The Consequences of Defeat:

The Quest for Status and Morale Following Military Failure

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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 as well as third-party states uninvolved in the original defeat. The analysis below examines the validity of five potential explanations for post-defeat aggression, including models rooted in failed political objectives, an emotional desire for revenge and reputation-building. These three prominent 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.

Word Count: 10959

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 the defeated state have largely gone unstudied. This is despite broad recognition by historians that defeat often generates significant shifts in foreign policy.[1] 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 fought in a war. These acts of aggression are not only conducted against states responsible for the recent defeat, but against third-party states as well. Conversely, recently victorious or stalemated states 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 to be more aggressive in the future than are states that lose to equally-sized or larger opponents. These findings hold when controlling for the amount of decline in capabilities the countries suffer as a consequence of defeat. Moreover, they cannot be accounted for by generally higher frequencies of conflict at some times and places.

What explains the effect of past defeat on conflict behavior? The article introduces two highly plausible, but previously unaddressed, explanations for why defeat might bolster

[1]Eg. Dower (2010); Schivelbusch and Chase (2004); Howard (2005).

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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.[2]

The article also assesses the validity of three explanations for post-defeat 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 amongst 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.

This article derives unique behavioral implications from each of these five, non-exclusive explanations and subjects them to empirical analysis. The evidence strongly suggests that defeated states are not simply motivated by failed objectives. The results

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[2]On status, see Volgy et al. (2011); Wohlforth (2009); Larson and Shevchenko (2010); Ward (2017); Renshon (2016); Freedman (2105); Barnhart (2017). Less attention has been drawn to the need for collective confidence as a driver of state aggression.

support for the idea that states are motivated by negative collective emotions and by concerns about the state's reputation for strength and resolve. These two prominent 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 first addressing the prominent existing theories that propose a relationship between past actions and present conflict behavior, including prior research on reputation for strength and resolve and the literature on enduring rivalries, which focuses on the conditions under which conflict increases the likelihood of repeated and persistent disputes within the same dyad. The discussion turns to the relationship between defeat, status, national confidence and conflict and then lays out the unique behavioral implications derived from each of these different theoretical mechanisms. After the presentation of the empirical results, the paper continues with a discussion other potential alternative mechanisms and concludes with discussion of 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 a war?[3] How does the prosecution and outcome of war affect internal politics, and specifically the longevity of domestic political regimes?[4] Largely excluded from this analysis have been the questions

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[3]Eg. Wang and Ray (1994); Reed and Clark (2000).
[4]Bueno De Mesquita et al. (1992); Chiozza and Goemans (2004).

of if and how the conflict behavior of defeated states differs from that of states that have not recently fought in a war or that have fought to victory or stalemate.

Two broad areas of literature have outlined mechanisms that may be used to relate past war outcomes with future conflict behavior. Though they do not explicitly seek to explain the systematic effects of defeat, these theories may nevertheless provide convincing explanations for why defeated states are more likely to initiate disputes and to use force. 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 and the state itself. States that back down in the face of an international confrontation are, as the argument goes, more likely to develop a reputation for being unwilling to risk war or pay high costs in pursuit of its objectives.[5] Because potential rivals assume irresolute states will be more likely to back down when pressed, they will be more likely to challenge the state in an effort to adjust the status quo in their favor. The evidence supporting this assertion extends not only to the state's rival in the previous round, but to other states as well.[6] States that have conveyed resolve by fighting and winning are, in contrast, significantly less likely to face a future challenger than are states that have not recently fought to a victory.[7]

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

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[5]Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo (2015, p. 474).
[6]Huth and Russett (1993); Grieco (2001).
[7]Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo (2015).

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 suceed.[8] Or one could conclude that the state was deficient in both resolve and strength.[9] 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.[10] Defeated states, like states that have backed down, would arguably, therefore, face incentives to proactively reestablish a reputation for strength and or resolve through subsequent acts of aggression in effort to appear less vulnerable and thereby to ward off potential challengers.

A second area of research has focused on the effect of war outcomes, including defeat, on a state's own conflict propensity, but exclusively within a dyadic setting. A significant proportion of all disputes since 1816 have occurred within disproportionately few dyads.[11] Scholars have analyzed and explained the existence of these particularly conflict-prone dyads from a number of angles. One area of scholarship has explained dyadic recurrence through the lens of failed objectives. War, in this view, is a process through which contentious political, economic or strategic issues are resolved. Resolution of issues comes in

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[8]See Dafoe et al. (2014); Huth (1997).

[9]For this reason, Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo (2015) include in their analysis only unambiguous cases of backing down and not cases of defeat.

[10]Kertzer (2016).

[11]Mor and Maoz (1999); Goertz and Diehl (1995, 1993).

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 this repeated and escalatory dynamic within dyads.[12] 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. Blainey (1988) has also argued, however, that decisive defeat can lead to repeated dyadic conflicts if the defeated party sufficiently bolsters its material and military capabilities such that it feels it can overturn the tenets of a prior peace treaty.[13]

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.[14] War, and defeat in particular, can heighten a sense of group-based threat as well as 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 war-time rivals as well as deeply-rooted forms of group-based anger, resentment, humiliation and hatred. Such negative collective sentiment can give rise to a desire to achieve emotional catharsis through acts of physical revenge amongst

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[12]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.

[13]Quackenbush and Venteicher (2008); Hensel (1994). Grieco (2001) shows that victorious states are less likely to initiate conflict than states that have confronted stalemate.

[14]Coleman (2006); Bar-Tal (2007); Thies (2001); Scheff (1994).

state leaders and citizens.[15] 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.[16]

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. 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 less as a tool to decisively resolve disputes or as a source of potent emotions and more as a valuable source of information about a state's resolve, preferences and capabilities.[17] 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

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[15]Halperin (2008); Harkavy (2000); Lowenheim and Heimann (2008). Also Barbalet (1998).
[16]Klein (1991); Reiss (2006).
[17]Maoz (1984).

last round will be more likely to adopt more coercive bargaining strategies that increase the likelihood of war in future interactions with the same state than are states that managed to achieve at least some of their goals.[18]

Status, Confidence and Defeat

In its focus on enduring rivalries and reputation, the study of the effects of past action 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.[19] 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. Status inconsistency occurs when a state confronts a disparity between the status it expects to hold and the status it is afforded by others.[20] Concerns about the image of the state in the eyes of others are not solely driven, however, by how the state is treated by others. In addition to shaping expectations about the rights and

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[18]Levy (1994) argues, in contrast, that states will often only adopt a new strategy once they have experienced multiple repeated strategic failures. See also Reiter (1996).

