

War, the Presidency, and Legislative Voting Behavior*

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Abstract

An extraordinary body of scholarship suggests that war, perhaps more than any other contributor, is responsible for the emergence of a distinctly modern presidency. Central to this argument is a belief that members of Congress predictably and reliably line up behind the president during times of war. Few scholars, however, have actually subjected this argument to quantitative investigation. This paper does so. Estimating ideal points for members of Congress at the start and end of every major military conflict since World War II, we find mixed evidence of congressional accommodation to the president. Specifically, we find that members of Congress intermittently moves in the ideological direction of the president as the nation moves into a period of war, but always move in the opposite ideological direction when the country moves from war to peace. Those movements that we do observe, meanwhile, tend to track changes in public support for the president. These findings are robust and run contrary to other scholarship that emphasizes ideological consistency in members' voting behavior.

1 Introduction

Wars almost always disrupt the domestic polity. And the largest ones reconstitute it. As David Mayhew (2005, p. 473) explains, wars are “capable of generating whole new political universes.” They pry open new opportunities for policy change, remake the administrative state, alter electoral coalitions, and redefine the major parties. Their influence, indeed, may go farther still. Political scientists (Corwin 1947, 1957; Rossiter 2005 [1948]) have long argued that major wars alter the balance of powers across the various branches of government-and always to the president’s advantage.

For the most part, however, claims about war and presidential power-and, by implication, congressional and judicial deference-outpace the assembled evidentiary record. Though scholars have devoted ample attention to the impacts of war on presidential approval ratings (for recent reviews, see Aldrich et al. 2006; Baum and Potter 2008), and renewed empirical interest has been directed toward wartime judicial decision-making (Clark 2006; Epstein et al. 2005; Staudt Forthcoming), only a handful of papers investigate the systematic impacts of war on congressional voting behavior (Cohen 1982; Meernik 1993; Prins and Marshall 2001; ; Schorpp and Finocchiaro 2010; Wittkopf and McCormick 1998). Those that do, meanwhile, fail to address the deep endogeneity issues associated with presidential position taking.

The larger scholarship on congressional voting behavior, meanwhile, wholly ignores war. In studies that meticulously document the impacts of ideology, partisanship, and the internal hierarchies of Congress on members’ voting behavior, war hardly makes an appearance (for a recent review, see Theriault et al. Forthcoming). Further, by emphasizing ideological rigidity and voting consistency, these studies take, if only implicitly, a rather dim view of the possibility that congressional support for the president flows and ebbs as the nation moves into and out of war.

This paper puts the issue of war front and center. It investigates whether members of Congress tend to vote in ways that more closely approximate the policy preferences of presidents during wartime than they do during peace. Rather than focus on the highly selected subset of bills on which presidents take public positions, we cull all roll call votes cast in those

congresses during which major modern wars either began or ended. Employing a variety of bridging techniques, we then estimate peace- and wartime ideal points for every member of Congress.

We find intermittent evidence of a wartime effect. The outbreak of the 2001 war in Afghanistan, for which we have the most reliable estimates, coincided with a major shift to the ideological right in members' voting behavior. This shift does not appear to be an artifact of changes in the agenda, party control, the electoral calendar, rising conservatism at all levels of government, the particular date on which we transitioned from war to peace, or our choice of bridge actors. Moreover, we find these effects when limiting the sample of votes to bills that were substantive (i.e. not symbolic) and purely domestic (i.e. not foreign or security related) in nature. Examining prior wars, for which our findings are more suggestive, we find that the United States' entry into World War II coincided with a significant shift to the ideological left. We find limited or no evidence that the beginnings of either the Korean or Vietnam wars induced members to vote in ways that better reflected the ideological leanings of the presidents then in office. In all of these wars, however, the termination of military hostilities yielded a Congress less inclined to vote in ways that represented the presidents' ideological orientations.

This paper proceeds as follows. The first section characterizes the relevant literatures on war, presidential power, and congressional voting behavior. The second explains our data and modeling strategies. The third and fourth sections presents our main findings, beginning first with the 2001 war in Afghanistan, for which we have the strongest identification strategy; and then Vietnam, Korea, and World War II, for which the results are more provisional. The fifth section suggests one possible explanation for the pattern of findings that we observe. And the sixth section concludes.

2 Background

For centuries, no less, statesmen and scholars have argued that wars contribute mightily to presidential power. In Federalist Number 8, Alexander Hamilton recognizes that "it is the na-

ture of war to increase the executive at the expense of the legislative authority.” Echoing these sentiments, in Helvidius 4 James Madison argues that “war is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement.” By the end of the 19th Century, with the nation having fought two major wars and one catastrophic civil war, James Bryce (Bryce 1995 [1888], Book I, Chapter 6, pp. 48-49) remarked that, “[Though] the direct domestic authority of the president is in time of peace very small . . . [in war] it expands with portentous speed.” Two world wars later, the most prominent presidential scholars in the discipline wrote entire books detailing the exploits of wartime presidents (Corwin 1947; Rossiter 2005 [1948]). Subsequent historians such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (1973, 2004) and Stephen Graubard (2004) suggested that wars, throughout the nation’s history, have fundamentally altered the executive machinery of government. Most recently, with the nation waging simultaneous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a rising tide of scholarship intermittently laments the return of an “imperial presidency redux” (Schlesinger 2004, p. 45); or, like John Yoo (2009, p. vii), lauds the fact that “war acts on executive power as an accelerant, causing it to burn hotter, brighter, and swifter.”

To substantiate such claims, political scientists, legal scholars, and historians retell familiar historical examples: Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus and indomitable control over the federal government during the Civil War; Wilson’s efforts to mobilize a country through World War I; and Roosevelt’s unprecedented involvement in the domestic economy during World War II (Howell Forthcoming). Each of these three wars ushered in massive changes to national policies concerning the tax code, wage and price controls, civil rights and civil liberties, and labor-management relations. The wars also altered the design of the administrative state itself, yielding an extraordinary expansion of federal agencies-many of which were under the immediate control of presidents-designed to write and implement public policy. In 1956, Rossiter summarized the lesson of these episodes: it has become an “axiom of political science,” he noted, that “great emergencies in the life of a constitutional state bring an increase in executive power and prestige, always at least temporarily, more often than not permanently.”¹

¹Others have expressed Rossiter’s views in no less uncertain terms. According to Alexis de Tocqueville, the “first axiom of science” dictates that, “War does not always give over democratic communities to military government, but it must invariably and immeasurably increase the powers of civil government; it must almost compulsorily concen-

During war, presidential power may expand for any number of reasons. Presidents may be more inclined to exercise their unilateral powers, to which the adjoining branches of government may willingly accede; members of Congress may delegate, and the courts may independently recognize, broad emergency powers; and judges may be less prone to overturn elements of the president's policy agenda. In this paper, we explore yet another possibility: that during war members of Congress adjust their voting behavior to better reflect the president's ideological orientation. When a Democrat [Republican] inhabits the White House, members of congress may vote more liberally [conservatively] when the nation enters war, and more conservatively [liberally] when it exits war. Presidential power expands, by this account, because wartime presidents bargain and negotiate with congresses that exhibit greater support for their domestic and foreign policy agendas.

Congressional Studies on War

Congressional scholars have explored a wide range of influences on members' voting behavior, focusing attention on their partisan affiliations and majority party status (see, for example, Cox and McCubbins 1993), their colleagues who serve as committee chairs, party leaders, and co-partisans (Matthews and Stimson 1975), their general constituencies (Canes-Wrone et al. 2002; Mayhew 1974) and smaller sub-constituencies (Clinton 2006; Fenno 1978; Fiorina 1978; Miller and Stokes 1963), constellations of interest groups (Fowler and Shaiko 1987; Kingdon 1989), and, perhaps most powerfully, individual ideologies (Bullock and Brady 1983; Erikson and Wright 2001; Krehbiel 1993; Levitt 1996). Few studies, meanwhile, consider the influence of war. And those that do furnish little support for the contention that wars increase congressional support for the president.

trate the direction of all men and the management of all things in the hands of the administration" (de Tocqueville 1963 [1840], Vol. II, pp. 268-69). According to Edward Corwin, the nation's greatest wars offer a clear lesson: "The President's power as Commander-in-Chief has been transformed from a simple power of military command to a vast reservoir of indeterminate powers in time of emergency" (Corwin 1957, p. 261). According to Daniel Franklin, war "opens the floodgates for the expansion of presidential power" (Franklin 1991, p. 67). Say Eric Posner and Adrian Vermeule, "Because the executive is the only organ of government with the resources, power, and flexibility to respond to threats to national security, it is natural, inevitable, and desirable for power to flow to this branch of government. Congress rationally acquiesces; courts rationally defer" (Posner and Vermeule 2007, p. 4).

Andrew Rudalevige (2002) tracks the fate of presidential initiatives put before Congress during the post-World War II era. He finds that “critical external events” prompt an 18-percentage point increase in the probability that Congress enacts a bill that is in line with presidential preferences. Unfortunately, the analysis does not test the effect of war *per se*, for war is merely one of several scenarios that are coded as critical external events. Other studies that do explicitly control for war, meanwhile, offer more tempered assessments of its influence on presidential power. Jeffrey Cohen (1982) investigates presidential legislative success during three time periods: 1861-1896, 1897-1932, and 1933-1972. In the quantitative analysis, war’s effect is positive and statistically significant in the earliest era, but not in either of the two latter periods. In a recent working paper, Susanne Schorpp and Charles Finocchiaro (2010) present evidence that members of Congress were more likely to support elements of the president’s domestic policy agenda in the Vietnam and post-September 11 wars, but not in the Korean or Gulf War. Schorpp and Finocchiaro do not find any evidence that any of these wars increased the chances that members of Congress supported elements of the president’s foreign or defense agendas.

By expanding the definition of war to include not only “hot” wars like Korea and Vietnam but the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, and by further restricting the analysis to foreign policy initiatives, some scholars have unearthed evidence of a relationship between war and presidential influence in Congress. Examining roll call votes taken between 1947 and 1988, Meernik (1993) finds that hot and cold wars encourage congressional support for the president’s foreign policy and defense proposals. According to Meernik, presidents enjoyed greater levels of support in both the House and Senate during the first half of the Cold War; and greater levels of support in the Senate during the Korean War and Vietnam Wars. Other scholars reach similar conclusions, but code for altogether different periods of the Cold War. Brandon Prins and Bryan Marshall (2001), for instance, examine foreign, defense, and domestic policies introduced between 1953 and 1998. Identifying the first half of the Cold War between 1953 and 1973, they find a significant positive effect for foreign and defense policies, but not for domestic policies. Eugene Wittkopf and James McCormick (1998) investigate trends in congressional support for the president between 1983 and 1996, and present evidence that inter-branch conflicts

rose in the years immediately following the Cold War. Given the authors' varying approaches to coding the Cold War years, it is difficult to know how to interpret these collective findings. It is worth noting, though, that whatever influence the Cold War bestowed upon the president, it did so only in foreign policy.

Collectively, the available evidence provides a weak foundation for arguments about presidential power and war. It certainly does not appear that members of Congress automatically line up behind their president during periods of war. It is much too soon, though, to draw strong conclusions about the causal impacts of war on congressional voting behavior. All of these face a basic problem: they focus exclusively on samples of legislative initiatives on which the president took public positions. Presidents, however, do not randomly select elements from their policy agenda to put before Congress. Rather, presidents select those policies that they think stand a decent chance of passage, and set aside the rest. If such selectivity is a function of war - and there are ample reasons to believe that it is - then systematic biases are introduced that, uncorrected, may obscure war's genuine effects on congressional voting behavior; and, by extension, our assessments of presidential power (for longer discussions on this point, see Canes-Wrone et al. 2008; Howell and Johnson 2009; Lindsay and Steger 1993).

