type

Replacement Leaders vs. Full Set Comparison



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

Baseline: Non-Culpable Leaders



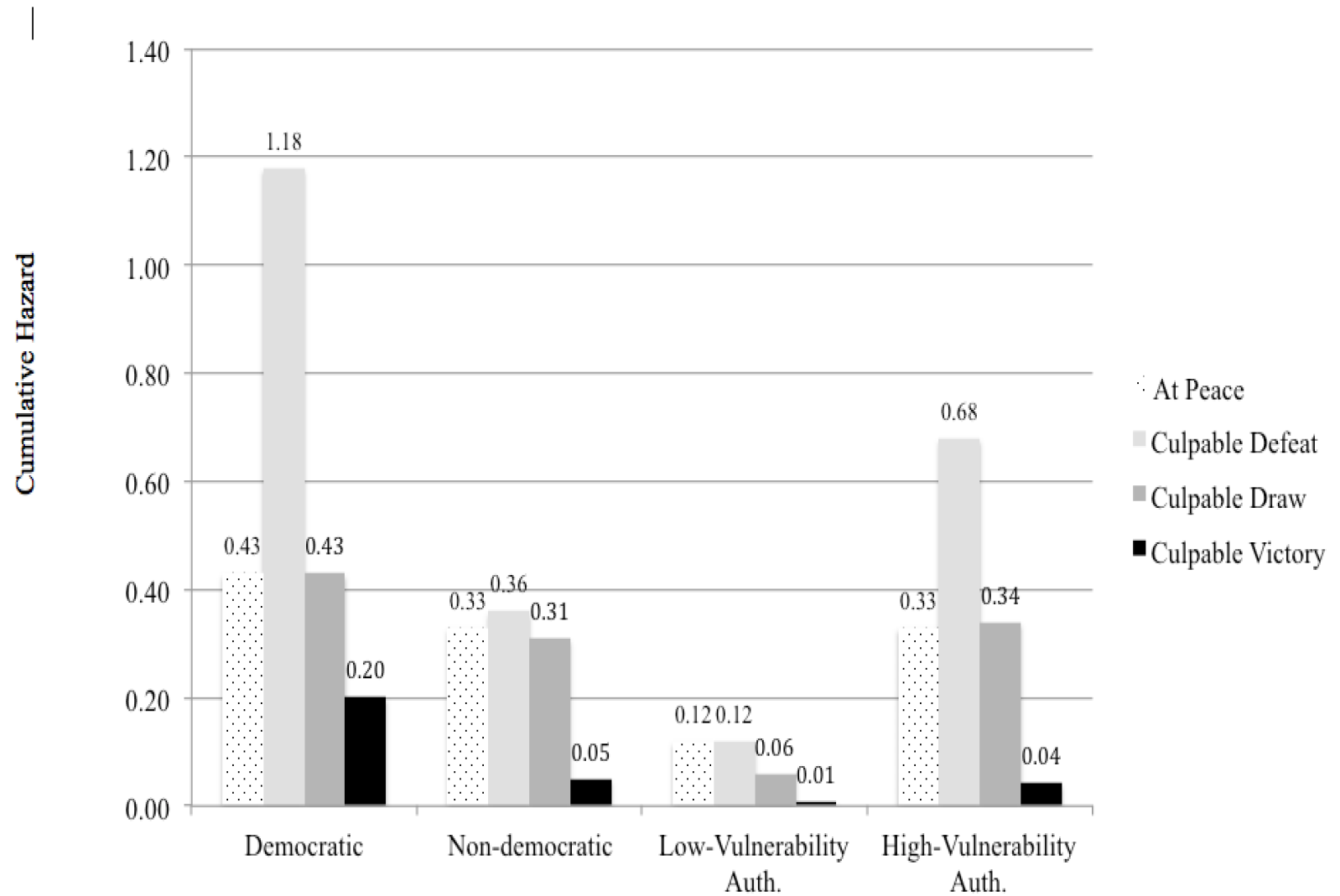
Leader Choices and Post-War Tenure

- 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

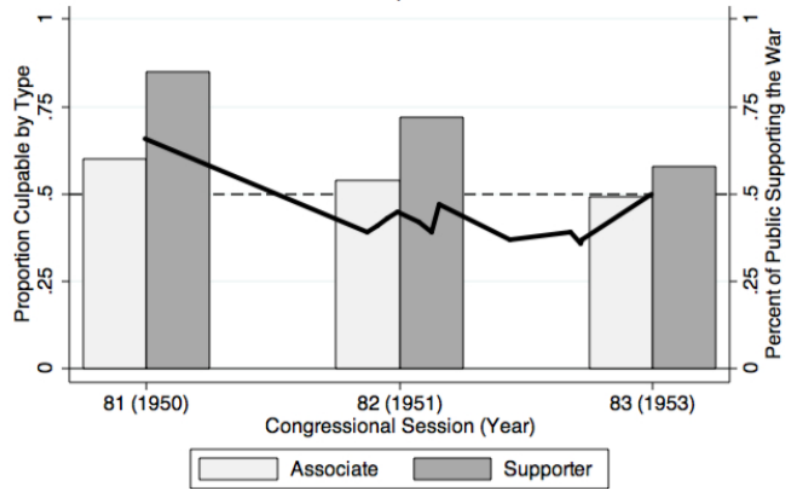
- Helps us understand why some leaders defy public opinion.