[19]Dafoe et al. (2014); Larson and Wohlforth (2014). Numerous status hierarchies may exist (Renshon, 2016), but all are likely to be based in part on military performance.

[20]Volgy et al. (2011); Renshon (2017); Wallace (1971).

privileges a state should receive, international status also shapes expectations about how a state should behave and perform on the world stage.[21] 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.[22] 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 in nature since high states are typically granted more deference on the world stage.[23]

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 an effort to enhance their image in the eyes of others, including competitive behaviors like direct military conflict and the pursuit of status symbols such as nuclear weapons or aircraft carriers.[24] 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.

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[21]Dafoe et al. (2014, p. 374).

[22]Barnhart (2017).

[23]Dafoe et al. (2014); Huberman et al. (2004); Gollwitzer et al. (2011); Renshon (2017).

[24]Renshon (2017); Sagan (1996); O'Neill (2006); Gilady (2006). As Larson and Shevchenko (2010) note, states may also engage in strategies involving imitation and social creativity.

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 superlative power in the service of "vigorous and expansive" foreign policies in which they maintain spheres of influence, acquire and maintain client states and protectorates and generally influence the politics of other, often smaller and weaker, states.[25] States that are seen as unable or unwilling to project their power abroad are rarely granted membership within the great power club.[26] 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.[27]

While the discussion has thus far discussed status and reputation as though they are orthogonal, they are intricately linked.[28] High status states are generally expected to hold reputations for strength and resolve and a reputation for weakness or irresoluteness generally contributes to the perception 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.[29] Two states may, therefore, each view a state to be irresolute but believe the other to perceive it

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[25]This definition of great power status comes from Levy (1983, p. 14). For similar definitions, see Wight (2002) and Buzan and Waever (2003).

[26]Volgy et al. (2011).

[27]See Neumann, p. 89. 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.

[28]For a detailed discussion, see Dafoe et al. (2014, pp. 375-6).

[29]O'Neill (2006).

as highly resolved and deserving of high status.[30] 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 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.[31] 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 vig-

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[30]The instrumental benefits of status-seeking acts are a topic of ongoing debate. See Mercer (2017).
[31]Luhtanen and Crocker (1992).

orous 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 vigour, 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.[32] 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*."[33] 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 US 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."[34] "Our days of weakness are over," he claimed in the aftermath. "Our military forces are back on their feet and standing tall."[35]

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

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[32]Porter (1980, p. 86).

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

[34]Reagan (1990, p. 451). See also Grow (2008, p. 157).

[35]Simons (1997, p. 23).

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, non-exclusive, explanations for why defeat, and in particular unexpected 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 as well as 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:

> *H1: 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 also 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 both 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 out-group sentiments and foster hopes of revanchism. In any case, we would expect the following:

> *H2: 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

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by group-based hatred of or anger at their victors, we should expect the following:

> *H3: Post-conflict 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.[36] It may also be possible for defeated states to seek emotional solace through aggression against third-party states, including prominent allies of the state responsible for their defeat. Again, however, we have little reason to expect defeated states to systematically target third-party states 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

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[36]Bohm (2018).

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 towards the responsible out-groups. And yet, we would expect the collective hatred, anger or humiliation generated by stalemate to 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 post-conflict aggression rather than collective out-group sentiment, we might expect the following:

> *H4: 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 post-defeat 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 de-

feated state.[37] According to the literature on reputation, not all conflict experiences should provide the same informational value about how a state will perform in future encounters with likely challengers.[38] 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.[39] 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.[40] 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. Thus, if this existing model of reputation-building is correct and if reputational concerns are driving post-defeat conflict, we would expect the following:

> *H5: Defeated states will be more likely to target states of near equal or stronger*
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> *size 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

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[37] The transferability of reputation for resolve is debated in the field. See Huth (1988); Wiegand (2011).

[38] Clare and Danilovic (2010, p. 863).

[39] 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.

[40] Crescenzi (2007, p. 386) notes that states can base assessments about similarity on other states' power characteristics and their foreign policy.

equally-sized or larger states will suggest that either reputational concerns are not a primary driver of post-defeat aggression or that the existing model of proactive reputation building should be expanded to account for the systematic targeting of weaker 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.[41] 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.[42]

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.[43] Such acts, if successful, can remind citizens of the agency and efficacy of the state with which they identify, thus enabling them

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[41]Renshon (2017) has shown that states confronting status inconsistency also often target weaker states.

[42]Acts of aggression directed at weaker targets also enable states to demonstrate their latest advances in weaponry or to reinforce the perception that they maintain modernized and readily deployable forces. See Eyre and Suchman (1996).

[43]On French status resurgence after the conquest of Tunisia, see Barnhart (2016).

to overcome the collective self-doubt induced by defeat and boosting national pride and morale.[44] 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 logically broader than the range of behaviors aimed at building reputations for strength and resolve, at least for great powers. This proposition enables us to distinguish 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 post-defeat aggression, we should not only expect subsequent aggression to come at the expense of equally-sized rivals. Rather, we would expect the following:

> *H6: Defeated states, and great powers in particular, will not only target states*
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> *of near-equivalent or greater capabilities within subsequent acts of aggression,*
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> *but will frequently target weaker states as well.*

In summary, this section has outlined unique behavioral predictions associated with

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[44]Russia's recent use of force in Ukraine and Syria support this claim. Russian aggression, motivated in part by a desire to restore great power status, has corresponded with 20-point jumps in trust in and support of Putin, despite the collapse of the ruble and a significant jump in the poverty rate. On Russia's status motivations, see Larson and Shevchenko (2019), among many others.

TABLE 1: PREDICTED FEATURES OF POST-DEFEAT AGGRESSION.

Possible Motivations of Post-Conflict Aggression	Implied Target	Target's Relative Power
Failed Objectives	Same State (H3)	Any
Vengefulness	Same State (H3)	Any
Reputation for Strength / Resolve	Any	Equal or Stronger (H5)
Desire to Bolster Status	Any	Any (H6)
Desire to Build Confidence	Any	Any (H6)

five key explanatory mechanisms of post-defeat aggression. Mechanisms rooted in unmet objectives and a desire for revenge lead us to expect post-defeat 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 distinguished by the average relative strength of the target of post-defeat aggression. These distinctions are summarized within Table 1.

