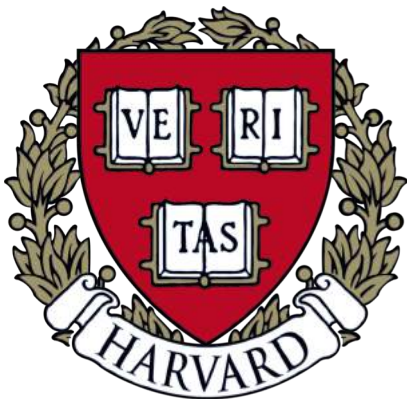


Resolve in international politics



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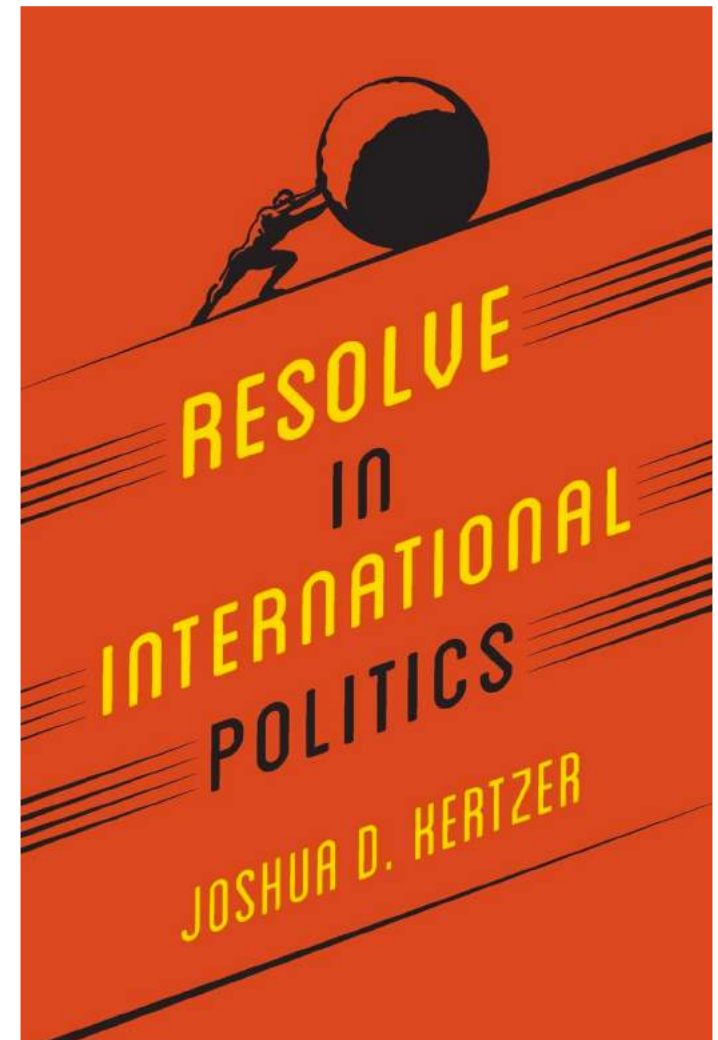
Political psychology in international relations

- Mass public
 - Public opinion about foreign policy
 - Public diplomacy, counterinsurgency, information warfare
- Elite decision-makers
 - Leaders and foreign policy decision-making