The Prevalence of Ideological Stability

Despite the literature's empirical limitations, the prevalence of null war effects should not come as a great surprise. By most accounts, congressional voting behavior is remarkably stable over time. Poole (2007, p. 435) writes, "based upon the roll call voting record, once elected to Congress, members adopt an ideological position and maintain that position throughout their careers—once a liberal or moderate or conservative, always a liberal or moderate or conservative." And so it has been since the nation's inception. Poole and Rosenthal (Poole and Rosenthal 1997) analyze roll call voting behavior of all House and Senate members who served more than one term in the 1st through 96th Congresses. The observed correlations between voting records at time t and time $t+1$ are 0.92 for House members and 0.87 for Senators, which decline only a

bit further (to 0.84 and 0.74, respectively) when considering the relationship between t and $t+4$.² The principal exception concerns members who switched parties, who exhibit significant shifts in their voting behavior (McCarty et al. 2001; Nokken 2000; Nokken and Poole 2004).

Members cling to their ideologies across the life-spans of their careers. Retiring legislators exhibit no less stability than their colleagues who seek re-election (Lott 1987; Lott and Bronars 1993; Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Vanbeek 1991), though their abstention rates may increase (Herrick et al. 1994; Poole and Romer 1993; Lott 1990; Poole and Rosenthal 1997).³ Members do not change their voting behavior when they decide to run for higher office. House members who later served in the Senate compile similar voting records in both chambers (Grofman et al. 1995; Hibbing 1986; Poole and Romer 1993; Poole and Rosenthal 1997). Though redistricting can alter the composition of House members' constituencies, it does not appear to affect their voting behavior (Poole 2007; Poole and Romer 1993).

Scholars have also shown that a variety of contemporaneous shocks do not affect the stability of members' voting behavior. In an analysis of House votes from 1949 to 1972, Asher and Weisberg (1978) find that changes in voting behavior are best described as "evolutionary" rather than immediate and dramatic (see also Carmines and Stimson 1989). Jenkins (2000) finds that members of the Confederate House who previously served in the U.S. House exhibited little ideological stability, even in the face of federal invasion of their districts. Jenkins attributes these findings to the lack of a stable party system in Confederacy, and suggests that Poole's contention (2007, p. 135) that members "die in their ideological boots" is contingent upon the existence of a stable party system.

The lesson from these studies is clear: comparisons of individual members over short periods of time-and especially those that focus on trends within a single congressional term-can be expected to reveal general stability in members' voting behavior; and no external event, very much including war, is likely to dislodge members from their chosen ideological footings.

²The difference is likely due to the differences in term length for members of the House and Senate; $t+4$ implies that a House member served ten years while a Senator served 30 years.

³Rothenberg and Sanders (2000) provide evidence that House members do exhibit significant changes in roll call behavior upon their decision to retire or after their defeat in a primary. Carson et al. (2004), however, argue that the Rothenberg and Sanders analysis suffers from omitted variable bias and present evidence from a better-specified version of the model that is consistent with prior research.

3 Data and Methods

Scholars have devised a variety of techniques for recovering estimates of legislator ideologies using roll call data. The most widely used methods are DW-NOMINATE (Poole and Rosenthal 1997) and its Bayesian analogue (Clinton et al. 2004). For this project, we use the Bayesian approach, which better facilitates the comparison of members' estimated ideal points during peace and war.

The model assumes that legislators have quadratic utility functions with normally distributed errors, and that these errors are independent across both legislators and roll calls. The roll call data are comprised of n legislators voting on m roll call items, where each legislator i must choose between a "yea" position ($y_{ij} = 1$) and a "nay" position ($y_{ij} = 0$) on roll call j . This specification results in a probit model, $P(y_{ij} = 1) = (\beta x_i - \alpha_j)$, where j is an item discrimination parameter that indicates how well roll call j distinguishes liberals and conservatives, α_j is the item difficulty that describes the position of a legislator who is indifferent between voting "yea" and "nay" on roll call j , and x_i corresponds to legislator i 's ideal point. The joint density of latent ideology and all model parameters α_j , β_j , and x_i are estimated from the data. Repeated iterations of the Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) algorithm generate random samples from the joint posterior density of the latent traits, which characterizes the full distribution of each of the model parameters.

We are interested in whether members of Congress shift their voting behavior in the ideological direction of the president when the nation enters war, and away from the president when the nation exits. So, for example, we test whether members of the 77th Congress voted more liberally after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor than they did before, indicating movement in the direction of the Democratic president (FDR) then in office. And similarly, we test whether members voted more conservatively in the 79th Congress after the armistice than they did before, indicating movement away from the Democratic president (Truman) then in office. We conduct similar analyses for the beginnings and ends of the Korean and Vietnam wars, and the beginning of the Afghanistan War.

To conduct such comparisons, we split roll calls based on the presence or absence of war.

Whenever possible, we restrict the sample to a single Congress and thereby control for the many contextual factors that have been the subject of previous scholarship on congressional voting behavior. By analyzing the universe of congressional roll calls within these time frames, rather than the subset of bills on which presidents have taken public positions, we mitigate the selection biases that plague previous research on war and congressional voting behavior.

Our chosen approach, however, faces challenges of its own. First, it rules out the possibility of explicitly modeling the president. By analyzing multiple wars conducted by presidents with very different ideological orientations, we can identify whether members of Congress shift in the general direction of the president then in office. But we cannot precisely measure each member's relative proximity to the president during war and peace. Second, we cannot compare peace and wartime ideal points that have been estimated independently. Indeed, it is well documented that ideal points estimated with different sets of data cannot be directly compared (Clinton et al. 2004; Poole and Rosenthal 1997). For precisely this reason interest group scores, such as those issued by the American Conservative Union or Americans for Democratic Action, cannot be compared across time (but see Groseclose et al. 1999). Similarly, ideal point estimates such as DW-NOMINATE cannot be compared across time because the scales may have shifted or stretched.⁴

To meaningfully compare estimates from separate samples of roll call votes, whether across time or institutions, Bailey (Bailey 2007; Bailey and Chang 2001) recommends the use of "bridge" observations.⁵ These bridges serve as fixed reference points against which ideal point estimates can be compared. Using this bridging approach, previous scholars have compared preference estimates between presidents, Senators and Supreme Court justices (e.g., Bailey and Chang 2001), bureaucrats and members of Congress (Clinton and Lewis 2008), and state legislators and mem-

⁴For instance, an extremely liberal member of Congress may have an ideal point estimate of -1 during one Congress and -1.5 in another. It is possible either that the scale of all members of Congress shifted in the negative direction, or that it expanded such that the variance of scores in the latter Congress is larger than in the former.

⁵Scholars have recommended other approaches, which are less suited to our own purposes. Martin and Quinn (2002), for instance, allow estimates to trend smoothly through time, but their growth models are assumed rather than estimated, rendering this technique inappropriate for the task at hand. Clinton, Jackman and Rivers (2004) analyze the 107th Senate to determine whether Senator James Jeffords voted differently after his defection from the Republican Party. They do so, however, by comparing differences in Jeffords' ideological rank, which is not a quantity of interest in the present study.

bers of Congress (e.g., Shor et al. Forthcoming).

For our purposes, we are not interested in comparing different actors across different settings, but rather the same actors across different time periods—transitioning either from peace to war, or from war to peace. The trick, then, is to identify bridge actors whose willingness to support different bills is unaffected by war.⁶ Though we explore a variety of options, we place the greatest confidence on those estimates that rely upon interest groups. Our main models rely upon the American Conservative Union (ACU) and Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), which offer a couple of practical benefits. First, both groups take a fairly large number of positions (generally, 40-50) during each Congress, which enables their ideal points to be estimated precisely. Additionally, whereas some organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Chamber of Commerce are concerned primarily with roll calls that address a specific issue domain, the ACU and the ADA take positions that span a wide range of issues. Because we assume unidimensionality, it is important that a full range of issues define the continuum over which legislator estimates are compared, such that any shifts between the pre- and post-war estimates can be meaningfully described as “liberal” or “conservative.”⁷

Of course, there are potential downsides to assuming that any actor’s preferences remain constant over time. For several reasons, however, the assumption appears justified in this instance. First, we track the positions of interest groups and legislators within short periods of time, typically no more than two years. Second, the ACU and the ADA are the nation’s oldest existing conservative and liberal interest groups, which suggests some degree of ideological consistency that may not exist among organizations with shorter histories. Third, though interest groups may be strategic in their selection of roll calls (Fowler 1982; Snyder 1992), as long as the selection rule remains constant across the short pre- and post-war periods, the recovered estimates should

⁶There is an important distinction between the ways in which Bailey (2007) and Shor et al. (forthcoming) use the term “bridge actor” and the way in which it is used in the present study. In these earlier studies, the authors use bridge observations to construct a common ideological space across different sets of actors and agendas. Because we are not faced with the problem of making comparisons across both time and institutions, we simply assume first a fixed scale across the pre- and post-war time periods and second that two actors’ positions remain constant across both periods.

⁷The Clinton, Jackman and Rivers (2004) approach described below requires only $d(d+1)$ restrictions in order to identify the model, where d indicates the number of dimensions. Here, we assume unidimensionality, and thus we both achieve identification and locate the interest groups at fixed reference points by constraining their post-war estimates to equal their pre-war estimates.

be consistent.⁸

To see how this works in practice, consider the analysis of the 107th Congress. First, we split the set of roll calls for the 107th Congress at the date on which the war in Afghanistan began (October 7, 2001). We then construct separate matrices for the pre- and post-war roll calls in both the House and Senate, in which the rows correspond to legislators and the two interest groups.⁹ Column entries indicate whether the legislator or interest group supported or opposed each bill. By estimating the above statistical model in an unidentified state, we then generate member ideal points for the roll call votes that occurred prior to October 7, 2001. We then post-process the data to constrain the ideal point estimates to have mean zero and unit variance, where negative ideal points reflect more liberal members and positive ideal points reflect more conservative members.¹⁰ After recovering the pre-war estimates, we estimate the post-war ideal points by constraining the estimates of the ACU and ADA such that they are equivalent to their pre-war estimates. This approach also ensures identification. We then compare the pre- and post-war estimates at both the individual and chamber levels.

4 Primary Results: Afghanistan

In Figure 1, we plot the densities of members' estimated peace- and wartime ideal points in the 107th Congress. The dashed lines indicate the peacetime scores, and the solid lines indicate the wartime scores. Scores are arbitrarily scaled from -2 to 2, where larger values indicate more conservative voting behavior. Both distributions are bimodal, with Democrats populating the left portion of the distribution, and Republicans the right. In both the House (left panel) and

⁸Poole (1981) shows that the ACA, ACU, and ADA were reliably ideological interest groups during the late 1960s and 1970s. Fortunately, for our estimation procedure to recover unbiased estimates of member ideal points, we need only assert more modest claims about the ideological consistency of interest group position-taking. Our approach requires only that the ACU and ADA maintain consistent ideological positions over a single Congress. Hence, the ACU and ADA need only take consistently conservative and liberal positions, respectively, during the 107th Congress. We make no claims about how their positions during the 107th Congress compare with positions before or after this short time period.

⁹In order to recover precisely estimated ideal points, members who served for short intervals of a given Congress were dropped from the analysis.

¹⁰We fit a one-dimensional item-response model, running 300,000 iterations after discarding the first 50,000, and thinning by 500.

Senate (right panel), we see marked shifts to the right. In the House, the movement appears to be concentrated among Republicans, while in the Senate both parties shift rightward. The unconstrained mean and medians shifts in the House were +0.54 and +1.28 respectively; and in the Senate, they were +1.21 and +1.26. Additional summary statistics can be found in Table 1 below.¹¹

Figure 1 goes here.