Data

The analysis below employs a cross-national design using data on conflict initiation and conflict outcomes from the Correlates of War MID 4.2 and the Dyadic Militarized Interstate Disputes 3.1 datasets spanning the years 1816 to 2007.[45] Hypothesis 1 predicts an increase

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[45]Maoz et al. (2019). This dyadic dataset recodes a number of conflict outcomes from the 2.0 dataset.

in aggressive behavior by defeated states. Three dependent variables were used to assess basic propensity towards aggression. The first dependent variable, *Initiation*, is coded 1 when the state is the first to either threaten, display or use force against its opponent and is otherwise coded 0.[46] 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 1 (no hostility) to 5 (war).[47] 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

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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 Appendix. Importantly, these changes do not substantially alter the reported results.

[46]This variable may not tell us which state most wants to alter the status quo. Rather, it is a measure of how likely states are to initiate aggression in response to demands from others or in support of its own demands.

[47]A value of 2 measures a threat to use force, 3 involved a display of force, and 4 is the use of force short of war. See Jones et al. (1996).

fought to victory.[48] *Victory* is coded 1 in the last year of the war if the state fights to victory or if its opponent yields after fighting and if the state has not experienced defeat. *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 variables *Defeat, Last 10 Years* and *Defeat, Last 20 Years* coded as 1 if the state has experienced a defeat, by any state in the last ten and twenty-year periods and otherwise as 0. The variables *Stalemate, Last 10 Years* and *Victory, Last 10 Years*, are respectively coded as 1 if the state has respectively experienced a stalemate or victory against any state in the last ten years period and has not also experienced a defeat within that period and otherwise as 0. This is in keeping with previous studies which assess the declining impact of reputation over a ten-year period.[49] The effect of defeat on the probability of initiation within each year following defeat is also analyzed within the Appendix, as is the effect of defeats followed by both imposed and negotiated settlements.[50]

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 CINC scores from the COW data set. This variable

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[48]This corresponds to a MID outcome of victory for one's opponent or for the state itself yielding. To be coded as either victory or defeat, the hostility level of both states must reach 20 on the MID aggression scale. These measures differ significantly from prior measures used to capture the effect of backing down without a fight. See Clare and Danilovic (2010).

[49]See Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo (2015); Clare and Danilovic (2010); Sartori (2005).

[50]

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, ie. the one in which it possessed the most capabilities relative to its opponent, is included as the measure over the subsequent ten year period.[51] 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 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 ten years. The models also include standard control variables for conflict, each described within the Appendix. Standard controls for temporal dependence, as discussed by Carter and Signorino (2010), are also included in the appropriate models.

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[51] Analysis of the effect of multiple past defeats or past defeats and victories is presented on pp. 7 - 9 of the Supplemental Files.

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 the instances of initiation involving the use of force. Victory and stalemate in the last ten or twenty year periods, however, are not significantly correlated with future aggression. Models 3 and 6 show that these findings hold over a subsequent 20-year period, though stalemate is correlated with a significant decrease in subsequent aggression over this period.

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% higher for those states which lost to states with fewer capabilities than for those states which lost to states of equal or greater size. These results hold within 20-year country fixed effects models and, as is shown in the appendix,

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 10 Years	.326** (.10)	.222* (.09)			.265** (.09)		
Victory, Last 10 Years	.092 (.09)	.063 (.08)			-.052 (.09)		
Stalemate, Last 10 Years	.065 (.14)	-.061 (.13)			-.118 (.15)		
Defeat, Last 20 Years			.375*** (.07)			.419*** (.08)	
Victory, Last 20 Years			.121 (.08)			.044 (.08)	
Stalemate, Last 20 Years			-.229 (.13)			-.328* (.13)	
Unexpected Defeat				.364** (.14)			.416** (.15)
Relative Capabilities	.096*** (.02)	.099*** (.02)	.095*** (.02)	.112*** (.02)	.043* (.02)	.041* (.02)	.037* (.02)
Joint Democracy	-1.23*** (.16)	-1.13*** (.15)	-1.13*** (.15)	-1.14*** (.16)	-1.41*** (.17)	-1.42*** (.00)	-1.41*** (.16)
Activity Level	.048*** (.00)	.042*** (.00)	.043*** (.00)	.042*** (.00)	.037*** (.01)	.038*** (.00)	.036*** (.00)
Contiguity	1.31*** (.09)	.994*** (.08)	.987*** (.08)	.993*** (.08)	1.12*** (.08)	1.10*** (.08)	1.14*** (.08)
Alliance	-.026 (.12)	.082 (.10)	.071 (.10)	.044 (.10)	-.021 (.12)	-.031 (.12)	-.022 (.12)
Peace Years	-.105*** (.01)	-.105*** (.01)	-.105*** (.01)	-.093*** (.01)	-.128*** (.01)	-.128*** (.00)	-.128*** (.00)
Peace Years x 2	.001*** (.00)	.001*** (.00)	.001*** (.00)	.001*** (.00)	.002*** (.00)	.001*** (.00)	.001*** (.00)
Peace Years x 3	-.000*** (.00)	-.000*** (.00)	-.000*** (.00)	-.00*** (.00)	-.000*** (.00)	-.000*** (.00)	-.000*** (.00)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001   N=142,528 for all models.

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FIGURE 1: PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF CONFLICT INITIATION.

The Effect of Defeat

The Effect of Victory


The Effect of Stalemate
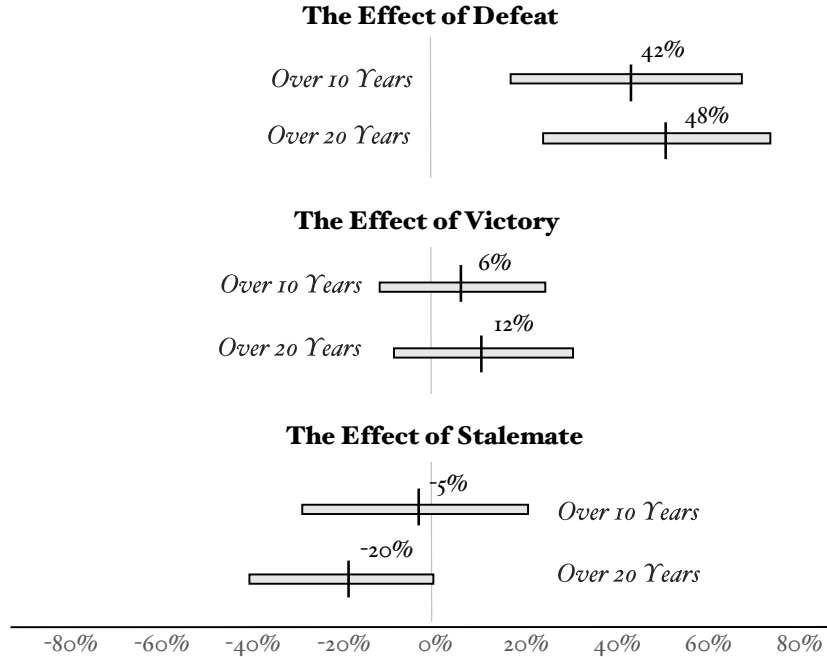
are robust to the exclusion of the major war years.