Today's focus: the psychology of resolve

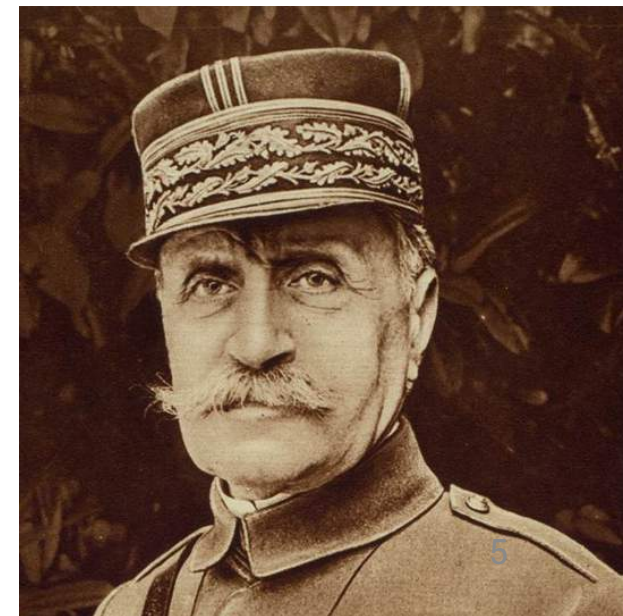
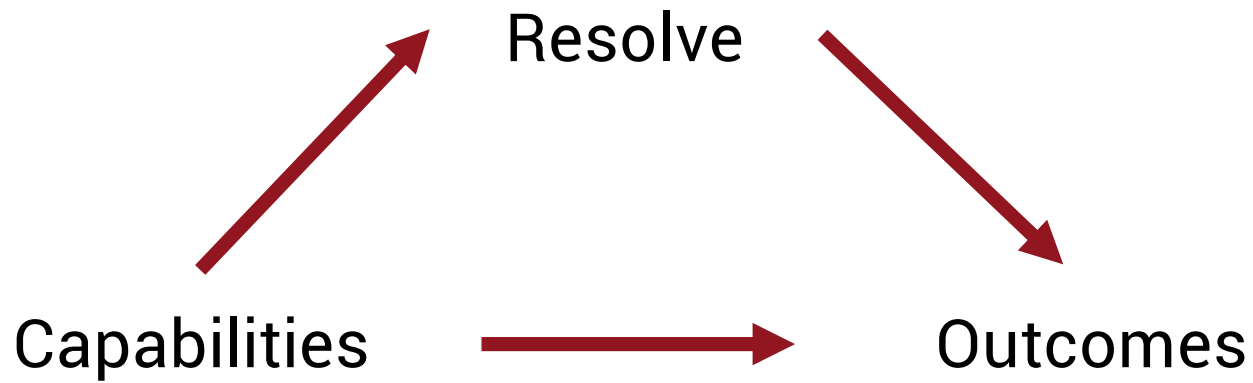
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Outline of today's talk

1. Political psychology in international politics
 - Focusing in particular on the psychology of resolve
2. Resolve's central role in international politics
 - The same reason why resolve matters also makes it hard to study
3. Two puzzles about resolve:
 - Explaining variation in resolve
 - Explaining assessments of resolve at a distance

Resolve in international politics



Resolve: our favorite explanatory variable

Resolve 

- Audience costs Fearon 1994
- Asymmetric conflict Mack 1974
- Casualty sensitivity in public opinion Mueller 1980
- Conflict outcomes Rosen 1972
- Crisis bargaining Snyder & Diesing 1977
- Democratic behavior in wartime Reiter & Stam 2002
- Deterrence Huth and Russett 1984
- Informational theories of democratic peace Schultz 1999
- Mediation outcomes Rauchhaus 2006
- Morale Shils & Janowitz 1948
- National will Morgenthau 1967
- Opportunity and willingness Most & Starr 1989
- Reputation Yarhi-Milo 2018
- Signaling Schelling 1960
- Terrorism Kydd & Walter 2006

The challenge of measuring resolve



Resolve as the interaction of stakes and traits

Resolve =

Situational features

The costs of fighting

- Human costs of war
- Economic and political costs of fighting

The costs of backing down

- Intrinsic interests (the stakes)
- Strategic interests
 - Reputation costs (abroad)
 - Audience costs (at home)

x

Dispositional characteristics

- Time preferences
- Risk preferences
- Honor orientations
- Trait self-control

Testing the interactionist theory of resolve

1. Explaining variation in resolve in public opinion towards military interventions

- Laboratory experiment, plus survey experiment in nationally representative sample of Americans
 - Experimentally manipulate situational features
 - Measure dispositional characteristics in pre-political domains

2. How does resolve affect state behavior?

- Analysis of great power military interventions, 1946-2003
 - Measure situational features
 - Measure dispositional characteristics
 - Estimate their interaction in Boolean statistical framework

Key findings

1. Resolve is an interaction: situational x dispositional
2. Dispositional traits are especially important
 - Same traits we study when explaining variation in willpower more generally
3. Resolve matters even when it's measured independently of the outcome we use it to explain

Challenge of assessing resolve

- Resolve's unobservability → importance of understanding how actors assess resolve
- Assessing resolve as an "ill-structured problem":
 - Given complex information environment, which indicators do observers use to draw inferences about resolve?
 - Capabilities?
 - Interests?
 - Past actions? (And in which contexts?)
 - Costly signals?
 - Domestic politics?
 - Leader-level characteristics?