In Figure 2, we again plot the pre and post scores for every member of the 107th House and Senate. This time, however, individual scores before the outbreak of war are aligned on the x-axis, and wartime scores appear on the y-axis. If a member's voting behavior did not change at all, then she will locate right on the 45 degree line. Scores above the 45-degree line indicate movement in the conservative direction; and scores below the 45-degree line reveal movement in the conservative direction. Plainly, the vast majority of members in both chambers appear above the line. Indeed, of the 183 members in the House and 95 members in the Senate who reveal statistically significantly different pre and post scores, all document movement in the conservative direction. (Observations whose peace- and wartime scores are significantly different from one another at $p < .001$ are solid, and the rest are shaded).

Figure 2 goes here.

As points of reference, we have identified a handful of individual members. Compare, for instance, the locations of two Senate Democrats: Hillary Clinton and Paul Wellstone. The latter, clearly, is located to the left of the former, indicating a significantly more liberal voting record. Importantly, though, Wellstone is much closer to the 45-degree line than is Clinton, suggesting the

¹¹Readers should not compare the cell entries in Table 1 across rows. The magnitudes of the mean and median shifts cannot be meaningfully compared across chambers or Congresses. In addition, the number of members exhibiting significant movement cannot be compared across chambers or Congresses because the number of roll call votes with which estimates were calculated vary widely. Ideal points are estimated much more precisely when there are large numbers of roll call votes, and thus there are likely to be many more significant shifts when both the pre- and post-war ideal points are estimated with high degrees of precision. The p-values reported in the final column provide information about whether the observed number of members who shifted in the expected direction is significantly different from what is expected by chance, conditional on the total number of members who exhibited significant shifts.

outbreak of war had less influence on his own voting behavior. These Senators' public comments about the war are consistent with the observed differences in their voting records. The day after the September 11 attacks, Clinton publicly announced that, "We will also stand united behind our President as he and his advisers plan the necessary actions to demonstrate America's resolve and commitment... I have expressed my strong support for the President, not only as the Senator from New York but as someone who for 8 years had some sense of the burdens and responsibilities that fall on the shoulders of the human being we make our President." One year later, in spite of the prevailing political winds that led to a historic level of midterm success for Bush and the Republicans, Wellstone was one of only four Democratic Senators seeking re-election to oppose the authorization for the use of force in Iraq.¹² Wellstone insisted that, "Right now, despite a desire to support our president, I believe many Americans still have profound questions about the wisdom of relying too heavily on a pre-emptive, go-it-alone military approach."

Robustness Checks

From a research design perspective, the 107th Congress provides an ideal venue in which to examine the impact of war on members' voting behavior. The onset of war constituted an unanticipated event, at least from the standpoint of Congress; lacking either the impending threat of war (as characterized the beginning of World War II) or the steady build-up of troops (as in Vietnam), the dividing line between peace and war in 2001 is quite clear; with large numbers of peace- and wartime votes to analyze, we are able to precisely estimate members' ideal points; and because all the votes come within a single Congress, we hold constant most (though not all) intra-institutional influences on voting. The findings demonstrate substantial evidence of a wartime effect. And as we detail below, the findings do not appear to be an artifact of the bridge actors used, the sample of roll call votes analyzed, the change in party control of the Senate that resulted from Jeffords' defection from the Republican Party, alterations in the agenda, or natural

¹²Most other Democrats appeared to fear opposing the president's security agenda. House minority leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) attributed the historic midterm Republicans gains to the public support for the president in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks: "[Y]ou've got a president at 65 percent approval," he said. "I think part of that comes from 9/11. The whole country's rightful reaction to the horrible attack on our country, that whole cluster of issues are still out there." *The New York Times*, November 6, 2002.

differences observed over the course of a congressional calendar.

Changes in the Agenda

Though the available evidence supports the contention that the voting records of members of Congress shifted in the ideological direction of the president when the nation waged war against Afghanistan, such movement is observationally equivalent to a shift in the agenda in the opposite direction. A moderate legislator, for instance, may appear to have become more conservative [liberal] either because she indeed voted more conservatively [liberally], or because the agenda became more liberal [conservative]. To ensure that our findings are not an artifact of agenda changes, we conducted two supplementary analyses.

First, recall that on May 24, 2001 Senator James Jeffords of Vermont switched his party affiliation from Republican to Independent and announced he would caucus with the Democrats. Before his switch, Democrats and Republicans had a 50-50 split in the Senate. After the switch, Democrats had sole control of the Senate, 50-49, with Jeffords the lone Independent. This change in leadership may have affected the agenda on which Senators voted. It may also have affected the House agenda, as House leaders may have changed their expectations about what they could get through the Senate.

To account for this change in majority party, we replicated the original analysis with the full set of wartime roll call data, but we limited the peacetime roll call data to the period after Jeffords switched his party affiliation. Our substantive findings remain unchanged.¹³ With the outbreak of the Afghanistan War, we continue to see House Republicans and Democratic and Republican Senators lurching to the right.

As a further check, we examined the distribution of estimated cutpoints for roll call votes in the 107th Congress. The cutpoints indicate where the separation occurs between supporters and opponents of a bill. For instance, in a 100 member legislator in which 60 liberal members vote for a bill and 40 conservative members vote against it, the cutpoint is located between the least liberal legislator who voted for the bill and the least conservative member who voted against it.

¹³These results are included in a for-reviewers only appendix. Please see Figure A.1.

In a legislature controlled by Democrats with ideal points with mean zero, the cutpoints on most bills are likely to be located on the right (conservative) side of zero; and in a legislature controlled by Republicans, most cutpoints are likely to fall on the left (liberal) side of zero.

We calculate cutpoints using the item parameters that are generated simultaneously with the legislator ideal points.¹⁴ As discussed above, β_j is the item-discrimination parameter that indicates how well vote j distinguishes between liberals and conservatives, and α_j provides an indication of the ideological location of the proposal (similar to an intercept term). Cutpoints are calculated by dividing the discrimination parameter by the location parameter. Roll call votes that are unanimous or extremely lopsided do not provide any information about member ideal points because every member (or virtually every member) votes in the same way. Such uninformative votes have discrimination parameters very close to zero, resulting in cutpoints that go to infinity in the limit. Consequently, we drop all roll calls for which the discrimination parameter is indistinguishable from zero.

Figure 3 displays the distribution of cutpoints in the House and Senate. The dashed lines indicate the distribution of cutpoints before Jeffords switched his party affiliation, the dotted lines indicate the distribution of cutpoints after the Jeffords switch but before the onset of war, and the solid lines indicate the distribution of cutpoints during the war. According to the logic outlined above, cutpoints should be more conservative after the Jeffords switch than when control of the Senate was shared.

Figure 3 goes here.

Across the three time periods, the median cutpoints all fall just to the left of zero. The distribution of post-Jeffords switch cutpoints is flatter than that for those observed before the Jeffords switch. But the distributions of House cutpoints immediately before and immediately after the outbreak of war are indistinguishable from one another, suggesting that an agenda change is not responsible for the observed conservative shift in the voting records of House members.

¹⁴See Krehbiel et al. (2005) for a similar analysis of legislative cutpoints.

In the Senate we do see changes in the cutpoint distributions. The cutpoints prior to the Jeffords switch were more liberal than those after the switch but before the war, indicating that the agenda indeed shifted to the left once the Democrats gained control of the Senate. Once the war began, however, the cutpoints shifted in the liberal direction, indicating that Democrats put forth a more conservative agenda once the war began. This fact suggests that comparisons of peace and wartime ideal point estimates based upon roll calls that occurred after the Jeffords switch understate the extent to which Senators voted more conservatively once the Afghanistan War began.

Placebo Tests

It is possible that the previously documented trends in the 107th Congress have nothing to do with the outbreak of war, per se, but rather represent typical changes in the voting habits of members over the course of a congressional term. To investigate this possibility, we generated ideal points for the first and second years of three congresses during which no major military actions occurred: the 95th (Carter), 103rd (Clinton), and 99th (Reagan).¹⁵ To ensure the comparability of members' estimated ideal points in these placebo tests, we again relied upon the ADA and ACU as bridges.

The results look quite different from those observed in the 107th Congress.¹⁶ In the 95th House, member ideal points shifted slightly to the right (in the conservative direction) during the second session, while there are no significant differences in the Senate. Things look much the same in the 99th Congress. Though there appears to be much less variance in House member ideal points during the second session than in the first, the means and medians for each session indicate little aggregate movement. In the 99th Senate, meanwhile, there is clearer evidence of an ideological shift to the left. Note, however, that this is away from, rather than toward, the ideological position of the president (Reagan). These patterns also hold for the 103rd Congress,

¹⁵We selected these congresses and presidents because the first years of the Kennedy, Reagan and George H.W. Bush terms presented military and foreign policy challenges related to the Cold War, so these may not serve as the ideal "control" conditions.

¹⁶Reviewers, please see the top three rows of Figure A.2.

where we see more systematic evidence of shifting voting behavior, though in both chambers it occurs in the conservative direction, away from President Clinton. Taken together, these findings provide little evidence of systematic shifts in legislator voting records over the course of a single Congress. To the extent that aggregate changes are observed, the movement occurs in the direction *opposite* the ideological position of the president—a finding that may reflect member posturing in anticipation of midterm losses for the president’s party. Were this pattern to hold for the 107th Congress, members would have more *liberal* voting records after the outbreak of the Afghanistan war. All of the evidence, however, suggests that just the opposite occurred.

It also is possible that the shifts observed after the outbreak of the Afghanistan War had less to do with the president, *per se*, and more to do with a rising conservatism evoked by war. By examining previous wars undertaken by Democratic presidents, as we do later in this paper, we will be able to speak to this issue more fully. In the meantime, we investigate changes in voting behavior in other legislative bodies around the time of the Afghanistan War. In particular, we look at the California legislature, which has the advantages of furnishing numerous roll call votes in the 2001-2002 session, high-profile liberal and conservative interest groups (the California League of Conservation Voters and Chamber of Commerce, respectively) to serve as bridges, and a Democratic governor (Gray Davis) then under its watch.

The findings are striking.¹⁷ Rather than observing a shift in the conservative direction in the aftermath of the Afghanistan War, members of the California assembly revealed strikingly more liberal voting records. Shifts in estimated median ideal points were -0.55 and -0.66 in the California Assembly and Senate, respectively. These changes occurred even as every single congressional representative from California who showed significantly differently voting patterns during this period (both Senators and 37 of 51 members of the House, Republicans and Democrats alike) shifted in the conservative direction after the Afghanistan War. Showing that wars have a comparable effect on legislative support for governors as they do for presidents (as this one data point suggests) goes well beyond the scope of this study. The findings from California, however, weigh against the notion that the Afghanistan War evoked a uniform and

¹⁷Reviewers, please see the bottom row of Figure A.2.

widespread conservative reaction that had little to do with the president.

Selection of Bridge Actors

Though the magnitudes of the shifts identified above are sizable, they are not driven by the choice of bridge actors. We outlined several reasons underlying our choice of the ACU and ADA, but it is possible that the conservative shifts we observe are due to peculiarities in the ways in which the interest groups selected the issues on which they evaluated member behavior. For instance, if one (or both) of the interest groups shifted to the ideological left, it would exaggerate the shifts in legislative voting behavior. It is improbable that the ACU would demonstrate more liberal voting behavior post-war than pre-war, but this could be a concern with the ADA.

To test whether the above results are a function of interest group movement, we replicated the above analysis but substituted the AFL-CIO for the ADA. We again found that members of Congress had more conservative wartime voting records.¹⁸ Furthermore, the magnitudes of the aggregate shifts appear to be greater in both chambers when the AFL-CIO is substituted for the ADA, and an even greater number of members of both the House and Senate exhibit significantly more conservative records in the post-war period.

