Article

The Consequences of Defeat: The Quest for Status and Morale in the Aftermath of War

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Abstract

Studies of the effect of past actions have focused on yielding without a fight. What happens, however, when states fight and lose? This article assesses the effect of defeat on a state's behavior and finds that recently defeated states are more likely to initiate disputes than are undefeated or victorious states or states that fight to a draw. This aggression comes at the expense of states responsible for defeat and third-party states uninvolved in the original defeat. The analysis below examines the validity of five potential explanations for postdefeat aggression, including models rooted in failed political objectives, an emotional desire for revenge and reputation-building and finds evidence in support for the latter two. These existing mechanisms fail, however, to explain a key finding—the systematic targeting of weaker, third-party states—which, I argue, is best explained by a desire to bolster the state's status and confidence in the aftermath of defeat.

Keywords

international security, conflict, dyadic conflict, militarized disputes, use of force, war

How does defeat affect state behavior? While international relations scholars have devoted significant attention to the effects of backing down in a crisis, the systematic effects of defeat on the external relations of defeated states have largely gone

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unstudied. This is despite broad recognition by historians that defeat often generates significant shifts in foreign policy (e.g., Dower 2010; Schivelbusch and Chase 2004; Howard 2005). This article analyzes the impact of recent war outcomes on a state's own propensity for aggression. It shows that states that have recently been defeated are more likely on average to initiate subsequent disputes and to engage in higher levels of aggression than states that have not recently been defeated. These acts of aggression are conducted not only against states responsible for recent defeat but against third-party states as well. Conversely, recently victorious or stalemated states are no more likely to initiate disputes than states that have not recently fought in a war. The analysis also demonstrates that certain defeats—those in which states lose to much weaker states—have differential effects on state behavior. States that have been defeated by weaker opponents are more likely to initiate conflict and be more aggressive in the future than are states that lose to equally sized or larger opponents. These findings hold when controlling for any decline in capabilities countries experienced as a result of defeat and when accounting for heightened periods of conflict.

What explains the effect of past defeat on conflict behavior? This article introduces two highly plausible, but previously unaddressed, explanations for why defeat might bolster the aggressive tendencies of states. First, unexpected military failure can seriously threaten the status of the defeated state, leading it to engage in aggressive acts in attempt to bolster its image in the eyes of others. Second, defeat can undermine national confidence within the state, causing defeated states to engage in conflict in order to overcome a painful sense of collective impotence and malaise by demonstrating their agency and efficacy.[1]

This article also assesses the validity of three explanations for postdefeat aggression drawn from prominent existing theories. First, defeated states may be motivated by the same objectives, be they material, political, or strategic in nature, that drove them to war in the first place. Second, defeat may engender negative emotions among state leaders and citizens, who will then be more likely to support acts of revenge against the state or states responsible for the recent defeat. Third, a state may fear that defeat will earn it a reputation for military inefficacy and irresoluteness which could then increase the likelihood that the state faces military challenges in the future. The defeated state would then have an incentive to proactively establish a reputation for strength and resolve in hopes of warding off rivals (Clare and Danilovic 2010).

This article derives unique behavioral implications from each of these five explanations and subjects them to empirical analysis. The evidence strongly suggests that defeated states are not simply motivated by failed objectives. The results support the theories that defeated states are motivated by negative collective emotions and by concerns about the state's reputation for strength and resolve. These two prominent existing mechanisms fail, however, to explain a key finding below—the systematic targeting of weaker, third-party states—which, I argue, is best explained by a desire to shore up the status and confidence of the state in the aftermath of defeat.

This article proceeds by addressing prominent existing theories that propose a relationship between past actions and present conflict behavior, including research on reputation and enduring rivalries, which focuses on the conditions under which conflict increases the likelihood of repeated and persistent dyadic disputes. The discussion turns to the relationship between defeat, status, national confidence, and conflict and then lays out the unique behavioral implications derived from the five nonexclusive theoretical mechanisms. After presentation of empirical results, this article concludes with a discussion of potential alternative mechanisms and the implications of the findings.

Existing Literature on the Effects of Past Conflict

Scholars have examined many interesting questions related to war outcomes. What factors, for instance, best predict whether a state will win or lose? (e.g., Wang and Ray 1994). How does the prosecution and outcome of war affect internal politics and the longevity of domestic political regimes? (e.g., Bueno De Mesquita, Siverson, and Woller 1992). Largely excluded from this analysis have been the questions of if and how the conflict behavior of defeated states differs from that of states that have not recently fought in a war or have fought to victory or stalemate.

Two existing literatures may be relevant. Although they do not explicitly seek to explain the systematic effects of defeat, these literatures may provide convincing explanations for why defeated states are more likely to initiate disputes. First, scholars have focused on how backing down in a conflict affects a state's reputation and, as a result, the conflict behavior of rivals. Evidence has shown that states that fail to convey resolve by backing down may be more likely than states that have not to experience challenges in the future not only by the same opponent but by other states more generally (Huth and Russett 1993; Grieco 2001; also Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo 2015). States that have conveyed resolve by fighting and winning are, in contrast, significantly less likely to face future challengers than are states that have not recently fought to a victory (Huth and Russett 1993; Grieco 2001; also Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo 2015). Scholars have also argued that backing down affects the behavior of the state itself. Clare and Danilovic (2010), for instance, find that states that have yielded to another state without fighting and that confront numerous strategic rivals are more likely to initiate and escalate subsequent disputes with other rivals, in hopes of warding off future challengers through the development of a reputation for resolve.

While yielding without a fight may earn a state a reputation for a lack of resolve, what are the reputational implications of fighting but losing? The near exclusive focus on backing down may stem, in part, from the complication that, as Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo (2015) note, multiple reputational inferences can be drawn from defeat. Observers might conclude that the state lacked the necessary resolve to follow through and win or they might conclude that the state possessed sufficient resolve but lacked sufficient military, technological, and organizational capacities to

succeed (see Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014; Huth 1997). Or one could conclude that the state was deficient in both resolve and strength.[2] In either case, a state confronting a reputation for a lack of military strength or for irresoluteness would have reason to fear an increase in challenges by other states (Kertzer 2016). Defeated states, like states that have backed down, would arguably face incentives to proactively reestablish a reputation for strength and or resolve through subsequent acts of aggression in effort to appear less vulnerable and to ward off potential challengers.

A second area of research has focused on the relationship between war outcomes and the likelihood of intractable dyadic conflict. A significant proportion of all disputes since 1816 have occurred within disproportionately few dyads (see, e.g., Mor and Maoz 1999; Goertz and Diehl 1995). As Grieco (2001) has shown, a challenger that has lost a recent conflict is more likely to initiate another dispute against the same opponent than is a state that achieved victory. Scholars have analyzed these phenomena from a number of angles. One argument roots the explanation for dyadic recurrence in failed objectives. War, in this view, is a process through which contentious political, economic, or strategic issues are resolved. Resolution of issues comes in the form of decisive defeat by one state over another. Dyadic conflict ending in stalemate in which neither side is able to decisively shift the status quo in its favor would, according to this argument, serve as the most potent source of repeated and escalatory dynamics within dyads.[3] Stalemated wars are more likely to be followed by heightened violence because states will again seek to achieve a quick and decisive military victory which will enable them to enforce their will (see also Blainey 1988).