Methodological approach

- Choice-based conjoint experiments (mass public)
- Experiments on elite decision-makers

	Country A	Country B
Government	The country is a democracy	The country is a democracy
Interests in the dispute	Experts describe the country's stakes in the dispute as high.	Experts describe the country's stakes in the dispute as high.
Leader background	The leader recently took office; he has served in the military briefly.	The leader recently took office; she had a long career in the military.
Foreign relations	The country is an ally of the United States.	The country is an adversary of the United States.
Previous behavior in international disputes	The last time this country was involved in an international dispute, it initiated the crisis by issuing a public threat to use force against an adversary of the United States, but ultimately backed down. At the time, the country was led by a different leader than the one in the current dispute.	The last time this country was involved in an international dispute, it initiated the crisis by issuing a public threat to use force against an adversary of the United States, and stood firm throughout the crisis. At the time, the country was led by a different leader than the one in the current dispute.
Current behavior	In the current crisis, the country has yet to make any statements or carry out any actions.	In the current crisis, the country has made a public threat that they will use force if the other country does not back down.
Military Capabilities	The country does not have a very powerful military	The country has a very powerful military

In disputes like these, countries either back down or stand firm.

If you had to choose between them, which of the two countries is more likely to *stand firm* in the current dispute?

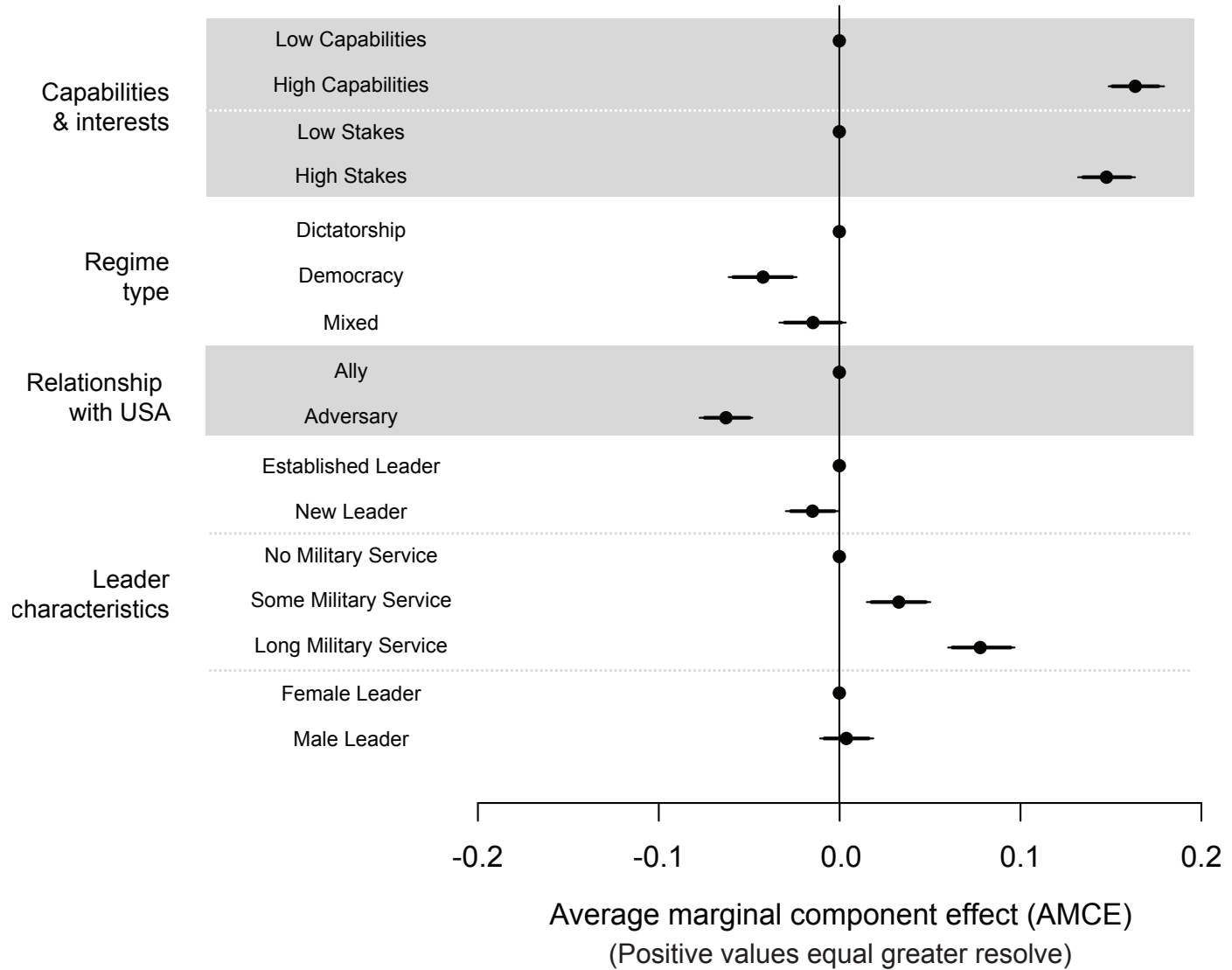
Country A

○

Country B

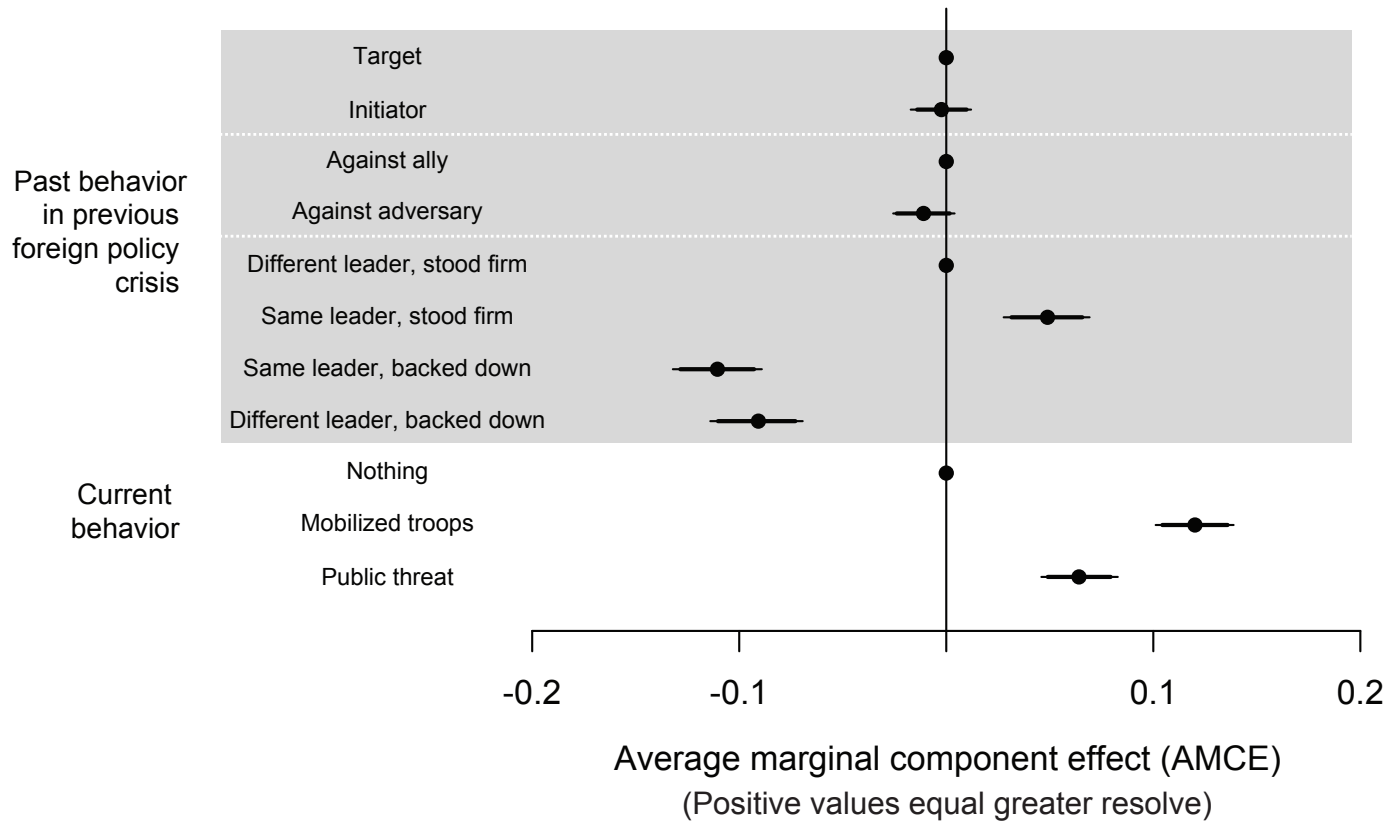
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Results