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 amongst states that have not recently fought in a war.[52] The figure indicates that the likelihoods of initiation amongst states that have been defeated in the last ten years and twenty years respectively are 42% and 48% 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

[52]These probabilities were generated using Models 2 and 3 from Table 2 are obtained by holding all continuous variables at their means and all other dichotomous variables in the model at 0.

FIGURE 2: HOSTILITY LEVELS OF SUBSEQUENT CONFLICTS.
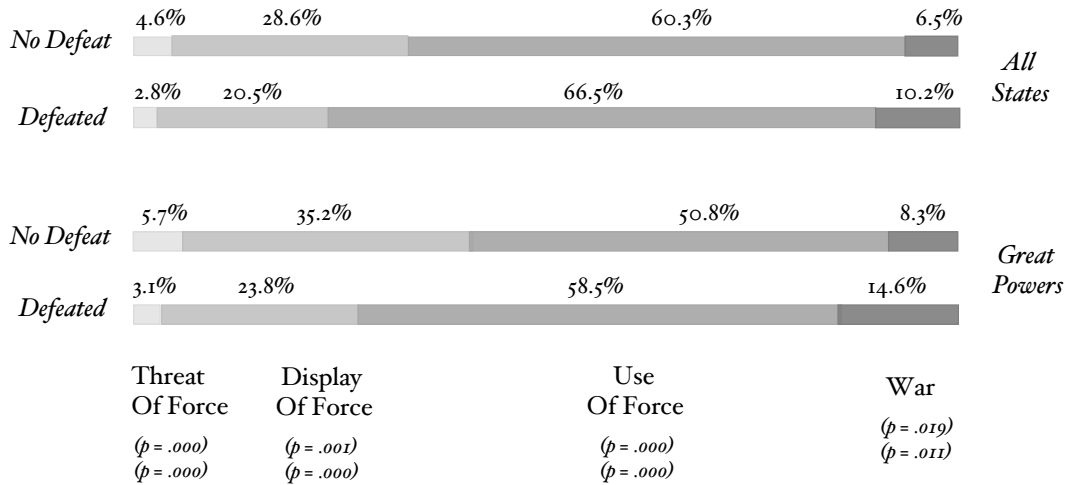
The top p-values refer to difference of means tests for conflict
by all state. The bottom p-values refer to difference of means
tests for conflict behavior by great powers behavior.

last twenty years, and which did not experience defeat during that time, are 20% less likely
to initiate conflict.[53]

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 amongst states that have been 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

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

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 Post-Defeat Aggression

What explains the increase in post-defeat aggression? *Hypothesis 3* predicts that if unmet objectives and / or collective hatred and a desire for vengefulness are the primary motivators of aggression, then post-defeat 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 analyze the validity of this prediction. When this variable is included within the model, the coefficients for the variables *Defeat, Last 10 Years* and *Defeat, Last 20 Years* represent conflict initiation directed at third-party states. Models 1 - 4 show that the likelihood that a defeated state initiates or initiates using force against a state responsible for its defeat is significantly higher than the baseline likelihood of initiation or use of force among states that have not recently fought in war. The likelihood of conflict initiation and the use of force directed at third- party states is also, however, significantly higher over a 20-year period following defeat. Why would defeated states wait more than a 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

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Variables	DV: Dispute Initiation		DV: Use of Force	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Defeat, Last 10 Years	.123		.147	
	(.10)		(.11)	
Same Opponent, Last 10 Years	.591**		.529*	
	(.19)		(.23)	
Defeat, Last 20 Years		.279**		.330***
		(.08)		(.08)
Same Opponent, Last 20 Years		.612***		.505**
		(.15)		(.17)
Relative Capabilities	.105***	.103***	.039*	.033
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Joint Democracy	-1.13***	-1.12***	-1.40***	-1.39***
	(.15)	(.15)	(.16)	(.16)
Activity Level	.042***	.042***	.036***	.037***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Contiguity	.974***	.964***	1.12***	1.11***
	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)
Alliance	.041	.034	-.011	-.016
	(.10)	(.10)	(.12)	(.12)
Peace Years	-.104***	-.105***	-.126***	-.127***
	(.00)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Peace Years x 2	.001***	.001***	.001***	.001***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Peace Years x 3	-.000***	-.000***	-.000***	-.000***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)

*p< .05, ** p<.01, ***p< .001   N = 142,538

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 fought in a war. The figure illustrates that the likelihood of targeting a state responsible for one's defeat is roughly 80% higher over 10 and 20-year periods. The likelihood of initiation against third-party states is 31% higher over a 20-year period.

FIGURE 3: PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF INITIATION BY TARGET TYPE.

Defeat in the Last 10 Years

Revenge

78%

Third-Parties

11%

Defeat in the Last 20 Years

Revenge

83%

Third-Parties

31%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%   125%   150%

*% Change from Baseline
Likelihood of Conflict Initiation*
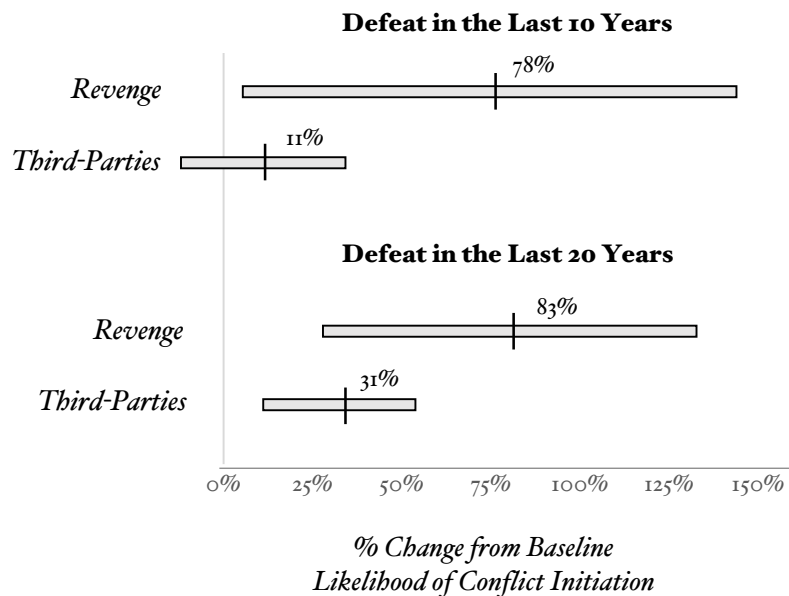
So far, then, we have evidence that defeated states not only target the state or states responsible for their defeat but third-party states as well, suggesting that models of enduring rivalry can not explain the total effects of defeat. The fact that states recently experiencing stalemate are no more likely to initiate conflict or use force than states that have not recently fought also 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.