Another broad swathe of the literature on enduring rivalries has focused less on the instrumental role of war and more on defeat's corrosive psychological effects (Coleman 2006; Bar-Tal 2007; Thies 2001; Scheff 1994). War, and defeat in particular, can heighten a sense of group-based threat and levels of individual identification at the national level. The resulting oppositional nationalist identities may constrain leaders in their abilities to engage in dyadic compromise or negotiation. Defeat can also engender deep mistrust of wartime rivals and deeply rooted forms of group-based anger, resentment, humiliation, and hatred (Volkan 1998). Such negative collective sentiment can give rise to a desire to achieve emotional catharsis through acts of physical revenge among state leaders and citizens (Halperin 2008; Harkavy 2000; Lowenheim and Heimann 2008; also Barbalet 1998). These acts of retaliation often foster a self-perpetuating cycle of resentment and revenge such that each humiliating defeat sows the seeds for another round of dyadic conflict (Klein 1991).

Clearly, unfavorable conflict outcomes do not always generate potent negative collective emotions which drive states to seek psychological solace through revanchism. Factors such as regime type, domestic stability, the state's past experience with conflict, and the cultural biases of the state may affect the degree to which negative collective emotions are internalized as a response to defeat (Schivelbusch and Chase 2004). We also should not expect all citizens to be equally laden by negative emotional reactions in response to international events negatively affecting

their state. We can conservatively assume, however, that citizens within those states that have recently experienced defeat will be on average more likely to internalize negative collective emotions against the state with which they last fought than will citizens within states that have recently fought and achieved victory or that have fought to a stalemate.

Finally, some scholars of enduring rivalries have treated conflict as a valuable source of information about a state's resolve, preferences, and capabilities (Maoz 1984). Repeated dyadic conflict can reflect fundamental lessons learned in the last round of bargaining or conflict. Leng (1983) argues, for instance, that states that failed to accomplish their objectives in the last round will be more likely to adopt more coercive bargaining strategies with the same state than are states that managed to achieve their goals (cf. Levy 1994).

Status, Confidence, and Defeat

In its focus on enduring rivalries and reputation, the study of the effects of dispute outcomes has largely excluded two important and related effects of defeat. Failure to prevail militarily, especially when such failure is highly unexpected, also arguably threatens (1) the rightful status of the state in the eyes of others and (2) the image of the state in the eyes of its own people.

Status

Status refers to an actor's standing within some global or regional deference hierarchy.[4] A state's standing is dependent in part upon others' assessments of its strength, wealth, technological capacity, cultural influence, and demographics. The study of international status has largely focused on status inconsistency to explain when status is most likely to affect state behavior (Volgy et al. 2011; Renshon 2017). Status inconsistency occurs when a state confronts a disparity between the status it expects to hold and the status it is afforded by others. Concerns about the image of the state in the eyes of others are not, however, solely driven by how the state is treated by others. In addition to shaping expectations about the rights and privileges a state should receive, international status also shapes expectations of how a state should behave and perform on the world stage (Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014, 374). Highly visible acts in which a state fails to perform as would be expected given its status threaten to undermine the state's position on the world stage (Barnhart 2017). Given the partial material basis for status, all states should be expected to defeat lower status states in conflict. Defeat in conflict to a much weaker state would lead others to question whether the state deserves its current status, creating an incentive for the defeated state to shore up others' perceptions of its rightful position. This incentive can be both psychological, as states pursue high status as a satisfying end in itself, and instrumental since high states are typically granted more deference on the world stage (Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014; Huberman, Loch, and Öncüler 2004; cf. Mercer 2017).

How do states go about bolstering their status? Because status estimations are based upon a broad set of traits, status-seeking states may engage in a number of different behaviors in effort to enhance their image in the eyes of others including competitive behaviors like the pursuit of status symbols such as nuclear weapons or aircraft carriers and, as Renshon (2017) argues, the initiation of direct military conflict.[5] Military disputes, according to Renshon, serve as highly public, dramatic, and salient events around which reassessments of a state's capabilities, and as a result its status, can be formed (Renshon 2017, 526).

Most importantly, we would expect status-seeking states to engage in acts that define the status position they seek to hold. Different strata within the international status hierarchy are associated with different sets of status-defining behaviors rooted in common knowledge about how states of a particular status typically behave. Great powers, for instance, are most commonly defined not only by their distinctive military and economic capabilities but also by their intention to utilize their super-lative power in the service of "vigorous and expansive" foreign policies in which they maintain spheres of influence, acquire and maintain client states and protecto-rates, and generally influence the politics of other, often smaller and weaker, states.[6] States that are seen as unable or unwilling to project their power abroad are rarely granted membership within the great power club (Volgy et al. 2011). As Leopold von Ranke noted, the ability to acquire and maintain a sphere of influence is a demonstration not only of distinctive material capabilities but also that the state has been granted droit de regard by other great powers in the international system.[7]

While the discussion has thus far discussed status and reputation as though they are orthogonal, they are, as Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth note, intricately linked.[8] High-status states are generally expected to hold reputations for strength and resolve, and a reputation for weakness or irresoluteness generally contributes to the percep-tion that a state's status is in decline. Unlike reputation, however, status does not reside at the level of others' beliefs, but within beliefs about others' beliefs about who possesses admirable traits and how they compare with others (O'Neill 2006). Two states may, therefore, each view a state to be irresolute but believe the other to perceive it as highly resolved and deserving of high status. Moreover, as we will see below, because reputations for strength and resolve serve as only partial bases for high international status, the range of status-seeking acts is arguably broader than the range of acts through which states might seek to bolster their reputation for these characteristics.

National Confidence

Of equal or perhaps even greater importance to defeat's potential deleterious effects on a state's image in the eyes of others is the detrimental effect that defeat can have on collective confidence within the state itself. Collective confidence refers to individual-level estimations of a group one identifies with as effective and worthy of pride (Luhtanen and Crocker 1992). States rarely enter into conflict expecting to

lose. Defeat, therefore, often challenges the state's self-image as an effective actor on the world stage, potentially undermining pride and fostering a collective sense of impotence. States lacking in confidence may become temporarily isolationist as they recover and rebuild their capabilities but then often seek opportunities to overcome their sense of inefficacy by rebuilding national confidence through the successful assertions of state interests. And success should indeed be key to the restoration of confidence. For while one international failure can be written off as a fluke, multiple failures rapidly start to substantiate a pattern of inefficacy with increasing potential to undermine the group's ability to plausibly blame others for their inefficacy.

The need for defeated states to redress damage to national self-concept through vigorous and successful assertions of their interest on the world stage has been acknowledged across historical time and place. In response to a surprising defeat to the Boers in 1895, British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, for instance, called for an immediate "'Act of Vigour' ... to soothe the wounded vanity of the nation." The target of this vigor, he argued, was not of importance. What was essential was that the British defy some other state in order to restore their sense of agency and efficacy (Porter 1980, 86). Following France's surprising defeat and its loss of Alsace and Lorraine in the Franco–Prussian War in 1871, Bismarck similarly recognized that France would eventually need to "soothe its *amour propre*."[9] He successfully encouraged France to rebuild its confidence through the conquest of Tunisia rather than through aggression directed at Germany. Upon entering office, Ronald Reagan recognized the need for the United States to "purge itself" of the pervasive collective doubt engendered by Vietnam. He seized what he perceived to be an opportunity for the United States to overcome its collective sense of inefficacy through the use of overwhelming force on the small Caribbean island of Grenada in 1983. The successful intervention, he wrote in his memoirs, "marked a turning point" (Reagan 1990, 451; see also Grow 2008, 157). "Our days of weakness are over," he claimed in the aftermath. "Our military forces are back on their feet and standing tall" (Simons 1997, 23).