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

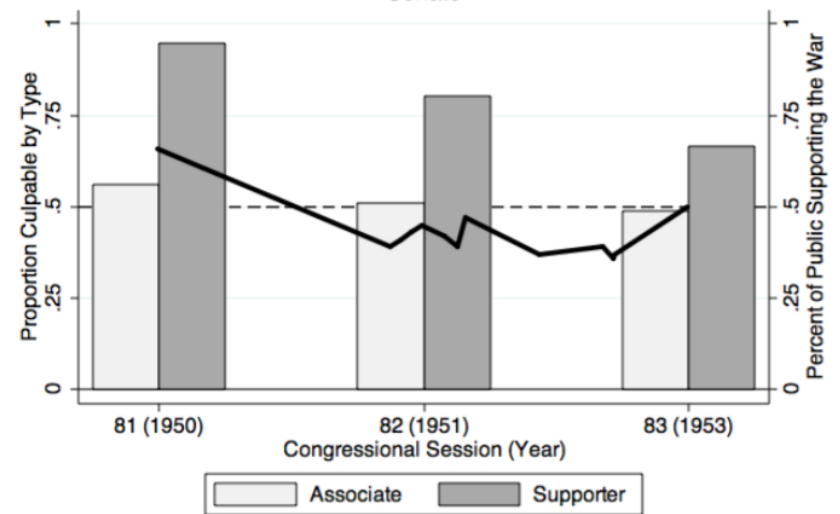
Korea

House of Representatives



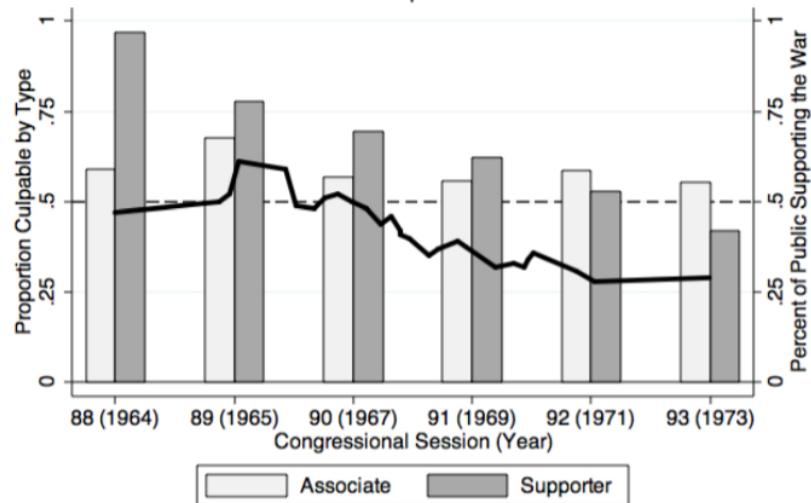
Korea

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