Subsets of Roll Call Votes

We also examined whether the observed effects of war on members' voting behavior are confined to particular issue areas or types of votes. For instance, the shifts observed in the figures above might be driven primarily by changes in the ways members vote on issues of national defense or on procedural items, while demonstrating more consistent voting records on domestic issues or substantive items. We again replicated the above analyses, but examined only the subsets of roll calls that dealt with domestic issues and substantive votes. Domestic issues were defined narrowly, consisting of roll call votes that occurred on issues not related to national security or defense, foreign policy, or any sovereign state. Substantive votes include only votes of

¹⁸Reviewers, please see Figure A.3.

final passage for amendments and bills.¹⁹ Though the magnitudes of the shifts attenuate slightly, they present additional evidence of substantial wartime shifts in the conservative direction.²⁰ These findings suggest that while members of Congress granted solid support to president on matters related to the conduct of military activities in Afghanistan, this support extended well beyond the realm of national security and defense issues.²¹

Defining the Beginning of War

In selecting the dates that mark the beginning and ending of wars, we follow (Epstein et al. 2005). The beginnings of war are defined by major U.S. troop deployments, and not the underlying events that precipitated the deployments. Hence, in the 107th Congress, October 7, 2001 (when the Afghanistan War began) marks the beginning of war rather than September 11. Nonetheless, we have estimated member ideal points for the 107th Congress using the terrorist attacks as the relevant marker. The recovered estimates are virtually identical to, if slightly larger than, those reported here.²²

Individual Differences in Voting Behavior

To further investigate the extent to which the observed shifts in voting behavior implicate the president, rather than members' independent assessments of the policy changes needed in war, we consider whether the observed shifts covary with the president's support among members' constituents. In particular, we explore the relationship between the differences in each member's

¹⁹Though not exhaustive, this excludes all motions to recommit and votes on procedures, rules, germaneness, resolutions, and nominations.

²⁰Reviewers, please see Figure A.4. Limiting these analyses to subsets of bills reduces the number of interest group positions such that the estimates are less precise. We cannot perform the same analysis for bills regarding national security/foreign policy due to a paucity of interest group data.

²¹For instance, in fall 2001 both chambers of Congress voted in support of granting the president trade-promotion authority, expanding his ability to make trade agreements with foreign governments that cannot be amended by Congress. This bill failed several times during the Clinton administration, and was seen as an important test of President Bush's power just months after the 9/11 attacks. More than thirty House Republicans who previously voted against the bill voted to support it, including vulnerable members from districts whose constituents opposed the measure. Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-NC), for instance, said that his vote to support the bill "was not the smartest vote [he's] made in my life," but "felt it was [his] duty to support the president," while Rep. Adam Putnam (R-FL) said that choosing between the demands of citrus farmers in his district and the pressure of the president "made [him] want to throw up." (*The New York Times*, December 7, 2001)

²²Reviewers, please see Figure A.5.

peace and wartime scores and Bush's 2000 vote share in their political jurisdiction. So as not to impose any functional form assumptions on the relationship between Bush's prior vote share and the estimated shifts in members' voting behavior, we estimate generalized additive models (GAMs), which provide estimates of $g_j(X_{i,j})$ for every value of $X_{i,j}$ using cubic smoothing splines (Beck and Jackman 1998).

Figure 44 displays the results for Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate. The dotted lines represent the 95% confidence intervals, and the hash marks along the x-axis indicate observations. Among Democrats in both chambers, the relationship between votes for Bush and changes in member voting records is both positively sloped and nearly linear, suggesting that Democrats from districts and states that supported Bush by larger margins were more responsive to the outbreak of war, whereas Democrats who represented constituents who supported Bush by lower margins held more closely to their pre-war ideologies. The plots for Republicans reveal some evidence of non-linearities, in which members from districts or states where Bush won or lost by narrow margins exhibited the largest shifts. For the most part, though, the relationships are negatively sloped in those portions of the distribution where the observations are most concentrated.

Figure 4 goes here.

These relations are also observed in a multivariate context. In regressions that posit change in members' ideal points as a function of members' pre-war ideal points and their quadratic, indicators for whether members are veterans of the U.S. military, whether they served on a committee primarily concerned with foreign policy or national security, whether they were a party leader, their seniority, and a linear expression of Bush's prior vote share, we observe a significant and positive effect associated with Bush's prior vote share for Democrats in both the House and Senate, and a negative but insignificant effect for Republicans in both chambers.²³ We also find a significant and positive effect for Republican Party leaders in the Senate, and a significant and positive effect for House Republicans who served on a foreign affairs or national

²³Other plausible covariates, e.g. public approval of the president, are not available at the district or state level for all observations during the time period under investigation.

security committee. All other effects are insignificant.²⁴

5 Second-Best Estimates: Vietnam, Korea, and World War II

In each of the major modern wars that preceded the Afghanistan War, we confront new identification problems. In the Gulf War, which lasted just a few months, we simply lack enough observations to recover stable results. Hence, we do report findings about its impact on members' voting behavior. In Vietnam, we must cull votes across congresses. The beginning of the Vietnam War, moreover, is contested, and the end is conflated by Watergate. For Korea and World War II, interest group ratings are unavailable, requiring the use of other bridging techniques. In the discussions that follow, we suggest partial solutions to these challenges, and we then present results from a variety of different modeling strategies.

Vietnam

Using the methods outlined above, we examine changes in members' voting behavior as the nation entered and exited the Vietnam War. For several reasons, this is a trickier business than in the Afghanistan War. For starters, the Vietnam War began slowly, making it difficult to identify a clear start date. Following Epstein et al. (2005), we mark February 7, 1965 as the beginning of the Vietnam War, which corresponds with the execution of Operation Flaming Dart, the first large-scale military initiative following the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. As the end of the war, we select January 27, 1973, when the Paris Peace Accords were signed.

For practical reasons, Vietnam also is difficult to analyze because it begins and ends quite early in a new congressional session. Hence, we lack sufficient numbers of peace- and wartime roll calls to compare members' voting records within a single Congress. We address this problem by combining the second session of the 88th Congress (1964) and the first session of the 89th (1965), and the second session of the 92nd Congress (1972) and the first session of the 93rd (1973). We further limit the analyses of these pooled samples to those members who served in both

²⁴Reviewers, please see Table A.1.

congresses. We recognize that by drawing observations across congresses, these comparisons less effectively control for the intra-institutional factors that previous scholars have identified as important predictors of members' voting behavior.

Finally, the ACU did not issue congressional ratings until 1971. In its place, we use positions taken by Americans for Constitutional Action (ACA) for the 88th and 89th Congresses. The ACA is a reasonable substitute because it was founded in the mid-1950s as the conservative analog to the ADA, and it also takes a large number of issue positions on a wide range of bills. Scaling a number of interest groups based on their congressional ratings issued from 1969-1978, Poole (1981) also shows that the ACA and the ACU were virtually identical ideologically.

Table 1 presents summary statistics for the Vietnam War analyses. Unlike the Afghanistan War, the beginning of the Vietnam War coincided with shifts in members' voting behavior away from the president's ideological orientation. In both chambers we find that members became more conservative once the war began. This finding is consistent with other scholars' observation that liberalism within Congress peaked in the early-to-mid 1960s (Stimson 1999). It also may reflect declining support for President Johnson among both the political elite and the public, which set the stage for the Democrats' loss of 47 seats in the 1966 midterm elections and Johnson's decision not to run in 1968. Whatever the cause, though, we find no evidence that the outbreak of this war yielded a Congress that was more willing to vote in ways that reflected the president's ideology.

Table 1 goes here.

We do find that with the Vietnam War's termination, members shifted in the liberal direction—that is, away from the ideological orientation of the president then in office (Nixon). This finding may reflect a greater willingness on the part of House and Senate members to vote with the president while a war waged abroad. Because the end of the war coincided with President Nixon's deepening political troubles due to the Watergate scandal, however, the differences may reflect members' efforts to distance themselves from an unpopular president. Taken as a whole, then, the Vietnam War produces mixed evidence, at best, for the proposition that presidential

power and congressional compliance expand during times of war.

Alternative Bridging Criteria

Up until now, we have relied upon interest groups to serve as our bridge actors. For World War II and Korea, however, this option is unavailable. Though the ADA began issuing congressional ratings in 1947, the ACU did not do so until 1971. A conservative interest group, Americans for Constitutional Action, preceded the ACU, but it did not begin to issue ratings until 1959. Requiring two bridge actors, one liberal and another conservative, we must find another way of facilitating comparisons of members' voting habits in those congresses during which World War II and Korea began and ended.

In lieu of interest groups, we rely upon individual members of Congress. From the outset, though, we recognize that this approach is fraught with dangers. For starters, we must assume that at least some members of Congress do not change their voting behavior when the nation enters or exits war. Should every member of Congress shift by a common unit, this bridging criterion will necessarily recover estimates indicating that peace and wartime votes are identical. And should we select the wrong member of Congress, it is possible to generate estimates of ideal point changes that are completely wrong. If in the 107th Congress, for instance, we select as bridge actors the Democratic and Republican Senators who in fact shifted the most in the conservative direction, our analysis for all other members will falsely reveal modest shifts in the liberal direction.

To select members of Congress whose voting behavior is likely to be least affected by war, we apply two different decision rules. The first draws upon our analysis of the 107th Congress, wherein we found that the war had a larger impact on Democrats representing jurisdictions where Bush performed well in 2000 and on Republicans representing jurisdictions where Bush performed poorly. To wit, in the Korean War and World War II we select the member of the president's party from the state or district (when available) in which the president performed the best in the most recent presidential election, and the member of the opposition party from the

state or district in which the president fared the worst.²⁵

As a second decision rule, we focus on those members who exhibit high levels of ideological stability—members, we suggest, who are less likely to adjust their voting behavior in response to war, presidential appeals, or anything else besides. To identify these individuals, we estimate member ideal points for the entire set of roll calls that span peace and wartime periods. The Bayesian credible intervals associated with each member’s ideal points provide information about the ideological stability of his or her voting record. Members with larger intervals, *ceteris paribus*, can be said to vote less ideologically consistently, while members with smaller intervals vote more consistently.

We cannot simply select as our bridge actors the Democrat and Republican with the smallest credible interval. These intervals, after all, also reflect their location within the larger distribution of ideal point estimates. Centrist legislators tend to have very precisely estimated ideal points, because there are many cutting lines that separate them from other centrists. It is more difficult to know exactly how extreme a very conservative or liberal member is, however, because there are fewer cutpoints between them and other like-minded legislators. We therefore regress the estimated credible intervals on a polynomial expression of their associated ideal points, and then we recover the residuals. Members with the largest negative residuals can be interpreted as having voted most consistently given their location in the ideological distribution; whereas those with the largest positive residual voted least consistently given their location.²⁶ Members of the former group qualify as plausible bridges. Because the differences in the size of the residuals are quite small, and because we do not want to make strong claims about the accuracy of the regression’s specification, we select as bridges the three Democratic and three Republican members with the largest negative residuals. We then calculate the aggregate shift in chamber ideal points using each of their nine combinations, and we report the results from the pair that yields the median shift.

²⁵Data on district-level presidential returns are not available until the 1952 election. Hence, we do not perform this bridging criterion for House members in World War II or the beginning of the Korean War.

²⁶This approach is similar in spirit to Lauderdale (Forthcoming), who develops a Bayesian heteroskedastic ideal point estimator to directly model the legislator-specific variances that describe the extent to which legislators’ voting behavior is not conditioned on the primary liberal-conservative dimension.

Recall that in our analysis of the 107th Congress, party leadership constituted another significant predictor of members' voting shifts. Particularly among Republicans, party leaders moved significantly further in the conservative direction after the outbreak of war than did rank and file members. Hence, for both decision rules we consider only members who are not party leaders. As a practical consideration, we further limit our selection of Democratic bridge actors to non-Southerners so as to ensure adequate coverage of the liberal and conservative regions of the (assumed) unidimensional continuum.