Ultimately, status and national confidence are also deeply linked. Status plays a significant role in shaping the identity of the state. States that perform in ways that are not in keeping with their identity confront a resulting decline not only in their international status but also in their collective confidence. In short, though a lack of confidence and a decline in status are two different effects of defeat, it is unlikely that either condition would occur in isolation. Moreover, as will be argued below, recently defeated states are likely to attempt to bolster the status and the confidence of the state through highly similar behaviors. It should also be said that the psychological motivation to overcome collective impotence described here can be distinguished from the psychological benefits of high status briefly referenced above. While holding high status may provide intrinsic psychological benefits on its own, this motivation is distinct from the desire to achieve psychological rewards through the reestablishment of collective morale.

In summary, the discussion above has laid out five plausible, nonexclusive explanations for why defeat may lead to higher rates of conflict initiation and escalation. Defeated states may be motivated by (1) a desire to redress failed objectives, (2) a psychological desire for emotional catharsis through the punishment of one's humiliator, (3) the need to minimize security threats stemming from the state's reputation for weakness or irresoluteness, (4) a desire to bolster the status of the state, and (5) a desire to bolster the confidence and self-image of the state. This list of potential mechanisms is not exhaustive. The list does, however, include the most prominent applicable theories in the field and the two important novel mechanisms of status and confidence. Potential alternative explanations rooted in material, strategic or domestic factors, are also addressed within the analysis below.

Theoretical Predictions: The Potential Effects of Defeat

Each of the theoretical frameworks described above share two common predictions. First:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Defeat within a recent war will engender a subsequent increase in aggression by the defeated state. Victory within war will not engender subsequent increases in aggression.

Second, the discussions above suggest another shared prediction, not yet explicitly addressed: that not all instances should affect state behavior to the same degree. Unexpected defeats in which states are defeated by those thought to possess far inferior capabilities going into war arguably present greater challenges to the reputation, status, and confidence of the state than do defeats to states of equal or greater capabilities. Unexpected defeats by weaker states may also engender negative outgroup sentiments and foster greater hopes of successful revanchism. In any case, we would expect the following:

> **Hypothesis 2:** States defeated by a weaker state will be more likely to subsequently initiate conflict than will states that have lost to stronger or equally sized rivals.

Beyond these shared predictions, the five theoretical frameworks generate unique behavioral predictions related to the characteristics of the selected target of post-defeat aggression. First, if state responses to defeat are motivated either by failed objectives or by group-based hatred of or anger at their victors, we should expect the following:

> **Hypothesis 3:** Postconflict aggression will come primarily at the expense of the state or states responsible for one's defeat.

Political, strategic, and territorial objectives are often dyadic in nature—states seek concessions or policy changes from particular rivals. In some cases, a defeated

state may believe that it can achieve its unmet political objectives by initiating conflict against a third-party state that was not involved in the original defeat. States seeking access to a strategically valuable waterway, for instance, might have the opportunity to gain access to the water via another state. The literature on enduring rivalries from which this theoretical framework has emerged has, however, provided no reason to expect defeated states to systematically target third-party states in the aftermath of defeat.

Similarly, social psychologists have shown that emotional catharsis is best achieved through the punishment and reciprocal humiliation of one's victor (Bohm 2018). Humiliated actors may also seek catharsis through acts of vicarious retribution against third-party actors who did them no harm (Barash and Lipton 2011; Lickel et al. 2006). Some defeated states may, for instance, be motivated by a desire for emotional solace in their acts of aggression against third-party states (Liberman and Skitka 2017). We have, however, little reason to expect defeated states to systematically target third parties in their quest for revenge.

Hypothesis 3 does not enable us to distinguish the relative impact of psychological and motives rooted within failed material objectives within repeated dyadic aggression. Because we lack sufficient data to control for failed objectives within the analysis below, I assess the relative impact of this factor by examining an observable implication of the theory related to the effects of stalemate. If failed objectives lead states to target their recent foe(s), we should expect wars ending in stalemate to also increase the likelihood of aggression, perhaps, according to the literature, to an even greater degree than wars ending in defeat. But what are the emotional repercussions of stalemate? Any conflict in which a state falls short of victory, and perhaps even in some rare cases when it does, has the potential to engender negative collective sentiment toward the responsible out-groups. And yet, one can fairly assume that the collective hatred, anger, or humiliation generated by stalemate will be lower on average than that engendered by defeat and the imposition and enforcement of a new, unwanted status quo that the state had perceived to be worth fighting over. Thus, if unmet objectives motivate postconflict aggression rather than collective out-group sentiment, we might expect the following:

Hypothesis 4: States that have recently fought to a stalemate will be more likely to engage in aggression than states that have not recently fought or that have fought to a victory.

If concern for a state's reputation and security motivates postdefeat aggression, we should expect defeated states to engage in acts of aggression aimed at warding off potential challengers through the demonstration of how they might fare in conflict against the defeated state.[10] Scholars have argued that not all conflict experiences should provide the same informational value about how a state will perform in future encounters with rivals (Clare and Danilovic 2010, 863). Crescenzi (2007) and Clare and Danilovic (2010) argue that the strategic calculations of potential

challengers are most affected by a target's past performance in encounters with states of similar capabilities.[11] In other words, the more similar state A's target (B) is to C, the more information C can glean about how it might fare in military conflict with A (see Crescenzi 2007, 386). If we assume that states are more likely to be targeted by equally sized or stronger states than they are by weaker states, then conflicts with states of equal or greater capacities than oneself would serve as the most effective way to proactively ward off such challenges. Successful military campaigns waged against weaker states might lead potential challengers to increase their estimations of a state's strength and resolve but would arguably do so to a lesser degree than would campaigns against more capable states. If this strategic model of reputation-building is correct and if reputational concerns are driving postdefeat conflict, we would expect the following:

> **Hypothesis 5:** Defeated states will be more likely to target states of near equal or equal strength within subsequent acts of aggression than they will to target weaker states.

Evidence that defeated states are significantly more likely to target weaker states than equally sized or larger states will suggest that either reputational concerns are not a primary driver of postdefeat aggression or that this strategic model of proactive reputation building fails to fully account for the behavior of reputation-seeking states.

Finally, as described above, defeated states motivated by a desire to bolster their status and esteem should be expected to engage in acts that both demonstrate their ability to effectively shape world affairs and befit their desired status. Such demonstrations can come at the expense of states of equal or greater strength. Because status is not based solely on the relative material and military wherewithal of the state, however, but also on whether the state behaves as would be expected given its status, such acts may also come at the expense of weaker states. The targeting of weaker, often discontiguous, states enables defeated great powers, in particular, to demonstrate not only their capacity to effectively project power abroad, a capacity that distinguishes great powers from others, but also their existing influence if their aggression goes unchecked by other international powers and their intention of maintaining high status.[12] Renshon (2017) has previously found that states which possess lower diplomatic rank than they would expect, given their relative power or economic capacity, often initiate military conflicts against weaker states. I contend that the conditions giving rise to status inconsistency are only one source of status concern. Failure to perform as one would expect given the status of the state, as may be the case with defeat in war, can also generate concerns about status even if the state's relative capabilities and diplomatic rank remain unchanged.