Horizontal bars denote 95% clustered bootstrapped confidence intervals

Results



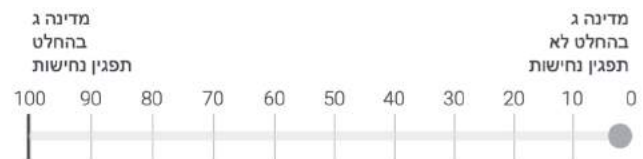
Extending results to elites

- Experiments on elite decision-makers
 - 89 current and former members of the Israeli Knesset
 - 64% of sample served on Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee

עכשיו, אנחנו נתאר תרחיש שונה:

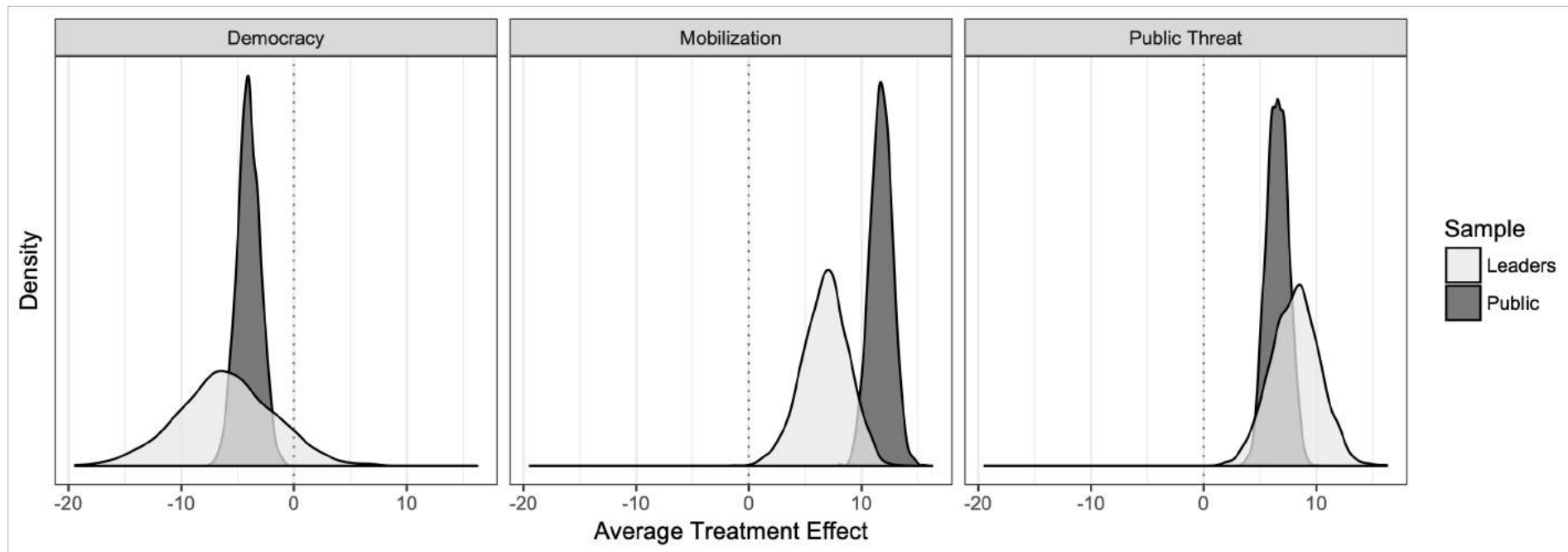
- שתי מדינות מעורבות כיום בסכסוך על טריטוריה שנויה במחלוקת. הסכסוך זכה לתשומת לב רבה בשתי המדינות, בשל הסיכון שהסכסוך יכול להסלים לשימוש בכח.
- מדינה ג היא . מדינה ד היא דיקטטורה.
- יש לשתי מדינות צבאות בינוניים בחוזקם, עם כוחות יבשה גדולים, חילות ים בגודל בינוני, וחילות אוויר מאומנים היטב.
- אף אחת מהמדינות אינה בעלת ברית קרובה של ארצות הברית.
- מדינה ג גדולה במקצת ממדינה ד, אם כי הכלכלות של שתי המדינות הן בערך באותו הגודל.
- למדינה ג יש רמה בינונית של סחר עם הקהילה הבינלאומית. למדינה ד יש רמה גבוהה של סחר עם הקהילה הבינלאומית.
- בפעם האחרונה ששתי המדינות היו מעורבות בסכסוך, מנהיגים שונים היו בשלטון.