As an initial check on both decision rules, we replicated the analysis for the Vietnam War and the Afghanistan War. As shown in Table 1, in four of six cases, the first decision rule yields results that are consistent with those generated from interest group bridges; and the second yields consistent results in five of six cases. Moreover, all of the discrepancies are found in the Vietnam War, which, for reasons already discussed, has properties that yield less reliable estimates than those observed in the Afghanistan War.

As a further check, we again replicated the analyses for the Vietnam War and Afghanistan War, but this time we selected those individuals who, under the two decision rules, we would expect to be the worst possible bridges. Hence, under the first decision rule, we selected the individual from the president's party who represented the district or state where the president performed least well in the previous election, and the individual from the opposition party where the president performed best. Under the second decision rule, we selected those individuals from both parties with the largest positive residuals. If our decision rules do a reasonable job of distinguishing members whose voting patterns are more and less resilient to war, then these "reverse bridges" should generate very different results from the more reliable estimates based upon interest group bridges. And so they do. In 9 of 12 cases, we found shifts in the opposite direction from those observed in the interest group bridges. And as in the previous check, the three problematic cases again are confined to the Vietnam War.²⁷

Together, these two cross validations suggest that we have a plausible basis for examining the impacts of earlier wars.

²⁷Reviewers, see Table A.2.

World War II

Apart from the bridging issues, our analysis of World War II has a number of commendable properties. First, the war itself-or more exactly, the United States's entry into the War-has reasonably clear beginning and end points.²⁸ Because Congress did not anticipate the Pearl Harbor attacks, the war's beginning also is likely to be exogenous to the congressional agenda. And because a Democratic president held office for this war, we have a further opportunity to evaluate the president's wartime influence over congressional decision-making. If wars merely induce a conservative response, a view that is consistent with the evidence presented thus far, then it should not matter that Roosevelt rather than Wendell Wilkie (the Republican nominee for the president in 1940) resided in the White House. On the other hand, if members moved towards the president's ideological orientation, then we should find evidence that members of the 77th Congress voted more liberally once the United States declared war against the Axis Powers. And after Harry Truman guided the war to its end on August 14, 1945, we should find that members of 79th Congress moved in the conservative direction.²⁹

Summary statistics again can be found in Table 1. Using the president's prior vote share to identify bridge actors in the 77th Senate, we find substantial evidence that members accumulated more liberal voting records after Pearl Harbor than he did before the attacks. We also find suggestive evidence that members of the 79th Senate voted more conservatively after the end of the World War II.³⁰ The results using the regression residuals to identify bridge actors are even more robust. Both the 77th House and Senate voted more liberally after the United States entered World War II. In addition, voting patterns in both chambers of the 79th Congress were a good deal more conservative upon the conclusion of World War II. On the whole, these results strongly suggest that World War II induced members of Congress to vote in ways that more closely approximated the ideological preferences of the president, and that members were less

²⁸regard the beginning and ending of World War II as December 7, 1941 and August 14, 1945, respectively.

²⁹For the 79th Congress, we use only the roll call votes that were cast during Truman's presidency. Thus, only those wartime votes cast after April 12, 1945, when Truman assumed the presidency, are included in the analysis.

³⁰The mean ideal point estimate for the Senate after the war's end is not significantly different from the mean ideal point estimate before the war ended; however, this is likely due to the relatively small number of roll calls with which the ideal points before the war's completion were estimated.

inclined to do so upon the war's end.

Korean War

When considering the Korean War, recall that a Democrat held office during the beginning, and a Republican at its end. Hence, if the Korean War induced members to vote in ways that better reflected the president's ideology, we should see members of the 81st Congress moving in a liberal direction (toward Truman) upon the onset of the Korean War, just as do members of 83rd Congress (opposite Eisenhower) upon the war's end.³¹

Our findings are consistent with the latter, but not the former, expectation. At the war's end, members clearly moved away from the president's ideological orientation. Both sets of selection criterion indicate that members of the 83rd House and Senate moved in the liberal direction after the war. At the war's outset, however, we do not find evidence that members moved toward the president. In three of four comparisons, the findings suggest that members of the House and Senate moved in the conservative direction after the Korean War began. Given the previously discussed perils of using members of Congress as bridges, we are reluctant to make much of the one finding that indicates ideological convergence at the war's beginning.

6 The Public as a Possible Mediating Factor

Our findings suggest that members of Congress shifted toward the president's ideological orientation at the outset of World War II and the Afghanistan War. To the extent that shifts were observed at the beginnings of the Vietnam and Korean Wars, meanwhile, they suggest that members moved away from the president. And at the termination of all four of these wars, we find evidence of members moving away from the presidents then in office.

We cannot possibly provide a definitive explanation for this pattern of findings. One particularly fruitful line of inquiry, though, is the state of public opinion. Already, we have seen that Democrats in the 107th Congress who came from districts or states where Bush performed well in

³¹We regard the beginning and ending of the Korean War as June 27, 1950 and July 27, 1953, respectively.

the prior presidential election shifted further in the conservative direction once the Afghanistan War than did Democrats whose constituencies showed lower levels of support for the president. Among Republicans, the results are more modest, but suggest that the war had the largest impact on those members whose constituencies supported the president in the previous election by smaller margins.

In Figure 5, we plot the distributions of public approval ratings observed during each of the congresses that we previously analyzed. As before, dashed lines represent distributions for the relevant early periods of each Congress, and solid lines represent the latter periods. Hence, dashed lines represent the distributions during the peacetime periods for the 77th, 81st, 88th/89th, and 107th congresses (during which wars began), and the wartime periods for the 79th, 83rd, and 92nd/93rd Congresses (during which wars ended).

Figure 5 goes here.

In every instance, changes in the distributions of public opinion track the observed changes in congressional voting behavior. With the onsets of World War II and the Afghanistan War, presidents Roosevelt and Bush witnessed marked increases in their approval ratings. The beginnings of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, by contrast, did not bode well for presidents, as both Truman and Johnson saw their approval ratings fall. And at the termination of every one of these wars, with the obvious exception of the Afghanistan War, which remains ongoing, presidential approval ratings fell.

This basic pattern carries over into electoral outcomes. In every instance, in the election following the termination of war the president's party lost seats in both the House and Senate. After the outbreak of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, when we did not find any consistent evidence of congressional accommodation to the president, the president's party again lost seats in the following congressional election. In the first congressional election after the beginning of the Afghanistan War, when we did find evidence of an ideological shift in members' voting behavior in the direction of the president, the Republicans picked up seats in both chambers. The only aberrant finding is the 78th election, when the president's party lost seats in both the House and

Senate even though members in the 77th Congress shifted towards the president's ideological orientation after World War II commenced.

Obviously, none of these findings can be interpreted causally. Public opinion and electoral returns may reflect, just as much as they induce, changes in members' voting behavior. Still, the striking relationships between changes in congressional behavior on the one hand and public approval ratings and electoral returns on the other suggest that the larger public is implicated in war and presidential power. Future research would do well to further investigate the extent to which war and peacetime shifts in congressional voting behavior are conditioned by the public's changing support for the president.

7 Conclusion

An extraordinary body of scholarship contends that wars constitute a boon to presidential power. And in virtually all of these accounts, Congress plays a prominent role. Members of Congress, it is supposed, predictably and reliably line up behind their president during times of war. And according to some, including Clinton Rossiter, the effects of war on presidential power are felt long after the wars themselves end.

We find mixed support for such claims. To be sure, at the outset of World War II and the Afghanistan War, members of Congress began to vote in ways that better reflected the ideological orientations of the presidents then in office. But at the beginnings of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, members of Congress did not line up behind the president. And with the termination of every war we analyzed, members of Congress shifted away from presidents—suggesting that whatever “honours and emoluments” wars had to offer the president, to borrow from Madison, they were promptly withdrawn when these wars ended.

These findings avoid the deep endogeneity issues associated with presidential position-taking, which plague previous quantitative explorations of the impact of war on congressional voting behavior. By design, though, they have limitations of their own. Most obviously, they do not permit explicit evaluations of the president's location during war and peace. Hence, while

we can assess whether members adjust their voting behavior in ways that broadly comport with the president's ideology, we cannot measure the precise distances between members' ideal points and the president's. Similarly, not all of our estimates are equally reliable. We place the greatest confidence in those based upon interest group bridges within a single Congress, and less weight upon those that pool votes across Congresses or that rely upon members of Congress to serve as bridges.

In addition, the measures we use to examine patterns of roll call behavior during war and peace are relatively coarse. It is quite plausible that congressional accommodation to the president increases with military escalations. Likewise, the pace of the withdrawal of resources, troops and otherwise, from activities related to war may also influence the extent to which congressional voting patterns reflect the ideological leanings of the president. Our measures represent an aggregate assessment of the patterns of roll call voting in Congress as the nation moved into and out of war, yet future research would do well to explore how these patterns are affected by the specific conduct of war-related efforts.

Despite these limitations, the findings on offer represent something of a challenge to literatures that focus exclusively on member characteristics, constituencies, and the intra-institutional organization of Congress as predictors of member vote choices; and further, that having fixed these quantities, emphasize the ideological stability of members' voting patterns. Repeatedly, we find, the outbreaks and ends of wars coincide with substantial shifts in members' estimated ideal points. And the public support for the president, we suggest, may help explain why the beginnings of only some modern wars induced changes favorable to the president, while the ends of all modern wars yielded a Congress more hostile to the president's policy agenda.

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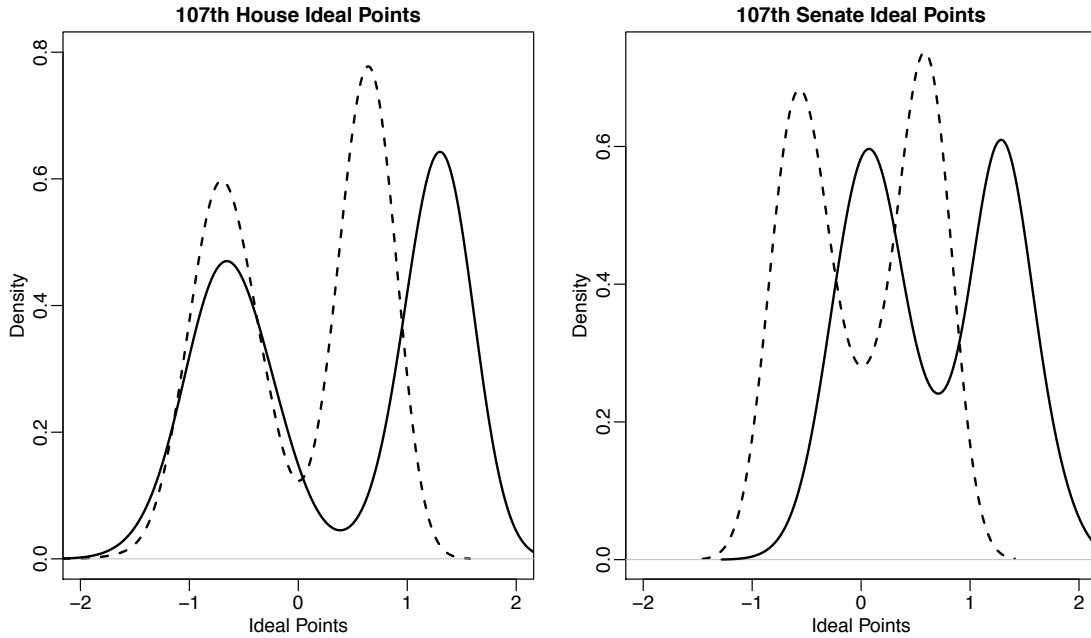
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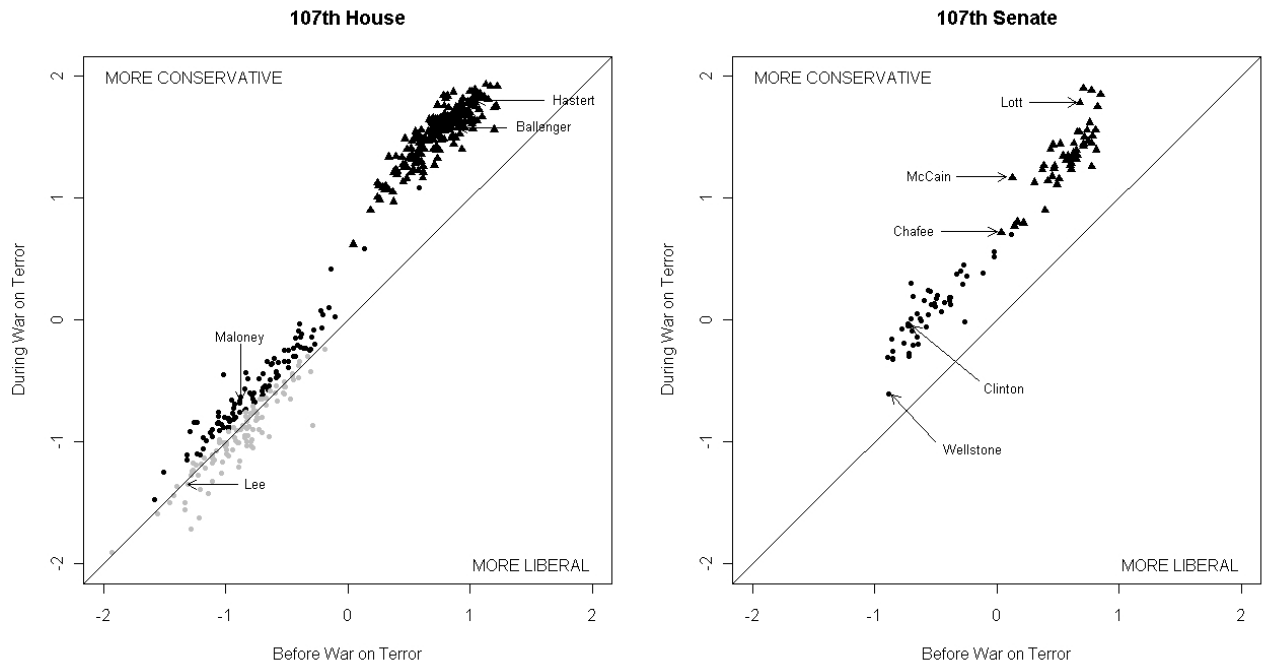
8 Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Aggregate Shifts in Voting Behavior in the 107th Congress