As suggested in the cases of US intervention in Grenada and the French conquest of Tunisia mentioned above, the successful targeting of weaker states can also provide a boost of confidence within the defeated state (see Barnhart 2016). Such

Table 1. Predicted Features of Postdefeat Aggression.

Possible Motivations of Postconflict Aggression	Implied Target	Target's Relative Power
Failed objectives	Same state (hypothesis 3)	Any
Vengefulness	Same state (hypothesis 3)	Any
Reputation for strength/ resolve	Any	Equal or stronger (hypothesis 5)
Desire to bolster status	Any	Any (hypothesis 6)
Desire to build confidence	Any	Any (hypothesis 6)

acts, if successful, can remind citizens of the agency and efficacy of the state with which they identify, thus enabling them to overcome the collective self-doubt induced by defeat and boosting national pride and morale.[13] Defeated states may also bolster national confidence through the targeting of states of equal or greater strength. Such acts are typically accompanied, however, by a greater risk of repeated failure and therefore pose an even more fundamental challenge to the self-image and confidence of the state.

Because states can seek confidence and status through the targeting of weaker states, as well as stronger states, the range of status and confidence seeking behaviors is arguably broader than the range of behaviors the strategic model of reputation building described above would lead us to expect, at least for great powers. This proposition enables us to gain some traction in distinguishing the effects of confidence and status motivations, rooted more in concerns about social perception and the state's overall influence, from reputation motivations rooted more in a concern about the future security of the state. If status concerns and a desire to enhance confidence motivate postdefeat aggression, we should not only expect subsequent aggression to come at the expense of equally sized rivals, rather we would expect the following:

> **Hypothesis 6:** Defeated states, and great powers in particular, will not only target states of near-equivalent or greater capabilities within subsequent acts of aggression but will frequently target weaker states as well.

In summary, this section has outlined behavioral predictions associated with five key explanatory mechanisms of postdefeat aggression as summarized in Table 1. Mechanisms rooted in unmet objectives and a desire for revenge lead us to expect postdefeat aggression to come largely at the expense of the state or states responsible for the recent defeat. Mechanisms rooted in reputation, status, and confidence concerns allow for both revanchist and third-party aggression but can be broadly distinguished by the average relative strength of the target of postdefeat aggression. Given the overlapping nature of some of these predictions, it will be difficult to decipher the precise motivation or motivations driving each act of postdefeat

aggression. Aggression toward stronger third-party states may, for instance, be motivated by a desire for status, reputation, or both. The analysis below will not, therefore, enable us to parse the relative degree to which each of these mechanisms motivates postdefeat aggression. Rather, it will enable us to identify patterns in the behavior of defeated states that shed light on the ability of existing theory to satisfactorily account for the behavior of defeated states.

Data

The analysis below employs a cross-national design using data on conflict initiation and conflict outcomes from the Correlates of War (COW) MID 4.2 and the Dyadic Militarized Interstate Disputes 3.1 data sets spanning the years 1816 to 2007.[14] Hypothesis 1 predicts an increase in aggressive behavior by defeated states. Three dependent variables were used to assess basic propensity toward aggression. The first dependent variable, *Initiation*, is coded 1 when the state is the first to threaten, display, or use force against its opponent and is otherwise coded 0.[15] The second, *Force*, is coded 1 if the state initiates conflict with the use or force against its opponent and is otherwise coded 0. Logit models are used to estimate cross-national dispute initiation. The third dependent variable, *Hostility Level*, relies upon the measure of hostility represented within the MID hostility scale which ranges from one (no hostility) to five (war; see Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996). Ordered logit models are used to estimate the correlation between past defeat and hostility levels once a dispute has been initiated. The unit of analysis utilized in each set of models is the directed dyad-year. Because victory and defeat closely proxy for political relevance and because I seek to avoid inflating coefficients of these variable, the models below are run using politically relevant dyads. In all models, standard errors are clustered by directed dyad.

The proper tests of the above hypotheses require measures of defeat, stalemate, victory, and the degree to which a defeat was unexpected. *Defeat* is coded 1 in the year in which a war ended if the state either yielded in a war after fighting or if the opponent fought to victory.[16] *Victory* is coded 1 in the last year of the war if the state fights to victory or if its opponent yields after fighting. *Stalemate* is coded 1 in the last year of the war if neither state accomplishes objectives held at the outset of the war. The hypotheses above address the longer-term impact of victory, stalemate, and defeat on behavior. Within the primary analysis, I use the dichotomous variable *Defeat, Last Ten Years* coded 1 if the state has experienced a defeat by any state in the last ten years and otherwise as 0. This is in keeping with previous studies which assess the declining impact of reputation over a ten-year period (see Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo 2015; Clare and Danilovic 2010; Sartori 2005). As discussed below, states that suffer material losses as a repercussion of defeat take, on average, twelve years to restore their capabilities. To allow states sufficient time for recovery, the analysis also employs the variable *Defeat, Last Twenty Years*, coded 1 if a state has experienced defeat in the last twenty years and otherwise as 0. The variables

Stalemate, Last Ten Years and *Victory, Last Ten Years* are, respectively, coded as 1 if the state has, respectively, experienced a stalemate or victory against any state in the last ten-year period and has not also experienced a defeat within that period and otherwise as 0. Additional analysis of the effect of defeat on the probability of initiation within each of the thirty years following defeat is also presented on pages 5 and 6 of the Online Appendix.

Defeat coming at the hands of far weaker states should disproportionately affect the reputation, the status, and the psychology of the defeated country. I coded the continuous variable *Unexpected Defeat* using the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) scores from the COW data set. This variable lists the summed capabilities of the defeated state and its allies as a proportion of the total capabilities of all states on both sides of the conflict if the state was defeated within the last ten years and is otherwise coded as 0. If a state has lost more than one war in the prior ten-year period, the most unexpected defeat, that is, the one in which it possessed the most capabilities relative to its opponent, is included as the measure over the subsequent ten-year period.[17] The hypotheses also predict what types of states defeated states are more likely to target. To assess target type, I include the dichotomous variable, *Same Opponent*, coded 1 if the state has been defeated by the other state within the dyad within the last ten, or twenty, years and as 0 otherwise.

Finally, states involved in many disputes would also be more likely to both be defeated and to initiate conflict. In such a case, any relationship found between past defeat and future aggression could be spurious. Thus, in keeping with Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo (2015), I include the control variable *Activity Level* that accounts for a state's recent level of activity. The variable is equal to the total number of MIDs in which the state was involved in the prior five years. The models also include standard control variables for conflict and controls for temporal dependence, each described within the Online Appendix.