לאור האינפורמציה שהוצגה, מהי הערכתך הטובה ביותר בין 0% ל 100% לשאלה האם מדינה ג תפגין נחישות בסכסוך הזה? אנה הזז את הסמן למספר המתאים ביותר להערכה שלך.



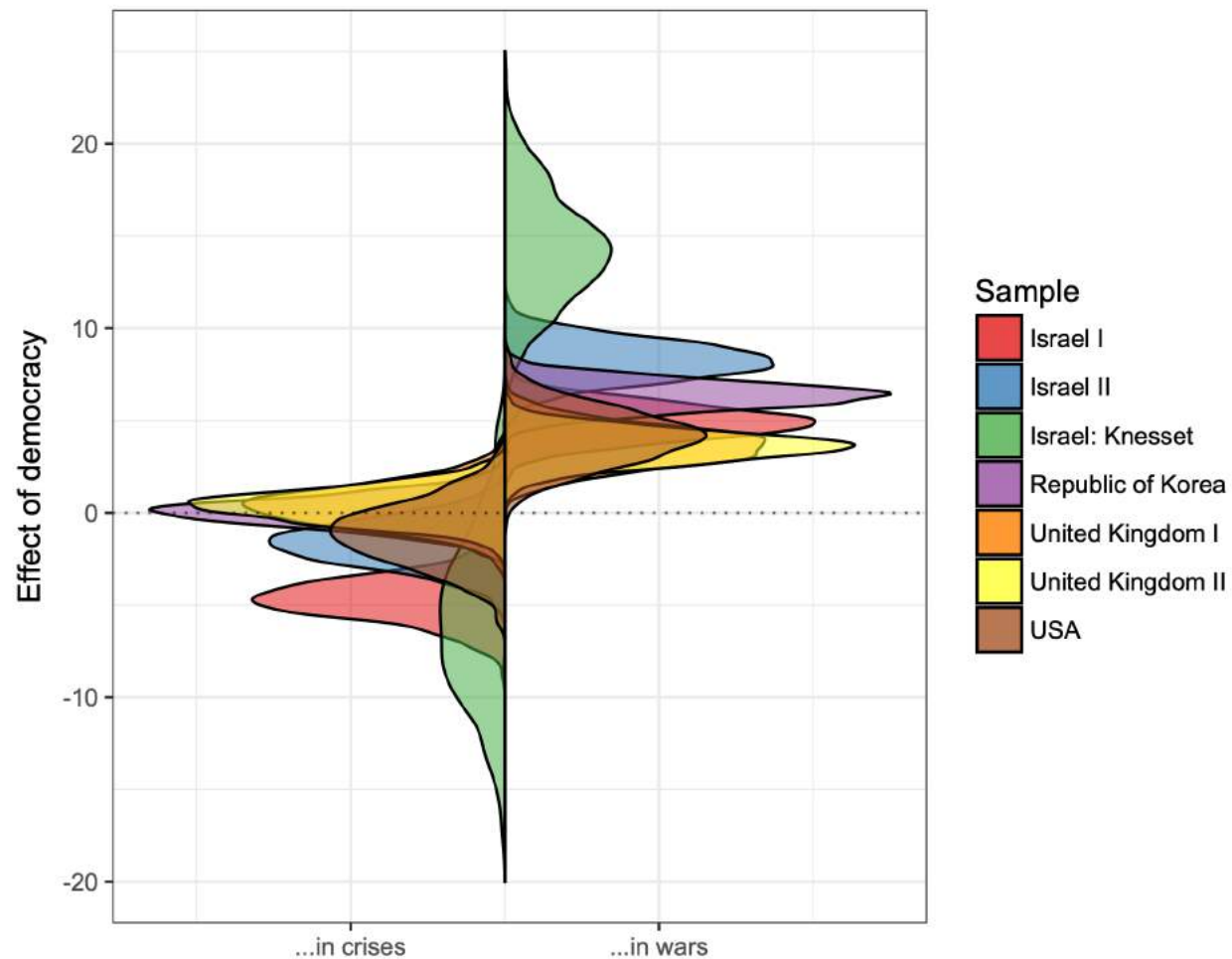
Results

- Striking similarities in assessments of resolve



Results

- Striking similarities in assessments of resolve



Conclusion

- Applying insights from political psychology to the study of resolve
- Next directions
 - Cross-cultural variations in assessments of resolve
 - Differences between elite and mass cognition
 - Aggregation in foreign policy decision-making