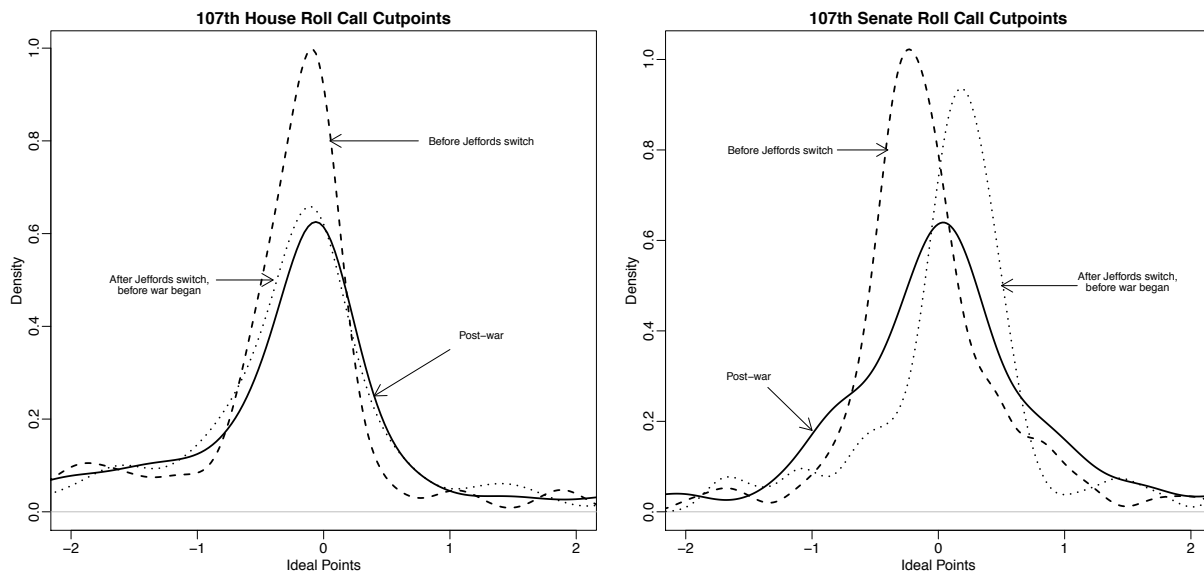
The dashed lines reflect the distributions of ideal points estimated using roll call votes cast before the war in Afghanistan began on October 7, 2001. The solid lines reflect the distributions of ideal point estimates using roll call votes cast after the war began. The ACU and the ADA are the bridge actors used to link the two time periods. Positive ideal points indicate more conservative voting behavior, and negative ideal points reflect more liberal voting behavior.

Figure 2: Individual Shifts in Voting Behavior in the 107th Congress



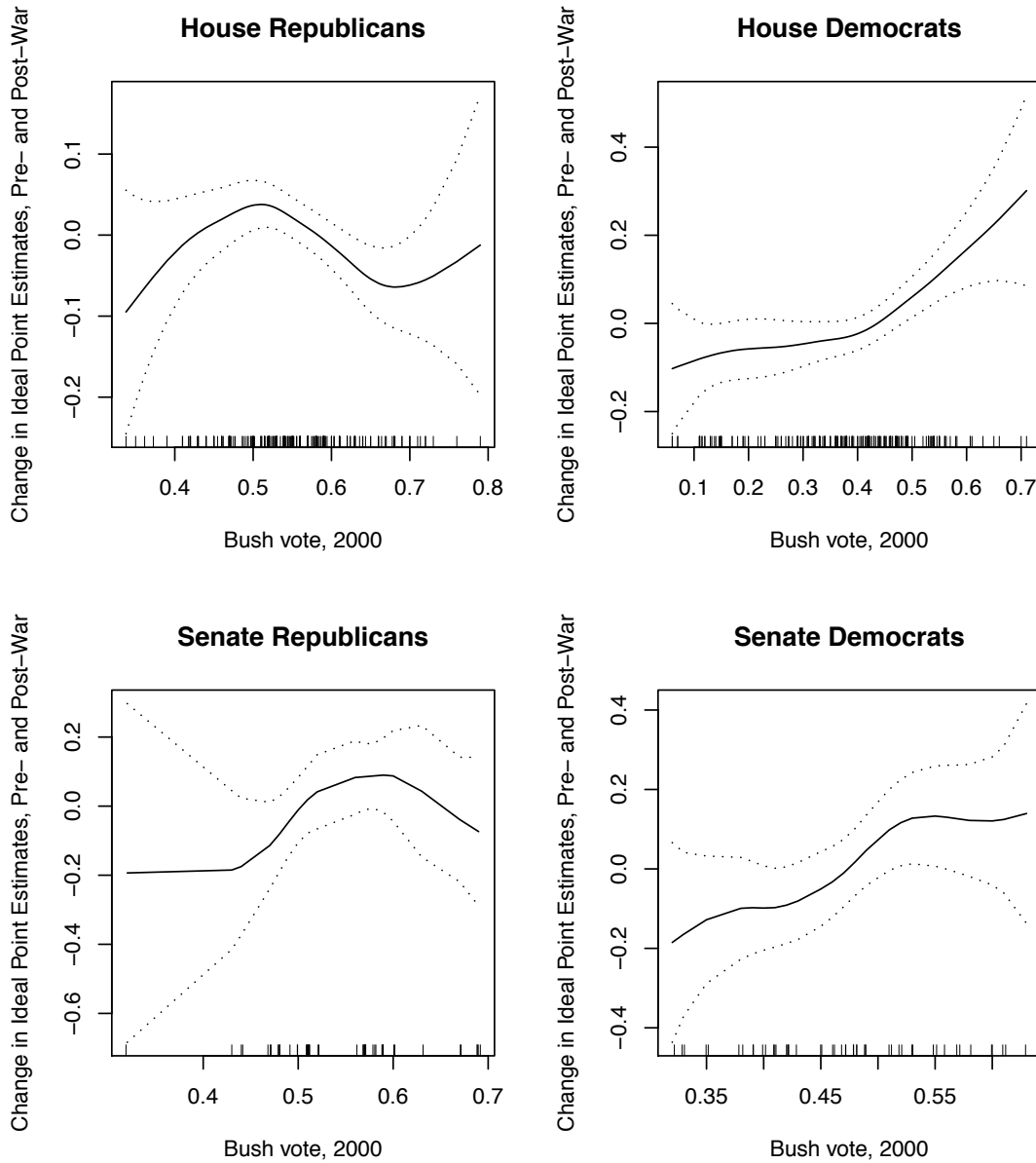
The x-axes represent member ideal points based on roll call votes cast prior to the beginning of the war in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, and the y-axes represent ideal points estimated using roll calls cast after the beginning of the war. Members whose points fall along the 45 degree line demonstrate perfect consistent ideological voting patterns in the pre- and post-war periods. Republican members are represented by triangles and Democratic members by circles. Members whose pre- and post-war ideal points are statistically significant at $p < .001$ are shown in bold.

Figure 3: Agenda Changes in the 107th Congress



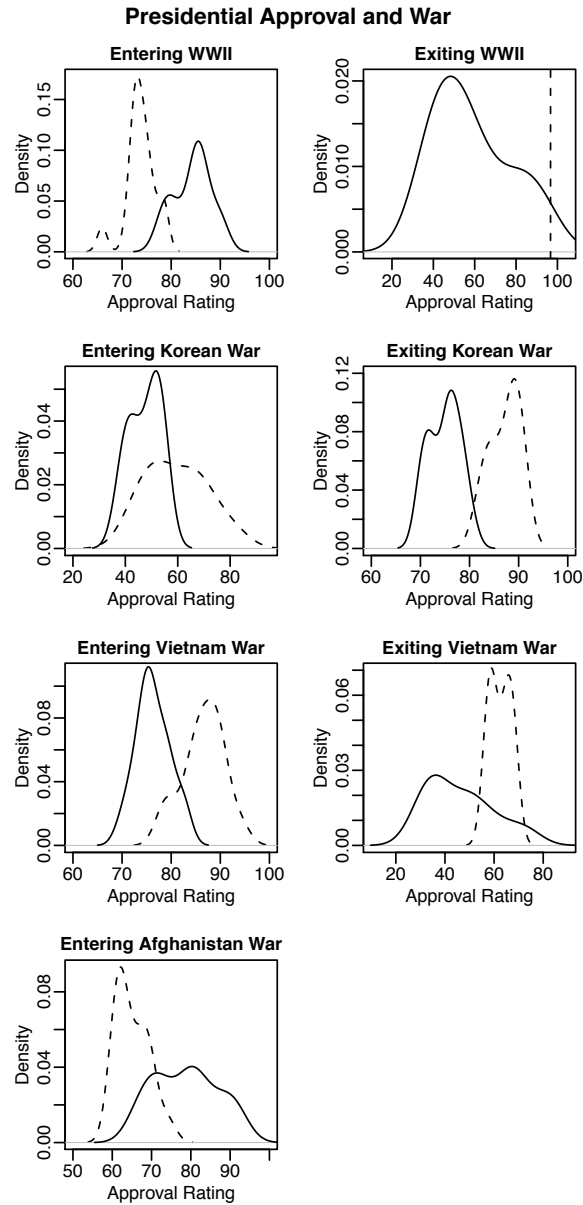
Cutpoint densities reported during three periods of the 107th Congress: before the Jeffords switch (dashed), after the Jeffords switch but before the war (dots), and after the war's commencement (solid). Cutpoints reflect the position in ideological space that separates members who voted for a particular bill from those who voted against it. Cutpoints to the right of the midpoint indicate agenda control by liberals, and cutpoints to the left indicate agenda control by conservatives.