Results

The Effect of Defeat on Aggression

Hypotheses 1 and 2. A series of models, presented in Table 2, assess the correlation of past defeat and past unexpected defeat, more specifically, with subsequent dispute initiation and initiation involving the use of force. In support of *Hypothesis 1*, the results of models 1, 2, and 5 demonstrate that having experienced a defeat in war in the last ten years is positively and significantly correlated with subsequent dispute initiation and instances of initiation involving the use of force. Victory and stalemate in the last ten, however, are not significantly correlated with future aggression. Models 3 and 6 show that these findings hold over a subsequent twenty-year period, though stalemate is correlated with a significant decrease in subsequent aggression over this period.[18]

Table 2. Conflict Outcomes and Subsequent Aggression.

Variables	DV: Dispute Initiation					DV: Use of Force	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Defeat, Last Ten Years	0.319** (.10)	0.213* (.09)			0.243* (.09)		
Victory, Last Ten Years	0.091 (.09)	0.060 (.08)			−0.059 (.09)		
Stalemate, Last Ten Years	0.089 (.14)	−0.048 (.13)			−0.098 (.15)		
Defeat, Last Twenty Years			0.369*** (.07)			0.408*** (.08)	
Victory, Last Twenty Years			0.121 (.08)			0.041 (.08)	
Stalemate, Last Twenty Years			−0.217 (.13)			−0.308* (.12)	
Unexpected Defeat				1.46*** (.29)			1.03** (.33)
Relative Capabilities	0.092*** (.02)	0.096*** (.02)	0.093*** (.02)	−0.337*** (.06)	0.043* (.02)	0.041* (.02)	−0.335*** (.06)
Joint Democracy	−1.26*** (.16)	−1.15*** (.15)	−1.16*** (.15)	−0.664 (.43)	−1.39*** (.17)	−1.40*** (.00)	−2.21** (.71)
Activity Level	0.051*** (.00)	0.044*** (.00)	0.045*** (.00)	0.091*** (.16)	0.038*** (.01)	0.039*** (.00)	0.085*** (.02)
Contiguity	1.31*** (.00)	1.00*** (.08)	0.993*** (.08)	2.54*** (.20)	1.12*** (.08)	1.11*** (.08)	2.59*** (.23)
Alliance	−0.035 (.12)	0.066 (.10)	0.056 (.10)	0.368 (.24)	−0.010 (.12)	−0.021 (.12)	−0.076 (.32)
Peace Years		−0.104*** (.01)	−0.105*** (.01)	−0.165*** (.02)	−0.127*** (.01)	−0.127*** (.00)	−0.156*** (.02)
Peace Years × 2		0.001*** (.00)	0.001*** (.00)	0.003*** (.00)	0.002*** (.00)	0.001*** (.00)	0.003*** (.00)
Peace Years × 3		−0.000*** (.00)	−0.000*** (.00)	−0.00*** (.00)	−0.000*** (.00)	−0.000*** (.00)	−0.000*** (.00)

Note: $N = 142{,}528$ for all models except 4 and 7. $N = 61{,}830$ for models 4 and 7. DV = dependent variable.
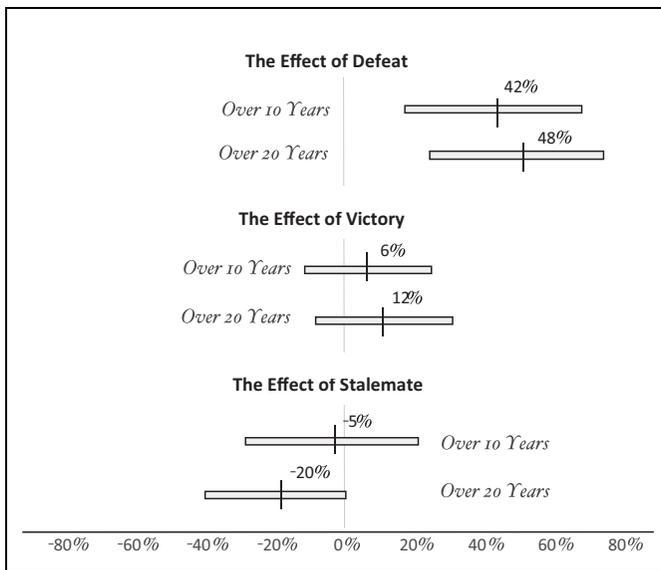*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

Figure 1. Change in predicted probability of conflict initiation.

Models 4 and 7 assess how the capabilities of the defeated state and its allies relative to its victor/s correlate with the likelihood that the defeated state subsequently uses force in its act of initiation. The results of the models show strong support for *Hypothesis 2*. The relationship is significant and positive. As a state's share of dyadic capabilities increases, so does the likelihood that the defeated state will initiate conflict. The predicted probability of initiating a dispute is, for instance, 97 percent higher for those states which lost to states with fewer capabilities than for those states which lost to states of equal or greater size.

Figure 1 illustrates the predicted probability of conflict initiation for states having experienced recent defeat, victory, and stalemate compared to the baseline probability of conflict initiation among states that have not recently fought in a war.[19] The figure indicates that the likelihoods of initiation among states that have been defeated in the last ten years and twenty years, respectively, are 42 percent and 48 percent higher than among states that have not recently fought in a war. Victorious states are no more likely to initiate conflict than states that have not recently fought. States that fought to a stalemate in the last twenty years, and which did not experience defeat during that time, are 20 percent less likely to initiate conflict.[20]

Figure 2 provides a comparison of the levels of aggression that states are most likely to engage in once they are involved in a dispute. The figure indicates the percentage of disputes in which a state's most hostile act within a dispute involves the threat of force, the display of force, the use of force, and full-on war. Of interest are the significant differences in hostility levels among states that have been
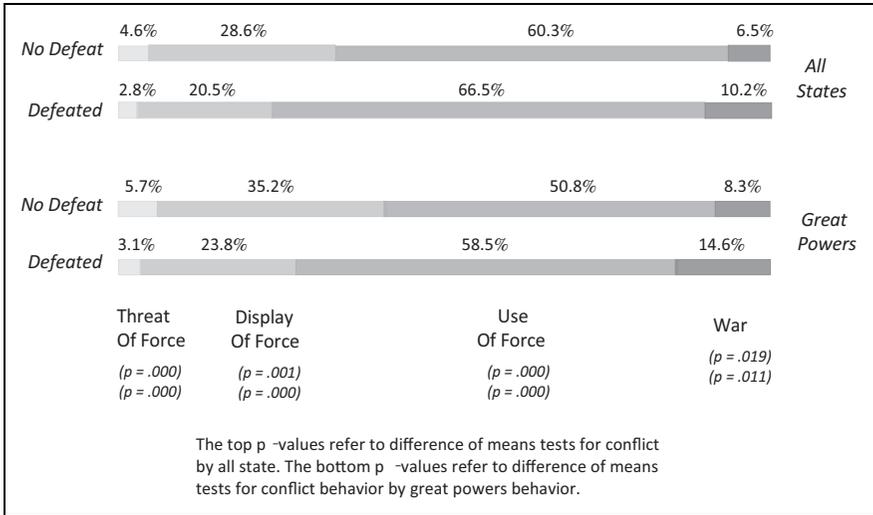
Figure 2. Hostility levels of subsequent conflicts. The top *p* values refer to difference of means tests for conflict by all state. The bottom *p* values refer to difference of means tests for conflict behavior by great powers behavior.

defeated within the last ten years and those that have not. As the figure conveys, states are 1.5 times more likely to go to war in the ten years after a defeat than are states that have not recently experienced defeat. Defeated great powers are roughly 1.75 times more likely to end up in full-scale war than are great powers that have not recently been defeated.