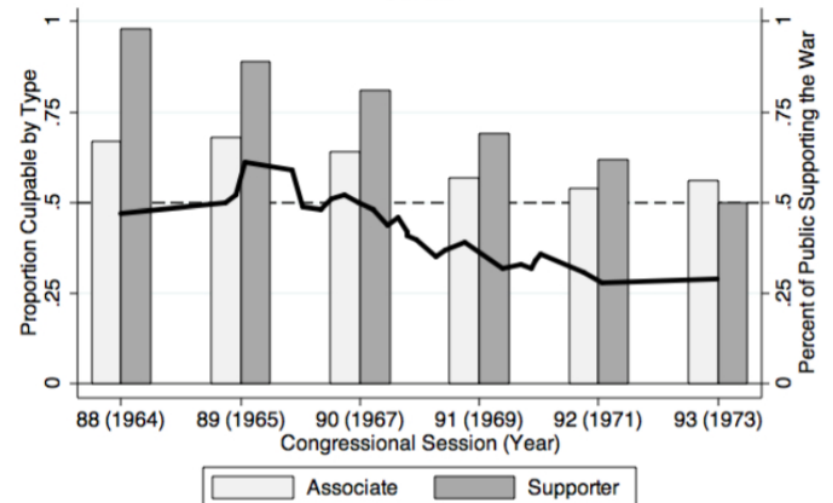
Vietnam

House of Representatives



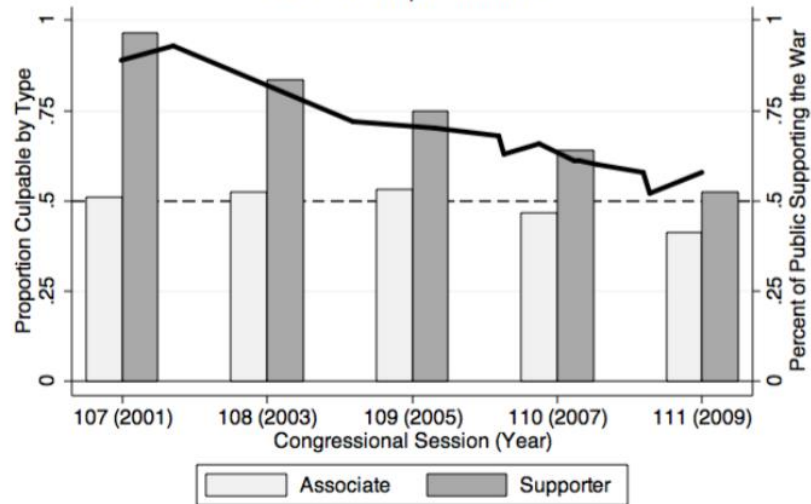
Vietnam

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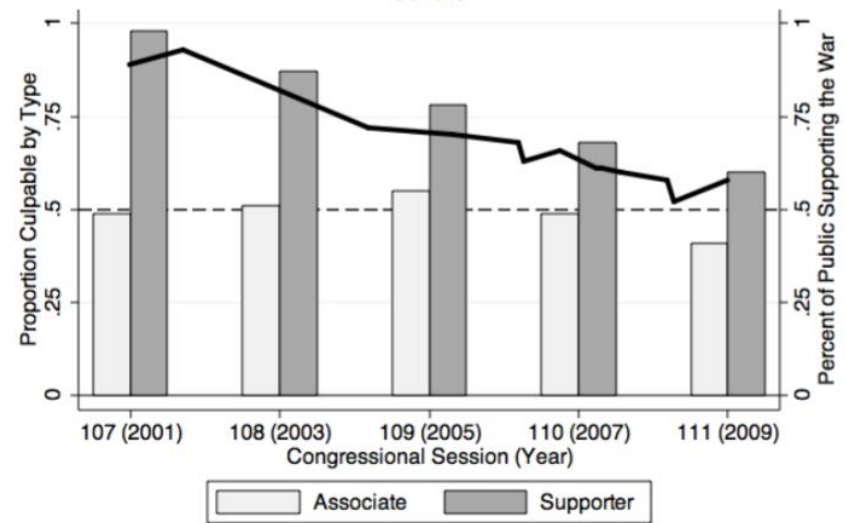
Afghanistan