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 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 the cases in which the predicted probability of conflict showed the biggest change due to recent defeat helps shed light on the validity of these two hypotheses.

First, the evidence shows that 43% of all instances of post-defeat initiation came at the expense of equally-powerful or stronger states.[54] A significant portion of the 57% of cases of post-defeat initiation came at the expense of dramatically weaker states. Amongst those cases in which the predicted probability of dispute initiation increased the most as a result of defeat, 21% were within highly skewed dyads in which the defeated aggressor possessed 90% or more of all dyadic capabilities, or a 9:1 military advantage over the target state.

Second, states that have not recently experienced defeat use force to initiate disputes in dyads in which they possess roughly 8% greater military capabilities than their target. Defeated states, in contrast, initiate with the use force within dyads in which they hold 33% greater ($p < .01$) capabilities than their target.[55] This statistic masks a distinct pattern,

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[54]These were states with 45% or more of the total dyadic capabilities.

[55]This equates to a dyad in which the defeated state holds 57% share of dyadic capabilities.

however, amongst great powers.[56] Amongst defeated great powers, a full 57% of the cases in which defeat most significantly increased the likelihood of initiation came at the expense of states which possessed less than 10% of the capabilities of their defeated great power aggressor.[57] This proportion of initiation at the expense of much weaker states is 7% higher (p = .06) than the proportion of initiation against equally weak targets amongst great powers that have not experienced recent defeat.[58]

Thus, while a significant portion of post-defeat aggression does target states of relatively equal or greater strength, in keeping with existing models of reputation-building, an equally large if not larger portion comes at the expense of far weaker states. Moreover, defeated states select weaker targets on average than do non-defeated states. Such frequent acts of highly asymmetric aggression would seemingly offer little relevant information to potential rivals considering the potential costs of fighting. These instances of aggression against far weaker states can be explained, however, 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.
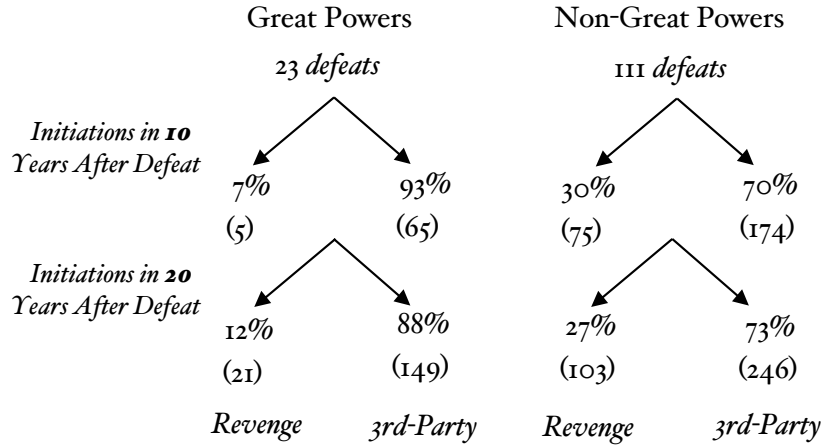
Further examination of differences in target type by status of the defeated state

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[56]This is calculated by looking at the relative capabilities of targets within the 50% of post-defeat conflict cases in which the increase in the change in predicted probability of conflict due to defeat was the highest.

[57]Over 86% of those cases in which great power defeat most significantly increased the likelihood of initiation involved the targeting of weaker states.

[58]The pattern is essentially the same for the initiation with the use of force.

FIGURE 4: TARGETS OF POST-DEFEAT AGGRESSION BY STATUS TYPE.

Great Powers

Non-Great Powers

23 *defeats*

111 *defeats*

Initiations in 10 Years After Defeat

7%
(5)

93%
(65)

30%
(75)

70%
(174)

Initiations in 20 Years After Defeat

12%
(21)

88%
(149)

27%
(103)

73%
(246)

Revenge

3rd-Party

Revenge

3rd-Party

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.

reveals additional evidence that great powers respond to defeat in distinct ways. Figure 4 shows that great powers experienced 23 instances of defeat over the roughly 180 years in question. And yet they targeted a state responsible for their loss in only 7% of the cases of post-defeat aggression within ten years after defeat. Over a twenty-year period, 12% of the cases of great power aggression were acts of direct military revenge. Defeated non-great powers were, in contrast, significantly more likely to target a state responsible for their defeat, with roughly 30% of their acts of initiation targeting a state responsible for recent defeat. In another point of distinction, of the 65 acts of conflict initiation against third-party states by defeated great powers, roughly 75% were directed at discontiguous states. The rate targeting of discontiguous, third-party states for defeated non-great powers, in

contrast, was roughly 40% (p < .001).

Alternative Hypotheses

Two alternative explanations of the relationship between past defeat and future conflict were also considered. These additional hypotheses relate to 1) the material and domestic incentives of the state to engage in aggression, and 2) the level of activity within the international system. First, it is possible that domestic, material or strategic factors motivate post-defeat 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 war-time 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.[59] The results of the model incorporating this measure of military recovery, reported in the 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% 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 non-great powers are no more likely to use force but are 9% more likely (p < .05) to initiate a dispute than lesser status states that have not fully returned to their pre-war levels. These findings strongly suggest that the pursuit of material recovery is not the driving ambition behind post-defeat 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

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[59]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.

between the past and present conflict behavior, then we would clearly also expect to see a correlation between past victory or past stalemate and future aggression. Instead, we find that neither past victory nor past stalemate are associated with any significant increases in subsequent conflict behavior over either a ten-year or twenty-year period.

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 - 40, 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.[60] This variation in the likelihood of post-defeat aggression could plausibly be explained by any of the five mechanisms discussed above.[61]

Second, states that fail to recuperate lost capabilities shortly after defeat are also

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[60]Some countries may be constrained in their abilities to pursue independent foreign policies in the decade after defeat. Extended occupation following defeat does, not, however, explain the broader empirical patterns presented above since years in which states were occupied were not included in the analysis.

[61]States may also be humiliated by the post-war treaty rather than by defeat itself, also leading to higher levels of aggression. According to evidence that, for the sake of space, is presented in the Appendix, defeats that are followed by imposed postwar settlements are more likely to be followed by aggression in the 10 years after defeat than are defeats followed by negotiated settlements. Both types of settlements are, however, followed by higher rates of aggression in the 20 years after defeat. See Part II, Section 5.