Why Does Defeat Increase Aggression?

The targets of postdefeat aggression. What explains the increase in postdefeat aggression? *Hypothesis 3* predicts that if unmet objectives and/or collective hatred and a desire for vengefulness are the primary motivators of aggression, then postdefeat aggression should come mostly at the expense of the state or states responsible for one's recent defeat. The results in Table 3, which analyze the core model but with the inclusion of the variable *Same Opponent*, enable us to test this prediction. When this variable is included within the model, the coefficients for the variables *Defeat, Last Ten Years* and *Defeat, Last Twenty Years* represent conflict initiation directed at third-party states. Models 1 to 4 show that the likelihood that a defeated state initiates or initiates using force against a state responsible for its defeat is indeed significantly higher than the baseline likelihood of initiation or use of force among states that have not recently been defeated. The likelihood of conflict initiation and the use of force directed at third-party states are also significantly higher over a twenty-year period following defeat. Why would defeated states wait more than a

Table 3. Targets of Conflict Initiation and Use of Force.

Variables	DV: Dispute Initiation		DV: Use of Force	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Defeat, Last Ten Years	0.108 (.11)		0.134 (.11)	
Same Opponent, Last Ten Years	0.543** (.19)		0.497* (.22)	
Defeat, Last Twenty Years		0.271** (.08)		0.321*** (.08)
Same Opponent, Last Twenty Years		0.581*** (.15)		0.493** (.17)
Relative Capabilities	0.099*** (.02)	0.095*** (.02)	0.039* (.02)	0.033 (.02)
Joint Democracy	−1.14*** (.15)	−1.13*** (.15)	−1.39*** (.16)	−1.38*** (.16)
Activity Level	0.044*** (.00)	0.044*** (.00)	0.038*** (.00)	0.038*** (.00)
Contiguity	0.985*** (.08)	0.974*** (.08)	1.13*** (.08)	1.12*** (.08)
Alliance	0.069 (.10)	0.063 (.10)	−0.002 (.12)	−0.006 (.12)
Peace Years	−0.104*** (.00)	−0.105*** (.01)	−0.126*** (.01)	−0.127*** (.01)
Peace Years × 2	0.001*** (.00)	0.001*** (.00)	0.001*** (.00)	0.001*** (.00)
Peace Years × 3	−0.000*** (.00)	−0.000*** (.00)	−0.000*** (.00)	−0.000*** (.00)

Note: $N = 142{,}528$. DV = dependent variable.
*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

decade to target third-party states? The answer likely relates, as discussed in further detail below, to the desire for defeated states to restore their political and material wherewithal before returning to the world stage.

Figure 3 presents the change in predicted probability of conflict initiation by target type among defeated states compared to the likelihood of conflict initiation among states that have not recently been defeated. The figure illustrates that the likelihood of targeting a state responsible for one's defeat is roughly 80 percent higher over ten- and twenty-year periods, as Hypothesis 3 would predict. The likelihood of initiation against third-party states is 31 percent higher over a twenty-year period.

So far, we have evidence that defeated states target both the state or states responsible for their defeat, but also third-party states as well, suggesting that models of enduring rivalry do not alone explain the total effects of defeat. The fact that states recently experiencing stalemate are no more likely to initiate conflict or use force than states that have not recently fought, however, calls into question *Hypothesis 4* and the proposition that defeated states are primarily motivated by the same failed objectives as the initial war. Rather, negative collective emotion may provide a better explanation of repeated dyadic aggression in the aftermath of defeat.
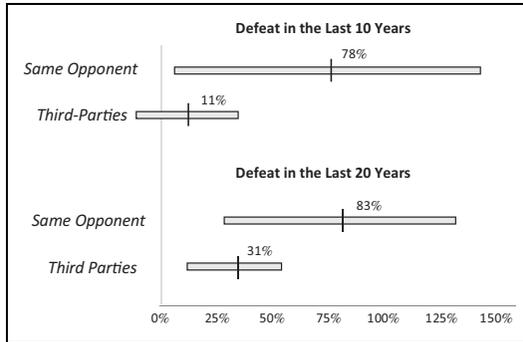
Figure 3. Predicted probability of initiation by target type.

The relative strength of target states. Hypothesis 5 predicts that if defeated states are motivated to initiate conflict primarily by a desire to demonstrate strength and resolve, they will be more likely, on average, to target states of near equal or greater strength. *Hypothesis 6* predicts that a desire to restore status and confidence will also lead defeated states to frequently target less powerful targets. Analysis of summary statistics and of cases in which the predicted probability of conflict showed the biggest change due to recent defeat helps shed initial light on the validity of these two hypotheses.

Evidence shows that 51.3 percent of all instances of postdefeat initiation come at the expense of equally powerful or stronger states.[21] The average relative capability of those targeted by defeated states does not initially appear to differ substantially from the relative capability of those targeted by states that have not recently been defeated (.498 vs. .487). These summary statistics mask, however, important distinctions within the targeting behavior of different types of defeated states. First, a full 55 percent of the cases of postdefeat aggression by defeated great powers occur within dyads in which the defeated aggressor possessed 90 percent of more of all dyadic capabilities, or a 9:1 military advantage. This proportion of initiation against these dramatically weaker states is roughly 10 percent higher ($p = .01$) than the proportion of initiation against equally weak targets among great powers that have not recently been defeated. Moreover, among those cases in which the predicted probability of dispute initiation increased the most as a result of defeat, 21 percent were within these highly skewed dyads in which the defeated aggressor possessed 90 percent or more of all dyadic capabilities.[22] The pattern is roughly reversed for nongreat powers, which are more likely, on average, to target states of greater strength than any other type of state. Defeated nongreat powers target even stronger states, on average, than their nondefeated counterparts.[23] These patterns are illustrated on pages 9 to 14 of the Online Appendix.

Second, both defeated great powers and nongreat powers alike tend to target weaker states when using force to initiate disputes than their nondefeated
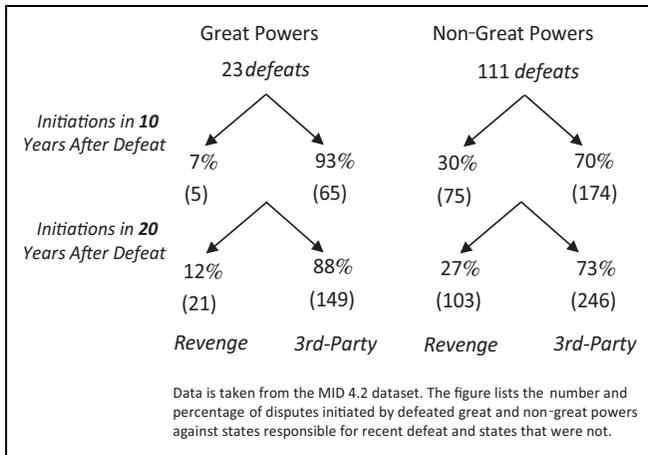
Data is taken from the MID 4.2 dataset. The figure lists the number and percentage of disputes initiated by defeated great and non-great powers against states responsible for recent defeat and states that were not.