House of Representatives



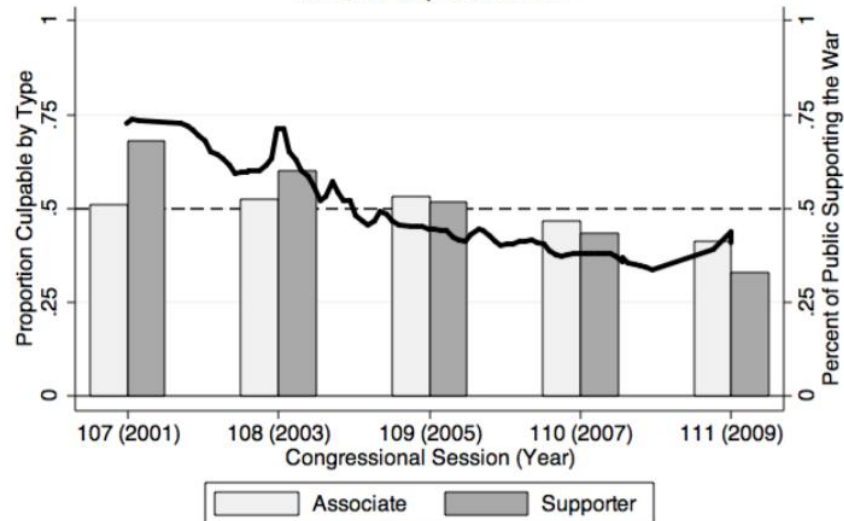
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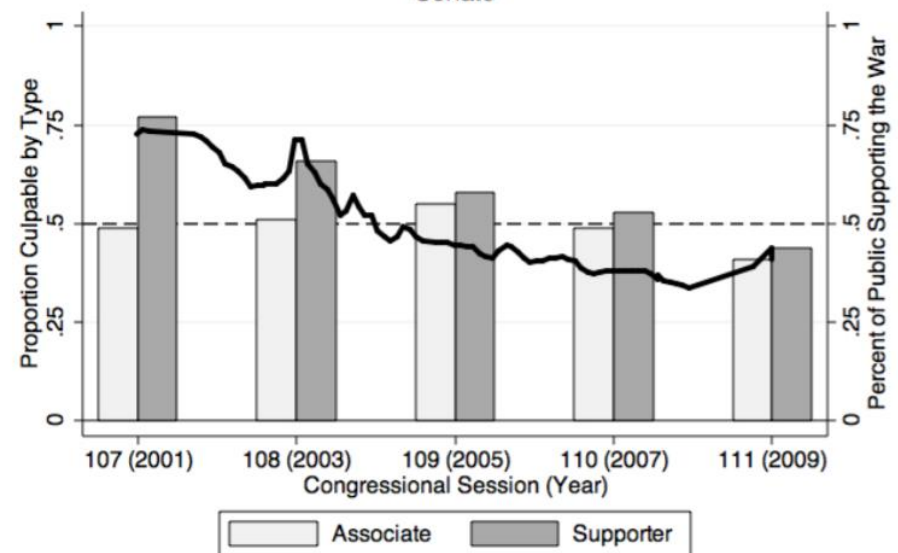
Iraq

House of Representatives



Iraq

Senate



Implications

- 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.