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 intiiation 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% of its fighting forces. Russia lost roughly 60% of its army in the fray of the Crimean War. Such losses in manpower often coincide with domestic political instability as well as dramatic losses in economic power. They are also often followed by periods of extensive military, political and social reorganization and modernization, which for some states can take many years.[62]   It took France, for instance, 11 years to again claim the capabilities it held in the year before the Franco-Prussian War and Russia a full 16 years to restore the capacity it possessed in the lead up 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.[63] 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

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[62]Bueno De Mesquita et al. (1992); Goemans (2000). Also Zarakol (2011). On average, states that suffer material losses in the process of defeat take 12 years to restore the military capabilities they held prior to war, excluding those states that lost more than 50% of their capabilities as a result of defeat.

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

would just wait, as he said, "for [its] time to come."[64]

The evidence above has not enabled us to highlight a single explanation for post-defeat aggression. Logically, such a singular mechanism does not exist. The implications of defeat are varied and can each propel states towards aggression in their own way. The analysis has called into question, however, the ability of existing explanations rooted in reputation, unmet objectives and revenge to fully explain the behavior of defeated states. In more than 50% 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. Defeated great powers are convincing few potential rivals of their willingness to pay high costs in conflict or of 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

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[64]Quoted in Trager (2012, p. 252).

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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 non-defeated 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 – revenge is likely not the only motive of post-defeat aggression, given the large proportion of post-defeat 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 indicate the limitations of existing models 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 post-defeat 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.

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Supplemental Files

Table of Contents

Part I: Data on Defeat

Part II: Robustness Checks

Part I: 1. Data on Defeat

The Dyadic MID 3.1 dataset recodes a number of conflict outcomes in ways that differ from the MID 2.0 dataset. After critically examining the changes focuses on war outcomes, I chose to restore three key data points back to their coding within the previous dataset for which the basis of the change was unclear and seemingly unfounded. First, the 1988 war between Iraq and Iran was coded as ending in a stalemate within the prior data but has been updated to reflect a victory for Iraq and a defeat for Iran. While Iranian leaders ultimately felt compelled to accept a ceasefire under Soviet and American pressure, Iraq failed to accomplish any of the objectives that motivated the conflict, including establishment of control over the Shatt al-Arab waterway. I therefore retain the original coding for this outcome.

Second, the Chaco war fought between Bolivia and Paraguay in 1935 is coded as ending in a stalemate, and yet Paraguay had come to control most of the disputed territories by the war's end. The war was understood as a victory within Paraguay, greatly increasing national territory and "working wonders for national pride." Thus, I retain the original coding of a Paraguayan victory and a Bolivian defeat.

Finally, the Sino-Indian War, ending in 1962, is currently coded as a stalemate. The Chinese did declare a unilateral ceasefire, but only after establishing the Aksai Chin territory it sought at the outset of the dispute. Following the war, India accepted the new de facto border as the new line of control. Thus, I code the conflict as ending in a victory for China and a defeat for India. These coding changes to not significantly alter the results relating to the effects of defeat and stalemate reported within the book.

2. *Variable Descriptions:*

- *Relative Capability* measures the natural log of the state's share of the dyadic capabilities as represented by the state's CINC score in the Correlates of War National Military Capabilities data set.

- *Contiguity* is coded 1 if the states within the dyad are touching or are separated by a land or river border.

- *Alliance* is coded 1 if the states within a dyad possessed a defensive or offensive alliance or a neutrality pact and 0 otherwise.

- *Joint Democracy* is a dichotomous measures which relies on the Polity IV data set and is coded as 1 if both states possess a Polity score of 6 or higher and 0 otherwise.

Part II: Robustness Checks

1. Omission of World Wars

To account for the possibility that numerous losses coded during the world wars were driving results, analysis was conducted on subsets of the data. The variables World War I and *World War 2* were coded 1 for the years 1914 to 1917 and 1939 to 1944 respectively. Within this analysis, each losing state incurred only one loss year – the end year of the war. The effects of defeat and victory were then assessed over ten and twenty-year periods after loss. Table 5 shows that the results are not significantly affected by omitting the intervening years of World War I over either a 10 or 20 year time span. Omitting the intervening years of World War II does significantly affect the findings for defeat over a ten-year period but does not significantly alter the effects of defeat over a subsequent twenty-year period.

TABLE 4: RESULTS WITHOUT THE WORLD WARS.

| Variables	DV: Dispute Initiation		DV: Use of Force	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 5	Model 6
Defeat, Last 10 Years	.219*		.165	
	(.10)		(.20)	
Victory, Last 10 Years	.117		.101	
	(.08)		(.11)	
Stalemate, Last 10 Years	-.029		-.035	
	(.14)		(.18)	
Defeat, Last 20 Years		.408***		.439***
		(.08)		(.08)
Victory, Last 20 Years		.155		.155
		(.08)		(.10)
Stalemate, Last 20 Years		-.184		-.226
		(.14)		(.15)
Relative Capabilities	.137***	.131***	.084**	.076**
	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)
Joint Democracy	-1.08***	-1.08***	-1.25***	-1.25***
	(.16)	(.16)	(.19)	(.19)
Activity Level	.045***	.047***	.043***	.046***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.01)	(.00)
Contiguity	1.11***	1.11***	1.22***	1.21***
	(.09)	(.09)	(.10)	(.10)
Alliance	.053	.037	.044	.028
	(.11)	(.10)	(.14)	(.14)
Peace Years	-.105***	-.106***	-.123***	-.123***
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.00)
Peace Years x 2	.001***	.001***	.002***	.001***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Peace Years x 3	-.000***	-.000***	-.000***	-.000***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001   N=137,866 for all models.

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2. The Effect of Defeat By Year

Analysis was also performed to assess the predicted probably of conflict initiation in each of the 20 years following defeat. These results are presented in Figure 1. The graph shows a peak in the probability of initiation two years following a loss, with a gradual decline in the probability over subsequent years.