Figure 4: Presidential Vote Share and Changes in Member Voting Behavior



Bivariate generalized additive models estimated. The x-axes represent the Republican share of the two-party presidential vote in the 2000 election, and the y-axes reflect changes in ideal point estimates before and after the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, where larger positive numbers suggest larger shifts in the conservative direction. The dotted lines represent the 95% confidence intervals around the estimate, and the tick marks along the x-axes indicate observations.

Figure 5: Shifts in Public Opinion with the Incidence of War



Density curves reflect the distribution of presidential approval ratings during times of war and peace. Each plot contains the distribution of approval ratings within the Congress (or two-year time period for the Vietnam plots) in which U.S. involvement in war began or ended. Figures are taken from polls conducted by the Gallup organization, and level of approval is calculated as the percentage of survey respondents indicating approval with the president's performance out of the total number of respondents who indicated approval or disapproval. For the plots in the left column, the dashed lines represent presidential approval before war began, and the solid lines indicate approval once the nation was at war. For the plots in the right column, the dashed lines represent approval while war was going on, and the solid lines indicate approval after the end of war. The dashed line in the plot labeled "Entering WWII" reflects the level of presidential approval for President Truman in the one Gallup poll conducted before the end of WWII.

Table 1: Summary of Results

War and Congress	Chamber	Expected Direction	Bridge Criteria	Bridge Actors (Rep, Dem)	Mean Shift ^a	Median Shift ^a	(N) Total	(N) Sig.	(N) Expected Direction	<i>p</i>
WWII 77th	House	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	House	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Taber May	-1.60	-1.32	424	280	263	.001
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	Gurney Hayden	-.25	-.19	95	74	44	.065
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Wiley Green	-.31	-.41	95	85	53	.015
WWII 79th	House	Conservative (-)	Presidential vote share	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	House	Conservative (+)	Regression residuals	Winter Dawson	+.06	+.32	430	228	137	.001
	Senate	Conservative (+)	Presidential vote share	Capper E. Thomas	+.03	+.33	90	64	35	.266
	Senate	Conservative (+)	Regression residuals	Hickenlooper McFarland	+.12	+.43	90	63	40	.021
Korea 81st	House	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	House	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Scrivner Carroll	-.50	-.84	428	360	286	.001
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	Aiken J.W. Thomas	+.18	+.10	92	85	34	.975
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Butler Neely	+.12	+.02	92	74	30	.960
Korea 83rd	House	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	W. Smith Powell	-.15	-.14	429	280	200	.001
	House	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Javits Eberharter	-.55	-.58	429	324	306	.001
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	Aiken Kilgore	-.38	-.39	92	81	76	.001
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Bennett Hayden	-.28	-.27	92	82	48	.075
Vietnam 88th/89th	House	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	Utt Powell	+.34	+.38	341	300	37	.999
	House	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Halpern Perkins	+.47	+.53	341	10	1	.999
	House	Liberal (-)	Interest groups	ACA ^c ADA ^d	+.35	+.38	341	273	17	.999

Table 1: Summary of Results (Continued)

War and Congress	Chamber	Expected Direction	Bridge Criteria	Bridge Actors (Rep, Dem)	Mean Shift ^a	Median Shift ^a	(N) Total	(N) Sig.	(N) Expected Direction	<i>p</i>
Vietnam 88th/89th	Senate	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	Jordan Pell	-.30	-.05	90	81	43	.329
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Curtis Jackson	-.23	-.01	90	81	44	.273
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Interest groups	ACA ADA	+.28	+.42	90	66	26	.968
Vietnam 92nd/93rd	House	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	Camp Conyers	-.14	-.07	359	311	220	.001
	House	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Snyder Perkins	-.06	-.01	359	281	178	.001
	House	Liberal (-)	Interest groups	ACU ^e ADA	-.03	-.02	359	150	86	.043
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Presidential vote share	Bellmon Kennedy	+.11	-.11	87	76	37	.635
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Regression residuals	Curtis Stevenson	-.20	-.37	87	75	63	.001
	Senate	Liberal (-)	Interest groups	ACU ADA	-.45	-.59	87	67	65	.001
Afghanistan 107th	House	Conservative (-)	Presidential vote share	Hansen Serrano	+.06	+.25	430	377	248	.001
	House	Conservative (-)	Regression residuals	Miller McDermott	+.15	+.28	430	375	322	.001
	House	Conservative (-)	Interest groups	ACU ADA	+.54	+1.28	430	362	323	.001
	House	Conservative (-)	Interest groups	ACU AFL-CIO	+.54	+1.28	430	362	323	.001
	Senate	Conservative (-)	Presidential vote share	Hatch Reed	+.10	-.01	100	88	62	.001
	Senate	Conservative (-)	Regression residuals	Gramm Durbin	+.00	-.08	100	83	29	.745
	Senate	Conservative (-)	Interest groups	ACU ADA	+1.21	+1.26	100	99	99	.001
	Senate	Conservative (-)	Interest groups	ACU AFL-CIO	+1.08	+1.05	100	90	86	.001

^a These figures are provided to assess the extent to which aggregate chamber behavior is significantly different during periods of war compared with voting behavior during peacetime. However, they cannot be meaningfully compared across chambers or time. Thus, variation in the magnitude of the mean and median shifts should not be interpreted as variation in the extent to which members of Congress shifted toward or away from the president.

^b District-level presidential returns were not available prior to 1952, so this bridging criterion could not be used for analyses of the 77th, 79th and 81st Houses.

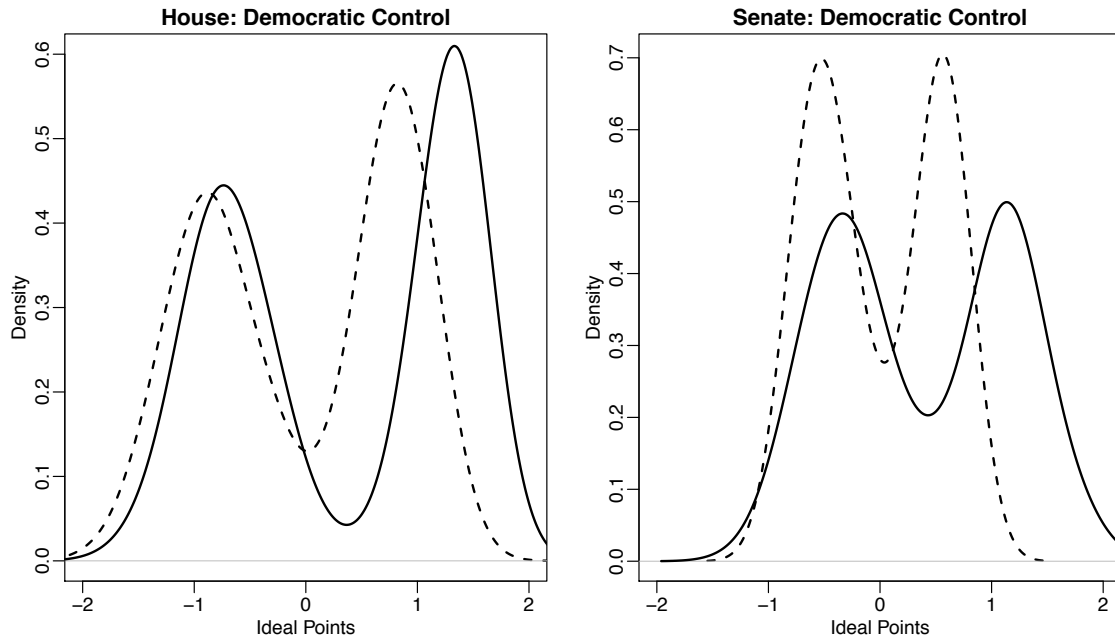
^c Americans for Constitutional Action.

^d Americans for Democratic Action.

^e American Conservative Union.

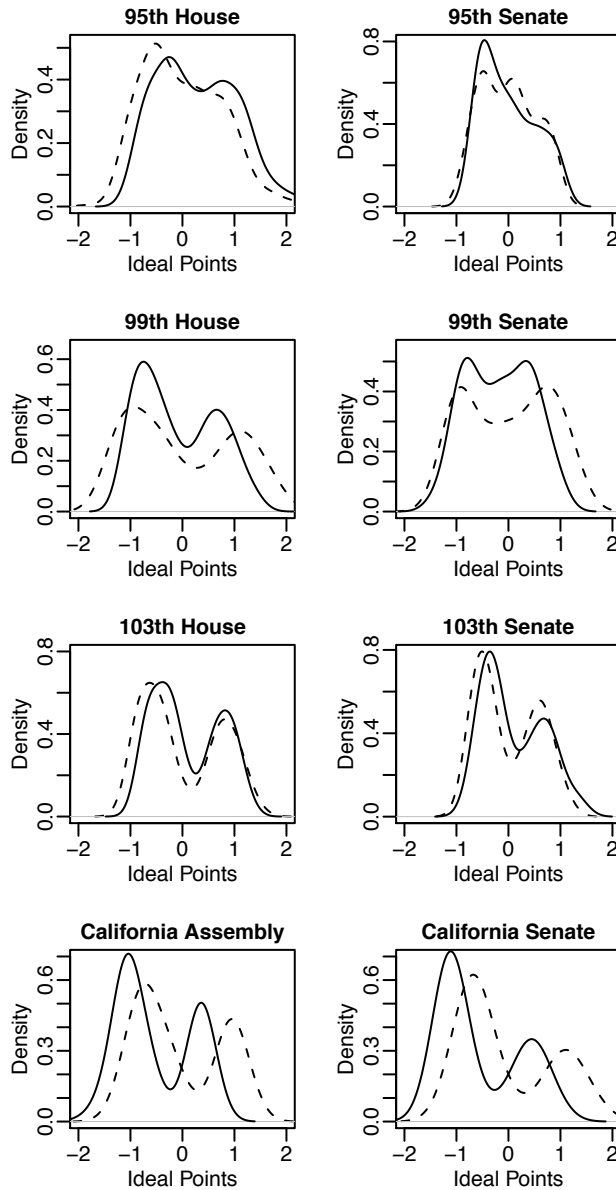
A Reviewer Appendix

Figure A.1: Interest Group Effects



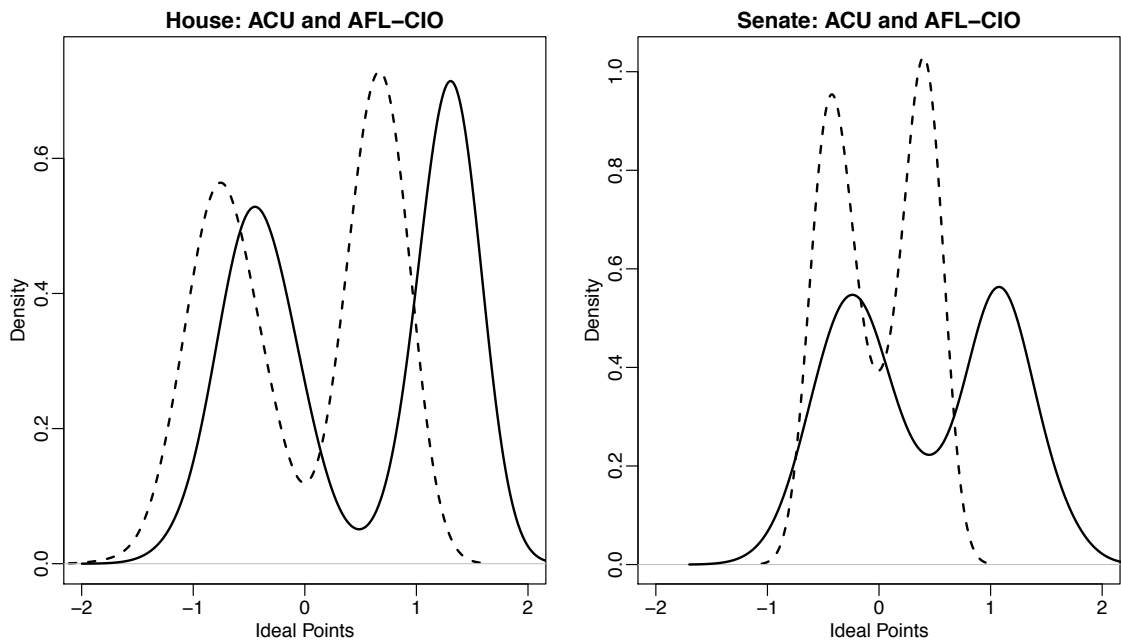
Plots show the distribution of ideal points in the 107th Congress before and after the beginning of the War in Afghanistan. Pre-war votes are limited to the period after the Democrats gained control of the Senate following Sen. James Jeffords' defection from the Republicans on May 22, 2001. The ACU and ADA are used to link the pre- and post-war periods. Dashed lines reflect the distribution of ideal points before the war in Afghanistan began, and the solid lines reflect the distribution of ideal points after the war began.