Figure 4. Targets of postdefeat aggression by status type. Data are taken from the MID 4.2 data set. The figure lists the number and percentage of disputes initiated by defeated great and nongreat powers against states responsible for recent defeat and states that were not.

counterparts. Nongreat powers that have not recently experienced defeat use force to initiate disputes in dyads in which they possess roughly one half the military capabilities of their target.[24] Defeated nongreat powers remain more likely to target stronger states but on average initiate conflict using force in dyads with closer to relative parity in military strength.[25] The average relative capabilities of defeated great powers which initiate conflict with the use of force after having recovered from any material losses suffered in defeat are 22 percent higher than the relative capabilities of nondefeated great power in dyads in which they initiate conflict through the use of force.

The evidence therefore shows that while a significant portion of postdefeat aggression targets states of relatively equal or greater strength, providing potential evidence in support of Hypothesis 5, a significant portion, at least among great powers, comes at the expense of far weaker states. Moreover, defeated states of all types select, on average, weaker targets than nondefeated states.[26] Acts of highly asymmetric aggression seemingly offer less relevant information to potential rivals considering the potential costs of fighting than aggression targeting states of near-equivalent or greater strength. These instances of aggression against far weaker states can be explained by confidence and status building mechanisms in which states are seeking to restore their sense of agency, efficacy and to demonstrate their intentions of maintaining high status by engaging in acts that define what it means to be a great power.

Further examination of differences in target type by status of the defeated state reveals additional evidence that great powers respond to defeat in distinct ways. Figure 4 shows that great powers experienced twenty-three instances of defeat over

the roughly 180 years in question. And yet they targeted a state responsible for their loss in only 7 percent of the cases of postdefeat aggression within ten years after defeat. Over a twenty-year period, 12 percent of the cases of great power aggression were acts of direct military revenge. Defeated nongreat powers were, in contrast, significantly more likely to target a state responsible for their defeat, with roughly 30 percent of their acts of initiation targeting a state responsible for recent defeat.

In another point of distinction, of the sixty-five acts of conflict initiation against third-party states by defeated great powers, roughly 75 percent were directed at discontiguous states. The rate of targeting of discontiguous, third-party states among defeated nongreat powers, in contrast, was roughly 40 percent ($p < .001$).

Alternative Hypotheses

Two alternative explanations of the relationship between past defeat and future conflict were also considered. First, it is possible that domestic, material, or strategic factors motivate postdefeat aggression. The impact of these factors has not been explicitly tested within the empirical analysis above. It is certainly possible, if not likely, that states engaging in repeated acts of aggression are motivated by domestic factors such as a desire for the economic benefits of being in a wartime posture or the desire to reap the electoral rewards of nationalist policies. If war postures are on average financially, strategically, or electorally profitable, however, we would expect defeated and victorious states to have equal incentive to adopt them. We would not therefore be able to distinguish, as we can in the results above, the conflict behaviors of recently defeated states from those of victorious states or those states that have not recently been involved in conflict.

It is also possible that defeated states initiate subsequent conflict with the intention of making up for material capabilities lost in the process of defeat. The inclusion of a variable measuring the state's capabilities (CINC) in each of the ten years following a defeat relative to the capabilities it possessed two years before it went to war enables a test of this proposition.[27] The results of the model incorporating this measure of military recovery, reported on pages 7 and 8 in the Online Appendix, show support for the idea that while defeated states are more likely in general to initiate conflict the likelihood of initiation is significantly higher among defeated states that have fully recovered their resources than it is among defeated states that have not. Defeated great powers that have fully recovered or never lost resources are, for instance, roughly 88 percent more likely to use force in the twenty years after defeat than defeated great powers that have not recovered the capabilities they possessed three years prior to the defeat. Recovered nongreat powers are no more likely to use force but are 9 percent more likely ($p < .05$) to initiate a dispute than lesser status states that have not fully returned to their prewar levels. These findings strongly suggest that the pursuit of material recovery is not the driving ambition behind postdefeat aggression but rather that states wait to rebuild militarily and economically before reasserting themselves on the world stage.

Second, it is possible that some states in the system are simply more conflict-prone than others. These particularly active states would be more likely to both experience defeat and to initiate future aggression and could therefore explain the primary relationship we find above. Numerous facts, however, call into question the validity of this explanation. The analysis above includes a variable accounting for the recent activity of a state within the last ten years. By including this measure, we can control for periods of particularly heightened activity by states. Additionally, if heightened activity were to explain the relationship between the past and present conflict behavior, then we would clearly expect to see a correlation between past victory or past stalemate and future aggression. Instead, we find that neither past victory nor past stalemate is associated with any significant increases in subsequent conflict behavior over either a ten-year or twenty-year period.[28]

Discussion

The results above indicate both that defeat affects states in ways that victory and stalemate do not, increasing the likelihood they initiate conflict and use force, and that defeat does not always lead states to behave in the same ways. First, states that lose to stronger opponents are less likely to initiate and escalate subsequent disputes than are states that lose wars they are expected to win. We would expect, for instance, the relatively small Finnish Army, which lost quickly to the largest military in Europe during the Winter War of 1939 to 1940, to be far less likely to initiate subsequent conflict than, for instance, the United States in the aftermath of its lost to a much weaker foe in Vietnam.[29] This variation in the likelihood of postdefeat aggression could plausibly be explained by any of the five mechanisms discussed above.[30]

Second, states that fail to recuperate lost capabilities shortly after defeat are also less likely on average to initiate and escalate subsequent disputes than are states that have not. This fact likely in part explains the long delay between defeat and conflict initiation in many cases. States can lose substantial military wherewithal while prosecuting a losing war. In the wake of the Franco–Prussian War, for instance, France faced the incapacitation of roughly 30 percent of its fighting forces. Russia lost roughly 60 percent of its army in the fray of the Crimean War. Such losses in manpower often coincide with domestic political instability and dramatic losses in economic power and are often followed by periods of extensive military, political, and social reorganization and modernization, which for some states can take many years.[31] France, for instance, took eleven years to reclaim the capabilities it held in the year before the Franco–Prussian War and Russia a full sixteen years to restore the capacity it possessed prior to the Crimean War. As the cases of American withdrawal in the aftermath of Vietnam and French passivity following the Franco–Prussian War suggest, periods of rebuilding and recovery often coincide with temporary withdrawal from the world stage.[32] Leaders are often willing to wait to ensure their state will have the greatest chance of success upon its return to world

affairs. The Russian Tsar, for instance, realized shortly after the Crimean War that another war was inevitable, and yet he was resigned to wait for adequate preparations to be made. Russia would just wait, as he said, "for [its] time to come" (quoted in Trager 2012, 252).

The evidence above has not enabled us to highlight a single explanation for postdefeat aggression. Logically, such a singular mechanism does not exist. Rather, each of the mechanisms above may explain potentially overlapping sets of postdefeat aggressions. The implications of defeat are indeed varied and can each propel states toward aggression in their own way. The analysis does suggest that reputational concerns and a desire for revenge may play significant roles in shaping postdefeat behavior. The evidence also suggests, however, that existing explanations rooted in reputation, unmet objectives, and revenge alone are unlikely to fully explain the behavior of defeated states. In more than 50 percent of cases of forceful initiation by defeated great powers, the target, most frequently a discontiguous, third-party state, possessed a mere fraction of the military strength of its aggressor. It seems unlikely that defeated great powers are convincing potential rivals of their willingness to pay high costs in conflict or their relative military strength with such actions. Additionally, while some of this aggression may be motivated by failed objectives from the original conflict, this mechanism cannot explain the broader and systematic increase in aggression against weaker, discontiguous states.