TABLE 5: THE EFFECT OF THE LIKELIHOOD OF INITIATION BY YEAR.
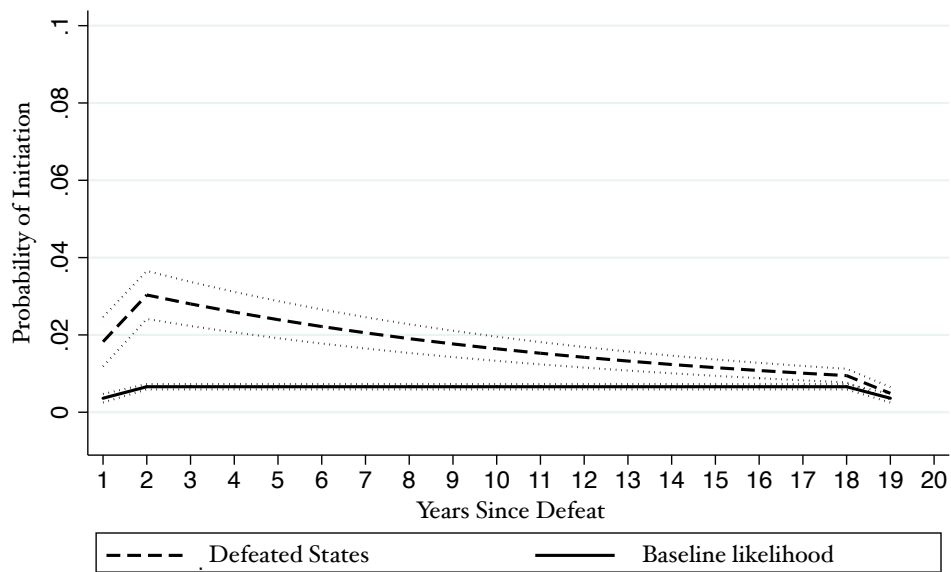
3. The Effect of Recovery

Not all states are prepared militarily or politically to reengage on the world stage immediately following defeat. Some states lose significant capabilities because of and in the years following defeat. To assess the effect material recovery, the variables *Recovery After Defeat, 10 Years* and *Recovery After Defeat, 20 Years* were created, as described in the article, and included as the primary independent variable in the core models from Table in the manuscript. Table 6 illustrates the effects of recovery on the likelihood of initiation and the use of force in the ten and twenty-year periods following defeat. The table shows that the likelihood that states engage in post defeat aggression against the state responsible for their defeat increases significantly as the recovery variable increases.

These models all find a positive relationship between level of recovery over ten and twenty years after defeat and the likelihood of initiation and the use of force, meaning that as the state recovers relative to its past capabilities, it is more likely to act in aggressive ways. This finding undermines an alternative hypothesis which would predict that defeated states engage in aggression to make up for any material losses they experienced as a result of defeat. These findings also extend to both sub-groups of major and minor powers. They also hold when using an alternate coding of recovery in which a state?s level of recovery is compared with its material capabilities in the year before its defeat rather than compared with three years prior to the defeat.

The dichotomous variables *Recovered* and *Recovered20* were also created and were coded 1 if the state's capabilities were restored and 0 otherwise. Inclusion of these variables within the core model shows that defeated great powers that have fully recovered or never lost resources are roughly 88% 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.

TABLE 6: THE LIKELIHOOD OF INITIATION AND FORCE BY LEVEL OF RECOVERY.

Variables	DV: Dispute Initiation		DV: Use of Force	
	Model 1 t-3	Model 2 t-3	Model 3	Model 4
Recovery, Last 10 Years	.246* (.10)		.263* (.11)	
Recovery, Last 20 Years		.414*** (.09)		1.20* (.47)
Relative Capabilities	.103*** (.02)	.088*** (.02)	.038* (.01)	.272* (.11)
Capabilities	-1.13*** (.00)	-1.14*** (.16)	-1.41*** (.17)	-7.29* (2.99)
Joint Democracy	.042*** (.00)	.027*** (.00)	.036*** (.00)	-2.03*** (.94)
Activity Level	.986*** (.08)	1.00*** (.08)	1.13*** (.08)	.015 (.03)
Contiguity	.036 (.10)	.014 (.10)	-.017 (.12)	.451 (.30)
Alliance	-.105*** (.01)	-.107*** (.01)	-.128*** (.01)	-.719 (.33)
Peace Years	.001*** (.00)	.001*** (.00)	.002*** (.00)	-.174*** (.04)
Peace Years x 2	-.000*** (.00)	-.000*** (.00)	-.000*** (.00)	.004*** (.00)
Peace Years x 3	.000*** (.00)	.000*** (.00)	.000*** (.00)	-.000*** (.00)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001   N=142,528 for all models.

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4. The Effect of Multiple Losses and Past Loss and Victory

The analysis within the paper analyzes the effects of having a single loss in the past on initiation propensity. What is the effect, however, of losing multiple times compared with losing only once? A count variable was created to measure the total number of defeats a state experienced within the ten years following the most recent defeat. The variable was included within Model 1 of the manuscript. The results of this analysis are presented in Table tab:mult. Models 2 within the table assesses the effects of multiple defeats only amongst those states that have experienced recent defeat.

The results show that increasing the number of defeats only moderately increases the likelihood of conflict initiation when compared to a baseline group that has not recently experienced defeat. Model 2, however, shows that when compared only with other states that have recently been defeated, states that have been defeated more are significantly less likely to initiate conflict.

TABLE 7: THE EFFECT OF MULTIPLE DEFEATS.

Table 6. The Effect of Multiple Defeats

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Total Defeats	.085*	-.263***
	(.05)	(.09)
Recently Victorious	-.177*	-.317
	(.09)	(.23)
Capabilities	-.219	.122
	(.93)	(3.06)
Relative Capabilities	.368*	.563
	(.15)	(.48)
Joint Democracy	-.605***	-.704
	(.15)	(.44)
Activity Level	-.010**	.014*
	(.00)	(.01)
*$p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, ***$p < .01$	N = 176,109	N = 12112

What happens then if the state is also victorious within the last ten years? The change in predicted probability of conflict initiation as a function of whether a losing state has also had a victory in the past ten years is graphed in Figure 5. Interestingly, we see that if a defeated state has also been victorious in the past ten years, the likelihood

they initiate aggression decreases by a statistically significant amount. This makes sense if we assume that victory substantiates status claims and that states then have less need to reassert their status through conflict. As the number of defeats increases, however, the moderating effect of past victory decreases and cannot be distinguished from a null effect when a state has been defeated more than 3 times in the last ten years.