Figure A.2: Placebo Tests



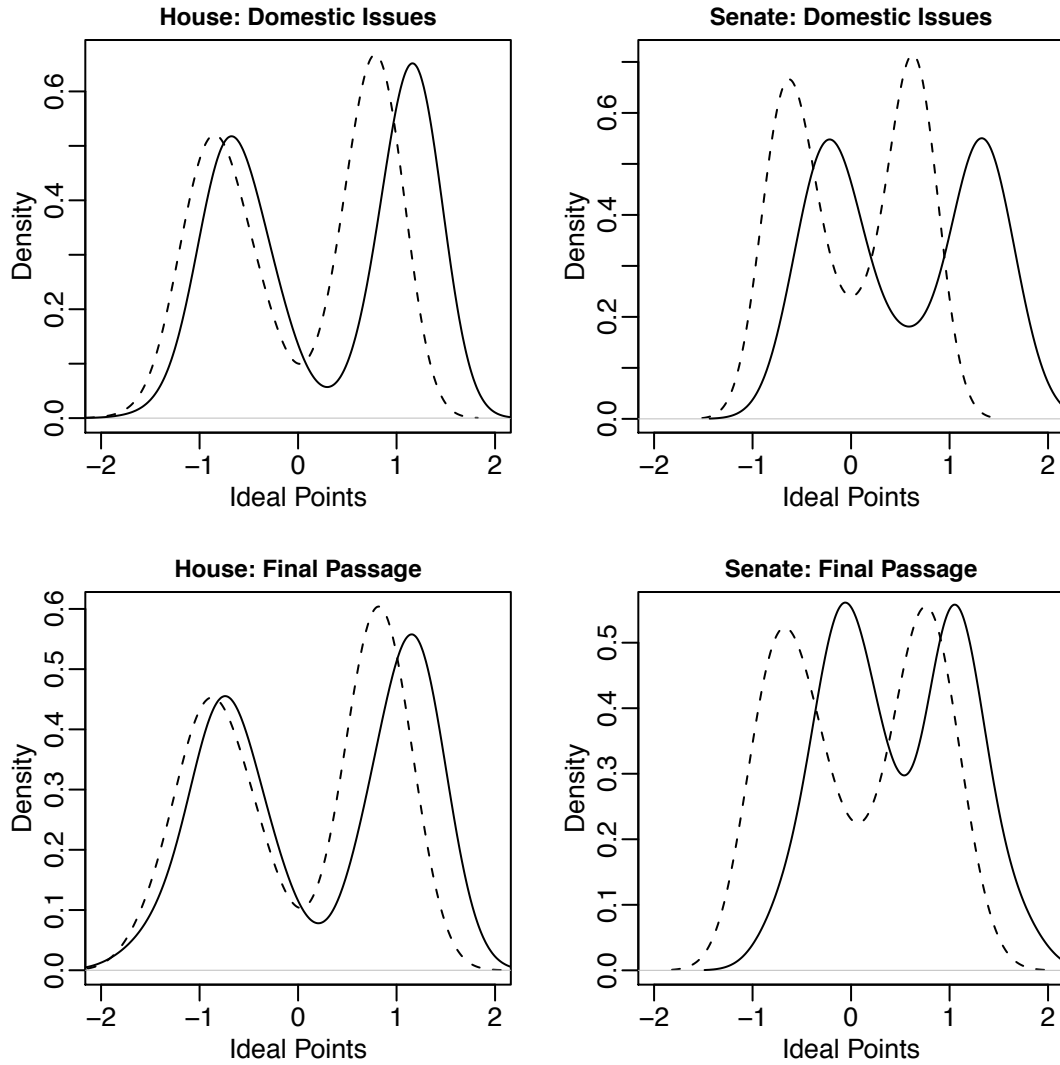
Plots in the first three rows contain the distribution of ideal points estimated during the first (dashed lines) and second (solid lines) sessions of the 95th (1977-78), 99th (1985-86), and 103rd (1993-94) Congresses. The ACU and ADA are the bridge actors used to link the sessions. To the extent that aggregate shifts are observed, they occur in the direction opposite the ideological position of the president. The plots in the bottom row indicate the distribution of ideal point estimates using roll call votes in the California Assembly during the 2001-02 legislative session. The dashed lines indicate ideal points estimated using votes that occurred prior to the war in Afghanistan (October 6, 2001), and the solid lines indicate the distributions of ideal points using votes that occurred once the war began. The California Chamber of Commerce and the California League of Conservation Voters were the interest groups used to link the two time periods.

Figure A.3: Interest Group Effects



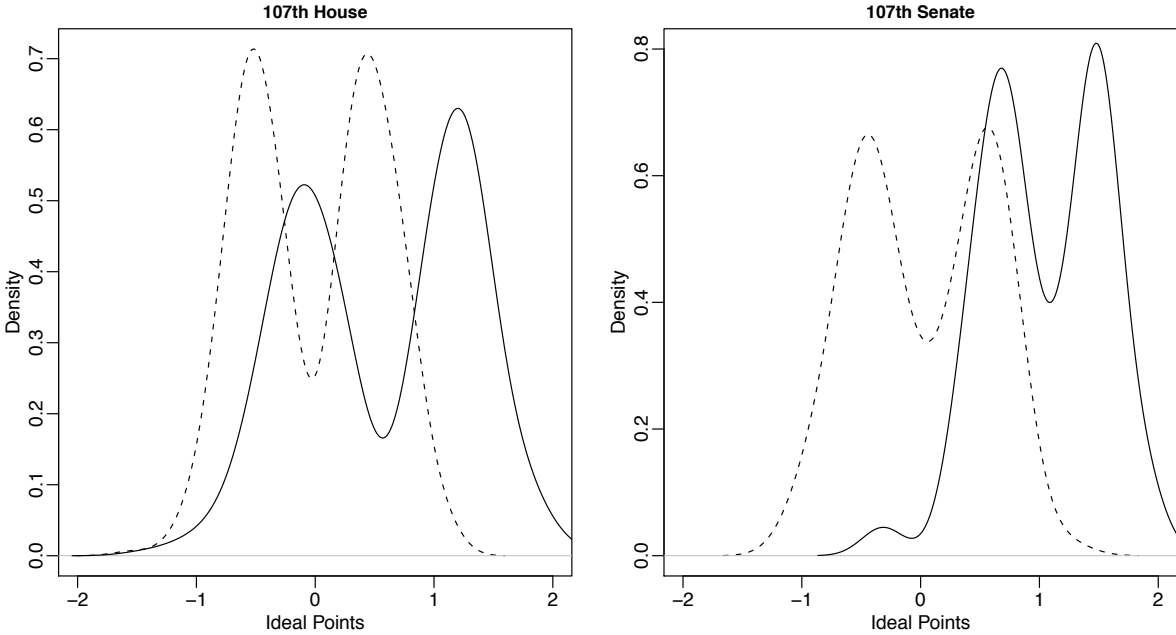
Plots show the distribution of ideal points in the 107th Congress before and after the beginning of the War in Afghanistan using the ACU and the AFL-CIO to link the two time periods. The results are nearly identical to those obtained using the ADA in place of the AFL-CIO and suggest that they are not driven by strategic behavior by interest groups. Dashed lines reflect the distribution of ideal points before the war in Afghanistan began, and the solid lines reflect the distribution of ideal points after the war began.

Figure A.4: Subsets of Bills in the 107th Congress



Dashed lines reflect the distribution of ideal points for the relevant subset of roll call votes prior to the beginning of the War in Afghanistan. The solid lines reflect the distribution of ideal points for votes cast after the beginning of the war. The ACU and the ADA were used to link the two time periods.

Figure A.5: Splitting Votes at September 11, 2001



Dashed lines reflect the distribution of ideal points estimated using roll call cast votes prior to September 11, 2001. The solid lines reflect the distribution of ideal points for votes cast after September 11. The ACU and the ADA were used to link the two time periods.

Table A.1: Regression Results

Independent Variables	House Democrats	House Republicans	Senate Democrats	Senate Republicans
Pre-war ideal point	0.39 *** (0.08)	0.53 *** (0.06)	-0.58 *** (0.25)	-0.21 (0.52)
Pre-war ideal point (squared)	0.17 *** (0.04)	-0.39 *** (0.04)	-0.25* (0.14)	0.16 (0.29)
Bush vote, 2000 (%/10)	0.03 *** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.12 *** (0.05)	-0.01 (0.07)
Time in office (decades)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.04)
Veteran	-0.03 (0.04)	0.02 (0.02)	0.18 *** (0.07)	0.05 (0.10)
Committee ^a	0.02 (0.03)	0.03* (0.02)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.09 (0.09)
Party leader ^b	0.11 (0.12)	0.03 (0.06)	0.07 (0.14)	0.34 *** (0.14)
(Intercept)	0.17 *** (0.09)	0.89 *** (0.06)	0.22 (0.30)	1.35 *** (0.33)
N	210	216	50	49
Adjusted-R ²	0.16	0.38	0.19	0.05
MSE	0.21	0.12	0.21	0.26

Entries are linear regression coefficients with standard errors shown in parenthesis. The dependent variable is the change in member ideal point estimates once the war in Afghanistan began on October 7, 2001, where larger values indicate larger shifts in member voting behavior. *** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .10$.

^a In the House, these committees were the Committees on Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security, Intelligence, and Veterans' Affairs. In the Senate, these committees included Armed Services, Foreign Relations, Intelligence, and Veterans' Affairs.

^b We defined party leaders as the House Speaker and majority and minority leaders and whips, and the Senate majority and minority leaders and whips. House, party leaders included Dennis Hastert, Richard Armey, Tom DeLay, Richard Gephardt, David Bonior and Nancy Pelosi. Senate party leaders included Tom Daschle, Harry Reid, Trent Lott and Don Nickles.

Table A.2: Reverse Bridging Criteria

Congress and Chamber	Interest Group Results	Presidential Vote Share Criterion	Regression Residuals Criterion	Reverse Presidential Vote Share	Reverse Regression Residuals
88th/89th House	+0.35	+0.34	+0.47	-0.10	+0.06
88th/89th Senate	+0.28	-0.30	-0.23	-0.28	-0.17
92nd/93rd House	-0.03	-0.14	-0.06	+0.30	-0.13
92nd/93rd Senate	-0.45	+0.11	-0.20	+0.24	-0.29
107th House	+0.54	+0.06	+0.15	-0.16	-0.01
107th Senate	+0.69	+0.10	+0.00	-0.01	-0.08

Cell entries reflect the mean shifts in chamber ideal point estimates.