The projection of power abroad at the expense of weaker, third-party states is the purview of great powers. By engaging in such acts to an even greater degree than those that haven't recently experienced defeat, defeated great powers may be able to regain confidence in their great power identity and to potentially bolster others' views that the state remains deserving of great power status. One might argue that these great powers are simply projecting power abroad for political or economic purposes or for the purpose of spreading their influence. And yet these mechanisms would not explain why defeated great powers would be more likely to target dramatically weaker states than are their nondefeated counterparts.

Conclusion

As historians and statesman have long intuited, recently defeated states behave in unique ways. Defeated states are on average more likely to both initiate disputes and to engage in greater hostility within existing conflicts than are states that have not recently experienced defeat. Moreover, states that have lost to far weaker powers are more likely on average to initiate disputes than are states that have lost to equally sized or stronger states. These impacts of defeat are significant. States that have lost to far weaker states are roughly six times more likely to initiate a subsequent dispute than are states that have not recently been defeated. Results hold when controlling for the capability of the state relative to the systemic average and for the capabilities of that state relative to the capabilities it held prior to its loss.

The analysis has also explored the validity of prominent explanations within the field that might explain the relationship between past loss and future aggression. Seemingly fuzzy concepts such as collective emotion, reputation, status, and confidence are difficult to measure with complete confidence. The analysis above, nevertheless, enables us to advance our understanding of how defeat shapes behavior. While a single variable measuring recurring dyadic conflict may not fully capture revenge motives, the inclusion of this variable sheds light on an important fact—the evidence suggests that while revenge may be an important motivator of postdefeat aggression, it is very unlikely to be the only motive, given the large proportion of postdefeat aggression that is directed at third-party states. Similarly, while the relative strength of the target may not serve as the most ideal proxy for reputational motivations, assessments of this variable point to potential limitations of existing strategic models of reputation to explain all aspects of the behavioral patterns of defeated states. Models of behavior rooted in status and confidence provide a plausible and likely explanation for many of the instances of postdefeat aggression that cannot be explained by existing theories. The incorporation of these factors into our models of conflict provides a more complete picture of defeat's effects and enables us to better predict exactly how states will behave in the aftermath of defeat.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. On status, see Volgy et al. (2011), Wohlforth (2009), Larson and Shevchenko (2010), Ward (2017), Renshon (2016), Barnhart (2017), and among others. Less attention has been drawn to the need for collective confidence as a driver of state aggression.
2. For this reason, Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo (2015) in their analysis include only unambiguous cases of backing down and not the cases of defeat.
3. Hensel (1994), Stinnett and Diehl (2001), Holsti (1991), and Huth (1996) note that territorial disputes are more likely than others to give rise to enduring disputes.

4. Numerous status hierarchies may exist (Renshon, 2016), but all are likely to be based in part on military performance (Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014; Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth 2014).

5. See Sagan (1996), O'Neill (2006), and Gilady (2006) on nuclear weapons as status symbols. As Larson and Shevchenko (2010) note, states may also engage in strategies involving imitation and social creativity.

6. Definition from Levy (1983, 14). For similar definitions, see Wight (2002) and Buzan and Waever (2003).

7. Regional powers may also project power abroad in pursuit of status, but, as Levy (1983) notes, they typically do so in more circumscribed areas and for less sustained periods of time (see Neumann 2014, 89).

8. For a detailed discussion, see Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth (2014, 375-76).

9. Commission de publication des documents relatifs aux origines de la guerre de 1914. Vol. III, No. 304, 307.

10. The transferability of reputation for resolve is debated in the field (see Wiegand 2011).

11. Accordingly, Clare and Danilovic analyze the impact of backing down on the likelihood that states initiate conflict against potential rivals of equal or nearly equal size.

12. Acts of aggression directed at weaker targets also enable states to demonstrate latest advances in weaponry (see Eyre and Suchman 1996).

13. Russia's recent use of force in Ukraine and Syria supports this claim. Motivated in part by a desire to restore great power status, it corresponded with twenty-point jumps in support for Putin (see Larson and Shevchenko 2019, among many others).

14. This dyadic data set recodes a number of conflict outcomes from the 2.0 data set. After critically examining these changes, I restored three key cases, for which I found little basis for the change, back to their original coding. These three changes are described in the Online Appendix. Importantly, these changes do not substantially alter the reported results (Maoz et al. 2019).

15. This variable may not tell us which state most wants to alter the status quo. It is a measure of how likely states are to initiate in response to demands from others or in support of its own demands.

16. This corresponds to a MID outcome of victory for one's opponent or for the state itself yielding. To be coded as victory, stalemate, or defeat, the hostility level of both states must reach twenty on the MID aggression scale. These measures differ significantly from measures used to capture the effect of backing down without a fight (see Clare and Danilovic 2010).

17. Analysis of the effect of multiple past defeats or past defeats and victories is presented on pages 7 to 9 of the Online Appendix.

18. Analysis on page 5 of the Online Appendix suggests that the effects of defeat may still be felt up to thirty years after defeat.

19. These probabilities were generated using models 2 and 3 from Table 2, obtained by holding all continuous variables at their means and all other dichotomous variables in the model at 0.

20. The coefficient for past defeat can be distinguished from the coefficients for stalemate and victory at the $p < .05$ level.

21. The vast majority of all disputes involve a single initiator. Roughly, 150 disputes are, however, initiated by coalitions of two or more states. All comparisons of relative strength in this section are based on the total capabilities of the initiating coalition and the total of the target state or states.

22. This is calculated by looking at the relative capabilities of targets within the 50 percent of postdefeat conflict cases in which the increase in the change in predicted probability of conflict due to defeat was the highest.

23. This equates to targets which possess 60 percent of dyadic capabilities rather than targets with roughly 55 percent of dyadic capabilities (distinct at $p = .01$).

24. This equates to a 40 percent share of dyadic capabilities.

25. The average relative capability of targets of defeated nongreat powers is .54, distinguished from that of nondefeated nongreat powers at the <.05 level.

26. Additional statistical analyses described and presented, for the sake of space, in Part B.4 of the Online Appendix provide further evidence in support of these claims.

27. I also analyze the relationship with three years before war entry to further ensure that preparations for war aren't skewing results. The results do not significantly differ.

28. Models incorporating country fixed effects, presented in Part B.5 of the Online Appendix, estimate positive coefficients for past defeat when predicting both initiation and initiation with the use of force ($p = .2$ and $p = .09$).

29. Some countries may be constrained in their abilities to pursue independent foreign policies in the decade after defeat. Instances of extended occupation were not included in the analysis above.

30. States may also be humiliated by the postwar treaty rather than by defeat itself, also leading to higher levels of aggression (see Part II, Section 5 for analysis).

31. On average, states that suffer material losses in the process of defeat take twelve years to restore the military capabilities they held prior to war, excluding those states that lost more than 50 percent of their capabilities as a result of defeat (Bueno De Mesquita, Siverson, and Woller 1992; Goemans 2000; Zarakol 2011).

32. MacDonald and Parent (2011) show that retrenchment following defeat enables states to best avoid long-term decline.

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