FIGURE 5: THE EFFECT OF VICTORY ON DEFEATED STATES.
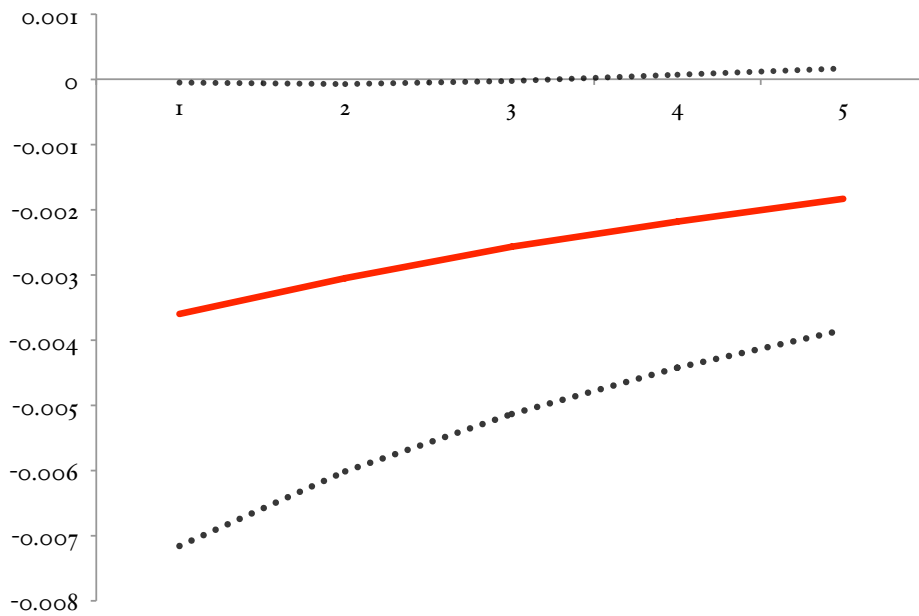
5. The Effect of Settlement Type

Quackenbush and Venteicher (2008) examine the effects of conflict outcome and settlement types following disputes on the longevity of peace within dyadic rivalries and finds that imposed settlements are followed by longer periods of peace than settlements negotiated between the two conflicting states. This work focuses, however, solely on repeated conflict within the same dyad and not on the effects of settlement type on the likelihood of aggression more broadly. This work also examines the effects of settlements following all types of disputes, not just those that rise to the level of all-out war.

To assess the relationship between settlement type following defeats in war, I created four primary independent variables using the coding of dispute settlements within the Correlates of War Dyadic Militarized Interstate Dispute dataset. The variable *Imposed, Last 10 Years* is coded 1 if a state was defeated in conflict within the last ten years and if the post-war settlement was imposed upon the defeated state and 0 if the state was not recently defeated. The variable *Negotiated, Last 10 Years* is coded 1 if a state was defeated in conflict within the last ten years and if the post-war settlement was negotiated between the two warring states and 0 if the state was not recently defeated. The variable *Same Opponent, Imposed* is coded 1 if the state has been defeated by the other state and had a settlement imposed within the dyad within the last ten years and as 0 otherwise. The variable *Same Opponent, Negotiated* is coded 1 if the state was defeated by the other state and negotiated a postwar settlement within the dyad within the last ten years and as 0 otherwise.

These variables were included within the core models from the manuscript. The results are presented in Table 8. Columns 1 - 6 examine correlations with settlement type and dispute initiation. Models 7 and 8 examine a subset of this – dispute initiation with the use of force. For the sake of space, the 2 additional terms in the temporal dependence variables are excluded from the text and the variables for *Same Opponent* is listed only once, though it applies to either imposed or negotiated settlements, depending on the model.

Models 1 and 2 show that the likelihood of dispute initiation is significantly higher amongst states with imposed settlement types over a 10 and 20-year period after defeat than it is amongst states that have not been defeated. Model 3 shows that much of this post-defeat aggression is directed at third-party states not involved in the original dispute. The likelihood of aggression towards the responsible state is no

TABLE 8: THE EFFECT OF SETTLEMENT TYPE ON DEFEATED STATES.

DV:	Dispute Initiation						Use of Force	
Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Imposed, Last 10 Years	.269** (.10)		.232* (.11)				.241* (.11)	
Negotiated, Last 10 Years	.051 (.15)			-.009 (.17)			.058 (.16)	
Same Opponent			.279 (.24)	.587* (.29)	.343 (.18)	.689** (.19)		
Victory, Last 10 Years	.077 (.08)						-.030 (.09)	
Stalemate, Last 10 Years	-.058 (.14)						-.084 (.15)	
Imposed, Last 20 Years		.222** (.08)			.248** (.09)			.225* (.09)
Negotiated, Last 20 Years		.386*** (.09)				.306** (.10)		.411*** (.11)
Victory, Last 20 Years		.150 (.08)						.093 (.08)
Stalemate, Last 20 Years		-.228 (.13)						-.297* (.13)
Relative Capabilities	.091*** (.02)	.085*** (.02)	.093*** (.02)	.095*** (.02)	.091*** (.02)	.092*** (.02)	.029 (.02)	.024 (.02)
Joint Democracy	-1.09*** (.15)	-1.09*** (.15)	-1.13*** (.15)	-1.09*** (.15)	-1.09*** (.15)	-1.07*** (.15)	-1.38*** (.16)	-1.38*** (.16)
Activity Level	.045*** (.00)	.048*** (.00)	.045*** (.00)	.045*** (.00)	.045*** (.00)	.045*** (.00)	.040*** (.00)	.042*** (.00)
Contiguity	1.12*** (.08)	1.19*** (.08)	1.12*** (.08)	1.12*** (.08)	1.11*** (.08)	1.09*** (.08)	1.29*** (.08)	1.277*** (.08)
Alliance	.020 (.10)	.006 (.10)	.020 (.10)	.021 (.10)	.021 (.10)	.013 (.10)	-.063 (.12)	-.073 (.12)
Peace Years	-.103*** (.01)	-.104*** (.01)	-.104*** (.01)	-.103*** (.00)	-.104*** (.01)	-.103*** (.00)	-.127*** (.00)	-.126*** (.01)

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

N=142,528 for all models.

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higher than the baseline likelihood of aggression amongst non-defeated powers. This would seem to be in keeping with the Quackenbush and Venteicher (2008) findings that imposed settlements produce a more extended peace. Models 1 and 2 also show that, while the likelihood of aggression is no higher in the 10 years after a negotiated solution than the baseline probability, the rate of aggression is higher in the 20 years following defeat and negotiated settlement. As Model 4 shows, however, the likelihood of post-defeat aggression is significantly higher towards the state responsible for defeat than the baseline likelihood while the likelihood of attacking a third-party state is not.

Models 5 and 6 examine the target of post-defeat aggression over 20 year periods and finds that imposed settlements correlate with increased rates of aggression, but primarily directed at third-party states. The likelihood of aggression directed towards third-party states and the same opponent as within the war are both higher than the baseline likelihood of aggression by non-defeated states in the 20 years after defeat. Models 7 and 8 show that post-defeat aggression following both imposed and negotiated settlements both often involve the use of force.